

Chapter 9: Drawing

Chapters 9-13 cover the fine arts media. *Media* is plural for **medium**, or the material used to create art. Works of art that combine mediums are called **mixed media**.

Why drawing?

Drawing has many purposes, but historically it has been mostly used as **preliminary study**. Through drawing, artists can experiment with different approaches to their compositions. They illustrate, for themselves, what they are going to do.

Illustration is another important purpose of drawing. Before the invention of the camera, illustration was the main way to record visual history. Today it provides visual interpretation of written texts, particularly in children's books and anime or manga.

Drawing is the *most direct* of all of the art media- it records the path of the artist's hand directly onto the paper.

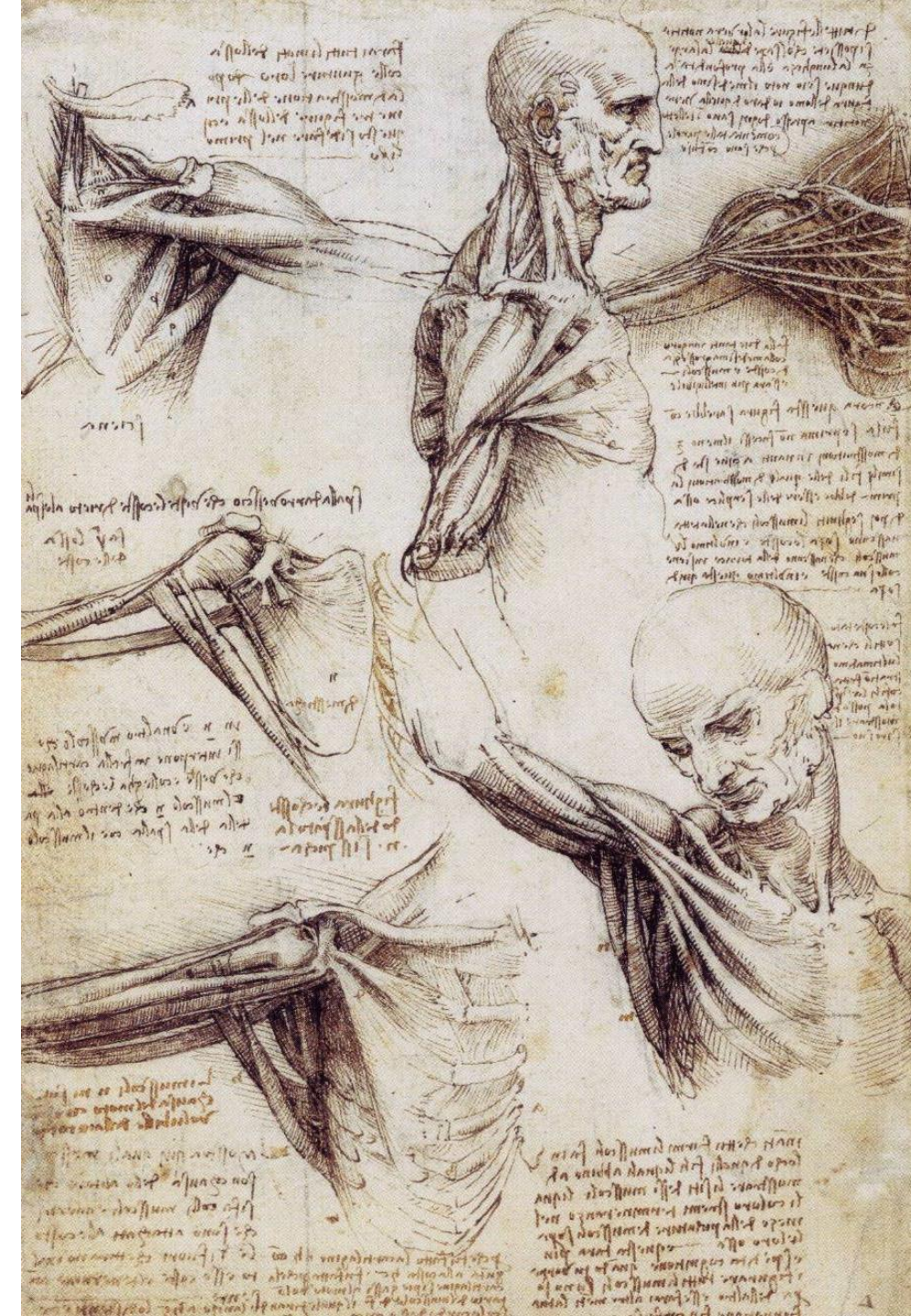
The History of Paper

- Before the late 15th century, paper was extremely costly.
- The image on the right is an early Renaissance drawing from the workshop of Maso Finiguerra. It shows a young man, a student, sketching on a wooden tablet that would later be sanded clean after each drawing.
- The artist that drew the student working worked in pen and ink on rare, expensive paper.
