

DRAWING

ANTEROS ARTS FOUNDATION.

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ART

Drawing as the beginning of all art.

Definition: *the formation of a line by drawing some tracing instrument from point to point of a surface; representation by lines; delineation as distinguished from painting...the arrangement of lines which determine form.'*

Importance of line.

Apelles visited Protogenes who was not at home. He drew a single fine coloured line on a panel. P returned, saw the line and knew that it was A. P then drew a finer line in another colour over the first one. When A visited again, he drew a third line over the second. It was so fine that no other line could be drawn over it.

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780 - 1867)

'Drawing is the probity of art. To draw does not mean simply to reproduce contours; drawing does not consist merely of line: drawing is also expression, the inner form, the plane, the modelling.'

John Ruskin (1819 - 1900)

'The art of drawing which is of more real importance to the human race than that of writing...should be taught to every child just as writing is.'

People drew pictures even before they learned how to write.

Camille Pissarro (1831 - 1903)

'it is only by drawing often, drawing everything, drawing incessantly, that one fine day you discover to your surprise that you have rendered something in its true character.'

These quotes have a common theme: that **drawing is the essence of all art and creative activity**. Ingres and Pissarro are saying that drawing gets you close to the true essence of an object. i.e. **drawing tells you something important about that thing in a way that other art forms possibly don't**.

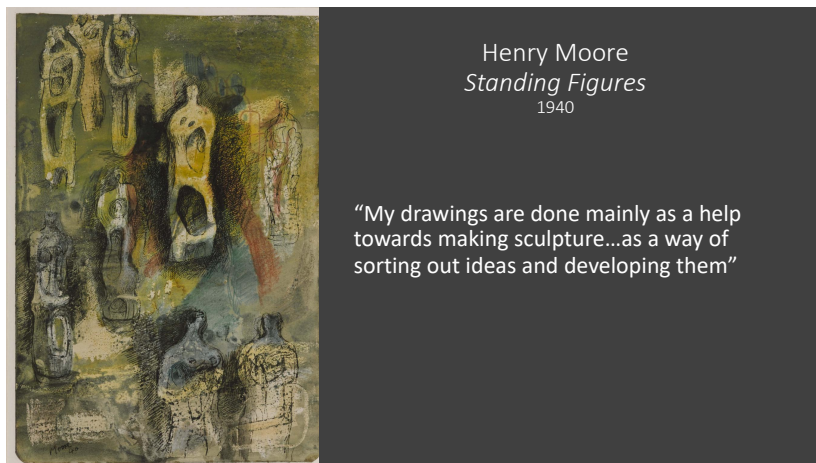
And this is where, I think, the fascination of drawing lies: in **the relationship between simplicity and complexity**. How a simple line or set of lines can contain so much and tell us so much about an object.

It is private, personal, experimental, versatile and immediate. And is also, by contrast, controlled, technical, and (at least for much of its history) subject to strict rules.

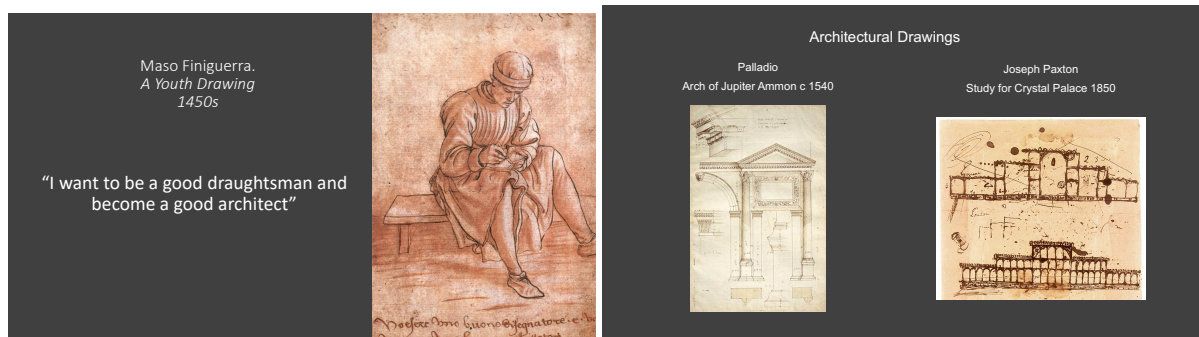
Does drawing get us closer to the artist? What can a drawing tell us about an artist that a painting or other media cannot? The **drawing is the direct expression of artistic inspiration**, allowing concentration on form and idea. **A drawing is part of the process of thinking aloud on paper**. It is how artists who work in different media begin their ideas.

