

## Freehand Drawing / Unit 3 / Visual Communication Practices / A Folio

While there are endless ways of drawing, in Visual Communication and Design, drawing can be broadly divided into two categories.

**1. Drawings that are produced unassisted** beyond the use of your hand being used to direct delivery of the media onto a surface. These are considered **freehand drawings**. A good freehand drawing can be characteristically fluid and confident in application relative to the medium/material/method used. It can be the result of a range of media being combined; it can be purely linear in nature or be visually enhanced with a range of rendering techniques to project a particular visual quality or message.

(Would it follow that if you used your foot to hold the media, it would be that you were 'freefoot' drawing !?)

There are a number of implications to this notion, some of which are:

- Computer drawing, where, by simply and freely moving the mouse to generate imagery/text, the resultant image produced as pixels of light on a monitor, is considered 'freehand' drawn.
- Using a drawing tablet to convert freehand drawn imagery into digital data, viewable on a computer screen.
- A freehand drawn image subsequently scanned into the computer and visually enhanced using tools such as a pen tool or the airbrush tool is considered 'freehand' drawing.
- An image drawn 'freehand' onto a piece of lino, then cut out, can be considered freehand drawing using the method (of production) print making. If straight edges are used to control the cut, it is 'instrumental'. Similarly etchings, drawn freehand into a bituminous covered metallic material (surface) when processed, become 'freehand' drawn prints.



The most common types of freehand drawing applications in Unit 3:

### **DRAWINGS FROM OBSERVATION.**

Observational drawing is just that. Using freehand drawing skills to record what you see before you. In their purest form, they are one or two point perspective; some students then choose to extend this notion, by observing an object then imposing a paraline drawing system onto that object using freehand drawing.

### **FREEHAND CONCEPT DRAWINGS.**

Students generate quick idea drawings as starting points to initiate a range of

ideas to develop and work towards resolving the communication need. It can be a series of creative sketches, thumbnails of layouts for ideas still forming, freehand proportional concepts using drawing systems to develop 2D and 3D views of a package or product to explore form and where appropriate, function of that object.

## ILLUSTRATION.

This is a strategy of image making, subject matter can be fictitious and not necessarily reflecting that seen by the eye. It may be stylized, surrealistic, or like cubists, rearranging elements within a concept to redefine the visual intent. It can mix both freehand and instrumental drawing strategies – and combine with other methods (of production) - such as photography. There is no need to delineate freehand from instrumental drawing when illustration is the intention of the image making process but when this occurs, this would not be considered for assessment purposes when assessing observational drawing as an example.

**2. Drawings produced with the assistance** of some form of equipment to control elements such as line, shape and form with the intention to improve the delivery of a media onto a material are considered **instrumental drawings**. This practice ensures that lines are straight or curved in some regulated manner. We know them as 'constructed' or 'instrumental' drawings. Equipment such as rulers, french curves, tee squares, templates, even drafting machines fall into this category.

- Formal Orthogonal drawings that follow Australian Standards conventions are instrumental drawings. The term 'Working Drawings' was also used to describe a dimensioned formal type of instrumental drawing.

- A instrumental drawing may be produced manually using set squares and tee squares, or it may be computer generated, using a program designed for this purpose. It can be a vector program, primarily used for illustration such as Illustrator or Corel Draw, or a specific engineering focused program such as Auto Cad where numeric data is entered along with particular commands/tools selected to generate a solution.

By holding down the shift key on the pencil tool and constraining the line to ensure it is straight, the drawing becomes an assisted line and so becomes 'instrumental' in nature. When a student uses the shift key to regulate a shape or choose a regular 'shape' tool such as an ellipse or polygon tool; where you use a marquee tool to select



an area and fill it with colour, where clipping paths are used to alter and control a shape, these vector type moves are considered strategies to control an image. These computerised moves are designed to emulate the manual process of using a french curve, a template or drafting equipment.

A logo (statistical diagrams, stylised maps) could be constructed manually using instruments. Fabricated images (cut paper and a cutting knife) using straight edges could then be an extension application of this idea to keep the formal qualities of the visual solution.

### Things are not always that straight forward though!

For example:

- An instrumental drawing of an isometric object may then be rendered using freehand rendering skills. Some people have problems determining what category this then belongs to. I get my students to photocopy the original drawing as evidence of its existence as a constructed drawing then they render the original constructed drawing to produce a second level related to this. A constructed drawing cannot be considered a 'Drawing from Observation'. It can be used as a basis for an illustration however. It shows students skills in 'application of media, methods and materials, and can also be used to assess their abilities to apply design elements and principles with considered thought.
- Students can fall into the trap of feeling 'safe' using just instruments. They should be encouraged 'early on' to believe that the less formal qualities of a freehand drawing are just as valuable and just as visually appealing, on a different level.
- Drawing methods can be demonstrated using 'freehand' drawing – they are not the exclusive domain of instrumental drawing. For example, when generating ideas for product development, quick orthogonally placed views drawn freehand are fine for developing ideas. Similarly, freehand drawn 3D drawings are appropriate for exploring the best approach to trial the closing mechanism on a package, a series of thoughtful design alternatives with relative proportion, is an appropriate approach prior to making a final decision. Once the choice is made the refining stage would be to make a prototype of the package and test by producing a scale drawing of the surface development.

Unit 3 requires that freehand manual drawing is used. The following key skill indicates specific circumstances. (page 23, 2004-07 Study Design refers):

- apply **manual drawing**, including **freehand drawing** and **drawing from observation**, to generate concepts and ideas relevant to the communication needs.

The following key skills lend themselves to freehand drawing, but can also adapt to instrumental drawing

- use drawing methods appropriate to the communication need to demonstrate form and where appropriate, function, including third-angle orthogonal, paraline (isometric and planometric) and perspective drawing;
- apply information and communication technology.....
- select and develop design alternatives.... to suit the communication need
- refine a selected design to produce a final presentation.....to suite the communication need.....

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