

UNDERSTANDING TALENT



Brenda Hoddinott

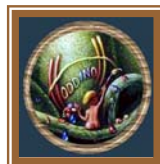
A-02 GETTING STARTED: This inspirational article provides insights into myths surrounding art and artists, and is divided into the following sections:

- ✚ Thankfully, nobody ever told me I couldn't draw.
- ✚ "Talent" is a word often misunderstood.
- ✚ Individuals progress at their own special pace.
- ✚ Talent must be nurtured and developed.
- ✚ Almost everyone can learn to draw.
- ✚ Drawing means something different to everyone.
- ✚ The joy of drawing is in the process not the product.
- ✚ Drawing is seeing.
- ✚ The act of drawing produces a physical reward, art.
- ✚ Draw in a way you really love.
- ✚ You have already taken the first step!
- ✚ Art has become very accessible in recent years

7 PAGES – 2 ILLUSTRATIONS

This article is recommended for artists of all ages and abilities, as well as home schooling, academic and recreational fine art educators.

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Thankfully, nobody ever told me I couldn't draw.

As an introverted child, I was oblivious to the meaning of the word “talent”. I discovered drawing could entertain me for hours and provide me with something everybody needs, a sense of being special. The respect and praise of a friend, parent or teacher gave me a boost of self-confidence, which enhanced my desire to constantly improve my skills. Growing up in the small town of Corner Brook, Newfoundland, presented the challenge of accessing information necessary to improve my drawing skills.

ILLUSTRATION 02-01



I was an avid reader and loved visiting our public library, in which I spent many hours devouring everything I could find about art, from children's picture books to encyclopedias with photographs of art by the Great Masters. I was rarely without inspiration or subject material for my drawings.

My greatest love was drawing faces. I thrived on the challenge of being able to draw likenesses of friends and celebrities, and it was this early interest in faces, which ultimately brought me beyond the frustrations of self-education, to a very rewarding career in art.

By the time I discovered that many people believed “drawing” to be very difficult or required a special talent, I was already well on my way to becoming technically skilled.

As a young artist of fourteen (after several years of teaching myself) I drew this little girl and her doll.

“Talent” is a word often misunderstood.

Talented artists are often presented to us through movies, television, and media as magical, illusive, and mysterious eccentrics. In the art world, you sometimes hear the media hailing such things as human excrement, or random blobs of paint on a canvas, as great works of art.

If you're anything like me, you struggle to understand these artworks. You're often left scratching your head, amused yet puzzled. The critics encourage you to believe that these artworks are the result of “extraordinary talent”. No wonder so many people believe that talent itself is magical, elusive, and not within the grasp of mere mortals, such as us! However, even the bizarre or zany stuff is usually great for a few giggles.

There will always be artists who prefer to rely on “shock” to achieve recognition. But, the general population seems to respect artists who demonstrate strong technical skills in their style (or styles) of choice, representational, impressionistic, or abstract.

Talent is actually the self-discovery and acknowledgment that you possess the interest and motivation needed to become exceptional in a specific area.

Individuals progress at their own special pace.

In fact, drawing is as natural a human activity as learning to walk or talk. From the ancient caves of pre-historic humans to the tombs of Egyptian and Native peoples all over the world, we have found evidence that humans used art to communicate and immortalize events and objects precious to their lives and cultures. The creators, of these ancient artworks, were probably not disparaged by self-doubt. They made art because it was the natural thing to do.

From the beginnings of history to modern day, prodigies have been considered as persons who acquire a special ability with little effort. Talent is understood by many to only include these people. However, most prodigies, from a very young age, obsessively work to develop their skills. By continuing to challenge themselves, they discover their ability to transcend to extraordinary levels of technical competence.

You are a unique individual with diverse abilities. Be patient with yourself. Your drawing skills develop over time. If your dream is to be a talented artist, you need to be true to yourself. Hard work, patience and devotion inevitably challenge a mediocre artist to become an exceptional artist.

Talent must be nurtured and developed.

Sadly, the world is full of “talented” people who never pursue that which they love, because they understand talent to be some magical elusive quality.

Many people arrive at the conclusion that talent is only available to individuals who were born with it. I disagree. I wasn’t “born” an artist. With various books I taught myself how to draw and so can you! Continue to explore and nurture your desire to draw. We all possess talent.

Almost everyone can learn to draw.

Most individuals are capable of developing superior skills in specific areas. Many persons, including individuals challenged by visual, physical and mental limitations, enjoy drawing. The drawing techniques presented in my books and CD-ROMS require only two abilities, the ability to see, and some way to hold a pencil.

Luckily, I can see and have hands. Some people without hands have become successful artists by accepting the challenge of using their mouth or feet to hold their drawing tools. If you have some vision and a way to hold a pencil, the only obstacle left is making a commitment. With a better understanding of talent and ability, you begin to recognize that drawing can be one of your special skills.

Drawing means something different to everyone.

You could look up the definition of drawing in a dictionary or even create your own nonspecific definition such as: Drawing is the applying of an art medium to a surface so as to produce a visual image.

These words don't define drawing as it personally relates to you. What comes into your mind when you think of the word drawing? How do YOU define this word? Put on your thinking cap for a moment, and finish the following sentence.

To me, drawing is.....

You can learn to draw. With interest, patience and commitment, you can become as good at drawing as you wish. The most important thing is that you are actually drawing, making art, and communicating through and nurturing the artist within.

The joy of drawing is in the process not the product.