Renaissance idea that all visual arts had their basis in drawing. This continues throughout art history.

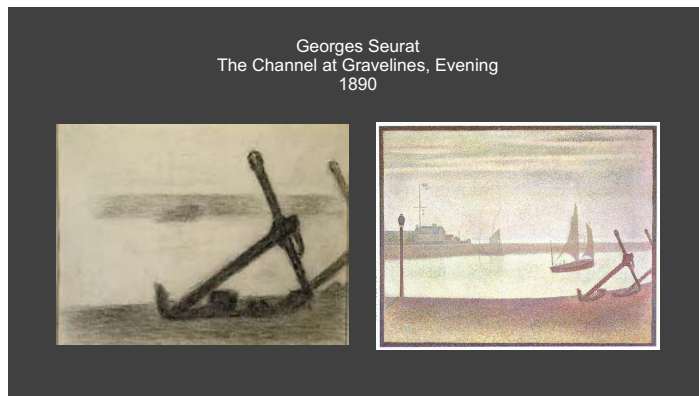
Sculptors – *Henry Moore drawing was a form of sculpture*, “My drawings are done mainly as a help towards making sculpture...as a way of sorting out ideas and developing them”



architects – *showing ideas to clients and planning 3 dimensions in 2 dimensions*
Palladio and Paxton



painters use the drawing for their first and most direct ideas. *Look at this in more detail later.*



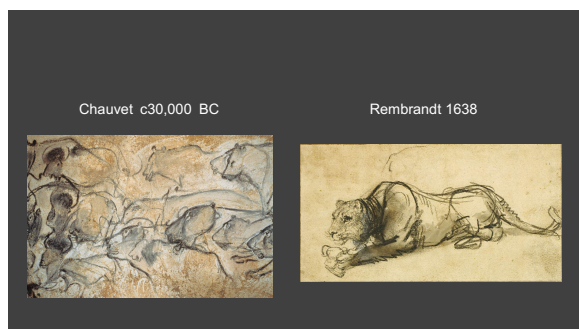
I want to look at the history of drawing and see how we can develop some of these ideas through the history of the art and how we can develop and consider questions about the aims and purposes and nature of drawing.

How it developed in complex and sophisticated ways in the Renaissance and how it formed the basis of an intellectually based artistic education up to the 20th century when drawing became liberated and evolved in experimental, and challenging directions.

History

Customary to begin with cave art which is essentially drawing. Which makes drawing one of the oldest surviving examples of material and artistic culture.

Chauvet, - charcoal line drawings and red ochre. Mainly animals – some were hunted and some were predators. Importance of line as the essence of drawing. Compare with Rembrandt. The same essential elements.

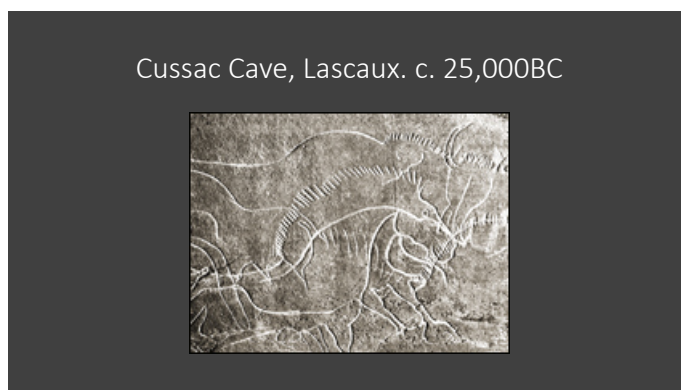


Is this drawing almost as a form of writing? Pictogram?

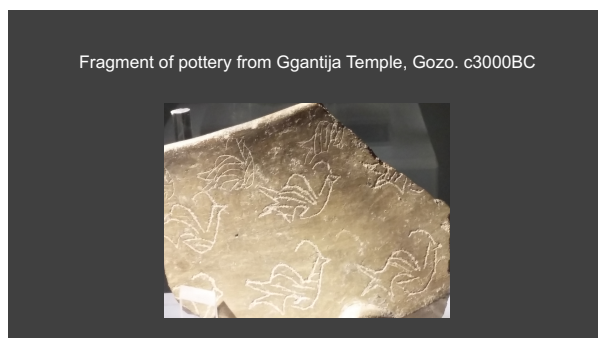
Lascaux. Human line figure drawings.



Grotte de Cussac. Line figures etched into the rock using finger on wet clay. As these are not etchings for the purposes of creating a print or any subsequent image, they are a form of drawing. **Can an incision be a type of drawing?**



Malta. Etching on pottery. C3000BC Ggantija. Incised after firing.



What is the purpose of drawings such as these?

