

Week 6: Final Project

Note to the Tutor:

Congratulations on finishing our first six weeks!

According to our Foundations Guide, this is the time for a “Final Project”. So this “tutorial” is also different from 1-4 and 5.

Here, I’ll give a variety of suggestions, and you can decide what you want to do with your class. Some of you may have done a baseline drawing and will want to do a progression drawing. Others may be looking for something different.

But why did we do OiLS, Mirror Image, Upside Down, Abstract, and Perspective? How, especially repeated over the years, do these exercises help create underlying artist skills, leading to an improvement in drawing skills?

“Week 1: OiLS” and “Week 5: Perspective”

During week one, we discussed breaking any image down into its OiLS.

During week 5, we discussed two different levels of OiLS: Three-dimensional images, and a single point perspective. What is the underlying skill?

Artist Skill: There are two large classes of drawing (lots of off-shoots, but there are two main classes in my experience): **Observational Drawing**, and **Imaginative Drawing**.¹

Observational Drawing is drawing that which you can see in the moment you are drawing it, whether in a model, a photograph, another illustration, something you are watching in real life, or under a microscope.

Imaginative Drawing is drawing something which does not exist in the time and space the artist is seeing at the time of the drawing.

Most imaginative drawings draw on previously completed observational drawings. Drawing a dragon, for example, would be based on observational drawings (or memories) of various types of lizards. Drawing a plan for a future house would likely be based on designs and patterns already sketched and studied from life. Even drawing a horse rearing or jumping (provided you were not looking at a photograph at the time you drew it) would be imaginative drawing².

So when we break down any “master” image to its OiLS (or three-dimensional forms) and draw an observational drawing, we train ourselves to break down any image into its OiLS.

¹ These terms are my own, but I’m sure you could find them elsewhere.

² Of course, prior to the invention of photography, drawing any action pose, especially from an animal, was an imaginative drawing, drawn from hours watching and sketching the animal from different perspectives and poses.

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Eventually, the line between drawing things from real life and drawing images from our imagination or mind’s eye becomes blurred. After practicing from real life, we can start to more easily and quickly draw images from our own imagination. At this point, we’ve reversed the process: rather than breaking down a master image into its OiLS and building it back up, we are now building an image from the beginning, using only our imagination as the guide.

Week 2: Mirror Image and Week 3: Upside Down Drawing

During week 2, given one half of an image, we drew another half.

During week 3, we took a master image and set it upside down, then drew a copy also upside down.

We did this to break our ‘icon’ patterns in our heads, and draw what was actually there, not what we thought we saw based on our internal, simplified, icon patterns.

Artist Skill: Whenever an artist draws something from observation, they have to visually measure distances between shapes, lines, planes, edges and more. When we drew mirror-images, we had to visually measure the drawn lines using the printed “master half” as the guide. As we drew, we had to “guesstimate” distances, curves, shapes from one half to the other, and the “check” was on the same page.

It was the same with drawing upside down, although there we visually measured the distances, shapes, angles and such from one image to another on a separate canvas.

This is what artists do. We visually measure everything from the object we are examining to the paper or canvas in front of us.

Cutting an image of these subjects in half, or flipping it upside down, is just a means to tricking the brain into seeing the OiLS, spaces between shapes, and such, rather than glossing over the true shapes in order to quickly draw an icon pattern and move on. The underlying skill, however, is visually gauging shapes, distances, and proportions.

Week 4: Abstract Art:

We studied how artists have always ‘played’ with their art, but with the invention of photography taking over “speed” and “accuracy” of many works, artists were free to use OiLS just to play and draw things that had no relation to real life.

Artist Skill:

“Creativity is just problem solving” as Steve Jobs now-famously said. Ed Catmull of Pixar says the same, adding, “Once people see it as problem solving, it stops seeming like magic-because it’s not. [Creativity] Brokers are just people who pay more attention to what problems look like and how they’ve bene solved before. People who are most creative are the ones who have learned that feeling scared is a good sign. We just have to learn how to trust ourselves enough to let the creativity out.”