Drawing adds a new and exciting activity to your life. The joy and personal satisfaction of creating a drawing is both your incentive, and reward. The process of discovering this ability is enriching to all aspects of your life. The drawing process enhances many aspects of human development. As a means of expressing yourself, the language of art is a relaxing, stimulating and productive communication.

Your drawings illustrate your personal perceptions. Drawing challenges you to communicate what you see into a non-verbal language. With only a few supplies and some basic skills, you soon find yourself taking pride in your new achievements.

Drawing is seeing.

Through your own eyes, as an artist, you appreciate everything around you from new perspectives, wherein you visually explore with a whole new purpose, discovering drawing subjects!

Drawing is more than simply rendering a specific object. It visually defines your choice of drawing subjects from your own unique perspectives. No other person in the whole world is exactly like you.

The act of drawing produces a physical reward, art.

It really doesn't matter why you draw or who sees your drawings. Maybe you hope to one day publicly exhibit your drawings. Or, you may choose to only share them with family and friends. You also have the option of keeping them all to yourself. Your drawings serve as a journal of your artistic journey.

For example, have you ever thought about writing a book? Use your own drawings to illustrate your literary art.

You can use your drawings to decorate your surroundings with a personal touch. Have some of your drawings framed and hang them in your home or workspace.

Family, co-workers, and friends often become quite fascinated by your artistic creations. Don't be surprised if they soon request some of your drawings for their own homes. Of course, this is a good time to encourage them to take up drawing themselves.

ILLUSTRATION 02-02



In this illustration, you see one of my many current styles of drawing. I have no names or labels to identify my styles. I simply enjoy drawing in various ways.

Draw in a way you really love.

Every artist seems to have a unique approach to drawing. Some love big bold loose drawings, while others like little tiny drawings with lots of intricate details.

Deciding which style applies to a specific drawing is not easy. Many artists choose to not label their drawings at all. Your personal style evolves each time you attempt new and diverse methods of drawing. Keep an open mind while carefully noting which of your drawings you prefer. Styles are neither right nor wrong... they just are. With time, your style (or styles) develops all by itself.

You have already taken the first step!

In that you are reading this, you are already on your way to becoming an artist. Perceived personal limitations are not obstacles. Your only challenge is making a commitment.

For most of my adult life, I have chosen to share my love of art with both children and adults by teaching art. Today I am blessed with the commitment and technology to bring my knowledge and love of drawing to you from my web site at:

www.finearteducation.com or www.drawspace.com

Whether it is your desire to learn the very basics of drawing or to improve the drawing skills you already have, my classes will hopefully have something of interest to you.

Art has become very accessible in recent years

Vast art resources are available through galleries, the Internet, art books, and possibly even within your own community.

With careful observation of the drawings of other artists, you gain invaluable information, which you can apply to your own drawings. Take time to examine, and appreciate a diverse range of art and artists.

Investigate and participate in some of the wonderful drawing e-groups, where international artists share tips, critique one another's works, and openly discuss various art techniques and art resources.

Check out your local community based educational facilities and recreational centers, for drawing programs in your area. You can always benefit from drawing classes and workshops. You meet others within your community who also want to improve their drawing skills, techniques and styles.

As you uncover local art resources, you meet diverse artists, and have opportunities to become involved in art groups. Many art groups organize incredible workshops, taught by prominent artists, and the camaraderie and enjoyment is well worth your time.

With an interest in self-expression, you CAN develop exceptional drawing skills.

BRENDA HODDINOTT - BIOGRAPHY

As a self-educated teacher, visual artist, portraitist, forensic artist, and illustrator, Brenda Hoddinott utilizes diverse art media including graphite, technical pen, colored pencil, chalk pastel, charcoal, conté crayon, and oil paints.

My philosophy on teaching art is to focus primarily
on the enjoyment aspects while gently introducing
the technical and academic. Hence, in creating a
passion for the subject matter, the quest for
knowledge also becomes enjoyable.



>Brenda Hoddinott<

Born in St. John's, Newfoundland, Brenda grew up in the small town of Corner Brook. She developed strong technical competencies with a personal commitment to self directed learning, and the aid of assorted "Learn to Draw" books. During Brenda's twenty-five year career as a self-educated civilian forensic artist, numerous criminal investigation departments have employed Brenda's skills, including Royal Canadian Mounted Police and municipal police departments. In 1992, Brenda was honored with a commendation from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and in 1994, she was awarded a Certificate of Membership from "Forensic Artists International".

Her home-based art career included graphic design, and teaching recreational drawing and painting classes. As supervisor of her community's recreational art department, Brenda hired and trained teachers, and designed curriculum for several children's art programs. In 1998, Brenda chose to end her eighteen-year career as an art educator in order to devote more time to writing, drawing, painting, and developing her websites.

Drawspace <http://www.drawspace.com> incorporates her unique style and innovative approach to curriculum development. This site offers downloadable and printable drawing classes for students of all abilities from the age of eight through adult. Students of all ages, levels and abilities have praised the simple step-by-step instructional approach. This site is respected as a resource for fine art educators, home schooling programs, and educational facilities throughout the world.

LEARN-TO-DRAW BOOKS BY BRENDA HODDINOTT

-  **Drawing for Dummies (2003):** Wiley Publishing, Inc., New, York, NY, this 336 page book is available on various websites and in major bookstores internationally.
-  **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Drawing People (2004):** Winner of the Alpha-Penguin Book of the Year Award 2004, Alpha - Pearson Education – Macmillan, Indianapolis, IN, this 360 page book is available on various websites and in major bookstores internationally.