# **The Imagemaking Process: Approach & Techniques**

## **Creativity and Originality**

In graphic design, nearly every designer will have to create original images. Not everything you need will be available online nor will photography always be the best avenue for your design projects. However, if you are just starting to get into graphic design, you may not be as familiar with the various techniques for image making. Here's where we can have some fun with creativity and originality.

Even when not working for a client, making images and playing with techniques on your own time can be rewarding in the long term. As you begin to master a wide variety of techniques and get comfortable with experimentation, you will develop your own, unique style. The versatility of techniques at your command also draws new clients looking for a graphic designer who is able to produce a wide selection of images to choose from. Let's check out some approaches to imagemaking.

## **Process**

In **process-driven image making**, our focus is on the creative process itself. We're less concerned about creating a perfect image and more concerned with trying out new techniques and modifying ones we already know. We might have a general idea of what the final image will look like, but most times the technique will determine exactly what we get.

When working with new ways of creating, it's best to begin with a simple start. That could mean using the technique on basic shapes or only using a one-step process. Get comfortable with it at first, then begin to experiment with more complicated variations. In this way, you can end up making a number of different images to compare. You'll know which way works best for you when you step back and look at all that you produced. You will also end up mastering new techniques along the way.

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## **Iteration**

In many ways, the repeated variations in process lend itself to our next step. **Iteration** in image making means that we produce a large number of images with some slight variations as we go. We have the same basic image at the core, but we rework it, making new versions, and try a variety of to see what looks better for your project.

| iteration  ***Each image uses the same lamp but continually makes changes in the design.*** |
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Usually, we will confine ourselves to variations on a single technique as well. Just be sure to step back and really analyze your images, comparing them to one another. Often, we find iteration really forces us to learn and master a technique through repetition.

## **Generation**

**Generation** as an approach to imagemaking focuses on volume. Just keep making images using a variety of techniques and perspectives. In this approach, we do not hold to any right way to represent our subject. Many times, we're surprised to find a technique we might normally dismiss produces an exciting result. No matter which image you select at the end, the entire generative process will give you more familiarity with techniques and hone your skills, especially when you use experimental techniques.

## **A Few Techniques**

So, before we wrap this up, let's look at a few techniques you can

| generation  ***A single strawberry can inspire a plethora of images with various techniques and styles.*** |
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### **Plug-In or Unplug**

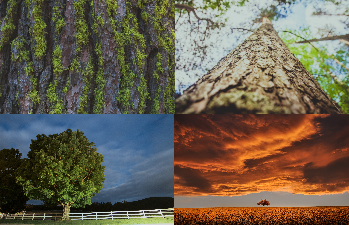
If you are more familiar with creating images by hand, it's time to plug-in and just play with making digital images. Leaving your comfort zone will force you out of common patterns and styles that might have you in a rut.

If you are a digital image maker, shut off the computer and get your hands into the process. Sometimes, there is a satisfaction to having traces of pigment you can scrub off your hands with mysterious streaks of paint in your hair at the end of the day.

Embracing the unfamiliar wakes up parts of your brain and can inspire entirely new compositions.

### **Play with Distance**

Explore the limits of your subject, determining how close you can get and still identify the object. Remember those extreme close up segments on *Sesame Street* where you tried to guess what you were looking at, only to find out it was pores on a face, a tire tread, or an orange peel? You can also zoom out and see how far away you can get and still have a recognizable subject that maintains its position as the focus of your composition

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***Can you still recognize a tree in each image?***

### **Use New Mediums**

If you're used to painting, try pencil drawing. If you are used to digital images, create a paper collage. Basically, use a material you've rarely or never used before. Get the feel of the new medium and see how it changes the way you produce your image.

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