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Then there's the oft-mis-attributed "Einstein" quote: *"Creativity is just intelligence having fun"*. (It apparently is most likely from the pen of Joey Reiman, in his book, *Success: the Original Handbook*.)

When you play with abstraction, whether that's simplifying figures (like Klee's rose into an angled spiral) or just intersecting colors and shapes (like Delaunay and Mondrian) abstraction is a mental break which also helps us see shapes and patterns once they're pulled out of "accurate reality."



Many famous buildings, like the Sydney Opera House (left) and the Guggenheim Museum in New York City (right), are abstractions of things found in nature. The Sydney Opera House roof was inspired by, of all things, an orange peel. The "shells" are nested, yet, if they were pulled apart, the architect Jorn Utzon claimed, they could be re-made into a sphere, just like an orange peeled into segments.

The Guggenheim museum (Architect Frank Lloyd Wright) drew on concepts like an inverted Mesopotamian ziggurat, the interior sections of an orange, and a nautilus shell.



The Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain (Architect Frank Gehry) was inspired by the shapes of fish and fish scales, as well as boats and flowers. This undulating building was deliberately designed to be a giant piece of abstract art itself, but the architect had to start with something real to inspire him.

(Photo from website "Bilbao: City of Design")

<http://www.bidc.eus/guggenheim-bilbao/>)

Logos for companies and products are also frequently abstractions of something from reality.

No matter where an abstraction finally ends up, it started with just playing with the things we really see and think of. In the process of playing with them, we may invent something new.

And we could all use some more playtime anyway!

Week 5: Perspective

During week five, we explored how to break down and re-build three-dimensional shapes into their OiLS and how to practice drawing with them.

At another level, we learned how items become smaller the further away they get from the viewer, and using one-point perspective, we learned how to take something and make it look three-dimensional by using perspective rules.

Artist Skill: Without the ability to “trick the eye”³ into thinking something really exists in three-dimensional space, our drawings would look flat and unrealistic. But, we have to learn how to “break” certain rules in order to create the image of “reality”.

When drawing our cubes or the one-point house, we used diagonal lines-yet we know most cubes are made of straight lines at right angles to each other (and we certainly want our houses to have straight lines and right angles!) We “broke” reality by using diagonal lines and angles that weren’t “quite-right”, in order to show what appeared to be a solid, straight, cube.

We know that a tree, from a distance, may appear to be no larger than our thumb, and yet it would tower over us if we walked over to it. In the same way, placing tiny trees in the background of a painting, our brain doesn’t think “Wow, those trees are tiny”, it thinks “those trees are quite a distance away”. We “broke” the rule of “full grown trees are generally large” in order to convey, “these trees are far away, and though they are large, they appear small due to distance.”

So starting with the very basics of cube, column, sphere, and such, we began to learn how to break an image into a different type of OiLS, one that will help us create an illusion of depth and three-dimensionality.

All of which brings us to week Six and the intimidating “FINAL PROJECT”!

And it stumped me for a while, since I didn’t know what to do. There are lots of good ideas out there, but what was the point of the drawing module which I could use to help tie everything together for my students and others?

³ Literally “trompe l’oeil”(Tromp –LOY): (French) An art term meaning painting in such a way to trick the eye into seeing a two-dimensional surface as three dimensional. If you’ve ever seen those sidewalk or street paintings that look like you can fall into a canyon, or that a waterfall or sinkhole has suddenly opened up beneath your feet, this is a perfect example of Trompe l’oeil. To see more examples, just image search “trompe l’oeil”

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It wasn’t until writing a good bit of what you’ve just read that I hit on what, I think, the goal of the drawing module is.

It’s to give our students the tool of drawing accurately enough to communicate to others.