- This work represents a transition point in Western art- the point at which artists began to draw on paper before they committed their ideas to canvas or plaster.
- Copying an artist's work was how a student learned the "higher" art of painting.



Until the arrival of paper, parchment and papyrus were used. Paper manufacturing began in the Western world in 13th century Italy, and was traditionally made out of fiber derived from scraps of cloth, like hemp, cotton, and linen. Paper was invented in China in 105 CE and arrived in the West through trade with the Muslim world.

By the end of the 15th century, drawing had become more of its own medium. It was seen as embodying the artist's personality and creative genius. Leonardo da Vinci's drawings (like the one on the right) are especially fascinating, as they reveal his process and invention.



Drawing Materials

DRY MEDIA	WET MEDIA
Metalpoint	Pen and ink
Chalk	Wash and brush
Charcoal	
Graphite	
Pastel	

Different drawing materials produce different effects. Drawing materials are generally divided into two categories- **dry media** and **wet media** (or liquid media).

Pigment: a coloring agent, usually a mineral, such as cadmium or cobalt.

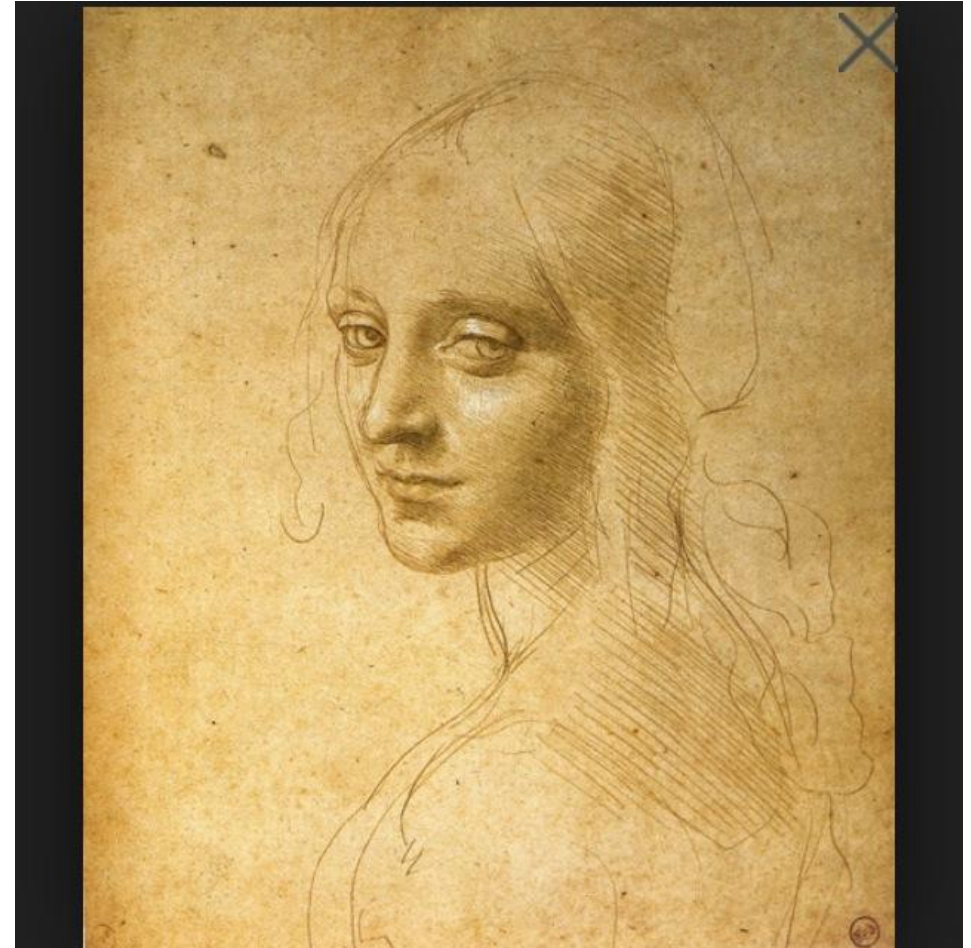
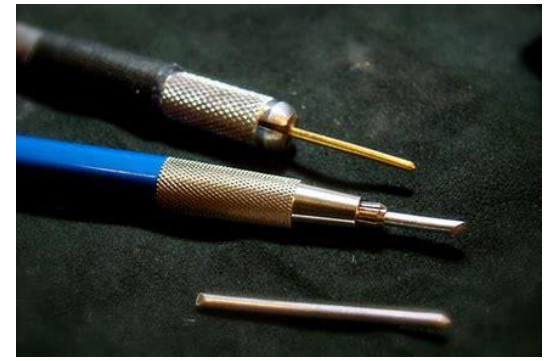
Binder: a substance that holds the pigment together.

