



# The ABCs of Sketching

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[MyArtPassion.Com](http://MyArtPassion.Com)

First Edition

"Painting is stronger than me; it makes me do its bidding."

- Pablo Picasso

## **Important Information:**

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## **Legal Stuff:**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This e-book is going to introduce you to some of the basics of creating professional looking sketches. These techniques can be used alone, or implemented in various combinations to create the effect that you want.

**“Why is it so important for an artist to learn sketching?”**

Drawing in monochrome lays the foundation for greater things to come. You can move on to color pens, oil pastels, watercolor painting, acrylic painting and oil painting later on but without the skills to create the visual effects that you want, your progress will be limited.

This e-book is about building a strong drawing foundation. Without a strong foundation, the artist has no expressive freedom. Without control and mastery of drawing techniques and tools, they cannot express their ideas and vision in a satisfactory manner.

And that’s the goal that every artist should keep in mind when creating a work of art.

It could be a few broad strokes, or it could be many fine lines. It could be patches of shades, or it could be patches of void spaces. It doesn’t matter.

The important thing is to remember that a drawing or a painting is complete when the ideas are expressed to the artist’s satisfaction.

You’ll see these techniques re-surface when we move on to discuss more advanced drawing techniques. Meanwhile, do familiarize yourself with the techniques discussed in this e-book.

Ultimately, the goal we want to achieve here is to prove that anyone with a burning desire and a strong interest for art can learn to draw in no time.

Have fun!



## 2.0 Seven Aspects of a Sketch

Understanding the seven aspects of a drawing allows a student of art to see how a drawing is being composed in a step by step manner. They make drawings and paintings easy to appreciate and comprehend.

What's the next natural thing to happen? With understanding comes better works of art. Let's start with understanding...

### 2.1 Aspect 1: Composition

#### What is Composition?

In the visual arts, in particular painting, graphic design, and photography and sculpture composition is the plan, **placement or arrangement of elements or ingredients in an art work**. The selection and placement of elements within the work contributes to a response from the viewer, the work of art is said to be aesthetically pleasing to the eye if the elements within the work are arranged in a balanced compositional way. However there are artists who sole aim is to disrupt traditional composition and challenge the viewer to rethink balance and design elements within art works, for instance artists like Salvador Dali.

Basically the term composition means 'putting together', any work of art from music to writing is arranged or put together using conscious thought. The various elements in the overall design usually relate to each other and to the whole art work (Dunstan, p. 7, 1979). There are fundamentally two types of composition: informal, and the less frequently found formal or symmetrical. Composition is also related to artistic canon, for example, the draughting of a pleasing face. In graphic design and desktop publishing, composition is commonly referred to as page layout.

Source: Wikipedia

The composition of a drawing contains elements such as line, shape, tone, texture, color, direction, size, proportion, and perspective. The combination of these elements makes up the overall look and feel of the drawing.

Decide early the subjects that are going to be included in the drawing. Draw out rough shapes as outlines for the subjects. This will let you see how the different shapes fit into the drawing, and you won't find yourself running out of space for some objects that you want to include in the drawing.



## **2.2 Aspect 2: Perspective**

Perspective, simply put, is the way in which objects appear to the eye. Anyone with a keen observation of the objects in the surrounding has the potential to draw great looking pictures.

After that, it's all a matter of translating that mental image into visual form. The higher the level of skill and mastery of tools, the better the drawing.

Here, the artist has the power to choose from the many different ways to represent the image. Different mediums, different drawing tools, different types of paints, etc. He or she may even choose to represent perspective differently. Here's a quick example of how perspective can affect the drawing.

Objects that are further away always appear smaller. The further they are, the smaller they are, and they will keep on appearing to the eye as smaller objects until they disappear into the horizon.

In addition, details of the objects may be blurred or lost due to the distance.

If the object is of importance or if for some reason the artist wishes to emphasize the presence of the object, the perspective can be altered to bring the object to focus.

