

10. Basics of Drawing

Synopsis

This module is meant as an introduction to the basic elements in drawing.

Lectures

10.1 Tools and Surfaces

10.2 Line

10.3 Tonalities

10.4 Perspective

10.5 Freehand Drawing

10.1 Tools and Surfaces

Learning to draw requires a familiarity and ease with handling different tools and surfaces used for drawing. Get yourself a set of pencils of different grades (from HB to 6B), charcoal sticks, wax crayons, watercolours, acrylic paints, an eraser, round and flat brushes of different thicknesses, a sketchbook, paper for watercolour and some small stretched canvases. A visit to a stationery shop that stocks art materials can lighten your pocket considerably. It may be a good idea to begin with some basic materials and decide on what more to acquire as you make progress.



Fig. 10.1.01

Drawing requires accurate observation and patience. A sketchbook made with cheap newsprint paper allows you to do several hours of practice. There are people who are gifted but regular practice can greatly improve your drawing. Draw from actual observation instead of copying another drawing. Try not to use the eraser even when you make a mistake. Instead, draw over and draw multiple lines to get it “correct”.



Fig.10.1.02

Pencils come in different grades. A soft pencil such as 2B or 4B or 6B is good for drawing.



Fig.10.1.03

Charcoal is an excellent material as it is very soft and allows you to vary the thickness of the line by varying the pressure. Charcoal drawings need to be fixed using a fixative. An inexpensive fixative is fevicol mixed with water and sprayed over the work using an airbrush or a blower tube.



Fig.10.1.04

After developing some command over the pencil, you may start using a brush to draw, You may use black fountain pen ink or solid ink that can be used after being mixed with water.



Fig. 10.1.05

Paper is the most commonly used drawing surface. There are different grades of paper that have different surface qualities and thicknesses. Some papers are absorbent and are good for water-colours. Textural qualities of paper allow you to build different tonalities.



Fig. 10.1.06

Canvases are available in different sizes and may be pre-stretched on a frame or mounted on a board and are typically used when working with acrylics or oils. They are also available as rools of different width. Choose a pre-stretched or mounted canvas of a small size to begin with.



Fig. 10.1.07

As you start using different surfaces and tools you will begin to understand how these surfaces respond. The image above has been created with charcoal on paper having a somewhat rough texture.



Fig. 10.1.09

Water-colours are transparent colours and a second layer can be painted over the first layer when it is dry. They have a freshness but require a certain understanding of technique. The wet-on-wet technique and the dry-brush technique are often used while working with water colours. Tempera and gouache are also water based colours but are opaque.



Fig. 10.1.10

A painting done with water-colours.



Fig. 10.1.11

Acrylic paints are bright, water-soluble when wet and dry rapidly. They can either be mixed with water or diluted using a medium and applied on paper and canvas.



Fig. 10.1.12

A painting done with acrylic colours.



Fig. 10.1.13

An oil-colour painting. Working with oils requires time as successive layers are normally applied after the paint has dried. Works in oil have a rich quality as the colour saturation possible is very good. Unlike water colours where 'corrections' are not advisable, an oil-painting can be corrected by painting over an area that needs reworking.



Fig.10.1.14

Tools and surfaces could include chisel and stone. The image above is from the rock-cut caves at Ellora.



Fig. 10.1.15

The tradition of drawing on floors of houses and outside doorways is meant to invoke auspicious spirits and is practiced mostly by women in several parts of India.



Fig. 10.1.16

Tribal communities draw on mud-baked walls with rice-paste as a ritualistic act during marriages and harvesting. Women in Kutch and Rajasthan decorate their walls with drawings.