Metalpoint

- One of the most common drawing techniques in late 15th-early 16th century Italy
- A **stylus** (point) made of gold, silver, or some other metal is applied to a sheet of paper prepared with a mixture of powdered bones or lead white and gumwater. The metal reacts chemically with the prepared ground, producing a line.
- If the stylus is silver, the medium is called *silverpoint*.
- Metalpoint lines are pale gray, delicate, and cannot be erased. It relies on **delineation**- a descriptive representation of subject matter through outline or contour lines.

Above right: metal styluses.

Below: Leonardo da Vinci, Study of a Woman's Head or of the Angel of the Virgine delle Rocce, 1473, silverpoint with white highlights on prepared paper.



Chalk and Charcoal

- Charcoal sticks are made from burnt wood, like hardwood and vines
- Very soft, easily smudged and blended
- Much easier to give a sense of volume through light and dark
- Requires a paper with tooth- a rough surface to which the material can adhere
- Drawings can be kept from smudging by spraying a synthetic resin fixative over the finished work
- Today, charcoal has become one of the most popular drawing media, due to its expressive directness and immediacy

Below: charcoal chunks and vine charcoal



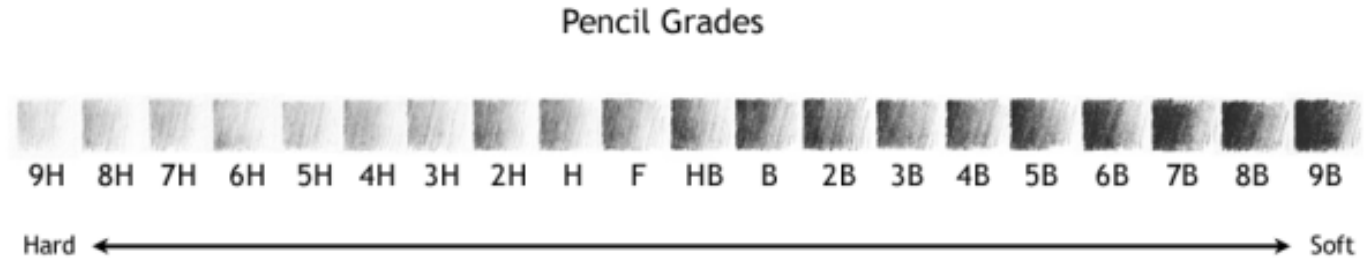
Georgia O'Keeffe, *Banana Flower*, 1933,
21 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Charcoal and black chalk on paper.

