

DESERT INSTITUTE

at Joshua Tree National Park

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Spring Session

2020

Drawing the Natural World with Charcoal and Pastel

Information

Date/ Time: Saturday, May 2 from 9 am – 5 pm

Sunday May 3 from 9:00 am to 3 pm

Meet at: [Joshua Tree Visitor Center](#) (click on the link for a map to the meeting site)

6554 Park Blvd., Joshua Tree

Instructor: Monica Lynne Mahoney, Artist, Instructor

Overview

Join Joshua Tree based artist Monica L. Mahoney for a weekend of immersive field sketching in the heart of Joshua Tree National Park. Known for her expressive drawing style and knowledge of the native flora and ecology of the region, Monica will lead participants on a journey to capture the shapes, forms, and vistas of the natural world using graphite, charcoal, and neutral tone soft pastel. Sharing her wealth of knowledge, Monica will start each morning with a guided sensory natural-history walk in a spectacular private location in search of the objects and vistas that students will choose to draw. Students will explore the power of line quality, shading techniques, and using foreground, middle ground, and background shapes for creating strong, believable compositions. On Saturday students will practice developing observation skills using a variety of sensory drawing techniques with plentiful practice sessions. On Sunday, students will have the opportunity for longer drawing sessions with pastel and individualized instruction as needed. The class is designed for all skill levels and taught in a supportive environment. The goal of the workshop is to sharpen our natural observation skills while having fun and exploring how drawing brings us closer to Nature and ourselves. The skills learned in this class are complimentary to the upcoming Watercolor painting workshop May 9-10.

This class will be conducted at the exclusive Lost Horse Campground with the option to car camp overnight on Saturday night.

Itinerary

Saturday, May 2, 9 am – 5 pm

Joshua Tree Visitor Center

- Meet and caravan from the visitor center to Lost Horse Campground
- Introduction
- Field Class
- Lunch/snack break, **bring your own food**
- Field Class
- Set up camp
- Evening free

Sunday, May 3, 9 am – 3 pm

- Introduction
- Field Class
- Lunch/snack break, **bring your own food**
- Field Class
- Break camp, clean up
- Depart/Evening free

What to Bring to the Course

The 10 Essentials: Every day in the Desert

- Day pack
- 4 quarts of water
- Closed toe hiking shoes
- Lunch and snacks
- Clothing layers
- Hat
- Sun glasses
- Sunscreen
- Notebook and pencil/pen
- Whistle

Necessary Art Supplies

Drawing Pencils, minimum selection: 2H, HB, B, 2B, 4 B, 6B. (Or feel free to get the full range with the Derwent Graphic Sketching Soft set of 12)

Vine Charcoal: try hard, medium and soft and different thicknesses to see what you like and to experiment (Faber-Castell has an affordable Pitt Charcoal pre packaged set/kit with compressed and natural charcoal and kneaded eraser that would work well)

Nu-Pastel selection of neutrals, 1 stick each: black, buff, light Naples yellow, burnt sienna, raw sienna, burnt umber, cold medium gray, warm medium gray, warm very light gray, white or ivory.

Pentel mechanical pencil 0.5 or 0.7 with refillable eraser and HB or 2H lead refill.

Mars White Plastic Eraser

Kneaded Eraser

Pencil Sharpener (important!)

Chamois (for blending. I prefer leather chamois but a soft automotive polishing cloth or cut up 100% cotton T shirt will work too)

Field journal/sketchbook, minimum:

- (1) Canson Mix Media Art Book 10 in x 7 in 98 lb or 138 lb.
-OR-
- (1) Canson The Wall wire bound sketchbook, 8.26 in x 12.36 in, 98 lb or 135 lb landscape or smaller size

Optional smaller sketchbooks:

- Strathmore Mixed Media 5.5 in x 8.5 in 90 lb. wire bound pads are fine and affordable for experimentation
- Prefer the Strathmore hardbound Mixed Media Artist Journal 5.5 inch x 8.5 inch 98 lb or 184 lb. white or tan paper is fine.

A trail chair, camp chair or yoga mat for comfort to sit on while drawing in the field. Should be easy to pack into/onto your day pack. I use a yoga mat because they are flexible and light and I can fold them to fit into funky seating areas on boulders and out in the field. Choose your comfort first, especially for the longer exercises.

Optional but useful for experimentation:

Artists White Masking Tape

Michaels carries some of these. For better prices, sales and free shipping deals you may prefer to order online from Blick Art Materials dickblick.com or go to your fave locally owned art supply store.

Fitness Requirements

Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold.

Hike Level

Moderate

Guidelines

- You are responsible for your safety.
- Park your car in designated areas only. Parking along the side of the road is dangerous to you and the environment.
- Rattlesnakes are present in the desert. Avoid contact with wildlife. Put your hands and feet only where you can see them.
- Stay with the group. If you get lost, stay put.
- Drink plenty of water. If you run out, notify the instructor or the Desert Institute Representative.
- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative.

Instructor Biography

MONICA LYNNE MAHONEY, BFA, studio art, MLA Landscape Architecture, is a multidisciplinary artist, educator and native plant naturalist living and working in Joshua Tree, CA. Mahoney's diverse artistic practice includes drawing, painting, sculpture, landscape design, ecological restoration, and award-winning public engagement and civic art programs that integrate art and the environment. She believes that no matter the skill level, the practice of painting and drawing in nature is a portal into the natural world, which helps us to see and connect with it in new and profound ways.

* The Desert Institute staff/instructors will attempt to accommodate participant's needs; however we reserve the right to deny a student participation in the course due to concerns regarding health and safety issues.