

Dogs and Cats in Art

By Sharon Jeffus

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Our pets that are dogs and cats are very special to us. We are going to look at master works of art that are first of all realistic before the development of the camera, and then Impressionistic and Expressionist interpretations of these special pets. Before we begin to do a picture together, let's look at the following master works of art so we can learn some of the elements and principles of art and learn how to SEE like an artist sees. The third element of art is texture and we will learn how to create texture in the fur of the animals. Adam Benno did the picture of the Tri Colored Spaniel below.



When you do your picture, you can notice which direction light is coming from and create dark and light values according to the direction of the light. Notice the background in the picture above. It is not the same color, but is lighter and darker values of yellow green. A soft blurred background (as seen in the Mona Lisa and other work in the Renaissance is called sfumato).

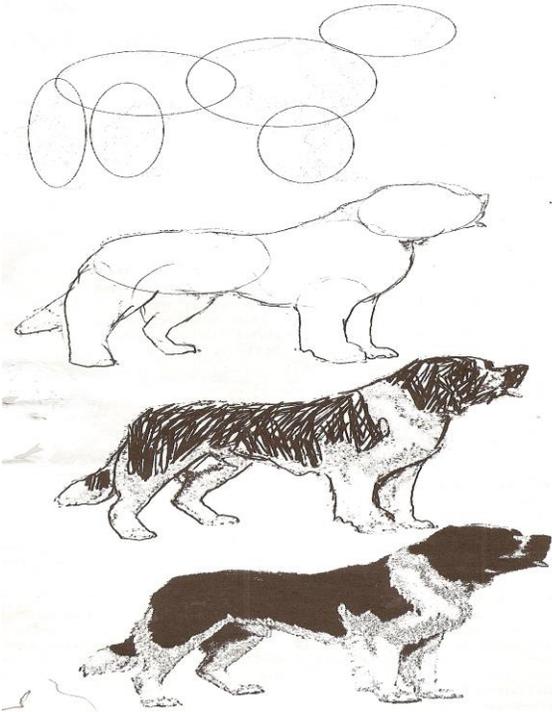
Background is always important in art in the portrait of your animal. .

In the next picture, we also see a realistic picture of dogs.

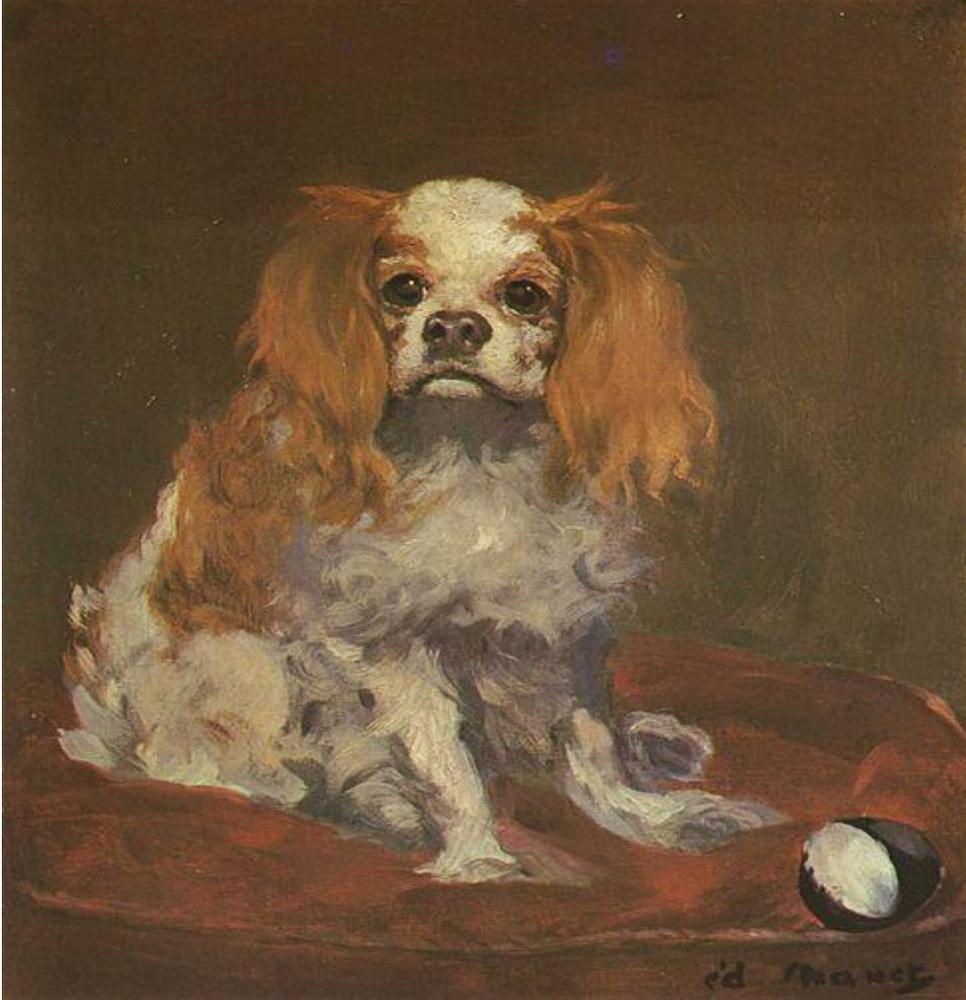
Remember that in art, line defines shape, and then you add shading, shadow, and texture to make things look more real. These greyhounds are getting ready to race. Do you think the artist depicted them looking as though they were ready to run? Lilian Cheviot – “In the slips for the Waterloo Cup” (1914) is the artist who created the picture. Do you notice the different values in the background? I believe these dogs look very noble. What one word would you use to describe these dogs?