Purpose of drawings is obscure. Paintings are well into the caves, remote - not accessible. Maybe sacred or ceremonial places and images had a ritual purpose.

i.e sacrifice of animals and also drawings of predators as a propitiation, a protection.

Drawings for religious or other ritual. Are these ritual religious drawings primarily works of art or works of devotion/remembrance?

But why should these be religious or ritual works? When we say that they are, we seem to be trying to ascribe a sociological or anthropological aspect to these images as though they can carry meaning or purpose only in this way.

But perhaps they were drawn simply because they wanted to represent the world around them.

Perhaps these drawings are the disinterested representation or appreciation of nature. And that is a highly sophisticated idea which forms the basis of much enlightenment western aesthetics.

Medieval drawing.

Utrecht Psalter. made between AD 816 and 834 at the Benedictine abbey of Hautvillers, Epernay, Reims. Brown ink. The sketchy, graphic outline style, highly linear and rhythmical, slightly nervy and tense – a real energy. Reflects the religious intensity of the words. Influential on later medieval painting – esp Bosch. Would we get this quickness and fervour if it wasn't a drawing? This is the immediacy of drawing. The sense of real connection between the artist and the work and between us and the artist. Greater sense of emotion.



By 13th century, drawing and artistic production becoming more widespread.

Villard De Honnecourt - The notebooks of the 13th-century French architect Villard de Honnecourt (1200-1250) combine an instructional manual with theoretical precepts. Collection of 33 parchment leaves. Drawing figures from geometrical shapes. Two-dimensional method. Draws human figures, faces, animals, and architectural designs. And designs for decorations on buildings or books. The most explicit surviving document to detail the working procedures, activities, and interests of the Gothic artist.

Villard is creating the beginnings of a **pattern book**. Series of designs which an artist could copy and a client could choose.

We are struck by the simplicity of these images. They are almost like symbols. Flat, two dimensional. He says the lion is “drawn from life”. But really he is just producing what people thought a picture of “a lion” in general terms should look like even if he drew the picture in the presence of a lion. In other words, the purpose of drawing was not to produce a likeness or sense or atmosphere of the real thing.



Can see this also in 18th century drawing of rhinoceros.

In 1790, [James Bruce](#)'s travelogue *Travels to discover the source of the Nile* dismissed Dürer's work as "wonderfully ill-executed in all its parts" and "the origin of all the monstrous forms under which that animal has been painted, ever since". But Bruce's own illustration of the African white rhinoceros which is noticeably different in appearance to the Indian rhinoceros, still shares conspicuous inaccuracies with Dürer's work. Umberto Eco argues (developing the idea from Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*) that Dürer's "scales and imbricated plates" became a necessary element of depicting the animal, even to those who might know better, because "they knew that only these conventionalized graphic signs could denote “rhinoceros” to the person interpreting the iconic sign."



In other words, the idea lying behind the designs and images from Villard and used in pattern books to denote an animal, person, object continues long after the pattern book ceases to be a useful element in artistic design.

During the later Middle Ages **pattern books** were much more widespread. They were how pictures and designs were put together. Used to streamline workshop production and to transmit standardized elements in stained glass windows, paintings, tapestries. This is why the figures in these works of art often look quite similar. These drawings in pattern books were often quite simple and formulaic (although could be beautiful). That is because they were copied from these pattern books which were themselves copied and developed from earlier studies. Not studies from nature.

Head of a woman from a pattern book
1405-1410



Greatest of the late medieval draughtsmen is **Giovannino de Grassi** from Northern Italy (Milan). His workshop designs are naturalistic studies of animals and birds. He was principally known as a designer of illuminated manuscripts and if we look at his studies, we can see how copies of drawings were used and reused in these manuscripts.

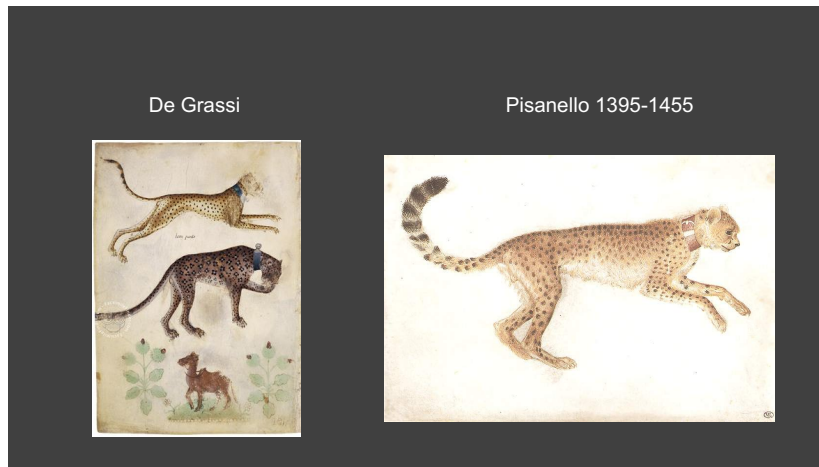
Leopards. By Grassi. **Leaping leopards** – Grassi and Pisanello . Pisanello almost certainly copying from Grassi. Can do a similar exercise with rabbits and monkeys.