Whether you end up like me, drawing for a good portion of my living, or, like some of my friends and relations, working in the audio/visual, education, medical, and engineering fields, (among others), all of us have had to draw something to most quickly and clearly communicate an idea; a children’s book illustration, or a filming set design, or how a surgery is going to begin and end, or how a certain set of gears need to fit together. There are, and will always be times we need drawing in lieu of, or in addition to, words.

And do draw imaginatively, one has to start observationally. And to draw observationally, we have to LOOK at something, literally anything, and try to draw it accurately. The techniques taught give us the tools, so we don’t get frustrated before the *practice + techniques* yield the accuracy we want in our drawings.

So below I have certain scripts you can use if you like, or you can summarize what I just said, if that inspires you.

I hope you find enough here to inspire you for the final week, and more, perhaps, for yourself and your own students through the year.

In Him, the Creator of All (including our creativity!)

R. J. Hughes

Level: Abecedarian

Materials Needed:

- Pencils
- Paper
- Optional: Colored pencils, any coloring medium

Recommended Additions: A favorite children’s picture book and/Or a Magazine like Highlights, National Geographic or some similar magazine where there are lots of pictures which illustrate the articles.

“Every artist was first an amateur” --Ralph Waldo Emerson

(Quoteboard on page 12)

Tutor: Why do we draw?

Well, think of your favorite picture book. Here’s one of mine <*Show your picture book, if you brought it*>

In a picture book, the words and pictures work together to tell a story. Without the words, we may not understand all that the series of pictures are trying to say. But the pictures tell part of the story the words may not say: they tell us what the characters or people look like, where they live, if they’re happy or sad, or what’s happening around them. All these details tell us a lot about the story too. Drawing is another way to “speak” to another person.

Drawing also teaches us to look closely and carefully at the world around us. When we draw, we see EXACTLY how God made our world to fit together. It helps us focus, and get ready to show people how we see the world.

So keep practicing your drawing. Copy pictures in magazines, or books. Draw what you see out your window, or across your room. Learn to “talk” with your drawings as well as your words.

And above all, have fun!

<*See Activity Appendix, Page 10 for activity suggestions*>

Level: Apprentice/Journeyman

Materials Needed:

- Pencils
- Paper
- Erasers
- Optional: Colored pencils

Recommended Additions: A favorite children’s picture book and/or a magazine like Highlights, National Geographic or some similar magazine where there are lots of pictures which illustrate the articles.

“Every artist was first an amateur” –Ralph Waldo Emerson

(Quoteboard on page 12)

Tutor: Why do we draw? Why bother to learn how to draw at all?

Well, think of your favorite picture book. Here’s one of mine <*Show your picture book, if you brought it*>

In a picture book, the words and pictures work together to tell a story. Without the words, we may not understand all that the series of pictures are trying to say. But the pictures tell part of the story the words may not say: they tell us what the characters look like, where they live, if they’re happy or sad, or what’s happening around them. All these details tell us a lot about the story too. If the author of this picture book is “telling” a story, the illustrator is “showing” a story, and together, they tell a better story than perhaps, they could have told by themselves. Grown-ups still use images in addition to words. Do you think articles from National Geographic would be as interesting without the photos and diagrams?

Drawing also teaches us to look closely and carefully at the world around us. When we draw, we see EXACTLY how God made our world to fit together.

Together, these are reasons to study drawing and art: it gives us another tool of communication with other people, while teaching us to really look at the world around us.

But, like reading, like writing, like anything worth doing, drawing only improves with practice.

So keep practicing your drawing. Copy pictures in magazines, or books. Draw what you see out your window, or across your room. Learn to “talk” with your drawings as well as your words.

And above all, have fun!

<*See Activity Appendix, Page 10, for activity suggestions*>

Level: (Experienced) Journeyman/Masters

The Review Lesson

Materials Needed:

- Pencils
- Paper
- Erasers
- Optional: Colored pencils, or an coloring medium

Recommended Additions: A favorite children's picture book and/Or a Magazine like Highlights, National Geographic or some similar magazine where there are lots of pictures which illustrate the articles.

