

Copy a Master

One of the oldest and best proven ways to learn to draw is to copy a master. The masters themselves, Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo copied the Greeks and others.

We learn by example. You are not just imitating but building up a skill set that you can then to apply to your own drawings. Copying forces one to slow down and really see what the artist saw.



Vincent Van Gogh in a letter to his brother about Charles Bague's Drawing Course, said, "*Careful study and the constant and repeated copying of Bague's exercises have given me an insight into figure drawing. I have learned to measure and to see and look for the broad outlines, so that, thank God, what seemed utterly impossible to me before is gradually becoming possible now. I no longer stand as helpless before nature as I used to do.*"

- ❖ Leonardo (flowers above) did many botanical studies. His blackberries are in Sarah Simblet's Botany for the artist. You can find more online if you Google Leonardo da Vinci botanicals.
- ❖ Look in your books or online for artists you really admire. I have a few children's book illustrators that I love. I used to copy Marguerite de Angeli's drawings when I was young.
- ❖ You do not have to stick to botanicals Think about subject matter you are interested in.



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I like to draw trees, so I am looking at Ruskin's trees and Vincent's trees.

❖ If you want to practice color, there are so many great colorists. I love this leaf by Jean Emmons, a botanical artist from Washington state. Jean is famous for using a multitude of different colors in her work. Simply working on a portion of this leaf could be so informative and fun! (See page 92 in Wendy Hollender's Botanical Drawing in Color for a better color rendering)

"Start copying what you love. Copy, copy, copy. At the end of the copy, you will find yourself." ...Yohji Yamamoto