Elements of Visual Representation
Prof. Shatarupa Thakurta Roy
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
**Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur**

Lecture – 45

In the previous topic, I made a statement that design is all about decoding a sign. So, we tried to decode, analyze, and then see how things are done. So, if the surface looks like a very shiny or dull, we try to find out, how many times we have repeated a pattern to get that shiner, and how many times we have repeated that particular pattern to get that dullness on the surface.

There are often images that we can visualize; there are certain images, certain concepts that give us some kind of automatic tendency to a visualization. But there are certain concept that is it becomes struggle some to visualize them. Like, when we say that, it is a moonwalk. So, it like certain thing appears to our mind, it like, if somebody says or we get to hear or we imagine a golden surface, we quickly like promptly we visualize a surface that is shiny.

So, there are lots of similar ideas, which are easy to visualize, there are also ideas, which are not as easy as this to visualize. But finally, we get into a process, where you know it is all about, we decode, we see we analyze and we go on that way. With that, I will also contradict this statement a little bit with another statement that design is all about fooling our eyes. So, what we see is, what is not there, what we see is, what we perceive, but they may not exist there. So, that is applicable for the virtual reality and also in reality, what we see and what we see as a real, are not actually real. So, let us see how it works.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:11)
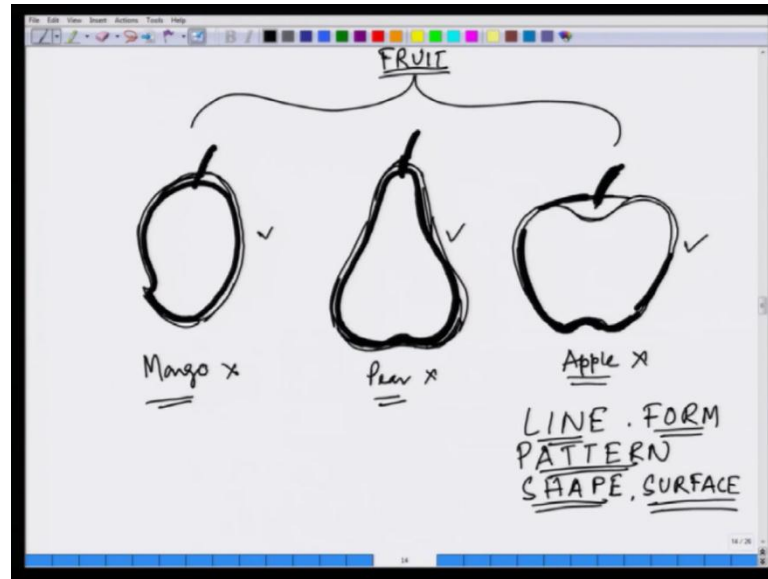
So, they are a few line drawings and we can quickly read them, identify them as a mango, a pear, an apple, three of them will come under a category; that is fruit, any child will tell us that. But what are they actually, they are nothing but line, pattern, shapes, a formation, form and also surface. So, what we see here is not mango, it is not pear, it is not apple, but they are images of mango, pear and apple. So, this is how we perceive and they may not be the reality.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:18)
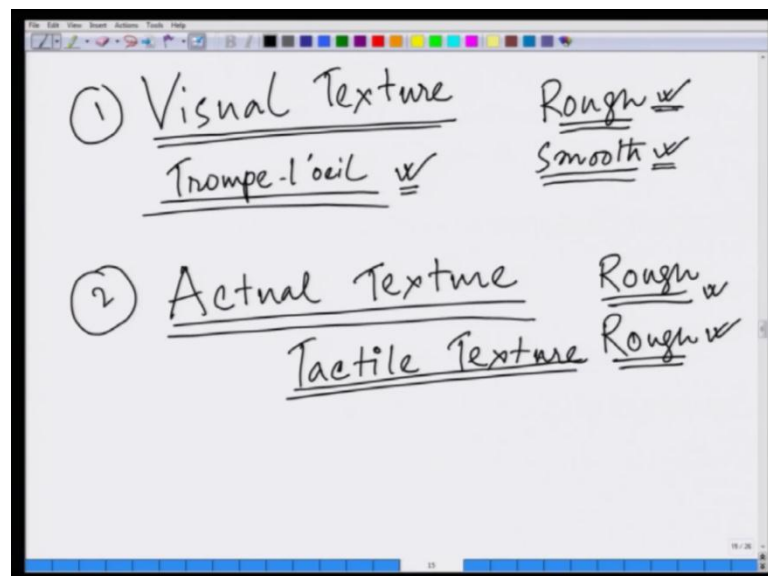
Now, there are two kinds of textures that we come across, one is the visual texture. So, we see a surface, which appears to be rough, we touch it and the kind of sensation that we get is smooth. So, that is fooling your eyes, there is a term called Trompe-l'oeil in art, which is known as how to fool ones size. So, the surface is smooth, but it looks rough. The use of visual texture is vast in our use in the regular happening, but there are also textures which are actual.

