

Introduction...

Drawing is a fundamental skill that all visual art fields depend upon. However, in the end, drawing becomes more than just a skill. It becomes a process of observation, recording, explanation, expression, conceptualization, and decoration, etc.

In these processes, drawing emerges as a tool for the conceptualization and manifestation of ideas that affect our everyday lives, whether we are artists or not. Think about it. The buildings we move throughout and the cars we drive...the environment we live in and interact with was designed by an artist who first conceptualized the design through a drawing.

However, drawing is more than just a fundamental tool for designers. A part of Manifest's mission states that "to learn to draw is to learn to see, and the way we make things look is directly related to how we see." Inevitably, drawing is a way of seeing, and as a "Drawing Center" Manifest seeks to promote and explore this discipline.



Bulls Eye by Kathleen Thum

Take a look around...

The National Drawing Annual Exhibit features some non-traditional works when it comes to what most people think of when they think of drawing. In fact, one of the questions to be answered by this entire exhibit is, "what is drawing?" Take a look at the variety of images you see, and list some of the key differences. After doing so, look at *Bulls Eye*, by Kathleen Thum.

In order to understand the drawing, it may be helpful to break a part the image into its bare elements. What colors, lines, shapes, textures, and values do you see here, and what type of composition are they creating? At the same time, what is the subject matter, and how is it depicted? Use this information to help find the content of the piece, that is, the meaning of the image, the message that the artist wishes to communicate.



Solution #2 by Jennifer Jenkins

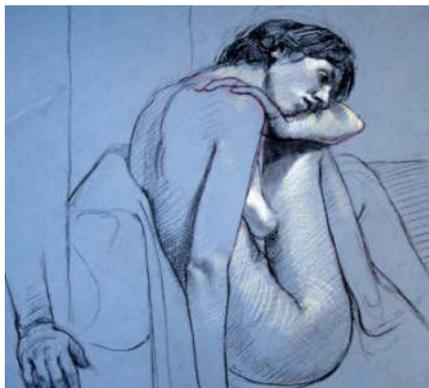
Take a look around...

Note the materials that Jennifer Jenkins uses in her *Solution #2*. Often when we think of drawing materials we think of graphite, charcoal, pastels, or color pencils, etc. How does the use of non-traditional materials change the meaning of what it is to draw?

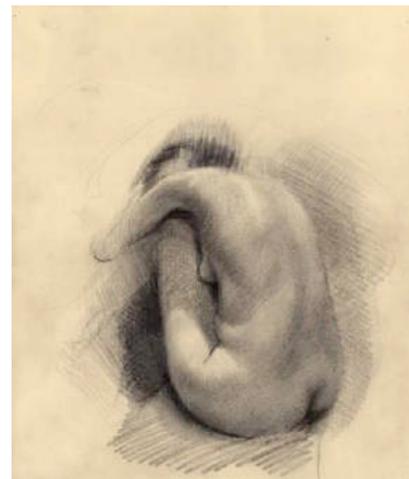
Think about it. What makes a drawing? Is it the tools we use? Or is it the process of manipulating the elements of design?

Take a look around...

The Manifest Open Figure Sessions Exhibit features works drawn from life in the Manifest drawing studio. The process of drawing from the figure is a practice that goes back hundreds of years. As you look around the gallery, notice how different artists depict the same subject matter. What stylistic differences do you see? In order to pinpoint some of these differences, you may consider things such as the materials, the energy of the marks, or the composition of the drawings to name a few.



Emil Robinson, 2005



Think about it...

Using your comparisons from above, how would you respond to the following question?

How does the way we see change the way we draw?

Take a look around...

Think about both exhibits in the context of one another. Compare the two, and make note of their differences and similarities. What strikes you first about the National Drawing Annual Exhibit in relation to the Manifest Open Figure Sessions Exhibit? Make a list, comparing the subject matter, handling of materials, and styles. What do you notice?

Did you know?

Non-objective art is a type of art that is not based on physical actuality or optical perception. Representational art, on the other hand, is a type of art in which the subject is presented in such a way to reflect the actual object. The work in the National Drawing Annual Exhibit is primarily non-objective, whereas the work in the Open Figure Sessions Exhibit is primarily representational. These styles exist on opposite ends of the same spectrum of abstraction. However, both approaches, within the context of these shows, have left the door open for experimentation.



Carrie Nixon, 2005

Consider Carrie Nixon's drawing of the nude on a wood panel. In this drawing, the grain of the wood becomes just as important to the drawing as the marks of the medium. The artist must now accommodate the natural visual element of the wood grain, showing that the choice of materials is just as important to the drawing as the process of drawing itself. This experimentation expands the traditional definition of drawing. It also adds another layer to the content of the piece. What is the relationship between the wood and the figure? Do you think Nixon's choice to draw on wood is purely aesthetic, or do you think there may be some correlation between the two as subject matter and form?