## **2.3 Aspect 3: Proportion**

A quick search on the Internet reveals the following definitions for proportion:

### **What is Proportion?**

- the quotient obtained when the magnitude of a part is divided by the magnitude of the whole
- magnitude or extent; "a building of vast proportions"
- give pleasant proportions to; "**harmonize** a building with those surrounding it"
- symmetry: **balance** among the parts of something
- adjust in size relative to other things
- **harmonious arrangement** or relation of parts or elements within a whole (as in a design); "in all perfectly beautiful objects there is found the opposition of one part to another and a **reciprocal balance**"- John Ruskin



Source: Princeton Wordnet

I've decided to emphasize the essence of proportion by bolding the keywords in the web definitions above. Proportions are often exaggerated in cartoons to create comical effects.

You can keep drawings in proportion by using the measuring technique. More on that later on in this e-book.

### **2.4 Aspect 4: Definition**

Definition in a drawing refers to the intensity of lines and color when representing shapes and forms. The artist has to decide which areas of a drawing to define in order to make a drawing more exciting to look at.

Some artists prefer drawing or painting everything exactly as they see it, so they choose to define every detail in their drawings. In modern art, many artists prefer drawing *spontaneous* drawings and may choose only certain objects or areas to define in a drawing.

"The only time I feel alive is when I'm painting."  
- Vincent Van Gogh

### **2.5 Aspect 5: Lines & Curves**

Lines and curves of a drawing can evoke powerful responses in the human mind. Entire drawings or paintings can be completed with lines only.

The basic use of lines and curves is to use them to describe and define shapes and forms. Besides that, lines and curves are also used to perform shadings to describe lighting effects.

A popular way to use lines is to describe motion. It is also not uncommon to see artists drawing the contours of the female figure with curves that suggest fertility.



"For me an object is something living. This cigarette or this box of matches contains a secret life much more intense than that of certain human beings."

- **Joan Miro**

## **2.6 Aspect 6: Tone, shades & textures**

Tone, shades and textures make a drawing or painting come to life. They can be used to express 3D effects on a 2D medium. They can be used to describe the details of raw materials (e.g. metallic surface, glass, etc).

When drawing human beings, shades and tones can be particularly useful. A light and smooth shade can express gentleness, while a coarse, deep, and heavy shade can suggest age.

Shades can also be used to define lighting effects. Lighting effects affect the mood of the drawing and can be very helpful in describing the setting of the drawing.

## **2.7 Aspect 7: Planning**

As you can see, the 6 different aspects described above are not isolated elements. They can combine to form many different effects that'll affect the overall quality of your drawing.

Therefore, it is important that an artist plan early how to execute a drawing or painting. Here's an example of how planning takes place:

1. Know what you want to achieve. This is important as only then will you know when a drawing is complete. Knowing what you want to achieve with a drawing or painting will help to prevent overworking a work of art.

**Quick tip: Choose subjects that interest you. You'll draw more passionately!**

2. Draw broad lines and curves lightly to form the overall shapes and structures of the drawing. Keep in mind the composition of



the drawing. Choose drawing tools that allow you to make amends easily (like a light HB pencil).

3. Decide which areas are light, and which areas are dark. Also, think about the subjects that need to be defined and emphasized. How are you going to define them?
4. Use pencil marks to mark out these areas. Make notes if necessary.
5. Decide how you want to start working on the drawing. E.g. top to bottom, left to right, etc.

Once planning is complete, the artist can begin drawing. Note that it helps tremendously to constantly assess the drawing to ensure that the overall composition maintains its balance.

"Painting gave meaning to my life which without it, it would not have had."  
- **Francis Bacon**

### 3.0 Seven Drawing Techniques

Here's a quick note on the seven drawing techniques. These techniques are good not only for sketches but they are actually techniques that can be applied to any drawing; be it a sketch, a watercolor painting, or an oil painting.

Armed with these techniques, you'll soon be able to work on any drawing or painting and "craft" out a superior work of art, just like a craftsman would.