The flower looks volumetric, with rounded surfaces that curve around. This is accomplished through the subtle transitions of light and dark areas that blend into one another. Charcoal and chalk are much softer than metalpoint, and they can spread across the drawing surface easily and blend together.

Charcoal and chalk drawings are frequently more concerned with variations of light and dark value rather than delineation.

Graphite



- A soft form of carbon similar to coal, discovered in 1564
- The lead **pencil**- graphite enclosed in a cylinder of soft wood- is one of the most common drawing tools
- Early *conté crayons* substituted clay for some of the graphite. This technology was adapted into the making of pencils, and allowed for the relative hardness of the pencil to be controlled
- A scale of pencil grades, above, shows the hardness and softness of graphite from 9H to 9B. Artists are able to achieve a wide range of lights and darks by using this range of graphite.

This is an example of a highly developed photorealistic graphite drawing. It is a little larger than the size of a sheet of graphite paper.

Vija Celmins
Untitled (Ocean)
1970

graphite on acrylic ground on paper



Celmins
recalled
having a
realization
that

“the surface of the ocean was somehow like the surface of the paper and that I could combine the images and have the image and the drawing unfold together. I really didn’t fudge around or erase or smear. The graphite went on quite clear. I usually started actually at the right hand corner and moved straight up, like a record of a double consciousness. A consciousness of the surface of the paper and also the surface of the image. It’s about a kind of double reality of seeing what’s there in a most ordinary way, a flat piece of paper and then seeing the double reality of an image that implies a different kind of space which is laid on top of the other image, but which really isn’t there... I like to think of it like a ghost of an ocean. There is a feeling of timelessness that’s implied in an image of an ocean that really has no boundaries.”

Pastel

- Essentially a chalk medium with colored *pigment* and a nongreasy *binder* added to it
- Pastels come in sticks labeled soft, medium, and hard. The more binder that is added, the harder the stick
- The harder the stick, the less intense its color-increased quantities of binder dilutes the pigment
- This is why we associate the word “pastel” with pale, light colors
- Like chalk, pastels are extremely fragile and the powder can literally fall off of the paper, so final drawings must be fixed

