THE WALT STANCHFIELD LECTURES: VOLUME TWO

REVISED & EXPANDED EDITION

DRAWN TO LIFE

20 GOLDEN YEARS OF DISNEY MASTER CLASSES

Walt Stanchfield
Edited by Don Hahn

CRC Press
Taylor & Francis Group

'For nearly thirty years, the artists that passed through the gates of Disney Animation, and even non-artists like myself, were influenced by the craft, skill, wisdom, writings and sketches of Walt Stanchfield.'

—Roy E. Disney

'Walt was a kind of Mark Twain for us at Disney. He always taught with humor and skill. You learned to see the world through his eyes. I remember him one day encouraging us to leap into our drawings with boldness and confidence, "Don't be afraid to make a mistake. We all have 10,000 bad drawings in us so the sooner you get them out the better!" Sitting in Walt's class was as much a psychology course as it was a drawing class. One couldn't help walk away with your mind and soul a little more open than when you entered.'

—Glen Keane, *Walt Disney Animation Studios*

'Walt Stanchfield's classes and writings were little distillations of the man: quirky, strongly stated in a genial voice, and brimming with a lifetime of sharp observations about story telling and graphic communication. Whether he drew with a ball point pen or painted with a brush dipped in his coffee cup, he got to the essence of things and was eager to share what he learned with his eager disciples, myself among them. He was grizzled and he was great and proof that there was more than one Walt at the Disney Studio that could inspire a legion of artists.'

—John Musker, *Walt Disney Animation Studios*

'Walt Stanchfield was one of Disney Animation's national treasures. His classes and notes have inspired countless animation artists, and his approach to drawing of caricature over reality, feeling over rote accuracy, and communication over photographic reproduction gets to the heart of what great animation is all about. Huzzah to Don Hahn for putting it all together for us!'

—Eric Goldberg, *Walt Disney Animation Studios*

'During the Animation Renaissance of the 1990s, one of the Walt Disney Studio's best-kept secrets was Walt Stanchfield. Once a week after work, this aged but agile figure jumped from drawing board to drawing board, patiently teaching us the principles behind the high baroque style of Walt Disney Animation drawing. Being in a room with Walt made you feel what it must have been like to be taught by Don Graham. Having one of your life drawings be good enough to be reproduced in one of his little homemade weekly bulletins was akin to getting a Distinguished Service Medal! Senior animators vied with trainees for that distinction.'

—Tom Sito, *Animator/Filmmaker/Author of Drawing The Line: The Untold Story of the Animation Unions from Bosko to Bart Simpson*

'This exciting collection of master classes by the great teacher Walt Stanchfield is destined to become a classic on the order of Kimon Nicolaides' exploration of the drawing process. Stanchfield (1919–2000) inspired several generations of Disney animators and those of us outside the studio fortunate enough to happen upon dog-eared copies of his conversational notes, which we passed around like Leonardo's Codex Leicester. Stanchfield beautifully communicates the essence and joy of expressing ideas through the graphic line and accumulating a visual vocabulary. Drawn to Life is a treasure trove of cogent, valuable information for students, teachers and anyone who loves to draw.'

—John Canemaker, *NYU professor and Academy Award®-winning animation filmmaker*

'Walt Stanchfield, in his own unique way, taught so many of us about drawing, caricature, motion, acting, and animation. Most important to me was how Walt made you apply what you had observed in his life drawing class to your animation. Disney Animation is based on real life, and in that regard Walt Stanchfield's philosophy echoed Walt Disney's: "We cannot caricature and animate anything convincingly until we study the real thing first."'

—Andreas Deja, *Walt Disney Animation Studios*

'Walt Stanchfield's renewed emphasis on draftsmanship at the Disney Studios transformed the seemingly moribund art of animation. His students were part of a renaissance with The Little Mermaid and Who Framed Roger Rabbit, a renaissance that continues with films ranging from The Iron Giant to Lilo and Stitch to Wall-E.'

—Charles Solomon, *Animation Historian*

DRAWN TO LIFE

20 GOLDEN YEARS OF DISNEY MASTER CLASSES

Drawn to Life is a two-volume collection of the legendary lectures of long-time Disney animator Walt Stanchfield. For over 20 years, Walt mentored a new generation of animators at the Walt Disney Studios and influenced such talented artists such as Tim Burton, Brad Bird, Glen Keane, and Andreas Deja. His writing and drawings have become must-have lessons for fine artists, film professionals, animators, and students looking for inspiration and essential training in drawing and the art of animation.