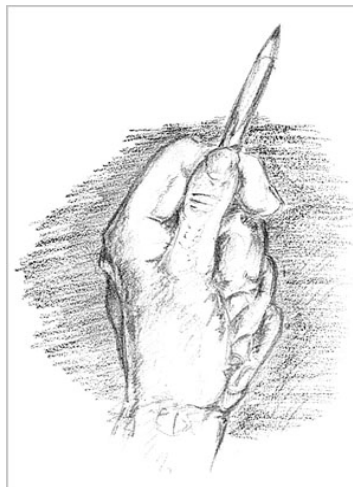
Familiarize yourself with these techniques, and learn how to execute them. We'll be discussing them on and off in other drawing/painting tutorials.

### **3.1 Measuring Technique**

Measuring technique is applied to a drawing to maintain the proportion of the subjects (see section 2.3). In practice, subject measurements do not have to have exact measurements (e.g. 2.03cm). This is not engineering or architecture, it's art.

You'll see that it's not difficult to employ measuring techniques to your art pieces. Here's a step by step guide:

1. Choose a key reference object. For instance, if you're drawing a human figure, you can use the length of the head as a reference. Anything you draw afterwards will be directly proportionate to the head.
2. Choose any slim object that can be conveniently used. You can use a pencil (we see artists using quite often on TV and in books) or a straight ruler. Hold it upright (90 deg. Perpendicular to the ground), and use your thumb as a marker to mark the distance.



**Use the thumb as a marker**

3. Repeat the use of your measuring tool for measuring any distance between two points.

Using this 3-step approach, you can now draw any objects in proportion to your key reference object.

"I never paint dreams or nightmares. I paint my own reality."  
- **Frida Kahlo**

### **3.2 Pressure Technique**

The pressure technique can be applied to create different shades and tones. The intensity of the tone is varied due to the different levels of pressure applied to the drawing tool.

This works exceedingly well for drawing tools that are hard. E.g. graphite, pencils, charcoal, etc.

To apply this technique, press hard on the drawing paper when shading and slowly ease off the pressure. Observe how the shade fades off as the pressure eases off slowly.

This whole effect can be completed with the use of just one drawing tool. It can be used to create dark or light tones. I've included an example of the many different levels of tones that can be created.

The more sensitive an artist is to the pressure, the more levels of intensity that he or she can create.



**How many levels can you create?**

### **3.3 Layering Technique**

The layering technique can also be used to create different shades and tones. A particular drawing area is darkened by shading over the same portion over and over again to achieve the intensity required.

You can try this technique with drawing pencils. Start with a HB pencil and shade lightly over a rectangle. Next, go over the same area with a darker pencil, say 2B. Repeat the process with a few other pencils, each darker than the previous one. Observe the effects.

You can also try this technique using just one pencil. Watch how the layered portions become darker and darker as you continuously draw over them.



Drawn with a graphite lead

Note that this technique works best when working in dry conditions, unless you want the shades to blend together.

"I'm always trying to create work that doesn't make viewers feel they're being spoken down to, so that they feel open participation."

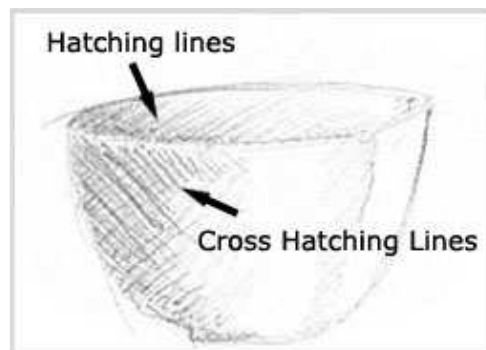
- Jeff Koons

### **3.4 Hatching, Cross-Hatching Technique**

Hatching means drawing of lines in a similar direction to achieve the shape, form or intensity that the artist wants.

Cross hatching means the same as hatching, except that lines are drawn in a criss-cross manner.

This technique is well-suited for sketches drawn with pencils or pens. Shades and tones are accomplished by drawing more lines.



