



## E3 Forensic Art—Know the Terms: Understanding Forensic Art Terminology

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**Learning Overview:** After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the terminology used in forensic art. Facial reconstructions, composite drawings, age progressions, and video approximations are some of the examples that will be highlighted. This presentation will assist in understanding the complexities of the work performed by forensic artists and recognize the different uses for each application.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by raising awareness of the definitions for each category of the forensic artist's work. In this presentation two General section forensic artists will present examples of casework they have handled and the definitions involved with each. These experienced forensic artists are collaborating to present this general knowledge to the Academy.

A confluence of facial anatomical sculpting ability and the data from a detailed forensic anthropological report are used in order to reconstruct the most reasonable likeness of the face the deceased wore in life. Facial reconstructions are cold cases. Given that the forensic artist begins with a skeletonized human skull, the following forensic anthropological terminology must be understood. Postmortem Interval (PMI), and its particulars, which include disarticulation (lost mandible or lost bones of the splanchnocranium), trauma (blunt force/sharp force, gunshot) and scavenging (animal gnawing) will be described. Any one of these or any combination of the above particulars can influence the outcome of a facial reconstruction. The presented 3D facial reconstruction was sculpted Fremont County, CO, by a member of the Colorado Coroners Association.

A combination of facial anatomical drawing ability and the data from a detailed forensic anthropological report were used in order to reconstruct the most reasonable likeness of the face of the deceased. A photographic image was used to develop a drawn 2D image of the face, rather than clay on the skull. This version of the 3D facial reconstruction is a faster process for getting the image to the investigators. As with 3D facial reconstructions, all 2D reconstructions are cold cases. PMI and its particulars, including disarticulation, trauma, and scavenging will be described. Any one of, or any combination of, the above particulars can influence the outcome of a facial reconstruction. The presented 2D facial reconstruction was drawn by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department lead forensic artist.

The composite drawing is a hand-drawn image. That drawing may be done with a pencil and paper, drawn on computer, or on a tablet with a stylus—any of these variations are composite drawings. Composites are traditionally developed using the cognitive interview process. Training is extensive for professional forensic artists in rendering the human face, understanding the anatomy, and interviewing witnesses. The presented composite was drawn by the lead forensic artist at the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for the Burbank Police Department, California. The description of the suspect was given by two different witnesses.

Forensic images are created from viewing video of persons of interest. Understanding the influence of light and shadow as well as Light Source is crucial in developing these approximations. Distortion, distance, and angle are three aspects that are taken into consideration in this process. These aspects assist investigators with a better understanding of who they are looking for.

Investigators, working on cold cases, often use an age progression. The image is developed using a combination of reference tools (early photos of the suspect, siblings, and parents) and knowledge of the Human Aging Process. Wrinkles, weight gain, and life style are other considerations taken into account.

Forensic art is a rapidly expanding discipline that requires specialized training, beyond advanced drawing skills. The forensic artist is called on for many different skill sets that assist in the identification process. These applications relate closely with those of other disciplines of the forensic sciences, especially forensic anthropology, forensic odontology, and forensic psychology.

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### Forensic Art, Facial Approximations, Facial Reconstructions