Written by **Walt Stanchfield** (1919–2000), who began work for the Walt Disney Studios in the 1950s. His work can be seen in films such as *Sleeping Beauty, The Jungle Book, 101 Dalmatians*, and *Peter Pan*.

Edited by Disney Legend and Oscar®-nominated producer **Don Hahn**, whose credits include the classic *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, and *Hunchback of Notre Dame*.


GENE
4/19/97

THE WALT STANCHFIELD LECTURES: VOLUME TWO

DRAWN TO LIFE

20 GOLDEN YEARS OF DISNEY MASTER CLASSES

Second Edition

Walt Stanchfield
Edited by Don Hahn

CRC Press
Taylor & Francis Group
Boca Raton London New York

CRC Press is an imprint of the
Taylor & Francis Group, an **informa** business

Designed cover image: Front and back cover images © Walt Stanchfield Merryweather drawings by Frank Thomas © Disney Enterprises, Inc. Figure construction drawings by Glenn V. Vilpuu

Second edition published 2024
by CRC Press
6000 Broken Sound Parkway NW, Suite 300, Boca Raton, FL 33487-2742

and by CRC Press
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

CRC Press is an imprint of Taylor & Francis Group, LLC

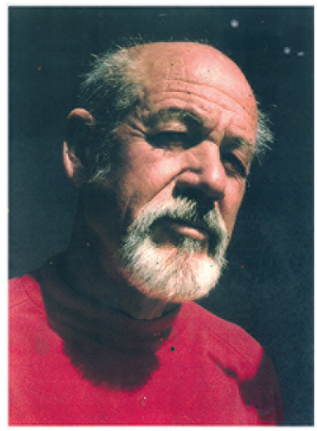
First edition published by Routledge 2009

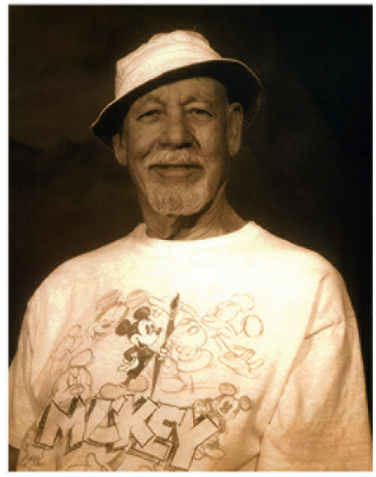
ISBN: 978-1-032-10439-3 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-10438-6 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-21535-6 (ebk)

DOI: 10.1201/9781003215356

Typeset in Futura
by codeMantra

Dedicated with love to Dee




MICKEY

It is management's wish that the "Disney Tradition" be revitalized and maintained. The tradition, as we see it, reflects the desires and aspirations of Walt, who, when alive strove to bring animation to a highly developed art. In attempting to recapture the quality attained in former years, we need ~~not~~ but refer to that letter Walt wrote to Don Graham in 1935. It expresses the needs of the animation artist and the means he felt were necessary to develop and fulfill those needs.

Walt not only encouraged his employees to better themselves by bringing teachers and lecturers to the studio but he demanded constant improvement. We don't have Walt with us today but we do have the great heritage of animation he left, plus the facilities and the talent with which to uphold that heritage and, to risk sacrilege, improve on it.

Nevertheless, ~~there~~ there will be an attempt to reinstate the learning atmosphere that once permeated this studio. There will be various classes, conducted by numerous instructors. There will be suggested reading and film study: discussions on action analysis and its application to our media.

There will be no attempt to return to any particular era of the past, but to incorporate a composite of all the great accomplishments of the past into a future product that we can all be proud of.

Stan Green 2/10/81

Contents

Foreword

Once in a lifetime, a truly exceptional teacher crosses your path and changes your life forever. To me and to many, many of my colleagues in the arts, Walt Stanchfield was that teacher.

Being part painter, part poet, part musician, part tennis bum, part eccentric savant, and part wise professor, Walt inspired a generation of young artists not only with his vast understanding of the animator's craft but also with his ability to teach that craft and share his enthusiasm for a life in the arts.

