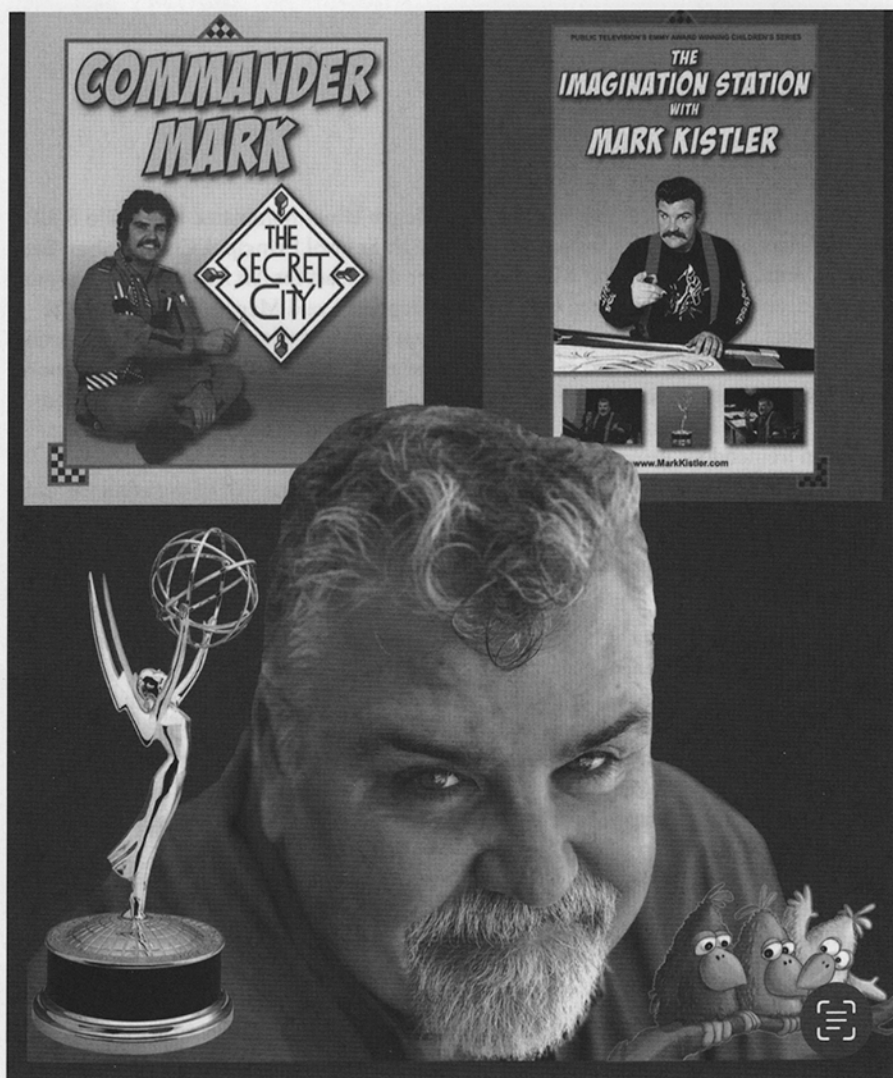




Missouri Art Education Association

"The Case for Directed Drawing in Missouri's Art Classrooms"

**An essay written by Mark Kistler
previewing his presentation as keynote
speaker at MAEA state conference
March 24/25, 2023.**



The Case For Directed Drawing In Missouri's Art Classrooms

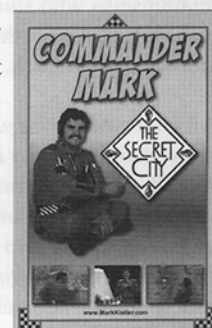
“Directed drawing with the fundamental elements will inspire imagination, build skill, and ignite confidence. It not only works, but it opens up the joy of drawing to millions who might not have experienced the life-inspiring power of the visual arts.”

BY MARK KISTLER

IN THE 1980'S I WAS INVITED to be a featured panel speaker at the National Art Education Conference. I was to be on this panel discussing the importance of a strong drawing component in America's art classrooms. Fellow panelists were best-selling authors and visual art educators Betty Edwards (*Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*) and Mona Brooks (*Drawing With Children*). I was and still am a HUGE fan of these books and was thrilled and honored to be included on a discussion panel with these two giants of visual art education.