So, there is one category that is visual texture and the second categories are the actual texture. Actual texture or real texture is also known as tactile texture and this is opposite of visual texture that we see some surface as rough upon touching, we find it rough. So, these are the differences between the visual texture and actual texture. Think in terms of the sculpture, when we are making a sculpture with the traditional materials. For example, we are using marble and we are trying to create a surface, which is smooth, marble has thinner, smaller and closer particles which are integrated.

So, we can get a formation, where we can do an intricate carving and also, they have a good longevity, because of the integrity that the stone has. Now, when we create a surface and we go there, we touch it, we get that smoothness there. But then maybe our purpose is to make a human figure and the human body is not that cold and smooth. So, that way, we are fooled by the whole creation that we try to give a surface that seems to be a human skin, but they are not human skin at all.

So, otherwise also, when we use surfaces of stone or maybe a metal, it can be clay or plaster. So, in most of the cases, the surfaces are manipulated by the artist to give the sensation that the artist is deciding to convey to the viewer. Now, very interestingly, we see that, there are formations, where we do not hide a surface. For example, in some of the architecture, specially in modern architecture, when we have a structure; that is made out of break and we keep it open, we do not want to cover it with any kind of plastering and give it a smooth surface. We keep brick as brick, we keep cement as cement, we call it the honest use of material and that is very common in the modern tradition.

So, that way, it is a choice from the part of the designer or the part of the artist, whether they are going to give the right message to the artist in terms of it is visual texture or in terms of it is tactile quality. So, this is totally depending on the content or the subject matter and the suitability of the form of that matches with the subject matter. So, in a

way, we end up creating surfaces, where we go, we touch it and we feel that, you know it just looks rough or smooth, but it is just the opposite there.

o, that way, we are again coming down to the same solution that we are basically repeating a pattern and nothing else. So, when we touch a stone, it will give you a different sensation, after polishing we will get a complete different sensation. So, it is up to the artist and the artist decision, whether to keep it rough or to keep it smooth. So, when we create that, when we create some visual texture, which is not the actual texture or tactile texture. We go for different tricks and this is all about, how we use our sense of pattern, how we repeat them.

