

## Basic 101: Class 30

### When BEES Attack???

Nah, let's just stick with ink for now. We will return to landscaping and the creatures that you may encounter while playing in the bushes and trees around your home, but the focus of this particular class will be at once broad and specific.

"How?" you ask? Well, it will be broad in the sense that I want you guys to have fun and have complete control over your subject matter when it comes time to put pen to paper. It will be specific in the sense that ONLY one technique is to be used for your entire drawing. And that one technique will be....

😱😱 THE DREADED STIPPLE TECHNIQUE!!! 😱😱

Now, most of you are familiar with stippling, or pointillism, as it were, so it requires no big explanation. The bottom line is that with this technique there is no linework whatsoever. Everything is comprised of dots. Now, that's not to say that this technique cannot be combined with others, but for the purpose of this lesson, consider such a combination absolute taboo.

Stippling can be used to produce both loose, rather heavily textured works, and extremely fine, high-detail pieces of near photographic quality. The means by which the artist controls the outcome are generally limited to two: nib size and pacing. It is important to understand that, whatever the desired outcome in terms of how loose and sketchy or highly realistic the work may be stylistically, the key to value transitions with this technique is the placement of dots in proximity to other dots. Simply put, if you draw a one inch square and place fifty dots inside of it, you will have a light value. Add fifty more dots to that, and you will have a noticeably darker value. As you add more dots, thus leaving less and less space between dots, your value becomes darker. Thus, the smaller the nib used in a stippling work, the more subtle the value transitions that can be achieved. If done in a sensible manner, a fine nib can also be used adjacent to a large nib to effectively create bold tonal and/or textural contrasts within a composition. As most of you do not have complete sets of technical pens at this point, I won't dwell on that point any further.

Working at the appropriate pace for your desired result is also important. Common sense applies in this area. The faster you work, the more likely you are to produce "dots" that are more like "dashes." This is often an effective means of establishing textural contrast between subjects, and in some cases would even be encouraged in order to more closely mimic the texture of the subject being rendered.

However, producing dots that are more like dashes is also a quick way to completely ruin a stippling piece. You must pay attention to your subject and make logical choices as to how each area should be rendered.

Leading up to our foray into pen and ink in this program, I asked that you each make an effort to acquire at least one technical pen, preferably a rapidograph, with a nib size of .30. This is where it really becomes necessary that you have this in order to get the desired result. A felt tip, ball point, or some other kind of pen simply is not going to produce the consistency of marks that you want in order to produce an effective stippling work. So...if you have not picked up a pen of this type, please do yourself a favor and GET one!!! It does not necessarily have to be an expensive rapidograph, but at least get one of those micron pens for a couple of dollars.

Considering the tedious nature of this technique, I was unable to prepare a demo for this class, but I will include scans here of a portrait that I did two years ago. I think this is actually a great example for the class, because it so happens that the entire thing was done with a .30 nib, and it was very hastily done. I could have used much smaller pens and spent twice as much time on this, but I got the point across effectively with a larger nib in much less time. In other words, this illustrates my point that you do not necessarily have to make every single dot perfect on the page in order to produce an effective portrait. Up close this looks sloppy as hell, but hanging on the wall it looks just fine.

Full view:



Close:



Now, in order to see an example of a much more precise, methodical stippling work, check out the following piece recently completed by our very own Ron Guthrie. For those who do not know, Ron is a very well known, accomplished pen and ink artist who specializes in stippling work. I would encourage you to visit his website as well, as there is some amazing work to be seen.

[Ron's Ice Skating and Stippling Extravaganza!!!](#)

### **Assignment**

Draw a picture, whatever you like, but use nothing but dots to comprise the entire picture. As always, I want you to post your reference to help me, you, and your peers better judge your progress. Like class 29, this will be a three week class, so you have plenty of time. Happy inking!