“Every artist was first an amateur” --Ralph Waldo Emerson

(Quoteboard on page 12)

Tutor:

Let's review the previous five weeks:

In Week 1, we looked (or re-looked) at OiLS, the shapes that make up almost any drawing. What was the point to studying that?

<You can break any image, no matter how complex, into simple drawing shapes of Ovals, dots, lines, angled lines, and curves>

During Week 2 We did Mirror images. Why? Do you know?

<The point wasn't to draw a perfect mirror image, the point was to break the pre-set internal patterns (icons) down and draw what we actually see. In the process, we practice visually measuring and replicating an image as it really IS, not the way we THINK or presume it is. Whenever you draw from life, you need to be able to do that, even if the master image isn't a perfectly symmetrical image.>

During Week 3, we drew upside down. Why? Do you remember?

<We turned the master image upside down to force the brain, again, to break that internal icon and slowly examine the real object. This again forces us to visually measure and replicate an image the way it truly IS not the way we THINK it is. Different technique, similar practice, to week 2.>

During Week 4, we explored Abstract Art. Why? Do you remember?

<We explored using OiLS for fun, without needing to replicate anything. Art can be fun, and artists have frequently played with their art just for fun.>

Last week, we explored how to draw three-dimensional forms and some perspective. Why?

<We replicated how the real-three dimensional world looks by learning some techniques for making a two-dimensional drawing look like it has depth. This makes drawings look more real to the viewer.>

In the process, have we discovered why learning how to draw, even if you never want to be an artist, is important?

<See what they say! If they have no ideas, you can mention some of the following.>

- Art and drawing form the base of a “universal language”, so knowing how to draw accurately gives you another tool of communication. (Bed Franklin)
- Some things can be more quickly and accurately understood through a diagram, sketch, or drawn plans, than long explanations.
- It increases our ability to judge spatial reasoning and spatial awareness.
- It relaxes the brain, increases the ability to focus and improves creativity, which, according to Steve Jobs, Ed Catmull, Einstein and others, is just a form of out-of-the-box problem solving.

Improvements in drawing will always take practice, so even after today, take the time to practice drawing something you see, or a photo you like, or anything that catches your eye.

< See Activity Appendix, Page 10, for final project ideas.>

Activity Appendix

Idea #1: Baseline/Progress

This particular project only works if you took a baseline drawing back on week one. If you did, return the original master image to the student and have them re-draw it. Once they are done, return the original sketch they did in the first week and see the improvements.

If the student feels discouraged because they don’t see any, or enough improvement, (or they even perceive regression) there may be a reason.

First thing: It may be a bad drawing, or the fearsome “bad drawing day”. Like bad hair days, or days when everything seems to go haywire, bad drawings and bad drawing days do happen, even to professionals (it absolutely happens to me, I know, and far more often than I want to admit!) The secret here is to get back up and keep “drawing the bad drawings out” and Looney Tunes animator Chuck Norris taught us back in Week 1. See if it was just a one-off “bad drawing”, and the next one is better. If you must, try again that evening, or tomorrow. When I have a “bad drawing”, I turn to a new page in my sketchbook and start again.

Second: Was there practice during the week? If not, this could be another reason there was little progress. But all that means is there’s an opportunity for the student to do yet another “progress” picture in the future to show even more progress once they practice some more.

If the student is dissatisfied with their perception of their own progress, try to talk them through it and encourage them to keep going. I know, speaking as a professional artist, that there’s a significant chunk of my own work that didn’t turn out the way I envisioned. I know that as a mother, there’s things they didn’t turn out the way I imagined. This too, is just part of life. Encourage them to be patient and persistent with their work. It will come.

Idea #2: Draw something you’ve seen before

There were a lot of images in these modules which you may have lying around still. If so, hand them to your students as a master image, and let them use the techniques they’ve learned to replicate it. This means if the original master looked slightly (or very) “flat” (Like the “Egyptian Tomb Painting” or “Japanese Couple under Umbrella” from Week 1) the resulting copy should also look relatively flat.

