

FORT WORTH COUNTRY DAY

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TAFA Artist Shares His Expertise with Students

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Ron Cheek, founder, director and main instructor at the **Texas Academy of Figurative Art (TAFA)**, was on campus last week teaching a workshop on drawing the human body to Upper School Painting and Drawing students. "First, Mr. Cheek explained his process and showed examples of drawings done by himself and his students at TAFA," said **Lauren Cunningham**, Upper School art teacher. "Then, the students spent the remaining time drawing a clothed model."

Cunningham polled her Painting/Drawing students at the beginning of the semester about what techniques they wanted to learn and/or hone. A majority of them expressed interest in being able to depict the human body more realistically. "The human body is one of the oldest subjects and one of the most challenging," Cunningham said. "Ron brings a high level of expertise and passion for this particular subject matter."

Cheek has been painting and drawing figurative artworks for years. Not only is he a talented artist, but he is also a phenomenal teacher, as Cunningham discovered when she took a TAFA workshop with Cheek last spring.

For senior **Ava Shen**, the workshop was invaluable. "My favorite part was that Mr. Cheek was circulating among us to give advice and suggestions," she said. "I learned the importance of having a clear contour line before blocking in all the details when drawing human figures. I also learned to divide the dark areas from the light areas. A realistic and accurate drawing of the human body can take up to days and requires a lot of effort and observation."

"This workshop showed that Ms. Cunningham's constantly looking for opportunities to allow her students to explore different things in painting and drawing," Shen continued. "For me, as an AP art student, I received some useful tips for my future artworks of human figures."

Cunningham was able to bring Cheek to campus thanks to a grant from Supporting CAST (Creative Arts Students and Teachers). CAST was formed to support requests from fine arts faculty at Fort Worth Country Day by providing funding support of activities that will benefit FWCD Lower, Middle and Upper School fine arts students and enhance their overall educational experience.

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