Before the conference began, I was informed that I had been removed from the panel due to Betty Edwards feeling uncomfortable with my participation and promoting my belief in the value of directed drawing. At the time I was starring as “Commander Mark” on the hit PBS children's television series *The Secret City*, a show that featured me as a futuristic space artist teaching directed drawing to millions of children across America. Even my bright red space suit costume was accessorized with drawing pens and pencils.



Betty Edwards' thinking at the time was not unusual: that directed drawing was somehow detrimental to a student's ability to draw from life and nature. This was an early indication of the decades of push-

back I was to experience against my teaching techniques. Now, 40 years later, after publishing 20 directed drawing books, presenting thousands of directed drawing school assemblies, and teaching directed drawing lessons on 300 PBS television episodes and most recently over 1,000 livestreams, I'm more convinced than ever that directed drawing works. Directed drawing with the fundamental elements will inspire imagination, build skill, and ignite confidence. It not only works, but it opens up the joy of drawing to millions who might not have experienced the life-inspiring power of the visual arts.

My earliest exposure to how drawing instruction had been conducted for generations was with Kimon Nicolaides' book *The Natural Way To Draw*, first published posthumously by his ardent and devoted students in 1941.

His phenomenal book (I'm looking at my copy as I write this) emphasizes the importance of repetitive practice. Look at an object and draw it over and over again, thousands of times.



Five thousand times, actually, if you're a follower of this groundbreaking book. The ideas in his book are still as applicable today as they were nearly 80 years ago. However, for most people who have a desire to learn how to draw, the idea of having to make thousands of mistakes over and over again as a prerequisite is just too overwhelming.

Over the last 40 years of my career I have recognized and promoted the value of directed drawing as a bridge to learn how to draw without having to repeatedly make those first 5,000 mistakes. I teach what I term, "The 12 Renaissance Words Of Drawing," a collection of basic fundamental principles to create a three dimensional drawing. The terms are based on my

elementary art teacher's "7 Magic Words Of Drawing" of Bruce McIntyre.

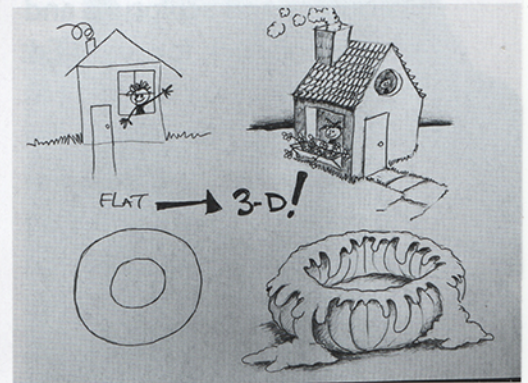


"I hope to convince you of the value of directed drawing in your art classroom with lessons rooted in 'The 12 Renaissance Words Of Drawing.'"

Bruce McIntyre inspired my love of drawing by teaching me skills rooted in these seven concepts first developed by the Renaissance greats Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, and others. Over my years of teaching I've built on these Renaissance artists' concepts and Bruce's lessons to eventually expand the list to "The 12 Renaissance Words Of Drawing." I feature these words and lessons teaching the concepts in many of my books.

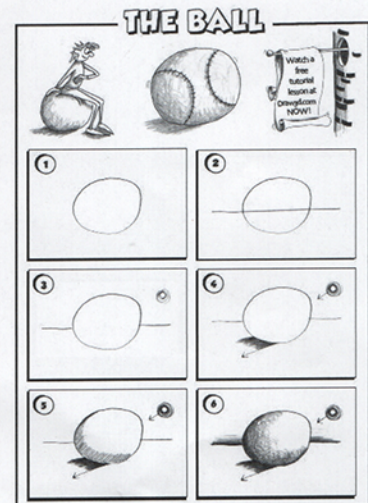


Circling back to the title of this essay and to the theme of my featured guest artist Zoom presentation at your Missouri Art Education Association Conference, "The Case For Directed Drawing," I hope to convince you of the value of directed drawing in your art classroom with lessons rooted in "The 12 Renaissance Words Of Drawing." I'll have the opportunity to actually teach you livestreaming a few lessons that you will be encouraged to teach your students. For now, allow me to simply give you an overview. My goal is to empower students with the



drawing skill to sketch what they see in the world around them and what they see in their imagination in three dimensions. Using their sketchbooks as a window, they will be able to share with the world what they are thinking, feeling, and experiencing.