Idea #3: Draw something new

This week’s history sentence revolves around some of the historical figures of the Renaissance. In the Image Appendix, (Page 12) I’ve included period (or near period) engravings of some of the people, and/or their inventions and environments (gotta love Da Vinci’s notebooks!)

In the same way, if you want to Google these names or other drawings you know of, feel free to use those too!

Idea #4: The Hot Air Balloon or Castle

One of the final project drawings I love is the now-classic-Classical-Conversations Hot Air Balloon project. It nearly perfectly encapsulates the techniques of the five weeks by allowing the student to use their OiLS to complete the other side of the hot air balloon, (mirror image) reflect it in in the pond (mirror image AND upside down!), then abstract the balloon’s design. (With some shading, it can also be made to look three-dimensional and therefore incorporate Perspective.)

If you have CC Connected, you can find it with:

- User Name: ReneeH
- Title: Final Project Week 6
- 4.47 MB (includes instructions)

So “ReneeH” thank you for your creative solution to the “problem” of a final project!

But this also Cycle 2, and during the Week 5 development, I created a Bodiam Castle step-by-step. It proved a very involved project (too involved, I feared for the half hour time constraint at the detail level I ended up taking it to. Sorry!) so I ditched it, and went for the house.

So here it is, resurrected in a different form. Complete the castle, draw the reflection in the moat, and add some abstract banners flying overhead, and the “drawbridge” provides a simple one-point perspective. (Page 17)

Just remember, these patterns are a starting point, the goal is to be able to draw anything observationally. So if they finish, see if they’ll try drawing something else given a master image.

Idea # 5: Books, magazines, the world is full of images.

Draw “en plein air” as the impressionists did (That’s code for go outside with your materials and draw the landscape around you). Bring some favorite children’s books and draw a Dr. Suess-like creature, or a classic artist’s sketch, or a favorite cartoon character. As long as you are looking at a master image and copying it, that’s practice. The steps of drawing, (identify the simple shapes, draw what IS not what you THINK you see, build an under-image of shapes and OiLS, then add details and shading after the proportions and spacing is correct), is the same no matter what you’re drawing.