Born in 1919 in Los Angeles, Walt began his career in animation in 1937, right out of high school, at the Charles Mintz Studio. He served in the U.S. Navy, then joined the Walter Lantz Studio prior to his lengthy tenure at The Walt Disney Studios. There he worked on every full-length animated feature between *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* (1949) and *The Great Mouse Detective* (1986).

Walt's writing started in the 1970s, when veteran animators at the Disney Studio were at the end of their illustrious careers and new talent was pouring into the studio. Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston turned to writing their iconic book *The Illusion of Life* and Stanchfield focused on establishing a training program for new animators with veteran animator and director Eric Larson. Walt held regular weekly drawing classes and lectures for the crew. Among the young talent: Brad Bird, Don Bluth, Joe Ranft, John Musker, Ron Clements, Glen Keane, Andreas Deja, Mark Henn, and so many others.

By the mid-1980s, Walt started weekly gesture drawing classes for the entire studio. At the end of each class, he grabbed a few drawings that inspired or challenged him and then pasted them up with his typewritten commentary as a handout for everyone in the class. These weekly lecture notes, along with his early writing for the animation training program, are the basis for this first-time publication of his complete and prolific work.

In late 1987, I asked Walt to come to London to train the crew on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. The artists, led by legendary director Richard Williams, would crowd around him on the vacant third floor of the Edwardian factory building that was our studio. They would hang on his every word and absorb every line of his drawings. When it came time to pose, we had a leggy supermodel dressed up like Jessica, but Walt was the one who moved like her and helped us see what made her beautiful and sexy.

Walt's writing became the Bible of animation for a very young enthusiastic crew of artists that would eventually create films such as *The Little Mermaid*, *The Lion King*, *Aladdin*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Because of Walt's informal approach to these notes, many of the drawings included here are a generation or two away from the artist's original. This photocopied style is very much in keeping with Walt's casual, conversational style of teaching.

The text herein has largely been left alone, as written by Walt. His conversational style is so completely accessible to the artist; it seemed wrong to formalize or edit his voice out of the material in any way. Parts of the text are very heavy with animation terms and technique, but remain as written because they apply to the art of drawing in any medium. Topics appear in no particular order, and the sections are meant to be browsed as either instant inspiration or week-long immersion into any array of subjects. The random nature of topics is also a signature of Walt's personality and approach. He saw life as a unified experience. Drawings inspired paintings, which inspired poetry, which inspired architecture, which inspired travel, which inspired tennis – all connected parts of an artist's life experience.

Drawn to Life is one of the strongest primers on animation ever written. The material spares no detail on the craft of animation, but also digs deep into the artistic roots of the medium. We get a chance to see Walt grow personally as an artist over the span of 20 years represented in these two books. It's a journey that takes him from admired production artist, to technical teacher, to beloved philosopher.

Walt's affect on his students extended way beyond the drawing board. It's not just that he drew better than everyone else or taught better than everyone else – I admired Walt so much because he seemed to

live better than everyone else. When he was not drawing, he was playing guitar, writing poetry, tending his vegetable garden, or making baskets in the style of the Chumash Indians. He was never without a pen and would often color his drawings by dipping a brush into his cup of coffee at breakfast. The drawings were always loose, improvisational, impressionistic, and alive, just like their creator.

He passed away in the year 2,000 leaving behind a thousand pages of lecture notes and a generation of magnificent animators. With thanks to Dee Stanchfield, The Stanchfield Trust, Focal Press and The Walt Disney Studios, and special thanks to my co-editors, Connie Thompson and Maggie Gisel, it is with great pleasure that the genius of Walt Stanchfield is now available to you in the pages of *Drawn to Life*.

Don Hahn

Acknowledgements

EDITED BY:
Don Hahn

CO-EDITORS:
Maggie Gisel
Connie Thompson

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT:
Dee Stanchfield

BUSINESS AFFAIRS:
Kevin Breen

FOCAL PRESS
Jane Dashevsky
Paul Gottehrer
Amanda Guest
Georgia Kennedy
Chris Simpson
Katy Spencer
Anais Wheeler

DESIGNED BY:
Joanne Blank
Dennis Schaefer

WALT DISNEY PUBLISHING CLEARANCES:
Margaret Adamic

ADDITIONAL CLEARANCES:
Ashley Petry

DISNEY ANIMATION RESEARCH LIBRARY:
Fox Carney
Doug Engalla
Ann Hansen
Kristen McCormick
Lella Smith
Jackie Vasquez
Mary Walsh
Patrick White