**Re: Basic 101: Class 30**

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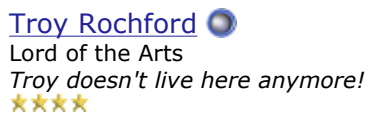
Stippling!....my favorite ink technique!! Good choice Troy! 🙌

Since this is a 3 week class I would start with 1 or 2 smaller pieces (nothing more than 4 or 5 inches) just so you can get used to this technique and keep the subject matter SIMPLE!

I would also recommend using the smallest tip possible....the smaller the tip the more realistic detail you can accomplish. Because this is a time consuming technique, you should also take a break about every 30 minutes just to step back and see what you've done and to give your hand and eyes a rest. If you go too long all the dots seem to blend together and you can lose the perspective of the drawing.

PS: here's a **TIP...try NOT to dot in straight lines!**it will show up in your work....use **random diamond or circle type patterns**

Murray 🤓



**Re: Basic 101: Class 30**

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Jeanette I dont think there is anything too ambitious about your reference. Murray's suggestion of starting small is of course valid, but he is making the suggestion as a practical matter - starting small until you get used to the technique. If you feel that you have a sufficient grasp on the technique conceptually, then go ahead and do this one.

Also - as I mentioned in the class intro, and Murray reiterated, the smaller the nib size used, the more subtle your value transitions, and thus the higher the level of realism. If you happen to have the smaller nibs, you are certainly free to use them. I wrote the class with the idea in mind that some of you don't have anything smaller than a .30 though. If that is all you have, then hopefully my Christ portrait above illustrates the fact that you can still accomplish quite a bit with this size.

OH - Murray raised two very important points - when you're filling in areas of tone, do place your dots randomly instead of in rows because it will look computer generated and strange if you go in rows. You should be used to that principle, because the same thing applies when scribbling trees and whatnot.

The other point is to take a break every once in a while. This technique is murder on your hands and eyes, as you will soon see! It gets easier as you get used to it, but particularly if you are new to the technique, take breaks often or you can get lost in your drawing.

[viking57](#) 

A WetCanvas! Minion!  
Solvang, California USA  
★★★★★

**Re: Basic 101: Class 30**

Hi Everyone,

Just peeking in here to see the new lesson. Troy and Murray are right in suggesting doing a small drawing. This will cut your time down by WEEKS!.

Also, another good point of working with the smallest nib size you have...a 6X0 Rapidograph is perfect or Hunt Crowquill for dip fans will do or try a Micron 01...but if 3x0 is what you have then that's doable too as you can see in Troy's Jesus drawing ( very nice work Troy!).

Keeping the subject simple but still challenging is good because this lesson is to familiarize yourself with Stippling. If you enjoy it then do a nice larger more complex subject.


A Simple subject suggestion.....how about crumpling up a piece of paper and placing an object on it. If you can, snap a photo of it and print it out on your computer....then you can work from that photo anywhere you go. By crumpling the paper you give yourself some nice textures and shadows to work with. This also keeps your main subject from getting boring. A sort of mini still life. The object could be anything also, a cell phone, interesting sharpener, calculator, pinecone, walnuts...maybe make it Holiday related!, an ornament....whatever. Just a suggestion because it is familiarization with stippling, not creating The Last Supper.



Very best wishes on your projects. I'll be looking forward to seeing your results!

Ron

[artdude](#) 

Moderator  
Alberta Canada  
★★★★★

 **Re: Basic 101: Class 30**

 GREAT start everyone! 

When stippling, try to hold the pen as upright as you can. Holding it at a slant will tend to give you small stroke marks instead of dots. This will also happen if you don't take those breaks. Tired hands and eyes are not your stippling friend...LOL

I also think if you all practice doing a "value scale" (or something that has a variety of values in it) in stippling, it will get you used to how to graduate the values in your work. Getting something REALLY dark with stippling takes time!

PS: Remember to be patient! Stippling is VERY time consuming!

CatEyes 

Veteran Member

*Somewhere between here and there.*

★★★

