

ALLOGRAPHIC DRAWING: The term allographic drawing is taken initially from Nelson Goodman, and is intended to provide a conceptual tool for understanding a broad range of contemporary art production and the attitude underpinning it.

The idea behind the term is that artworks are allographic forms, and that they are, in short, examples of that genus of drawing that includes diagrams and informal notations. Nelson Goodman introduces the term “allographic art” in his discussion of representation and notation in *Languages of Art*.¹ Goodman introduces the term to distinguish between autographic – being peculiar to an individual – and allographic meaning any other form of notation that is not autographic.

However, the *Oxford Dictionary* has it that allographic derives from the Greek root for ‘other’ and distinguishes between alternate forms of a letter of the alphabet, or of cases in typography, or examples from handwriting. The addition of the Greek word *graphe* meaning writing or drawing via the Greek word *graphikos* leads to the 1950’s compound word allographic.

Thus allographic representations are graphic records carried out by other means than conventional drawing, engraving, or lettering. In essence, allographic representation, allows for the widest possible set of variations of a form, and includes an unlimited selection of media. Such an understanding does necessitate the expansion of the notion of drawing to include three-dimensional representation and whether a drawing is two- or three- dimensional no longer carries any significance.

Allographic work is an aspect of Richard Serra’s aesthetic that is usually discussed as drawing with materials; “Drawing was implied in the activity. The making of the form itself, whether lead rolls or poles for the Prop Pieces, was implied in the drawing within the physical transformation of material from one state to another”.² By this definition, Robert Smithson, Fred Sandback, Barry LeVa, Michael Heizer, Eva Hesse, Robert Rohm, Nancy Graves, and Sol LeWitt may all, in addition to Serra, be considered to be drawing with materials. Drawing as a conscious aspect of American sculpture certainly extends back at least to David Smith, Richard Lippold, and Ibram Lassaw’s work from the late 1930s.

Allographic drawing is drawing with materials, as distinct from the idea of notation. Drawing is about notation but allographic drawing has a further stipulation, namely that it be executed with non-standard drawing materials.

1. Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art*. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976), p. 113.

2. Richard Serra, ‘About Drawing’. *Interviews, Etc. 1970-1980* (New York: The Hudson River Museum, 1980), p. 77.