

# Making a Mark- From Untamed Scribbles to Wholesome Art

– Payal Hiranandani

You may be surprised to know that every one of us has the ability to draw and it is hidden. Betty Edwards gives a good insight as to how to see like an artist and come to a stage where you can get your drawings laminated in a short span of time.

This book is not particularly written for someone who wants to be an artist or has a good amount of talent for drawing. It is for anyone who might not have tried to draw after a young age but had this itch at the back of his mind to learn how to draw. It gives a basis for hands-on comparison, not only to great artists but to yourself before and after you acquire perceptual skills. In fact, it unfolds your creativity to get into the depths of those techniques of observation that have been researched and then used over the years in the name of Art.

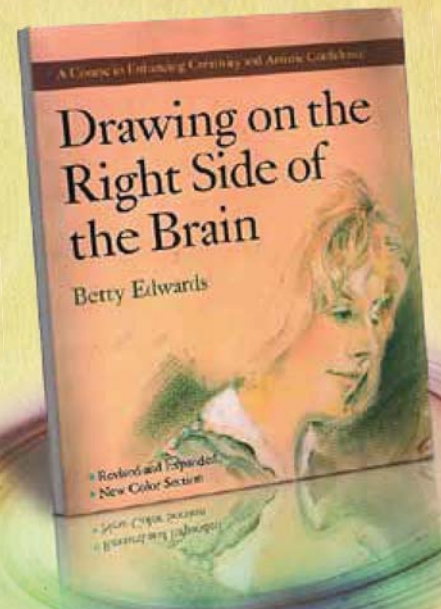
Many of us who were initially interested in drawing form and figures, lose interest by age 9 or 10 after which we may have little or no practise in the domain. So as we reach adulthood, we expect ourselves to draw like adults, and are totally put off when we find that our skills are no better than the time we left at 9 or 10. So we must sort this out- is drawing different from other

life skills like driving and reading? An artist learns the logical progression from line to value to colour to painting. He must possess the ability to see clearly and draw.

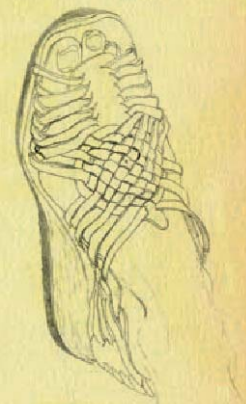
This is an important aspect which is discussed here. When you see in the special way in which experienced artists see, then you can draw.

A creative person is one who can turn a mundane ordinary data into a new creation. It requires the understanding of the two modes of information processing- often the dominant left side of the brain that continually tries to take over the right side, preventing a person from seeing things existing in the mind's eye. What is prescribed here is a good dosage of the right side in order to develop our right brain to draw pictures of our perception by turning off or leaving the logical, analytic, time-conscious left side in the background.

As we are mostly not aware of what goes on inside our brain, the author makes a strong point of being able to recognize the shift from the left mode to the right. Edwards's assumption is that the logical left brain, which is dominant, perceives in symbols and "recognizes" objects in the visual world as belonging to



classes of those symbols; so it interferes with the right brain's ability to simply see what things really look like when trying to draw them. Your left brain says, 'The moon is just a round shaped object', and prevents your right brain from seeing that the moon inside has a much more complex and asymmetrical shape.



Example of contour drawing

However, we must note that all drawing is the same - one drawing task is no harder than the other. Once the eye learns how to see through realism, it can more or less interpret all it sees into drawing.

Many art books tend to speak of 'ideas' but don't really tell you how to achieve an idea. This book contains a number of Instructional exercises on Art - mental exercises



that are used to strengthen the right brain and force the left brain into the background.



Joan Miro's 'Personages with star' (1933)- example of composition

There are exercises that the author has developed as well as traditional drawing methods that she has used, all based on letting your creativity flow. It tells us of a whole number of strategies and how drawing can get as automatic as a toddler learning how to walk.

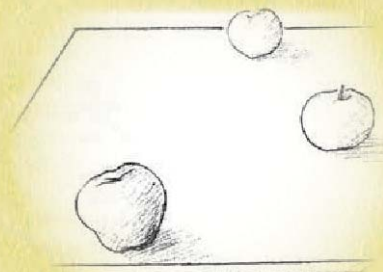
She has touched on topics such as composition (the way the components of a drawing are arranged), negative space drawing which contribute to the interest and balance of the composition, the use of a handy view finder, an aid to perception of a drawing. She has not used the usual methods of teaching perspective, such as the point method but has instead focused on sighting (observing angles and comparing lengths and widths).



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The upside down drawing, mirror images, the contour drawing (not being able to see what you're drawing) of say a hand, bypasses the symbol system and allows you to draw edges just as they are. If you like jigsaw puzzles, try thinking of every piece as separate and then joining all of them to form an image or object. That's how interesting drawing can be!

Other than this, she has also touched upon aspects of shading and colour, a skill most desired by students.



An example of sighting

These exercises help us understand why we can't draw and describe it in detail to guide us through a process of getting over a particular shortcoming.



A before and after portrait drawing

Any one pursuing drawing should be able to make his audience feel for his soul in his art. It does not matter whether the appearance and personality is expressed as much as the viewer feels the emotion that is being conveyed. Paradoxically, it is said, the more the artist sees his surroundings, the more clearly we see through the likeness of an artist. Thus, we know that a drawing is simply a reflection of a side of you that is beautiful and blissful with the kind of energy in you generated in your work.

This book definitely tells a novice how to get his own drawing style as a unique expression to convey to the world. It is important to believe what you see. It can be used as a self-study course for someone really motivated to learn how to draw. I believe anybody can be taught to see, and with that in place, drawing should come naturally.