









Cezanne, Oil on Canvas, still life with seven apples, 1878

Ever felt frustrated having worked so hard on a drawing – only to find it still looks ‘flat’?

Is it the proportions? The perspective? Perhaps the composition?

Whilst these all play an integral part, the most effective method of making your drawings appear three dimensional, is understanding how light logic works.

If line drawing creates the proportions, handling of tone creates the form.

The theory seems simple and the changes in technique small, but applying the principles of how tone, light and shade work, will improve the illusion of form in every drawing you do – regardless of the subject.

And the exciting part about it is, once you ‘get’ lighting, the principles never change.

In Part 1 of this 3 Part series ([Part 2 – Drawing shading demonstration](#)) we look at the theory, the drawing and then paint a simple form focusing on shadow, light and edges.

You might find it isn’t your drawing technique that’s wrong, but your lighting...

How does light behave when it hits a form?

Predictably.

If we’re using one single light source.

The problem is most of the time at home, you don’t have one single light source, you have a comfy chair, a cup of tea and 10 minutes to sketch your dog. There’s multiple lights coming from above, window lights and maybe lights from a t.v or reading light.

Just by the nature of the lighting setup we have in our homes, it makes it really difficult to achieve a dramatic drawing successfully.

To make something look three dimensional, you need the light to do the work for you –