Giovannino de Grassi (d. 1398)
Leopards and other animals
late 14th century



At this point an artist was not drawing the thing or drawing from his imagination but was drawing a drawing.

Cennino Cennini. (c.1370 - 1440). Writer and theorist on art in late 14th/early 15th century. Central role of drawing for training of the apprentice.



Artistic formation evolved from copying the master's own drawings and other workshop models before progressing to working from nature or casts.

'In the first place you must study drawing for at least one year; then you must remain with a master at the workshop for the space of six years at least, that you may learn all the parts and members of the art. Drawing without intermission on holidays and work-days'.

Copy-drawing was the method all great artists used to learn even when more individualism was introduced in the early Renaissance. Partly because of large workshops where a uniform style had to be developed. And also to learn manual skills and control needed for an artistic career. Drawing is a sort of physical training. An exercise for hand/eye coordination. Cennini's training method (drawing solidly for a year before painting) was art school practice until 20th century.

Move towards the High Renaissance.

During 15th century, we see a gradual development of artistic individuality. Greater artistic expression and genius. The more you draw, you build up a sketch book of things that you see and draw on a daily basis and suddenly you are not copying other drawings but copying real life and this was the great change of the Renaissance and which changed drawing and art for ever. **Move from pattern books to sketch books.**

Influences which develop Renaissance drawing.



1. Intellectual changes.

- a. *Interest in science and the natural world. How nature works. (Leonardo studies of skull/neck and head). **Leonardo revolutionizing drawing.*** This is the time when Leonardo also took drawing in a new direction.

Studies of anatomy, drapery, and nature studies.

Drawing also used for development of theoretical ideas of perspective, light and shade, space.

Drawings helped create new and original artistic forms.

- b. *Greater interest in relationship between humanity and natural world. This led to an increase in drawing directly from nature. Leonardo carrying out dissections to observe workings of the human body. Art is now seeking to reflect nature in a much deeper way*
- c. *And importance of humanity/humanism – greater sense of individual self-awareness and consciousness. Mankind being placed at the centre of the world and universe. Leads to more personal expression. In art this is manifest in personal drawing and sketching.*

Example of Leonardo's drawing methods. He encouraged artists to get out into the streets with sketch books and look at people and their heads and hands and sketch them.

- 2. **Technical advances – paper.** *Previously drawing was on wood panels or on wax panels. Paper is easier to use, portable, flexible and easy to store and more permanent than wax. Early 1400s paper was expensive and rare, so anything preserved on paper was for workshop use. Not used just for sketching.*

Around 1500 drawing expands as a medium. Paper production increases. Leonardo has small bound, paper sketch books he carries with him. The whole process becomes quicker, more individual and more experimental.

Within 50 years (by late 15th century) the fixed imagery of the pattern book was replaced by the capturing of instant responses to natural phenomena, contemporary events, or imaginary conceits.

Leonardo – Studies of heads and cats. Sketching and sketchbooks were expressive of the Renaissance outlook, being an individual rather than a shared or communal mode of graphic expression.



By 1500 this sort of quick sketching - personal, casual, and exploratory drawing pioneered by Leonardo had been accepted as the first step in solving problems of artistic design.

This is drawing as a form of thought process. Organising ideas and thinking aloud.

Leonardo is challenging the idea that art should be about strict imitation (which is what was happening with pattern books). Instead it should be about capturing expressions. Drawing can help the artist catch the way expression appear quickly and then disappear.

For Leonardo, drawing is part of the critical process of art – using it as a means of arriving at the truth, not just an illusion.

This is a new way of looking at how art works. It is about **realistic representation combined with imaginative expressiveness** and drawing helps with this.

Leonardo landscape – still a study for a painting but it is clearly done quickly outside. A direct copy from nature not from other artists' work. These quick drawings and sketches allowed artists to plan and organize large scale pictures by composing small drawings and then carrying them into the larger picture.

Leonardo da Vinci
Landscape drawing 5th August 1473
Study for Santa Maria delle Neve



Quick sketches and character studies are the first step in the process of creating bigger paintings.