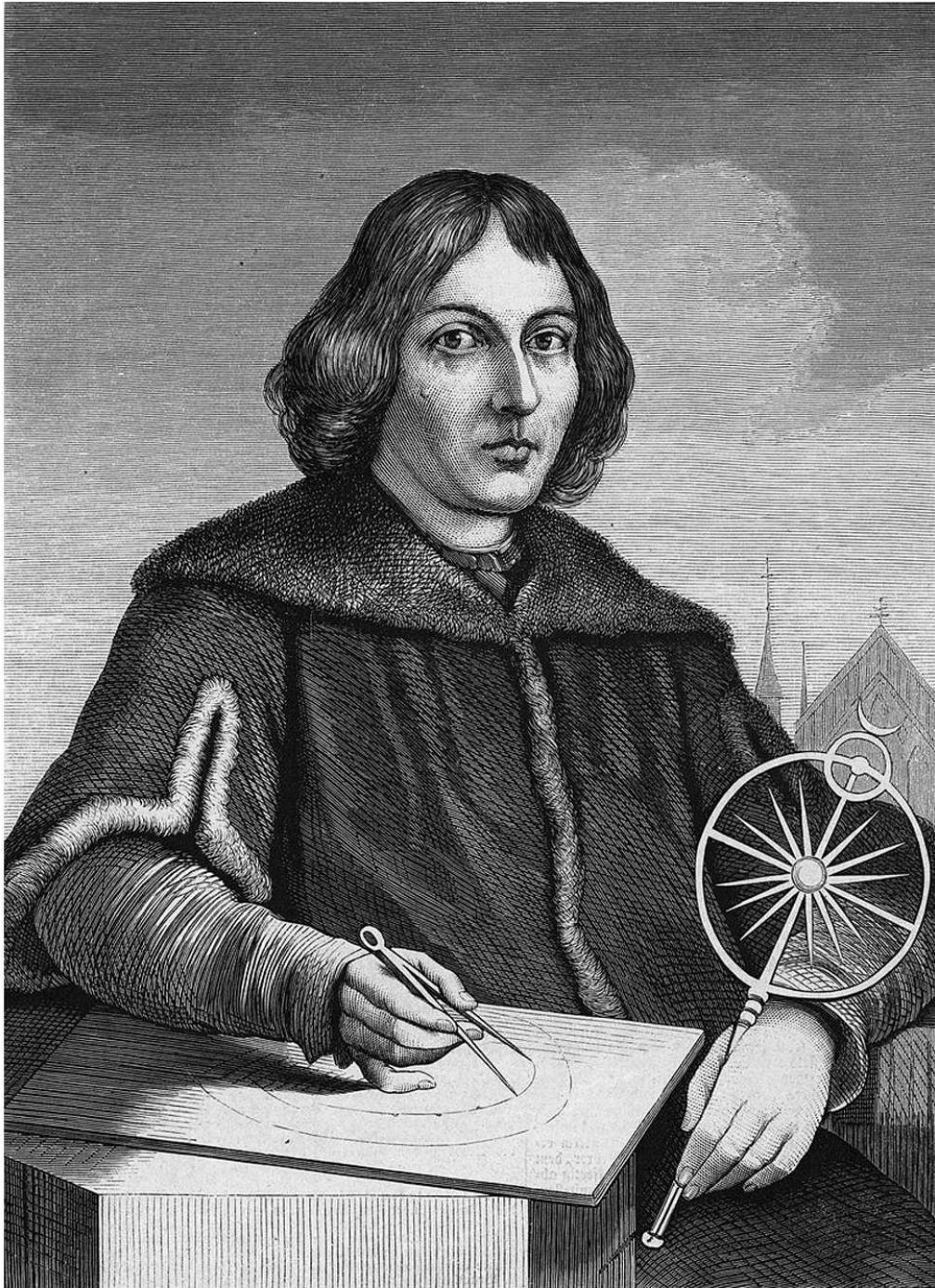


**“Every artist was
first an amateur”**