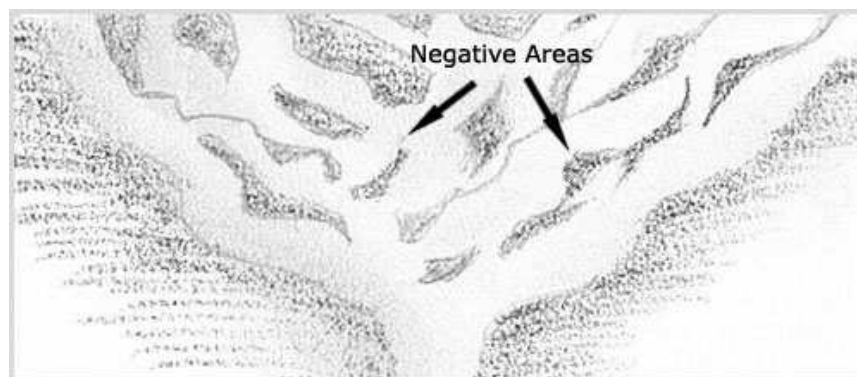
This rough sketch is accomplished with a 2B pencil

### **3.5 Negative Drawing Technique**

The negative drawing technique is used to bring out shapes and forms by filling in the negative areas of a drawing. *Negative areas* refer to empty spaces within the drawing.

When these empty spaces are shaded, we see the emergence of a form or shape.

We see this technique most commonly applied when drawing complex shapes and forms that cross each other paths. Some examples are trees and flowers.



**Notice that the shape of the branches has been left untouched**

### **3.6 Erasing Technique**

The erasing technique means the use of an erasing tool to create the effect required. An erasing tool can be an eraser, a piece of cotton, or a piece of tissue paper.

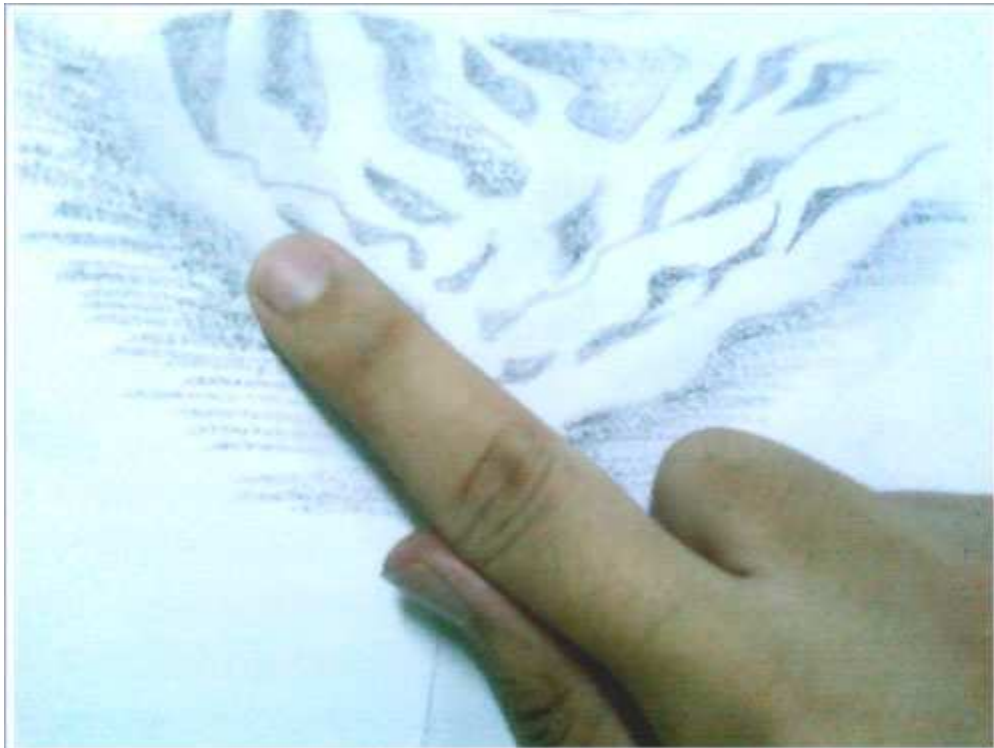
Bear in mind that erasing here does not mean making amendments to the drawing. The erasing is part of the drawing.

