



Creative by Nature Art

An Eight Day Introduction to Drawing & Painting

# Naturally



# CREATIVE BY NATURE ART

## AN EIGHT-DAY INTRODUCTION TO DRAWING AND PAINTING NATURALLY

**Lisa Lipsett, Ed.D.**



**This eight-day creative practice is designed to give you a simple, powerful and quick introduction to drawing and painting naturally.**

Some say the creative life is in ideas, some say it is in doing... It is the love of something, having so much love for something - whether a person, a word, an image, an idea, the land, or humanity - that all that can be done with the overflow is to create. It is not a matter of wanting to, not a singular act of will; one solely must.

– Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *Women Who Run With Wolves*

This eight-day creative practice is designed to give you a simple, powerful and quick introduction to drawing and painting naturally. From almost 20 years of teaching and personal creative exploration, I've learned that everyone is naturally creative and can experience the emotional, physical and spiritual benefits that accrue from strengthening their creative muscles through regular practice. Let's get started!

During this eight-day practice, you will learn fresh drawing and painting skills while communing with nature. You will animate your natural ability to create as you open to a plant or animal you love and work holistically using your senses and both hands to create. You'll experience the joy of making art with nature. Once you master the drawing and painting in nature connection, you will be well-equipped to explore your inner landscape. Soon, you'll fully appreciate art-making as a powerful and transformative way to better know both self and the world.

Before you begin Day One, wander a bit in your immediate surroundings and open to something you love. What draws you in? Write down a few words about what you will be working with and what you love about it. Then each session, return to this object or being for further exploration. If the spark is still there, continue with it. If something else draws you in, then create with that.

### MY LOVE

As a child, I held a strong fascination with Cecropia silk moths and their stages of metamorphosis. I'd forgotten this until I began to paint. Like beings peeking out from the darkness, these same creatures spontaneously ap-



peared in my paintings, spurring me to remember a pivotal childhood memory of my first encounter (Lipsett 2009). Now these gorgeous creatures are both a creative inspiration and a personal touchstone. Every spring, I hatch cocoons and this year two pairs of moths mated producing eggs and soon after, caterpillars. Right now, there are five caterpillars chomping on my apple tree. I haven't seen a Cecropia caterpillar since I was eight years old, so this is very exciting. Last week I was able to draw and paint with the biggest one, enjoying its gorgeous vibrant colours, amazing sticky feet and incredible knobby body. This is what I worked with for my own mini boost.

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Like a calming meditation or a series of yoga poses that ease your body back into alignment, these eight activities are meant to be repeated over and over again. Do one session at least weekly. Allow yourself at least 30 minutes to dive into each session to get full benefit. Also, be sure to follow the steps of the 'Create Cycle' as you draw and paint. There is power in a repeatable ritual that eventually deepens into an ingrained habit of working.

### THE STEPS OF THE 'CREATE CYCLE' (See Creative by Nature Art Introduction) are:

1. *Get quiet* - Take time to get grounded through breath as you feel your body on the earth.
2. *Explore and open to attraction* - Write down a few words about what draws you in. What will you commune with today?



Top: Cecropia Caterpillar

Above: Materials

3. *Go slow and create* - Slowly track a plant or animal with your senses as you draw and paint.

4. *Reflect and finish these sentences:*

I noticed...

I wonder...

Ask the plant, animal or image if it has anything to share.

Next session I will follow up on...

5. *Express gratitude* - Make an offering to express your appreciation

### MATERIALS NEEDED

A paint kit, two permanent fine tip pens, watercolour paper, and a water container. Visit [www.creativebynature.org](http://www.creativebynature.org) and watch the video to learn how to fold a creative nature book.



Contour Drawing

## DAY ONE - DRAW TEXTURE

With your eyes closed, explore the surfaces and contours of your chosen plant or animal with one hand while you track the experience by drawing with your other hand. Keep both hands moving in synchrony like a seismograph tracks an earthquake - one hand tracks texture while the other records on the page. Now switch hands. Track texture with the other hand as you draw.

## DAY TWO - PAINT TEXTURE

Move your paint kit and water close to your left hand. Move your right hand fingertips very slowly as you once again explore the textures of this being. Keeping your eyes closed, dip your left hand fingers in the water then run them across the paint kit. Keep your hands in synchrony: your right hand exploring texture, your left hand blindly choosing colours and expressing sensation on the page. Switch hands and carry on with a second painting following the same process.

## DAY THREE - DRAW SOUND

With your eyes closed, listen carefully to the sounds in the vicinity of the texture you worked with previously. Give each hand a turn tracking one sound. Take your time. Draw the rhythm, tones and nuances of what you hear. Now draw the same sound using both hands together by using two pens simultaneously.

## DAY FOUR - PAINT SOUND

Adjust your paint kit so it is close to your hands. With your eyes closed, listen carefully to the surrounding sounds. While putting your full attention to one attractive sound, give each hand a turn tracking the sound by painting the rhythm, tones and nuances of what you hear. Simply set the intention to stay in tune with the sound and trust your hands. Now paint the same sound using both hands together. Choose the paint colors with both hands and apply them simultaneously.

## DAY FIVE - DRAW A SMALL PATTERN

Open to a small pattern on the ground, on a plant, an animal or a tree. Limit your field of view to two inches or so. Slowly track the intricacy of the pattern with your eyes while one hand traces what you see in pen. You don't need to manage, boss or even look at your drawing hand. It is part of you, part of the same body, and a direct extension of your eyes. Go slowly allowing this hand to move in synchrony with your eyes. Switch hands to draw with your other hand. For your last image, continue to track the pattern with your eyes while you draw with both hands simultaneously.



Hand Painting

## DAY SIX - PAINT A SECOND SMALL PATTERN

Open to another small pattern. Limit your field of view to two inches or so. Slowly track the intricacy of this pattern with your eyes while one hand paints what you see. Again, you don't need to manage, boss or even look at your painting hand. Go slowly allowing this hand to move in synchrony with your eyes. Switch hands to paint with your other hand. For your last image, continue to track the pattern with your eyes while you paint with both hands simultaneously.

## DAY SEVEN - DRAW AND PAINT A SMELL, TASTE, OR USE YOUR 6th SENSE

Today, work with a new sense. Maybe a smell draws you in; maybe you are attracted to working with your 6th sense, an intuitive connection. Give both hands a chance to create in equal measure. Also, keep your eyes closed at least some of the time. Be an archaeologist of your own experience as you note what helps you stay in the flow and what jars you back out again. Take time to reflect on not only this session but your experience thus far. Is there a repeatable *recipe* that helps you stay connected while you draw and paint?

## DAY EIGHT - FREEPLAY: STEP INTO YOUR OWN PRACTICE

Today you have free rein to draw and paint whatever attracts you. Maybe the undulating motion of an ant, a new texture, the shadow play of a leaf on the ground, the sound or swirl of water going down the drain draws you in. Open to one exciting focus for this session, then draw and paint while you move between open and closed eyes, using left, right and both hands. Reflect on your experience.

Learn more about Lisa Lipsett's work at [www.LisaLipsett.com](http://www.LisaLipsett.com)

Creative by Nature Art – classes and event information: [www.creativebynature.org](http://www.creativebynature.org)

This article first appeared in Sage-ing Journal, Fall 2013 issue [www.sage-ing.com](http://www.sage-ing.com)