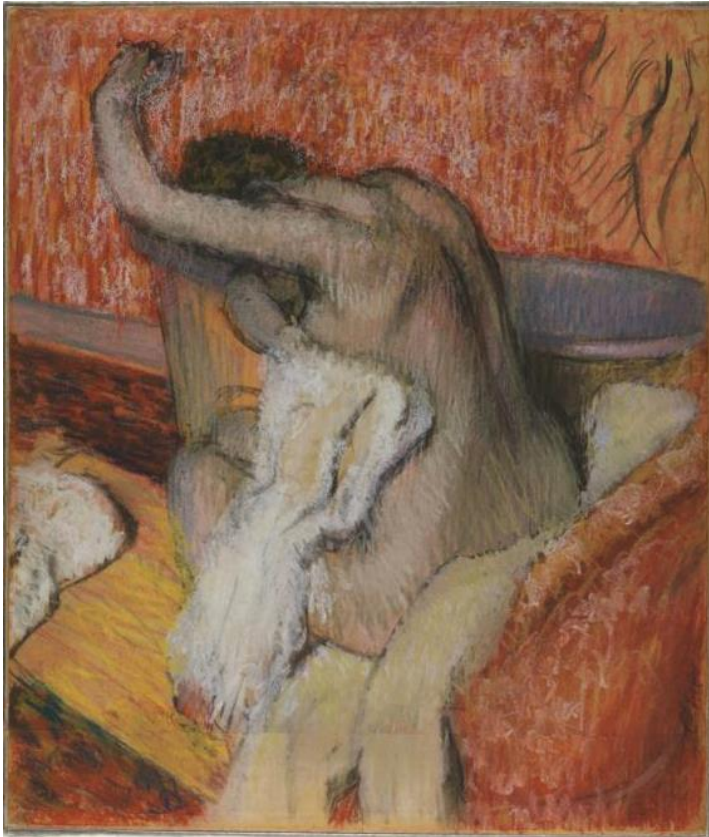


Ada Adriano

Edgar Degas, *After the Bath, Woman Drying Herself*, 1889-90

Pastel on paper, 26 5/8" by 22 3/4"

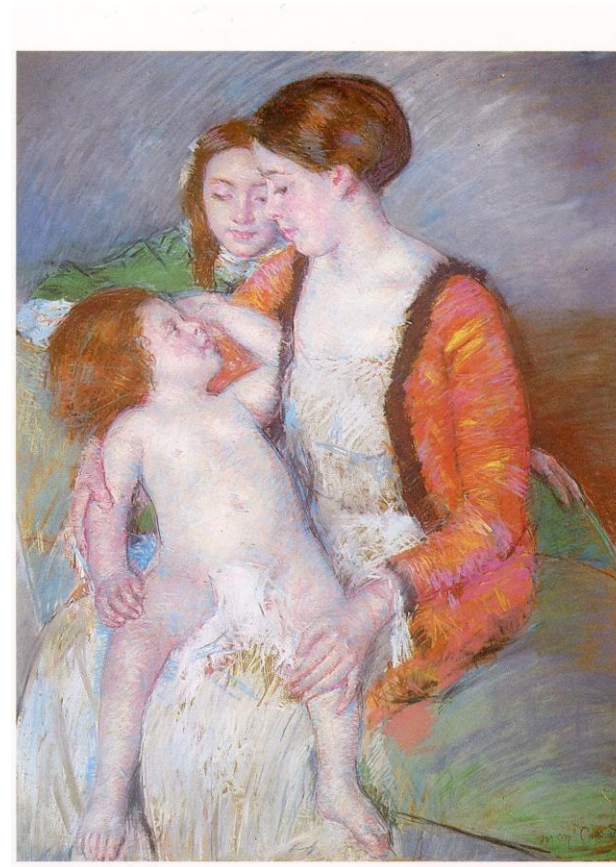
Degas built up pigments in successive layers in hatch lines. The layers create an optical mixture of color.



Mary Cassatt, *Young Mother, Daughter, and Son*, 1913

Pastel on paper, 43 1/4" by 33 1/4"

Degas was Cassatt's mentor, and she learned to use the pastel medium in even bolder ways than Degas. Her use of gestures and color across the composition showed great freedom of technique.



Liquid Media- *Pen and Ink*

- In liquid media, pigments are suspended in liquid binders that flow more easily on the surface than dry media.
- As paper became more available, during the Renaissance, most drawings were done with iron-gall ink, made from a mixture of iron salts and an acid. The ink was black at the time the drawings were made, but have browned with age.
- The quill pen used by most Renaissance artists, often made from a goose or swan feather, allows for greater variation in line and texture than is possible with a metalpoint stylus or a pencil.



Elisabetta Sirani, *The Holy Family with a Kneeling Monastic Saint*, 1660, pen and brown ink with black chalk on paper, 10 3/8" by 7 3/8"

Depending on the artist's manipulation of the quill and the absorbency of the paper, lines can be thickened or thinned.

Sirani diluted her ink and used it to render light and shadow expressively. She was so skilled that, according to story, she was forced to work in public in order to demonstrate that her work was her own and not done by a man.