Eg. Leonardo. Studies for Nativity.

Leonardo da Vinci

Studies for a Nativity



Study for a Group of Riders
in the Battle of Anghiari



Veronese. Wedding Feast at Cana.

Veronese. *The Wedding Feast at Cana*. 1563

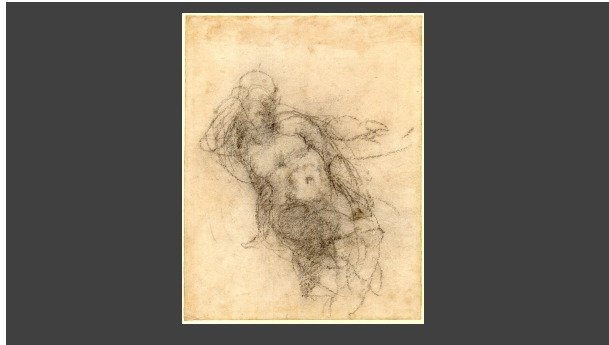


What is artist thinking about or concentrating on in these sketches? What are they trying to get right (if anything)?

What is the mental process involved in these drawings? Are they simply a form of mental or physical exercise?

Do we prefer the sketch to the finished painting? Do we value it more?

Artistic inspiration. Are these drawings which are sketches, almost doodles and scribbles, in some way closer to the artist than the finished work. Do they give an insight into the working of the artist's mind? We see them as spontaneous, intimate, expressive – is that because that is how we see artists and these drawings are a window into their innermost workings and so must reflect those qualities.

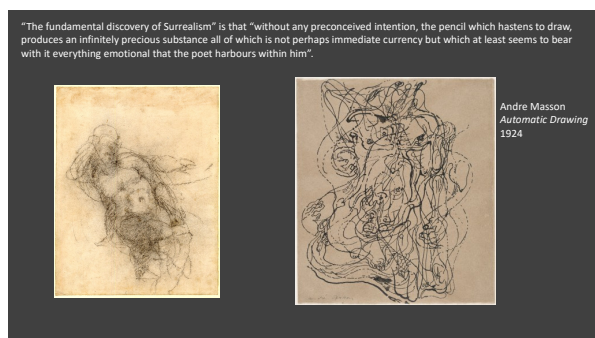


Michelangelo. There is no sense of clear line, or clarity of purpose. M is displaying what Ernst Gombrich calls “a constant state of alertness”.

A sense of an insight into the workings of M's mind and artistic thinking.

Can we see a connection between this spontaneous, highly energetic sort of sketching and the automatic drawing of Andre Masson?

“The fundamental discovery of Surrealism” is that “without any preconceived intention, the pencil which hastens to draw, produces an infinitely precious substance all of which is not perhaps immediate currency but which at least seems to bear with it everything emotional that the poet harbours within him”.



Drawing as basis of larger paintings.

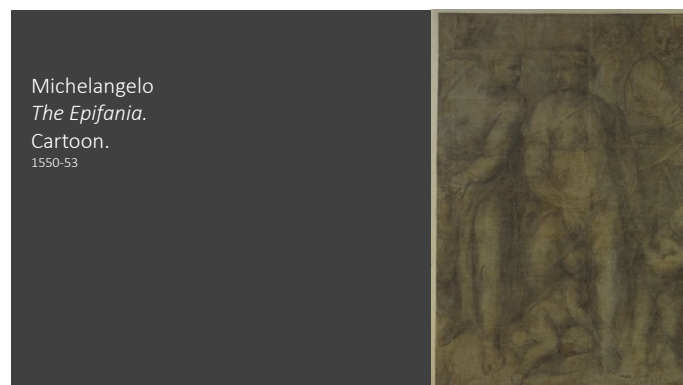
Big workshops. Raphael and Michelangelo in Rome in 1510s developed rationalized procedure based on drawing which encompassed the **essential preparatory stages** in the development and execution of monumental compositions, including frescoes, tapestries, and paintings on canvas.

Progressive sequence of drawings

- exploratory first-idea sketch;
- schematic composition drawing;
- modelli: study sheets of particular motifs, detail studies of single figures, drapery, heads, and other individual compositional elements;
- finished composition drawing squared for transfer;
- cartoons; simply a large sheet of paper on which the drawing was done.

Importance of these sorts of drawings. Storehouse of ideas for future paintings. For use in the workshop when lots of artists may be working on one painting.

Enabled a workshop to keep hold of work. Eg. Raphael's Sala di Constantino in Vatican after Raphael's death.



Presentation drawings

The other great renaissance development is in the highly technical finished drawings. Drawing moving in two separate but connected ways. The sketch as part of a series of constantly practised sketches and the highly finished drawing that could only be achieved as a result of endless practice.

