

1 Week Challenge

Pixel Art Academy study

This study will simulate use of Pixel Art Academy's upcoming alpha version practice tracking tools.

Your goal is to draw every day for 7 days in a row. You are only receiving instruction at the start (what you're reading right now) and then you are free to choose your own adventure for the week!

Every day that you've done something to improve your pixel art skills, you will check-in through a google form, submitting a short description and an image of what you've done.

> CLICK PRESENT IN THE TOP RIGHT CORNER

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

About practice

I divide most activities of artists into 4 categories:

	EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES	PURPOSE	PROPERTIES
OBSERVING	Looking at art, following other artists, hanging out on social networks, playing video games, watching movies	Raise motivation, recuperate from other activities	Easy to do. Raises your energy, develops interests, visual library, taste, goals. Has no effect on your skills.
LEARNING	Reading art theory books and tutorials, watching video lessons, receiving feedback, researching, getting references	Gather new knowledge	Opens up new skills (or skill levels) for practice. Doesn't actually improve those skills. Requires purpose/goals.
PRACTICE	Study-based drawing	Becoming a better artist	Improves skills being practiced (raises ability and efficiency). Requires brainpower.
PRODUCTION	Project-based drawing	Creating artworks	Uses existing skills to create artworks on the level of those skills. Can be pretty relaxing / cruise-mode.

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

Wannabe artists

This is a very common way to fail at being an artist.



These are people who enjoy looking at artworks on the internet, have bought dozens of art books, have folders of saved references and meticulously bookmark tutorials.

The problem is they never take the time to actually draw and study from the books that they bought.

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

Mindless practice

Practice in itself can also not lead to useful (or at least optimal) results.



If you practice the same things over and over again, you are becoming more efficient at it, but haven't learned much new.

It's also worth mentioning that too much practice has diminishing effects. 90 minutes is usually the upper limit with small breaks in between.

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

Plateauing

Another thing that often happens is that people get stuck at a certain level.



You can have 10 years of drawing behind you, but be at a significantly lower skill level than expected. Simply creating artworks in the same style, with the same knowledge and approach, doesn't improve you significantly.

This is completely OK if you are happy with where you are, but if you feel stuck at a plateau, the answer is going back to studying.

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

Deliberate practice

The most efficient way to mastery is through deliberate practice.



This is focused practice where you study a certain area of art, but also transform knowledge into practice. This is the fastest path to improvement. It consists of analyzing and evaluating your work, identifying areas for improvement.

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

Balanced artist diet

If you're after optimal improvement, what you should be striving for is hitting all 4 activities every day.



If life happens and you get pressed for time, you can split production and deliberate practice into two days.

If it's 3am and you really need to go to sleep, at least spend 5-15 minutes reading an article or looking at other people's art (so you feel guilty about not drawing and will not repeat the same mistake next day). It's good that you don't break your streak and fall out of your habit, but it's a cheat.

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

Examples of 1 hour daily routines

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
OBSERVING (10 min)	Go to DeviantArt and look at new artworks from people you follow.	Go to Twitter and look at Pixel Dailies for previous days. See what's today's theme.	Read a Retronator Magazine article.
LEARNING (10 min)	Grab that art book off the shelf and read one topic from it.	Do research on the theme and gather references.	Watch a video tutorial on YouTube.
PRACTICE (10 min)	Redraw the examples from the book and add a couple of your own.	Sketch out thumbnails for different compositions, applying art theory and anatomy knowledge from previous days.	Create a study sketch that demonstrates the principle talked about in the tutorial.
PRODUCTION (30 min)	Work on a tile set or a sprite for your game.	Pick a thumbnail and flesh it out into a final sprite. Post it on Twitter.	Work on a part of a bigger isometric scene.

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

What to study

There are 4 core art fundamentals:

- Perspective and depth
- Color and light
- Composition
- Anatomy

You can explore them relatively independently, so pick what interests and benefits you most.

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

Perspective and depth



Stas Gailunas

Color and light

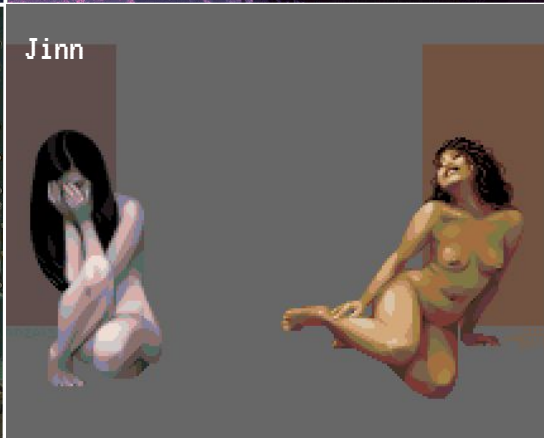


Mark Ferrari



Fool

Composition



Jinn

Anatomy

Secondary areas

Notice that none of the fundamentals have anything to do with dithering, anti-aliasing, selective outlining, banding, jaggies and whatnot of pixel-art specific areas.

Fundamentals will make you a better artist. Secondary areas are upgrades that you apply in addition to them.

Isometric projection



Pixel art technique



> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

Game assets

Animation

To get you started

Perspective and depth:

[Perspective + Composition Pt.1](#)

Color and light:

[Pixel Tutorials](#)

[Outline/Shading](#)

[Lighting theory](#)

[PSG Art Tutorial](#)

Composition:

[Quest: Environment Concept Art](#)

Anatomy:

[UNDERSTANDING ANATOMY: parts I-VII](#)

[Guide to Drawing the Body](#)

Isometric projection:

[Isometric Pixel Art](#)

[The Complete Guide to Isometric Pixel Art](#)

Pixel art technique:

[The Pixel Art Tutorial](#)

[Pixel Art Tutorial](#)

[Good Reads Archive](#)

Game assets:

[So you want to be a pixel artist?](#)

[Pixel Art Tutorial](#)

[Perfect Pixel Art](#)

Animation:

[Run Cycle Tutorial](#)

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

Optional: what learning fundamentals will do for you

My favorite series of video tutorials on digital painting is Feng Zhu's Design Cinema.

Here's a bit different episode where he showcases artists before and after going to his school to learn fundamentals.

This is why bare copying works to start things out but sooner rather than later you should combine it with learning fundamentals. That will enable you to draw anything you want.

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE



1 Week Challenge checklist

Try and plan ahead as to when you'll be able to spend 15 min-1 hour of uninterrupted time to draw.

Every day (ideally)

1. Observing: get pumped up - you get to do pixel art for an hour!
2. Learning: pick something from the list of tutorials, study one page
3. Practice: try it out and sketch what you've learned
4. Production: work on a personal project
5. Check-in: upload your daily result, submit it here:

PIXEL ART ACADEMY
DAILY CHECK-IN

Note that you are submitting the same form every day. These entries will be inserted into the Pixel Art Academy database, so you're getting a head start with your daily practice for the alpha version!

> PRESS RIGHT ARROW TO CONTINUE

Ready, Set, Go!

One week of drawing, especially if you're a beginner, will kickstart your path to become an artist. It's your way to leveling up in this RPG that is life. Get a bunch of XP in a short time and you'll have new skills to use.

And with that said, godspeed!

> PRESS ESCAPE TO START THE 1 WEEK CHALLENGE



DELIBERATE PRACTICE?

LIKE A BOSS!