If we want to create a surface, which is not very smooth, then we create bricks, which gives it a sense of a surface, which is uneven dainty and that way, we again go by the value difference. We create a frequent change in the low value and a high value contrast. So, let us again go back to the gradients and see, how we create surface; that is otherwise rough, because when we are making the service on a paper. The paper is smooth and we are creating some sensation, which is up and down rough or it is something completely different.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:22)
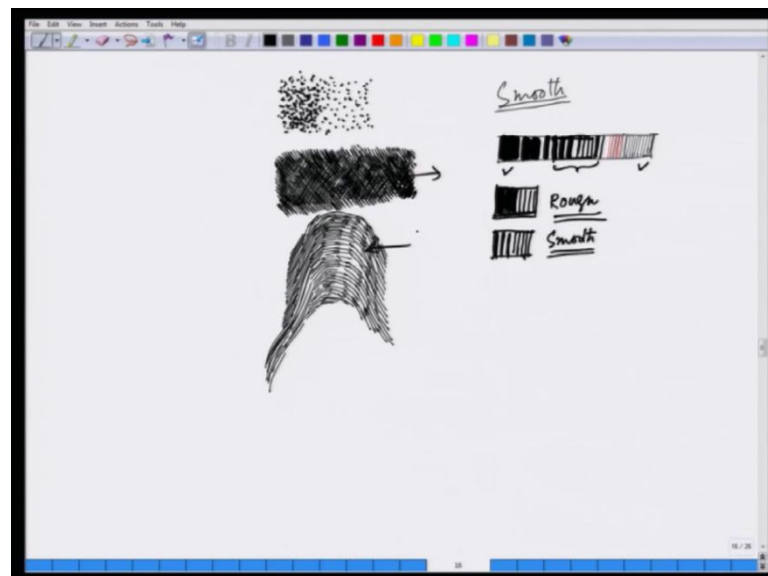
So, when we create a surface, where the gradients are proper and smooth, it looks smooth, when there is a brick between that and the contrast is higher in terms of the high value contrast that we have the range of the achromatic grey where. So, as we pick up a

contrast of this and this, will give us a rough feel, if we have a combination of this and this, which are placed in a close proximity. They will look smooth, the more will make it abrupt, it will look more rough.

So, black will give us a sense of a surface that is going deeper, the white should come forward. At the same time, when we create a surface that gives us a sensation of either this is a surface, which is made out of a fabric or maybe a cloth or a paper or this is a woven surface. So, these are the kind of visual message that they will carry further. With this, I will try to give you some examples for your reference; that is when you go through the artworks by the cubist artists in their synthetic phase. They are analyzing in the first phase and slowly at the last phase, they are synthesizing objects there.

So, we categorize them as analytical cubism and synthetic cubism in terms of the movement of you know it is just a pattern, the way the movements that took place. So, in the synthetic cubism that was another step, which is coming after the analysis. So, after the analysis, the artist felt like synthesizing some foreign object. So, that way on the surface of canvas, the artists like Picasso Brock. They decided to put some images, which are often like dead butterflies pasted or these are some jute or some woven cane patterns that they found out from different places. They are all manmade objects, natural objects, which were there that got pasted.

So, when we think of collarge, the whole medium talks about certain texture, which is not just the visual texture, but it is also has a tactical quality in it. So, they are actually there and that gives us a sense of surface, which is more expressive. So, when we talk about impasto technique in painting, there the artist is using some the paints, the way they are applying the paints on the surface, which is slightly three dimensional.

So, they are not smooth, for example, if we have a paintings, where the surfaces are rough, there is a chance that the paint can get also dry and fall off. So, artist needs some kind of a control to create that a surface, where the roughness is maintained many of the textile artists also used the similar technique. They did not like the feel of the artwork in terms of the visual texture; rather they preferred the tactile texture to get the surface.

So, tactile texture is something which is real and that like when we look at it is just like, it is just the factor; that is the tangibility and intangibility of the whole thing. So, when we talk about the virtual reality, the kind of texture that we put there, they are not

touchable, they are not tangible. So, that way we can categorize them in visual texture category and for example, when we have another surface, which is a collarge; that can be touched upon. And also, there are surfaces where we particularly, we feel that the sensation has to be created there.

A rough surface also creates the lighten shade pattern that changes with different time. So, those are the different experiments that the artist keeps on doing. So, when you look at the artwork, analyze them you try to recognize the patterns, where the textures are created, whether they are visual or tactile and that way, you will see, how the artists have used it from different period of time.