Idea of the presentation drawing began in about 1420s and developed in 15th century. These were drawings made for a purpose beyond just the artist's pleasure or practice – gifts, commissions, formal portraits. Could even be done for

a possible patron as an example of the artist's ability. Drawing as an absolute art on its own terms.

Jacopo Bellini – bound albums of drawings. Keep pattern book format – ie formal structure of collection of drawings. But drawing at a much higher level, sumptuous and elegant. Done on paper using leadpoint and on parchment using silverpoint or pen and ink.



Metalpoint drawing. The technique appeared in medieval Italy, a short metal rod, sharpened to a fine point made from lead, copper, silver, or gold. Silver was the most prized, producing especially subtle shades of grey line. It may only be used on paper prepared with a ground of Chinese white pigment, or white mixed with a watercolour pigment such as pink, to give a coloured ground. The metalpoint reacts chemically with the Chinese white to produce a delicate grey line, but the medium poses great difficulties since the lines, once made, cannot be erased. It therefore demands great certainty of decision on the draughtsman's part. Which shows the importance of endless copying and practice.

Ghirlandaio portrait of a woman. Silverpoint on pink ground, heightened with white. Developed drawing, highly finished and detailed. Also, this is drawing moving away from strong line and is more subtle, more reliant on shade, shadow and areas merging into each other. i.e. more realistic.

This Ghirlandaio was initially a design for a fresco for the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. But the fact that this drawing survives and that it is of such high quality – it is much more than a workbook sketch or study – suggests that it was intended for a longer life and was given to the patron.

Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-1494)
Head of a Woman wearing a Hood
1489



Finished presentation drawings were also used as a way of an artist producing work for other clients and patrons without producing a full painting which would be forbidden by the principal patron.

Durer. Visited Italy in 1494/5 and 1505/6 and this influenced his drawing. He wrote theoretical treatises on perspective and proportion. He developed idea of finely finished drawings for presentation that stand alone as complete and autonomous works of art. Also, from an early stage, Durer and other Northern artists, took a greater interest in detail and realism in their drawing – great precision. These drawings done in a mixture of metalpoint, chalk, ink and watercolour. Can drawing be done in watercolour?

Albrecht Durer 1471-1528

Walrus

1521 (pen drawing with watercolour)



Young Hare 1502 (watercolour)



Leonardo. “Bust of a Warrior”. There is actually no evidence that it was presented to anyone and may have been a copy done of work in the studio of his teacher Verrocchio but it was clearly intended as more than just a sketch as it is so highly finished and with more detail than we have seen in other silverpoint drawings.

Leonardo da Vinci
Bust of Warrior
c1475



Silverpoint is principally about the handling of the line which so far has been the essence of drawing. And here Leonardo is working up lots of lines to create a sense of depth.

Leonardo encouraged his pupils to use silverpoint for the very reason that it could not be rubbed out or mistakes altered.

Renaissance theory of drawing. **Disegno**. Both the act of drawing the mental process of design.

Vasari. Disegno. 'manifest expression and embodiment of the concept which he has in his mind'.

In 16th and early 17th century, Federico Zuccaro aimed to show that the whole of art (painting, sculpture and architecture) is based on the principle of *disegno*.

Zuccaro sees this as a mental activity and as the fundamental principle of all thought. i.e. it makes us see and think clearly. To design (building, tapestries, frescoes) you had to be able to draw.

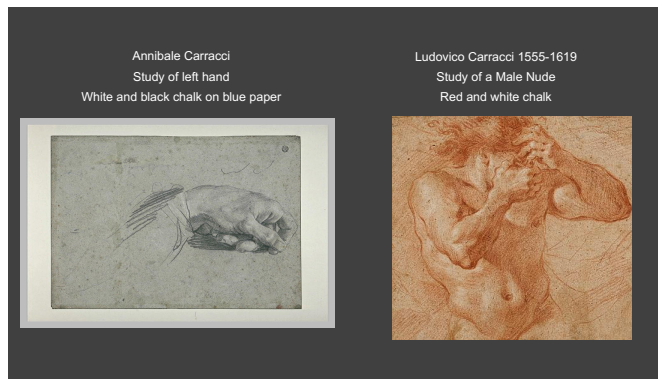
If disegno (drawing and the way it encourages us to think and see) is at the heart and essence of art and mental thought then this gives to drawing a very high status.

This idea may seem esoteric as far as art practice is concerned but it was part of a major change in the way that art was thought about in the Renaissance – an increase in the status of art. The intellectual, social, political, propaganda elements of art were being recognised and developed. And the aesthetic and theoretical foundation of the art was in the practice of drawing. Drawing, both in theory and practice starts to underpin all art.