The erasing technique can be used to "draw" light reflections. They can be used to soften lines, or create lighter shades.

### **3.7 Caressing Technique**

The caressing technique means using any object to stroke a particular area until the desired tone and texture is achieved. The key difference between the caressing technique and the erasing technique is that the caressing technique aims to spread tone, while the erasing technique aims to take away tone.

Observe the different effects created when employing the two techniques. As a general rule of thumb, if you wish to create a gentler feel, use the caressing technique. If you want a sharp highlight with sharper contrast, use the erasing technique.



**Using my finger to caress the medium**



## 4.0 Conclusion

The above techniques form the foundation for drawing. Use them to draw any pictures you want. Remember the old saying, "Practice makes perfect!" So practice, practice, practice!

"If people knew how hard I worked to get my mastery, it wouldn't seem so wonderful at all."

- Michelangelo

Finally, I'd like to add that I've isolated each of the techniques shown above to give a clearer illustration of how each effect looks like. When used together, these techniques can add sophistication and depth to your drawings.

### **A note of warning:**

Many aspiring artists with great potential give up because they try to tackle a drawing that's beyond what their skill level can take them. As a result, they lose interest quickly and give up too soon.

Be patient, keep on practicing, and move on to more advanced drawing/painting techniques only when you feel you are ready.

Every time you complete a drawing, ask yourself these questions:

- Does the drawing look spontaneous?
- Is it fun and exciting to look at?
- What kind of emotions does your drawing evoke?
- Did you successfully describe the subjects that you set out to draw in a satisfactory manner?
- Whatever your goal is, did you achieve your goal?

Asking these questions will help you "calibrate" your skills. Over time, you will see your skills improve by leaps and bounds.

## 5.0 A Note from the Author



Hi there!

If you make it this far, I'd like to congratulate you for being one of those who's absolutely serious about pursuing the art of drawing and painting.

With your kind of commitment, I'm sure you'll be able to draw great pictures in no time. Why am I so confident of that?

It's because I am a firm believer that everyone can draw. Drawing techniques can be taught, but if you have no interest in art, nothing I do will motivate you to come back and draw again and again and again until you master those skills.

Only strong desire and interest can make you a self-motivated artist. It's the spring board that'll help you hone your skills and allow you to take your drawings and paintings to greater heights. How do I know?

Believe it or not, everything you see here is self-taught. I never went to any expensive art school or anything like that. As a kid, I used to walk around with a sketch book tucked under my arm.

As far as I can remember, I always had that sketch book with me every where I go. Whenever I get the chance, I'll start doodling.

When I started schooling, I always bought extra exercise books. That's right, I use them for drawing. In fact, I think I spent most of my time in school drawing. Everybody would be busy making notes and I would be drawing.

When I feel bored, I draw. When I feel frustrated about anything, I draw. I just *love drawing*. It's therapeutic for me. I had a couple of



thick exercise books, completely filled with comics. They make all my friends laugh.

Drawing is one passion that I think I'll never be able to ditch. The other passion that I don't think I'll ever ditch is to create websites.

I love creating websites, and have been doing it for 7 years now. The first one I created was in year 2000, and I think it's one of the ugliest website you'll ever see. It had a completely black background, with red stripes all over the place. Yucks! ;p

Fast forward to present terms, I've created hundreds of websites since then. Flash sites, database driven sites, web directories, article sites, corporate sites, personal blogs, etc.

So now that you know a little about me, you'll start to see why I started MyArtPassion.com. The Internet has presented me with this tremendous opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals.

I'd like to build myartpassion.com into one of the best community sites on the Internet, and would like to invite you to join me on this journey. It's going to be one heck of a ride!

I hope you had fun with the little exercises that I've put together in this e-book, and I definitely look forward to seeing your creations.

