**Drawing - an abridged version**

Drawing is a *delineation* of form upon a *surface*, usually a *plane*, by means of *lines and tones* or *shading*. The forms delineated in a drawing may be visible objects as well as imagined forms presented as if actually seen, or abstract forms.

**Freehand Drawing**

Because drawing lies at the foundation of all the visual arts (including sculpture), it is one of the most important branches of study in schools of art and architecture, as well as in engineering schools. This article, however, is concerned with freehand drawing as opposed to technical or mechanical drawing (also known as drafting ). The drawing of *visible objects* is essentially the graphic *recording* of *impressions* received through the eye. Because it is not possible, however, to present all the visible facts and aspects of an object in black and white on a plane surface, the art of drawing lies in *suggestion, stimulating the imagination* of the viewer to provide whatever is lacking in the representation.

*A sketch* is a drawing that attempts to present in a *summary way* only *partial* and momentary *aspects* of the object represented.

We can distinguish various approaches to the art of drawing.

In *outline drawings*, and in some sketches, only the *outlines and contours of an object* or scene are shown. The power of the *pure line*, even without colour, to suggest the most *varied modelling of surfaces* and to express the smallest *detail* is beautifully shown in Chinese and Japanese art.

The Western schools, on the other hand, commonly put a great stress upon the *value* which is the *rendering of the* *varied gradations of light and dark*. European artists have always tried to achieve *the desired* *effects* by means of corresponding *gradations in the black-and-white tones* of the drawing. Even different colours can be suggested by black and white by a careful rendering of their values; a dark red, for example, *is indicated by darker shading* than a light blue or a yellow.

The great draftsmen of the Renaissance mastered their individual style of drawing - their “handwriting”- exploiting the possibilities offered by both outline and value methods. The drawings of Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo are remarkable for the purity, vigour, and delicacy of line, as well as for the *skilful modelling of the form* as expressed by *shading.*

**Drawing Technique**

The fundamental principles of the art are the same, whatever the *medium* employed. In drawing from any object or model, the first step is to observe and *sketch in the dominant* *structural lines, contours, and masses*. The composition is worked out by means of verticals and horizontals, proportions of the figures measured and indicated as well as diverse aspects of chiaroscuro and value. Eventually the more important details are added and corrected, and the minor details are left to the last.

The actual techniques of drawing, however, vary greatly depending upon the medium employed. Over the centuries, drawings have been *executed* on many kinds of surfaces—*cave walls, clay objects, plaster, papyrus, parchment, silk, wood panels, stone blocks and metal* *plates, and, most commonly, paper of various consistencies and tones*. The chief drawing *tools are pencil, pen or brush and ink, black or red crayon, and charcoal*. Of these, the pen is the most *exact*, as it makes a *definite mark*, hard to alter once the ink has dried. Tones must be expressed by *dots, closely crowded lines, and cross-hatching*. The masters of pen drawing must be masters of pure line. With charcoal, the artist usually “paints” on paper, *fine charcoal* *lines* are nearly impossible to draw; this difficulty is also true of the brush. Pencil and crayon require the use of the line but also permit *broad, soft strokes and rubbed-in shading*. Very effective drawings are made by using a *tinted paper*, often either gray or pale blue, on which the *highlights are indicated by use of chalk*; the darker *shades and masses are indicated* with the pencil, and the tone of the paper is left to represent *the intermediate values.*

**Perspective Drawing**

Perspective drawing stands midway between freehand and technical drawing. It aims to represent the *actual three-dimensional aspect of an object* from a given *point of view* and is a matter of scientific determination rather than personal and artistic interpretation. The object is shown with all *the angular distortion and foreshortening* that it presents to the eye at the given point of view. The *exact angles, dimensions, distortion, and foreshortening* of each part are determined by mathematical processes and not by mere *visual impressions*.

In Japanese drawings the *treatment* of perspective is very different; the point of view is, in almost all cases, assumed *at a high elevation*, giving an effect called *bird's-eye perspective.*