From the first simple sphere lesson...



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The Case for Directed Drawing in Missouri's Art Classrooms continued...

I always emphasize the importance of adding "extra" ideas. Only by redrawing lessons while adding billions of bonus extra ideas will students truly master these "12 Renaissance Words."

From the very first lesson, continuing each and every lesson forward, I relentlessly emphasize the importance of allowing yourself to make mistakes as you learn. I issue all students a "Drawing License To Flop!"...

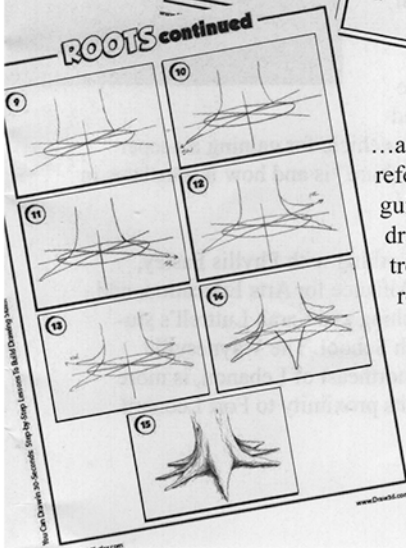
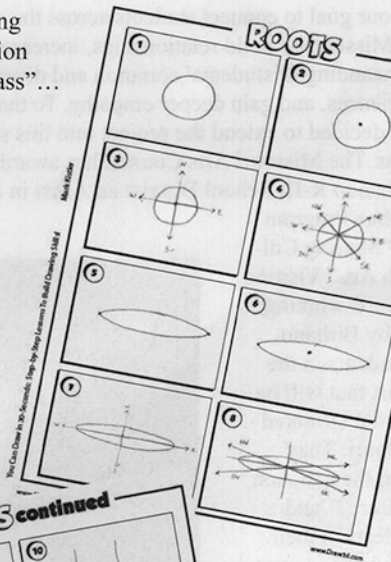
Directed drawing lessons based on the "12 Renaissance Words" quickly and efficiently teach students the skills necessary to draw from life, nature, and their imagination in three dimensions.

Thank you to your Missouri Art Education Association for inviting me to submit this essay and to speak at your upcoming MAEA Conference.

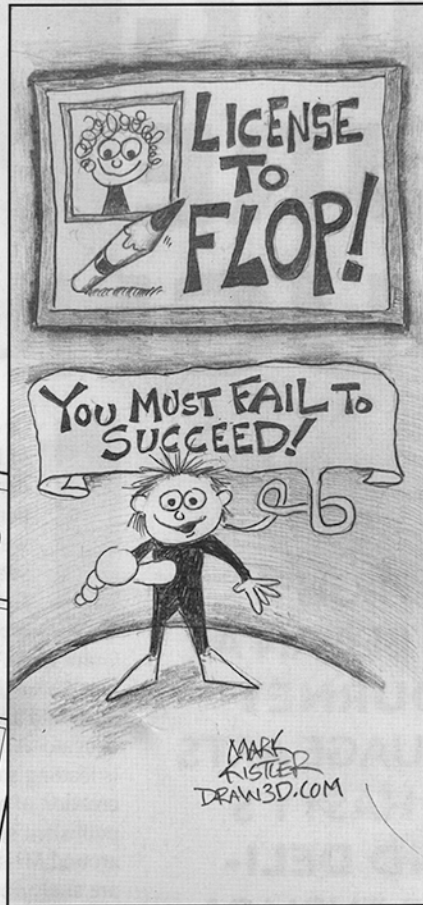
Please take a moment (11 minutes actually) to watch the informational video about my world touring visual arts school assembly. It's at the top of my web page, www.markkistler.com.



From using "The Drawing Direction Compass"...



...as a reference guide to drawing tree roots...



...while encouraging students to put all their anxiety and stress about drawing mistakes on the bus!

Wave goodbye to the stress bus! Beep! Beep!



Take a peek at our fun school assembly information video, yippee!



I look forward to meeting you virtually at MAEA 2023!