Should Drawing Be Fundamental For Designers?

On the boob tube there was a local private art school commercial advertising a graphics degree program. The announcer states..."You don't know how to draw? No problem, you don't have to."

The school claims that their professors can mold you into a superstar designer without having prior drawing skills or talent for that matter.

So that brings up the question. Should drawing be fundamental for designers? Um, ABSOLUTELY! Below we have compiled some of the benefits for designers if they apply drawing to their overall creative process. Stick figures are as far as you go? No problem! We've also listed a couple of links and resources to get your drawing juices going.

See the big picture
When you first get a new project, it's a blank slate. Although that may be exciting for designers, it can also be quite overwhelming. Many times we don't know where or how the ideas will come, and we usually only have an allotted time to concept and lay it out. Sketching can be used to see how you will lay out the piece, whether it's an ad, a website, or a package design. It is the frame upon which you will build. Once you have the elements you want in place, it's a matter of rearranging them around to see what works best. I find it's easier to see the big picture by drawing it out on paper first, rather than jumping on the computer. Remember a computer is a mere tool – nothing more. The ideas will always come from you.

Become a master problem-solver
Drawing is the origin of all design. When you draw, you run into and discover all the obstacles and problems you have to resolve in design down the road. After all, isn't it easier to use a pencil than a bulky mouse? So it's best to start at the root. For example when you draw, you learn where to apply your shadows according to where the light is coming from. You also master color theory. It's one thing to see how colors relate to each other on the color wheel, but it's another when you're sketching with color. Color excites and inspires, so don't be afraid of putting color to paper. I can't emphasize how much drawing as a child and a teen helped to understand design on a deeper level.

Save time and avoid headaches
Countless times designers have attempted to design directly on the computer without any prior sketching. Sometimes it works, but other times it's inefficient. It's like attempting to put up shelves in a house with no walls. It's pretty much useless. I can't stress enough - foundation, foundation, foundation. Lay a basic foundation by sketching your idea out, and you are guaranteed to shave off time towards your final project. There are so many other elements as a designer you have to stress and spend time on. Don't let this be one of them unnecessarily.

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Incorporate your drawing into the project itself

Want to become a double-threat designer? Draw and design! Demonstrating your skills and talents in such a way can add value to the brand you're designing. For example, drawing an image that will be part of a logo will ensure that brand's individuality. To be able to incorporate your unique art within a project can only help your client. By drawing it yourself, you'll definitely stand out in the vast sea of clip art and stock illustrations.

Links and Resources

With so many benefits to drawing, you are probably anxious to get started. Here's a compilation of useful websites and books to assist you.

- **Odosketch** (http://sketch.odopod.com) - Think of this as an online sketchbook. It allows you to save your sketches online by just creating a simple account. It's a treat to browse through what others draw as well.

- **How to Draw It** (http://www.howtodrawit.com) - This is an online step by step on how to draw different things including animals, cartoons, and my favorite, people. The people section includes lighting and line drawings. It's a beginner's level.

- **Fast Sketching Techniques by David J. Rankin** – This book teaches you to loosen up which is what's needed when sketching. It shows you how to capture something using brief and quick strokes.

- **The New Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain by Betty Edwards** – For those who want to delve deeper into drawing, here is the updated version of a classic (Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain, 1979). This book explains drawing to its core and opens your eyes to view drawing in a different way.

- **Autodesk Sketchbook Pro** – This is a paint and drawing software that allows you to transform your desktop computer, laptop, tablet PC, or iPad into the ultimate sketchbook. You can download a free trial. (http://usa.autodesk.com/adsk/servlet/pc/index?id=6848332&siteID=123112)

Concepts are raw, and thus should be developed using the rawest of tools – pencil and paper.

On that note designers, if you want to improve, and create intelligent, well thought-out design pieces, we suggest you dust off your STAEDTLER graphite pencil and rubber kneaded eraser and have at it! Draw!