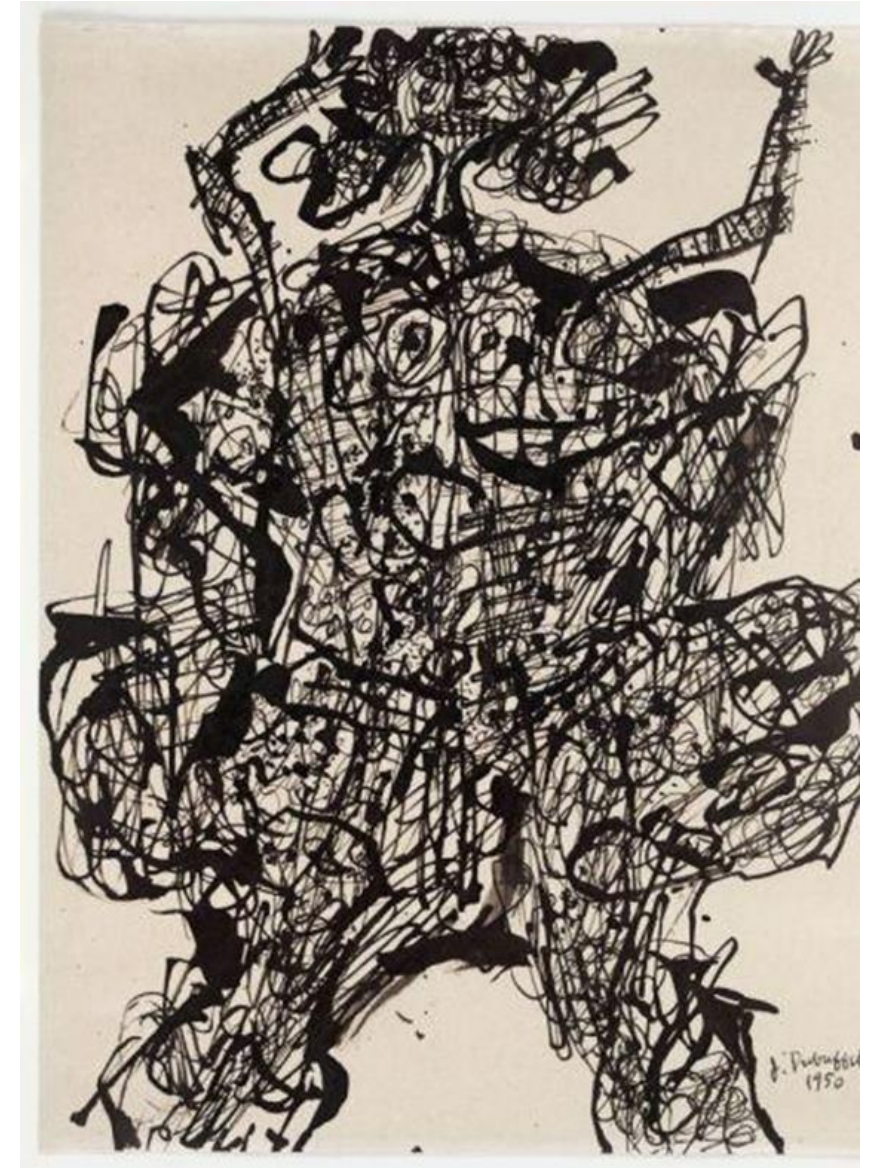
Jean Dubuffet

Corps de Dame

June-December 1950

Pen, reed pen, and ink, 10 5/8" by 8 3/8"

Dubuffet's use of ink and line seems almost violent. Though many see his work as misogynistic (the product of someone who hates women), it can also be read as an attack on academic figure drawing. The pursuit of formal perfection and beauty has been traditionally used to justify drawing from the nude figure. In this drawing, Dubuffet flattens form and transforms draftsmanship into *automatism*, unconscious and random automatic marking.