ARTIST RESEARCH AND LOCATION:
Chantal Bumgarner
Ginger Chen
Tenny Chonin
Howard Green
Tiffany Herrington
Bill Matthews
Robert Tiemans
Pamela Thompson

TRANSCRIPTIONS:
Patti Conklin
Kathleen Grey
Rhiannon Hume

INITIAL DESIGN CONCEPTS:
Kris Taft Miller

1

Innovation

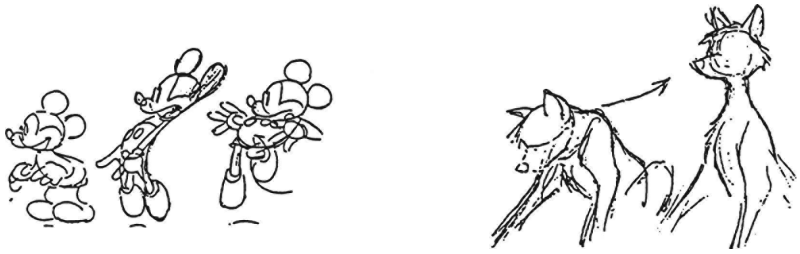
DOI: 10.1201/9781003215356-1

1 Review and New Approach

Some of you have been studying in our gesture analysis class for a long time now. The subject has been drawing and the emphasis has been drawing specifically with animation in mind. We have covered such areas as "Animation and Sketching," wherein I implored you to carry a sketchbook with you and sketch, sketch, and sketch.

I did a paper on "Mental and Physical Preparation" wherein I extolled the benefits of keeping in good shape. No illustration here for good shape does not refer to developing an Adonis-like body or a genius-like mind, not that we could if we tried, but at least a healthy mental and physical state that will help withstand the rigors they will be put to in pursuing an animation career.

I introduced the subject of angles in "Using Angles" and have pushed that subject as a very important element in capturing the gesture in drawing from the model and in creating movement in animation.



We covered "Doodling and Drawing" several times. The idea behind it was that doodling leads you to something, whereas if you have a specific gesture you are after — drawing will get you there.

Then "Simplicity for the Sake of Clarity." How many times have we lost our original idea in a maze of complications? One remedy for that is to back off and try to recapture that all-important first impression. To illustrate that lesson I used Frank Thomas's seemingly simple animation and (probably) Dale Oliver's seemingly simple cleanup drawings. I say seemingly simple because though it appears to be simple, still a great deal of thought went into each function to make it appear simple. Not for the sake of simplicity, but for the sake of readability. There was an idea to put over and any complication would only have been detraction.

"The Opposing Force." Angle against angle, squash against stretch, close proximity against openness — potent tools in both drawing from the model and in animation.

"Action Analysis: Hands and Feet." This was a short paper, but a revealing one. It was prompted by the tendency of students to leave the hands and feet (and props) off their drawings. Using some illustrations, I attempted to prove that you can tell more what a character is doing by their hands and feet than you can from their body.

There was a lesson, "For the Action Analysis Class." The class used to be called "Action Analysis" because years ago we used animation paper and drew 3 action poses on portable pegs. We did a preparation, anticipation, and action drawing for each gesture. The accompanying illustrations were some suggestions for a simplified approach to drawing from the model — they were taken from Glenn Vilppu's article on Life Drawing.

We followed that lesson with a couple of sessions where we used cylinders in place of body parts while drawing from the model. This was, and is, especially helpful when faced with a foreshortening problem.

I introduced you to Bruce McIntyre's rules of perspective. On the surface these may seem overly simple, even infantile, but in drawing they become genuine symbols that are easily applicable as drawings helps.

There was "Note Taking and Sketching." You've probably seen the American Express commercial where Karl Malden says, "Don't leave home without it." That goes for notebooks and sketchbooks too. There was more on "Sketching," "Essence Drawing," "Feeling the Pose," "Living Model to the Living Gesture," "Creative Energy," and many more. When I realized the next picture, "*The Little Mermaid*," will have hundreds, perhaps thousands, of head and shoulder shots, I offered some things on heads, suggesting we start with a simplified approach to head drawing. And we began devoting a portion of the sketch class to heads.

Finally, one that I think is of supreme importance, "Drawing and Caricature." We study from a live model, but we draw and animate caricatures. The ability to be able to know the human head and figure and to transfer that knowledge into cartoons is of utmost importance.