When you draw a dog, mark your paper with basic shapes first. Add shading, shadow and texture to make the dog look real. You can show the size of the dog by putting something in the picture that you know the size of. Start with the basic shapes as seen below, before you begin to detail the work. Line defines shape and then you add texture.



The next picture we will look at is Manet's "A King Charles Spaniel" done in 1886.



Manet was a leader in the Impressionist movement in art. The colors are real, but there is a lack of detail. The further you go back from the picture, the more realistic the dog looks, but if you go very close to the picture, it just looks like an abstract painting....you could do an Impressionist picture with just a sponge.

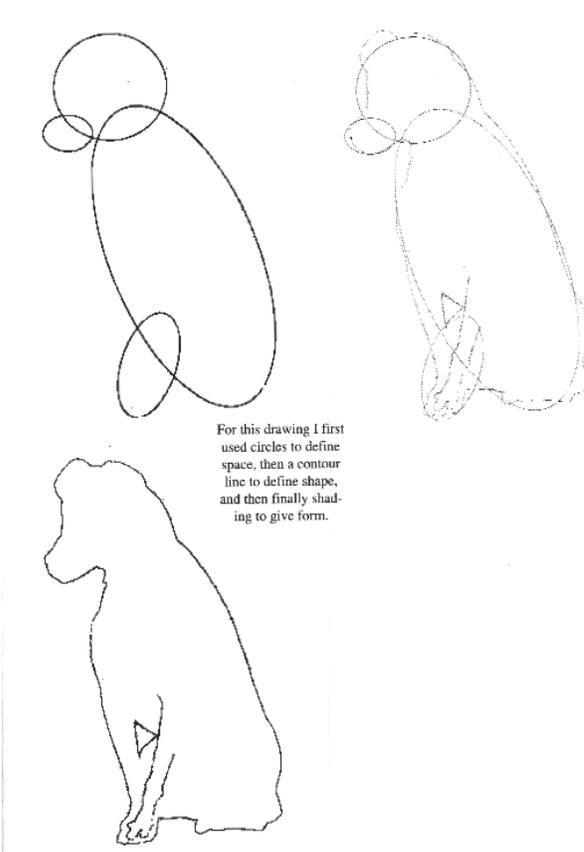
Do you think Manet captured the personality of the dog in this picture? He put a ball in the picture. Perhaps that was the dog's favorite toy. Notice the texture he created on the rug the dog is sitting on. You can create texture in many different ways.

Do you see the light reflected in the dog's eye?

Franz Marc did this picture “Dog Lying in the Snow,” sometime in 1910-1911. He was an Expressionist.



In Expressionism, colors can be unrealistic and you can capture feelings in color. Why do you think he colored the dog yellow? Draw the outline of a dog below and then color it in with a color that expresses feeling about the dog. You could even make it pink!



For this drawing I first used circles to define space, then a contour line to define shape, and then finally shading to give form.

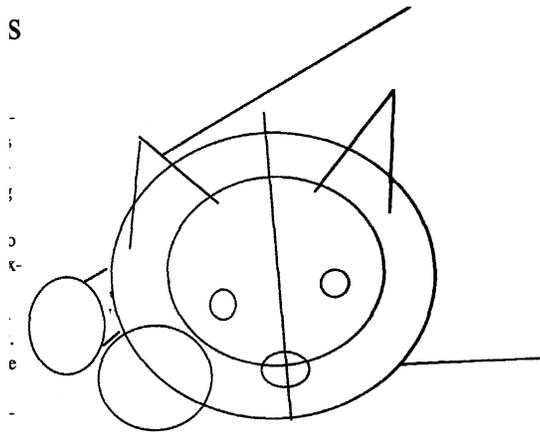
We will also look at the same types of art with the subject of cats. First we will look at a realistic picture of a cat by Carracci. Do you see where the light is coming from? The background is not the same color. Look at the room you are in right now. Where is the window? Do the walls all look exactly the same color, or are some areas darker and some lighter? In the 1700's children in European countries wore much different clothing than we wear today, but cats were the same. Do you tease your cat in a similar way today?



Sometime in the late 1700's, we have the picture of the beautiful long haired white cat that you see by Bachelier. What is the cat looking at? Do you see the horizon line? When you draw your animal, make sure you think about the background. Putting a prop in the picture will help you tell a story. Here we have the bird.



We are going to learn how to do an implied fur texture on the cat we will



create.

Remember to draw basic shapes first before you begin.

Mary Cassatt did the picture below of “Sara Holding a Cat” in 1908. Again, we see the style of Impressionism. Mary Cassatt was really the first famous female American artist important in her own right. She was mentored by the Impressionist Degas. Her subject matter was usually gentle lovely pictures of mothers and children filled with lots of light.



Finally, we have an Expressionistic picture of three cats by Franz Marc created in 1913. It is not realistic and defined by many shapes. Do you think Marc created a mood in the picture? How do you feel when you look at it? Diagonal lines show movement in art. Do you see movement in the picture? Do think the artist captured the feeling of three cats?



Sometimes comic strip artists use exaggeration and stereotyping to create an animal like a cartoon dog or cat. Snoopy was a very famous comic dog created by Charles Schultz. To see pictures of Snoopy dancing go to: <http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Animated+Snoopy+Dance&Form=VQFRVP#view=detail&mid=B620DE17B7EB436EAB9BB620DE17B7EB436EAB9B>

You can make a character look like they are moving by making a flip book. Each picture needs to be a little different. Go to <http://scratch.mit.edu/> to get a wonderful free animation program for kids called SCRATCH designed by MIT. Let them animate their own drawing of a comic dog.

Did you ever see the movie “Puss in Boots”? Below are two pictures of how an artist sees this delightful character. Which do you prefer?



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