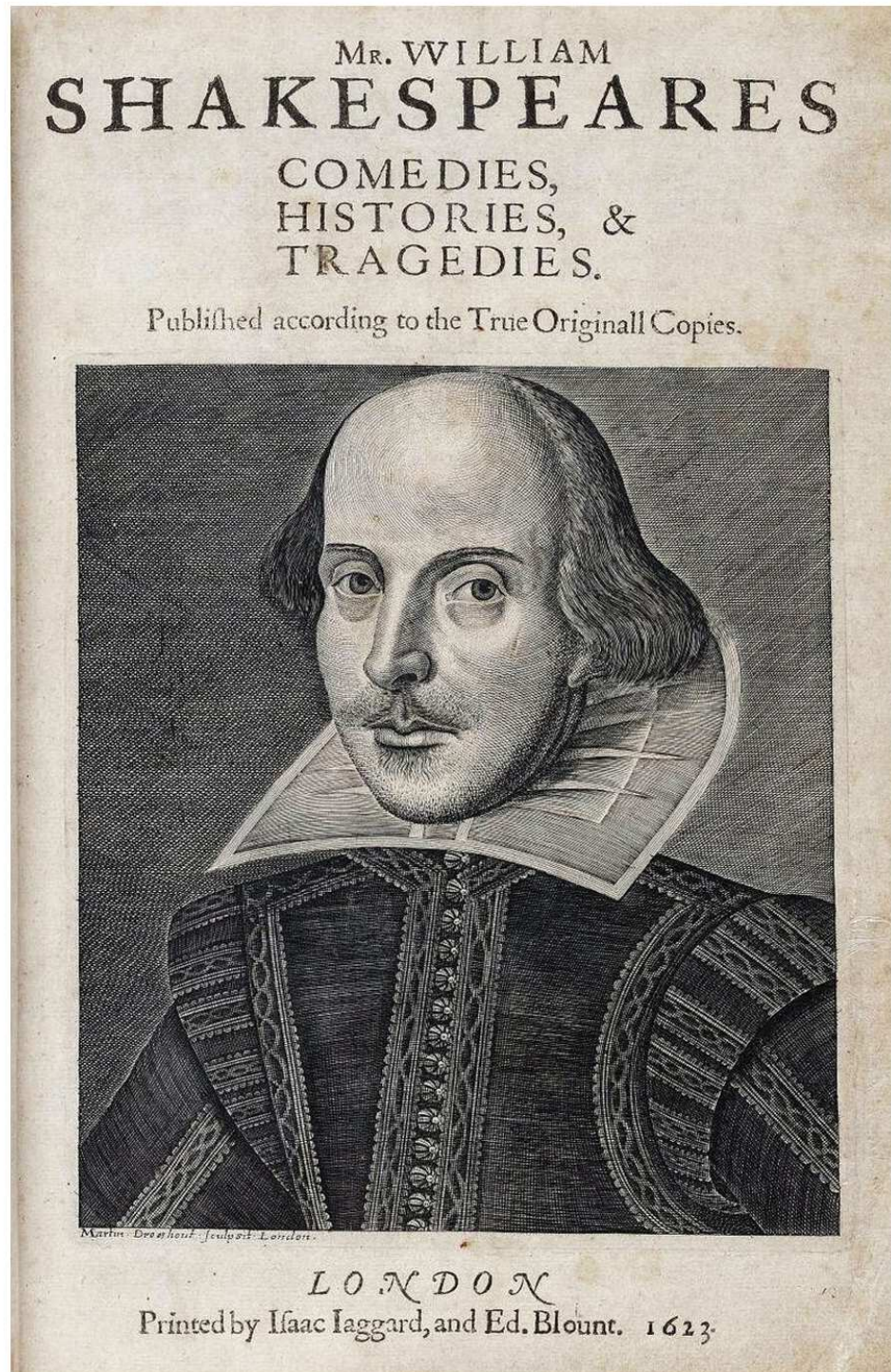
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

(1803 - 1882)