Along with all this we have been using pen and ink to help us focus on those points and to encourage (force) the mind to see first what we want to draw before attempting to put it down. Everyone has

been most cooperative in going along with all these suggestions. Perhaps it is time to explore some other aspects of drawing and some other approaches. So let's for a time put away the pens and bring out the soft pencils. For a couple of sessions let's throw caution to the winds and have a graphite orgy. Forget (for now) the subtleties we have been striving for and go for bold. Try still to capture the gesture, but in the most flamboyant manner. Be extravagant, be bold, be loose, be adventurous, even careless. Try to make the most powerful statement you have ever made, with no thoughts of right or wrong, good or bad. "Let," as the old saying goes, "it all hang out."

2 Artist/Actor

An actor's training and his later daily exercises and observations might run something like this: he imagines he is in church — what is the mood of the church and how do the types of characters he plays react in this situation? Likewise in a cemetery, a nightclub, at the dentist, at a wedding, watching a comedy — the list goes on and on.

But the problem is deeper than just that. How different would he act if it were happening in ancient Rome or Egypt, or in the Colonial days, or in England in the days of King Arthur? Or what if he were a comedian with not a serious bone in his body, and took all this as a big joke? What kind of background would he need, or what type of research would he have to do, what kind of reading should he do?

How would he portray the simple things in everyday life — sitting on a couch, reading a magazine, drinking a cup of coffee, watching a ball game on TV, or looking out a window, reacting to something happening on the street or at his neighbor's house?

How would he act if it's dusty, hot, freezing, or windy?

Can he express different ways of showing happiness for roles of different ages, social standing, and different physical makeup? Would an optimist express happiness differently than a pessimist?

Does etiquette, custom, or convention effect the manner in which he expresses laughter, for instance how loud, how long, or how spirited? How would he laugh if he had a pain in his side, or if he had just lost a friend, or if he didn't get the joke but was laughing out of politeness?

Again the list goes on and on. I posed these questions as if it were an actor in question, but I was thinking of you as artist/actor. Acting is the parallel between you and the stage or movie actor — the difference being, you act with a pencil, he acts with his body. But the background, training, and preparation are the same — the knowledge and understanding of human (and animal) nature.

In the evening drawing classes we have been trying to grasp the process of how and why the model arrives at the various poses and gestures. The audience goes to see cartoons to be entertained. They are interested in *what* happens (in the story). But we who fabricate them also have to know *why* and *how*. So we concern ourselves with why and how people (characters) act the way they do under the multitude of situations we subject them to in our stories.

Last week Craig Howell modeled for us. First of all he is post middle age, meaning he has a slight pot (belly), his cheeks are beginning to hang down, he has a double chin, and he is beginning to get that stoop-shoulder that most elderly people end up with. His hands are large, fingers fat — those of a worker. He is very serious minded. You would not know it to look at him but he is a walking encyclopedia.

He is a professional model and he knows how to play-act. He has done for us a carpenter, a waiter, a gardener, a farmer, a navy shore patrolman, a hunter (for McLeach), and last week a doctor and a construction worker. And whether you draw him realistically or caricature him, all these things have a bearing on your approach to drawing him.

Let's explore some of the applications of these physical traits to drawing. Here is an intern's drawing of Craig carrying a long rod. In my sketch next to it I have suggested a more stooped over back by projecting the head and neck forward. To balance the weight of the metal rod, I angled the head away from the rod. Figuring the metal rod had some weight to it, I extended his hand forward to better balance the part that hangs over his shoulder behind him. I also lifted his shoulder a little to make a kind of shelf so the rod would not slip off:

Here's another intern's drawing of Craig prying something with the metal rod. The student seemed concerned with drawing all the parts. He has the head isolated and the arms and hands out in the clear. In my suggestion sketch I tried to show more tension and power by folding those elements up into a grouping of forces. It is like the difference between trying to arm wrestle with your arm outstretched, or with your arm, shoulder, neck, and chest all marshaled together in support of each other.

Here is a rather nice drawing of Craig about to clean the wax out of a patient's ear. In my sketch I carried the concept a bit further by utilizing Craig's bent-over upper back, plus his intense interest in what he was doing, to force the attention toward the object of the pose.

