



Phoenix Studio

Creative Courses for Everyone

Choosing the right reference materials for 3-Dimensional art projects

If you are making clay or wire animals, you will need to bring some reference materials - images from Google, pictures from magazines, photographs, and perhaps your own drawings. I am a real stickler for this because without good reference material, you cannot make a good sculpture.

Sometimes people on my courses bring poor reference materials or none at all. This wastes everyone's time, causes unnecessary stress and naughty students get put in detention!

Here are some thoughts that may help you to avoid some of the common pitfalls, and choose instead references that can help and inspire your work.

I hope you find it useful.

Sourcing your reference! There are a host of places you can find images.

If you have a laptop, ipad or iphone you can bring it with you on the course.

We have free wifi which you can log on too. Just be careful of dusty hands on your keyboard!

magazines are great but it is harder to find exactly what you want. Here at the studio we have over 10 years worth of BBC Wildlife magazines that you can look through!

Google images is my favourite source for reference! It has images of everything you could possibly need & it's easy to scan across the page for the images you like. When you find the right image, right click on them and save to a new folder on your computer. You can then print them off. To save paper why not print 2 images per A4 sheet?



Visit your library or revisit your shelves at home. Kids books can also be a great source of images.

We have a range of books at the studio you can look through too!

Good sources for reference:

- Google images
- Magazines
- Photographs
- Reference books
- Your own sketches

Photographs that you have taken yourself are great too and because you took them will mean that much more to you!

If you like to draw then use your own sketches of your desired subject!

If you have a laptop, ipad or iphone you can bring it with you on the course - which will save you needing to print images. We have free wifi (though it's sometimes sporadic!) which you can log on too.

If I was going to create a sculpture of a tiger in clay or wire then I would go through the following steps in selecting appropriate reference material:

Get quality images

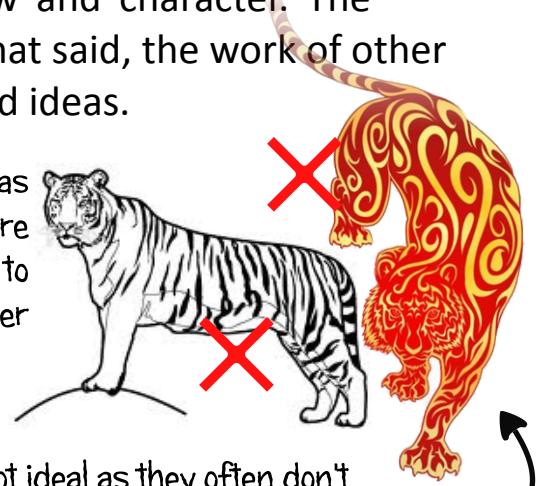
Even if you are working in quite an abstract manner, good reference material will help you to capture your subject's form, flow and character. The interpretation comes from you, in your own way. That said, the work of other artists can be an invaluable source of inspiration and ideas.



Using an existing piece of art work as reference means that you are interpreting an interpretation! Try to use it for inspiration but have other images for reference as well.



Illustrations and designs are not ideal as they often don't show the distribution of muscle tone, shape and form. Again, they are an interpretation of an interpretation.



One image is not enough!

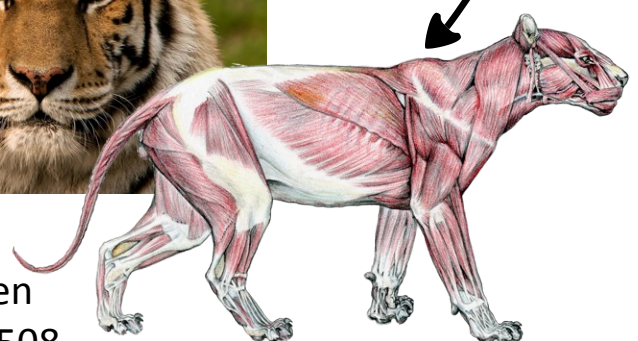
If you are creating a three dimensional piece then one image is not enough. You'll need multiple angles so you can get a better idea of how different parts of the body interact. It also helps you to capture the flow, character and movement in your piece. Doing sketches beforehand can also help the mind process what it is seeing too. Anatomical sketches can be brilliant too!



you can also get close ups of more detailed features like heads and feet.



Anatomical diagrams showing muscle groups are also great!



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If you have any questions about the above then please do ask. james@orts.co.uk / 07765980508