Drawing develops in two ways after 16th and 17th century.

- i. Academic drawing. **Growth of academies**. Taught a set way of drawing according to rules and strict organisation.

Carracci family (brother Annibale/Agostino and cousin Ludovico) were **founders of teaching academy in Bologna (1585/6)**. Encouraged study from life and study of High Renaissance and classical. Drew outside in nature, copied ancient sculpture.



French academy of painting and sculpture. Paris in 1648

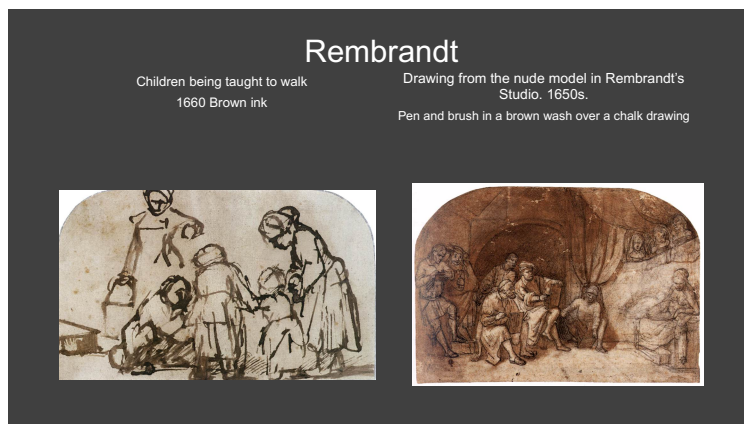
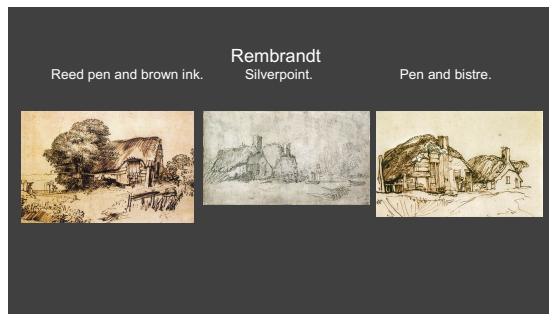
Codifying drawing categories and artistic procedures. Teaching programme based around the life-drawing class. Drawings of male nudes studied from life, the term 'academy' came to refer to all drawings of nudes

- ii. The freedom and expressiveness that we see in sketches such as these by Rembrandt. Like Leonardo, **Rembrandt** sketches all the time and uses those sketches as models for his larger paintings.



Of course the sketches by Rembrandt were never intended for public display.

Rembrandt. Enormous collection of drawings. c 1400. Same number lost. Few were presentation works – only about 25 signed. Not that many were preparation drawings. Most were experimental in the sense of attempting to bring the world into some sort of artistic order – this is drawing as suggesting Rembrandt's fundamentally aesthetic vision of the world. In other words, he perceives the world as something to be recorded and presented in two dimensions. He sees the world not as it is but as it might look on paper or canvas. Jots down ideas, private record of observations and feelings. These are genuine sketches. (bistre is a brown pigment made from charred wood, mixed with ink or chalk – used mainly in 17th century and much by Rembrandt).



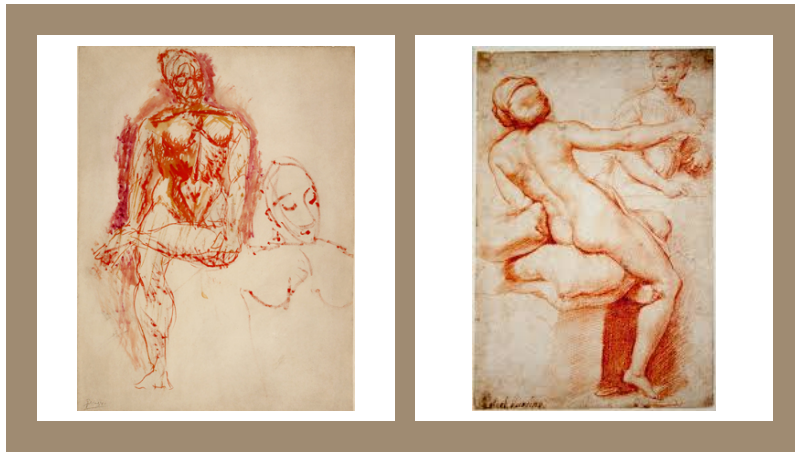
Movement away from classical academic approach happens gradually at end of 19th and beginning of 20th century. But when the time is right for the change the tipping point is very sudden and marked.