Wash and Brush

- When ink is diluted with water and applied by brush in broad, flat areas, the result is called a wash.
- Brushes allow artists to control the widths of their lines.
- Drawing with a brush is a technique with a long tradition in the East, because the brush is used as a writing instrument, such as in Chinese calligraphy
- Brushes allow for extremely expressive lines, immediacy, and spontaneity



Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1740s, pen and brown wash over graphite sketch, 11 3/5" by 8 1/3"

- First layer: preliminary graphite sketch
- Second layer: pen-and-ink drawing
- Third layer: brown wash

The wash helps to define volume and form by adding shadow. It also creates a visual pattern of alternating light and dark elements that help make the drawing more dynamic.



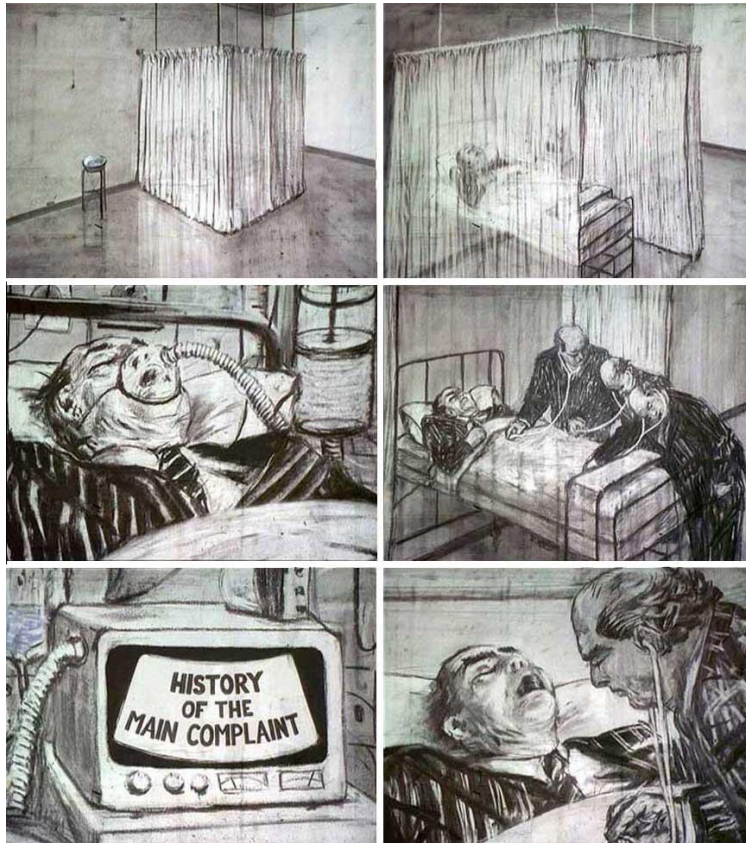
Innovative Drawing Media

- Drawing is by nature an exploratory medium. It invites experimentation.
- Artists have made innovative drawings by thinking about cutting with scissors as a kind of line (Henri Matisse's "Cut Out"s), making installations with life-size drawn figures (Whitfield Lovell's "Whispers from the Wall", and creating animated films built up through single drawings that are altered through erasure, addition, and redrawing (William Kentridge).
- Drawing also has an important place in popular culture, through comic books and graphic novels.



Left: Henri Matisse, *Venus*, 1952

Right: Whitfield Lovell, *Whispers from the Walls*, 1999. Mixed media installation, full scale recreation of a 1920's North Texas one room house, period artifacts, charcoal drawings on wall



Left: William Kentridge, *History of the Main Complaint*, 1996. Stills from a 35mm shown as video, 5 min 50 sec
Right: Marjane Satrapi, page from the graphic novel *Persepolis*, 2001, ink on paper

(left)

Käthe Kollwitz

Self Portrait, Drawing

1993

Charcoal on brown laid Ingres paper, 18 ¾" x 25"

(right)

Léon Augustin Lhermitte

An Elderly Peasant Woman

1878

charcoal with black chalk, with stumping, scraping erasing and wetting, on wove paper

18 11/16 x 15 9/16 in.