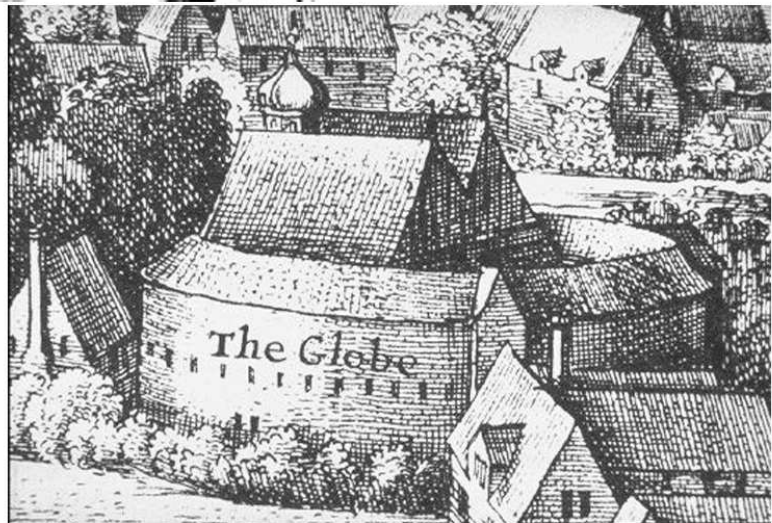
American poet and essayist



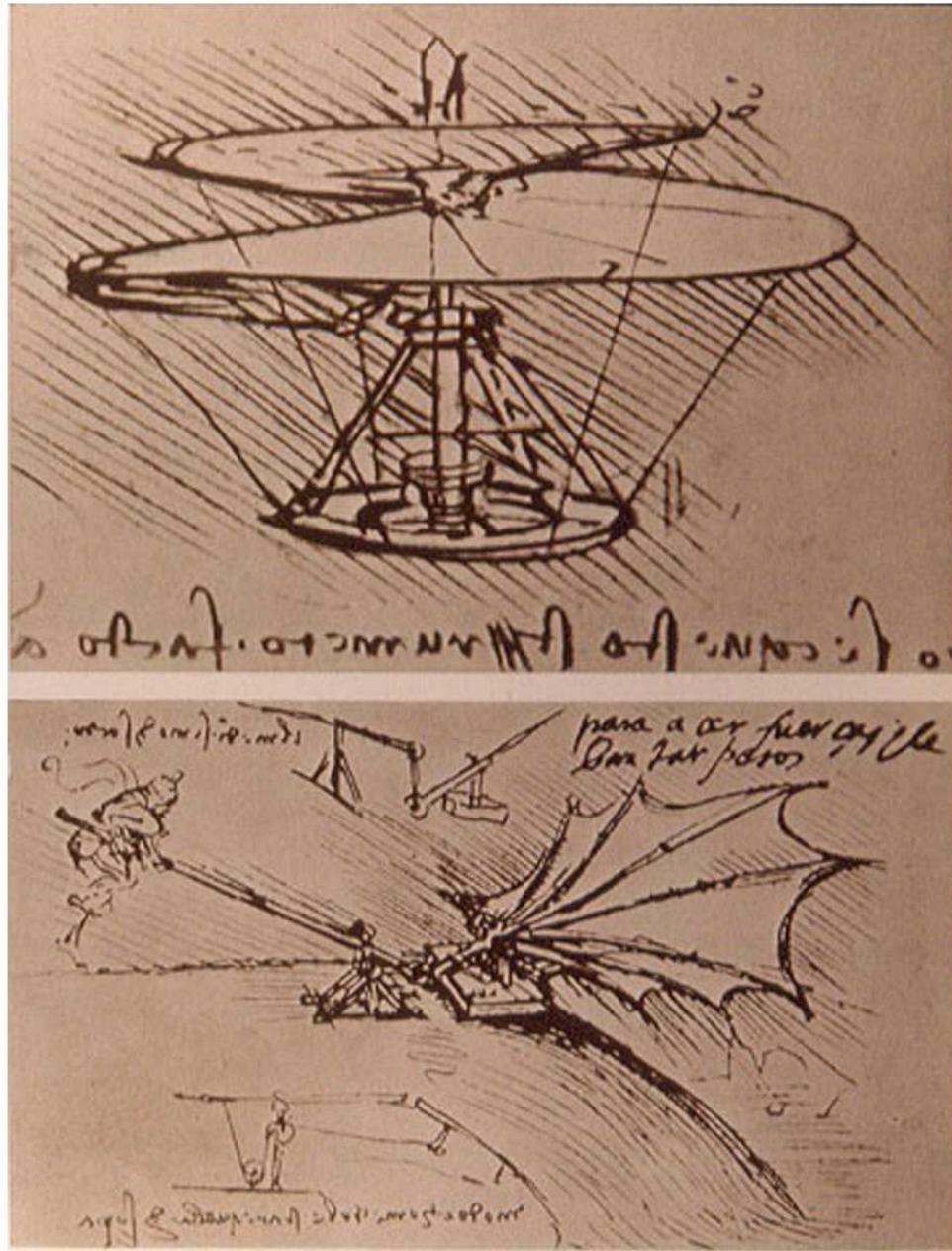
Nicolaus Copernicus



Shakespeare's engraved portrait, for the first folio of his plays



The Second Globe Theater as drawn from life (top and left) by Wenceslaus Hollar (1607 - 1677). The initial sketch was a study for his famous work "Long View of London from Bankside" which was completed in 1647 (approximately four years after the Globe had been closed by the Puritans and two years after it had been razed to make way for dwellings.)



Top: Da Vinci's helicopter or aerial screw. Bottom: Da Vinci's flying machine.