Everything is blown apart and this might be a way of describing drawing in 20th century. Drawing retains its importance and centrality to artistic education and practice but becomes freed from all constraints and rules.

Picasso. Had full classical training. But endless experimenting in manner of Leonardo or Rembrandt.

Les Demoiselles d'Avignon. Hundreds of sketches and preparatory drawings. i.e. a traditional method of producing a painting. Do we see Renaissance red chalk drawing in image on the left?



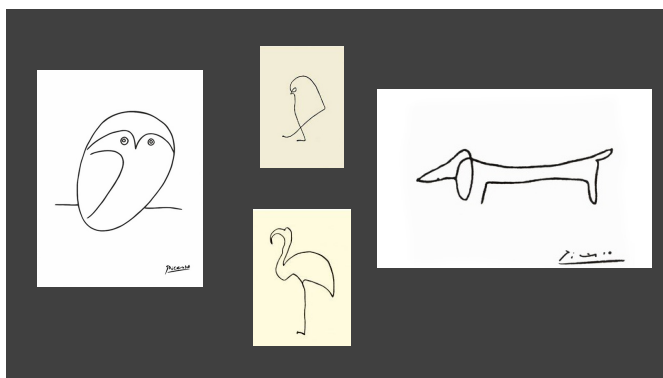


P spending a lot of time looking at Renaissance drawings. In 1905 Durer's Dresden sketchbook was published. Working within a tradition at the same time as overturning it. Drawing was the method used to do this.

Erik Satie drawing. Large scale (2ft x 18 inches). Sketching and rubbing out preliminary drawing and then superimposing it with a strong, defining line. Gives these a three dimensional, almost sculptural quality. Clarity and purity of line.



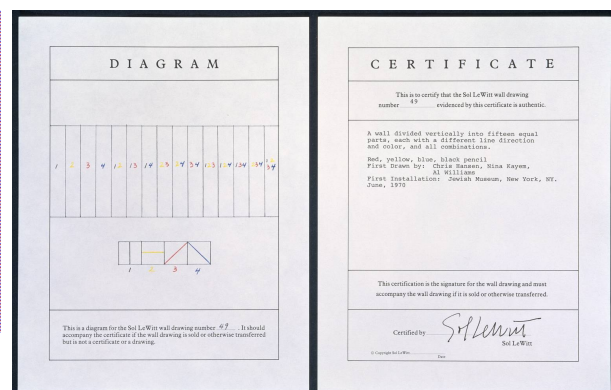
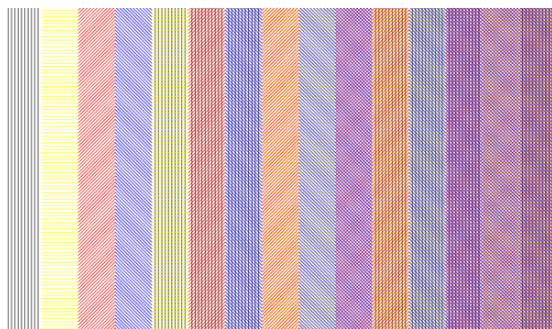
Picasso's use of a strong outline takes us back to the beginning of drawing. Primacy of the line. Experimenting in reducing subject to the smallest and simplest line. Picasso animal line-drawings.



Drawing is taking a line for a walk. Paul Klee.

LeWitt's wall drawings. Line on a wall. Where we started. The primacy of the line. By drawing directly on the wall, Lewitt limited the work's duration; ultimately the wall drawings are painted over. Temporary but the **idea is permanent**, and the drawings can be redrawn on another wall by another person. LeWitt gives instructions so that others can draw the image in the future.

"This kind of art is involved with all types of mental processes. It is usually free from the dependence on the skill of the artist as a craftsman. It is the objective of the artist who is concerned with conceptual art to make his work mentally interesting to the spectator and therefore he would want it to become emotionally dry". LeWitt.



"Art consists in the clarification of thought and feeling, and not the craft of embodying the thought in external form". Collingwood.

Richard Long. Six Hour Run. Represents Long's walk drawn on a map and then the map removed from the background leaving an abstracted, floating, disembodied line.

Richard Long
A six hour run from
Dartmoor to Exmoor
(Pencil and Red Crayon) 1975



Rauschenberg – de Kooning erased. Postmodern drawing.

Robert Rauschenberg
Erased de Kooning drawing
1953



Raises questions about whether the art is the idea or the what is executed?

Hockney – drawing with fingers on ipad. Going back to drawings in cave with fingers.

David Hockney ipad drawings

