



# The Art Elements 1

## Texture | project brief

### Materials + Equipment (when working at home)

Soft pencils (a selection between 2B – 8B), putty rubber, chalk pastel, pencil crayons  
Sketchbook or A2 sized paper (paper should be fairly smooth with only a slight texture for pencil drawing; heavy texture for chalk pastel drawings)  
Still-life objects – see suggestions lower down

### Project Brief

Examples of **Tactile textures**

- Collage
- Impasto (palette knife painting)
- Glossy/smooth varnished pictures and the Resin paintings that are so popular
- Abstract painting can often be nothing but a collection of textures (and colour/tone, shape, line, etc)

Examples of **Visual textures**

- Watercolour painting textures like
  - Wet in wet blending of colours
  - Textures created with salt/alcohol/printing with cling film, etc

Textures (Visual and Tactile) are important in paintings and drawings because they

- Engage the viewer – people like to touch or imagine what it would be like to touch an object.
- Communicate information about the objects surface texture (hard, soft, wood, glass)
- Connects emotionally with the viewer (snuggling up in a down duvet, sharp as glass).
- Create interest without having to alter the colour or tone.

**Remember:**

1. Surface **Textures** are both **Shape** and **Pattern**.
2. Textures are made visible by the way light is absorbed by, and reflected off a surface.

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## Step 1

**Aim: To learn how to draw visual textures (the surface quality of an object) using tone/shading and colour.**

Texture is important to help make objects stand out from others. Getting it correct communicates the right message and meaning to the viewer. Imagine if you couldn't tell the difference between

- a glass, China or plastic cup? Imagine drinking tea from a plastic cup – not right, is it?
- Brass, silver, gold or aluminium objects? Colour alone won't be convincing enough!
- A flower with petals that look like wood? A bit strange!

*I spent my 5 year high school career attempting to paint copper jugs, ceramic bowls, glass vases, and of course fruit (that's the project the teacher kept on setting us!). Even though I never aspired to be a 'still life painter' I still regard that practice and discipline an important part of my art education.*

***So have a go and see how you do!***

### Drawing

- Select 2 objects of contrasting qualities and surface textures
  - a glass and a shell; bunch of keys and old leather boot; shiny cutlery and crumbly biscuit; ceramic bowl and clear glass, etc
- Use pencil, graphite with a putty rubber to make a sketch of your still life objects.
- For inspiration and guidance
  - See my [Gallery of still life drawings](#).

When looking and drawing your objects, notice how

- Relationships between the various tones tell us a lot about the substance the object is made from.
- Colour saturation (intensity) and tone (light/dark) work together to describe a surface.
- Not all light-weight objects are light in tone and not all heavy-weight objects are dark in tone – look carefully.
- Accurate drawing of the shapes, correct perspective and proportion is needed to describe the object convincingly.

### TIPS:

- Use everything you have learnt from the previous projects about Line, Colour, Tone and Form to help you draw the textures and surface quality.
- Look carefully and study the objects well without rushing. Each of my pencil sketches took between 60 – 90 minutes to complete.



### Step 3

**Aim: To use a number of contrasting textures together within a single colour drawing to enhance the quality of each object.**

Step 3 takes inspiration from **my early college project** from many years ago. Even today I remember making this drawing as clearly as if it was yesterday. Not because the drawing is brilliant (it's not!) but because of the intensity of looking and learning.

Look also at the contemporary version of a traditional 17<sup>th</sup> century **Dutch still life** still life. Both can be seen on my [Pinterest board](#).

#### Contrasting textures

Showing off the true quality of objects can often be best achieved by having a contrasting texture/surface quality next to it. This is called playing-off one object against the other.

- Hard //soft
- Smooth // rough
- Shiny // dull
- Heavy // light
- Transparent // translucent // opaque

Using textures in this way is important when drawing still life objects, and equally so when creating abstract compositions.

1. Set up a simple still life arrangement of objects with contrasting textures and qualities.
2. Draw your arrangement in pencil and chalk pastel, or soft pencil crayons concentrating on the relationships between the different textures.

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## Notes

- If you are working on this project after attending the Art Elements course remember to refer to your notes and remember all that you learnt in class.
- Remember you need to be thinking and applying all that you have learnt about the Principles of Art to help you create a coherent and visually strong 'finished' drawing or painting.
- Use the '[Leave a reply](#)' form on my website to ask me any questions if you are working on this project at home, or sign up to attend the [Art Elements](#) course if you haven't already.

**Good luck and enjoy!**

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