Have fun drawing!

To your beautiful creations,

*Darren Chow*

Founder, MyArtPassion.com

P.S. Have something to say about this e-book? Room for improvement? Feel free to leave your comments here:

<http://www.myartpassion.com/blog/?p=9>



"Poor is the pupil who does not surpass his master."

- **Leonardo Da Vinci**

## **Appendix A: Getting to Know MyArtPassion.com**

Thank you for your interest in being a part of MyArtPassion.com. I'd like to take this opportunity to show you around the site, as well as share with you some insider details about the plans for this site. Let's start with giving you an overview of where we are heading.

### ***Plans & Direction of MyArtPassion.com***

MyArtPassion.com is not about my work or my art. It's going to be about you. I merely created the resources in the beginning to start the ball rolling. At the end of the day, I hope to see more and more of your work.

To accomplish this goal, it's part of the plan from Day 1 to include software and tools in the site that'll allow you to post pictures, share comments, make friends, and even create your own websites.

Ambitious plans but they are definitely achievable with your continued support. I'll leave those plans vague for now to leave room for changes. This establishes the general direction of the site. For now, let's take a look at how to get the most out of the site.

### ***Getting the Most Out of MyArtPassion.com***

#### **1. Download and enjoying free drawing resources**

All our members enjoy free resources in digital format. These free downloads include tutorials, case studies and other materials related to drawing.

Most of the resources will be made available for download in PDF format. If you're reading this, you already have PDF installed. Otherwise, please refer to your welcome email for download and installation instructions.



If you're not a member yet, visit this page to claim your free membership and get your free downloads.

<http://www.myartpassion.com/>

## **2. Connect with other members on the blog**

We'd like to invite you to visit our blog on a regular basis. We post updates on the blog frequently. Free downloads are made available directly on our blog.

Feel free to leave comments and chat with other members. I, for one, would like to get to know you better.

<http://www.myartpassion.com/blog>

## **3. Preparing for business and trade**

I strongly recommend all members of MyArtPassion.com to be equipped with at least a personal Paypal account. That's because having a Paypal account allows a member to send and receive money without revealing any credit card information.

Paypal is secure, and widely recognized as one of the most reliable online payment gateways on the Internet. It allows anyone with an account to send or receive payment with just an email address.

MyArtPassion.com will eventually be using Paypal as its payment gateway for any products and services that we may decide to promote.

In addition, Paypal members will also be able to trade with other members of the community.

Note that although we'll be using Paypal as the payment gateway, an account is NOT REQUIRED to make a purchase. However, anyone without an account will have to enter their credit card information every time they make a purchase.



Therefore, we strongly urge you to setup an account with Paypal. Creating an account is free:

<https://www.paypal.com/>

You've read above about the general direction this site is heading, and I'm sure you'll understand why it's important that our members are comfortable making purchases online.

In the long run, MyArtPassion.com cannot operate indefinitely without revenue. As we roll out our plans, we'll be developing some premium products to sell. Rest assured that you'll still be receiving free content from us. We only charge for our premium products.

We call them "premium" products because of the value that we're adding to these products. If you like our free products, you'll LOVE our premium products.

We've taken extra care to price them as affordably as we can. That's because we know that there are students and retirees out there who may be interested in our products, and we cannot imagine them having to pay hundreds of dollars for a single DVD.

We hope that you've enjoyed this e-book. Feel free to send this e-book to your friends!

While you're here, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you our very first premium product, entitled:

## **MyArtPassion Drawing Method Home Study Course**

### **Vol. 1: Drawing in Monochrome**

If you like the instructions you read in this report, you'll like what I have included in this **Home Study Course**:



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**Where to buy the MyArtPassion Drawing Method Home Study Course**  
**Vol. 1: Drawing in Monochrome**

The Home Study Course is for sale at <http://www.myartpassion.com>  
Check it out.

If you'd like more free resources like this one, sign up as a member with your name and email address at <http://www.myartpassion.com> and I'll send you free content regularly.