Here is an instance where even if the character was not stoop-shouldered or paunchy, he would bend forward to look into his black medical bag. However, a person with a paunch would have to make an extra effort to bend over so he could see over his stomach:

As you can see these are all things an actor/artist must *think*, *feel*, and *do*.

Here are two more poses where in my sketch I not only tried to capture the essence of the gesture but attempted to use as few lines as possible, applying two of Craig's physical attributes — the paunch and the bent-over upper back. When you know the *what*, *how*, and *why* of the gesture and the physical characteristics and traits of your character, you can go right to it in a matter of seconds. These are not meant to be finished drawings — only the necessary foundation for a drawing.

3 Don't Be Ordinary

Ever try to take the lid off a jar that was stuck tight? You end up bent over with the jar between your knees, all doubled up, your face all contorted in the exaggerated effort. Only an Arnold Schwarzenegger could twist the lid off by just holding it at a normal position in front of him.

When my wife, Dee, asks me to unscrew a tight lid, I first try to do it the Schwarzenegger way — to show how strong I am. If that fails, I most certainly ignore the ordinary way, that is to hold it under the hot water tap until the cap expands, but go right into the face-saving, cover-up routine — the overexaggerated cartoon version, exclaiming, "Boy, this cap is really welded on!"

So the next time you have to draw or animate a guy unscrewing a stuck jar lid, how will you approach the problem? The Schwarzenegger way? The only time you do that is when you are Arnold or when you are trying to show off, and are more interested in your ego than you are in the visual interest. I am sure my wife enjoys it more when I am wrestling with this tiny little beast. Even my dog enjoys it. Actually, come to think of it, I enjoy it more, too.

I always enjoy drawing a more exaggerated version of action. If I drew a character just standing there twisting off the lid as if it were already loosened — how would anyone know it was stuck, unless it was a caricature of Arnold? Even then, for the sake of entertainment it might be funnier if he fails, goes into the overexaggerated routine, only to have the gal he is with take the lid off easily with two fingers. It depends on the character, too. Tinker Bell would simply sprinkle a little pixie dust on the lid. Roger Rabbit might go to the workshop and come back with pipe wrenches, a vice, and a blowtorch. Donald in his inevitable fury might try explosives.

Still, if the two-finger approach was staged properly it could be delightfully funny. Perhaps the story calls for some understatement. It may not even be humor you are after, in which case you would have to find an entertaining way to put over whatever it is. Whichever, it would probably take some thought, much like I am doing here. It may seem terribly involved, but usually good entertainment can only be acquired through hard work. And to make it even more challenging, no matter how much hard work goes into it — it has to appear spontaneous.

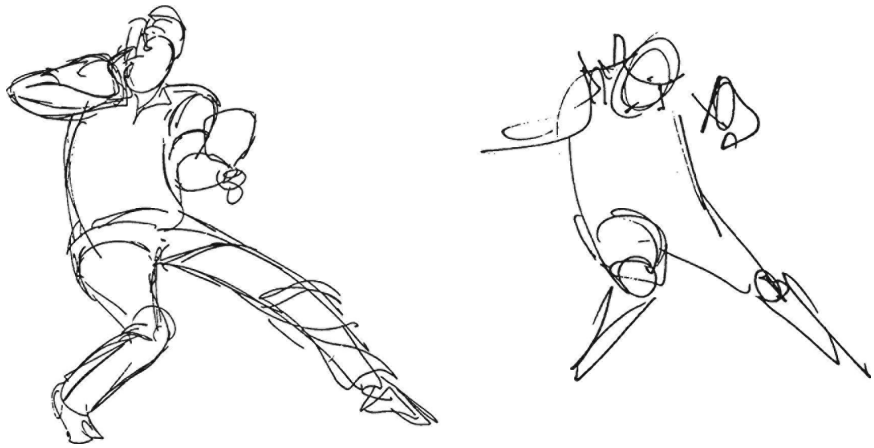
There is a rather recent style of cartooning in the newspapers and magazines that uses a technique where things are explained in a caption. For instance, a guy gently holding a jar, the caption reading, "Elmer twists off one of those stubborn fruit jar lids, effortlessly, a la Arnold Schwarzenegger." That type of humor can be funny, but without the written explanation the drawing is practically meaningless. Like if you had a drawing of a waffle, it would mean nothing special, but with the caption like "A non-skid pancake," it suddenly becomes humorous.

Pantomime has to do its thing without that written or verbal explanation. And that is what good animation and good drawing from the model does.

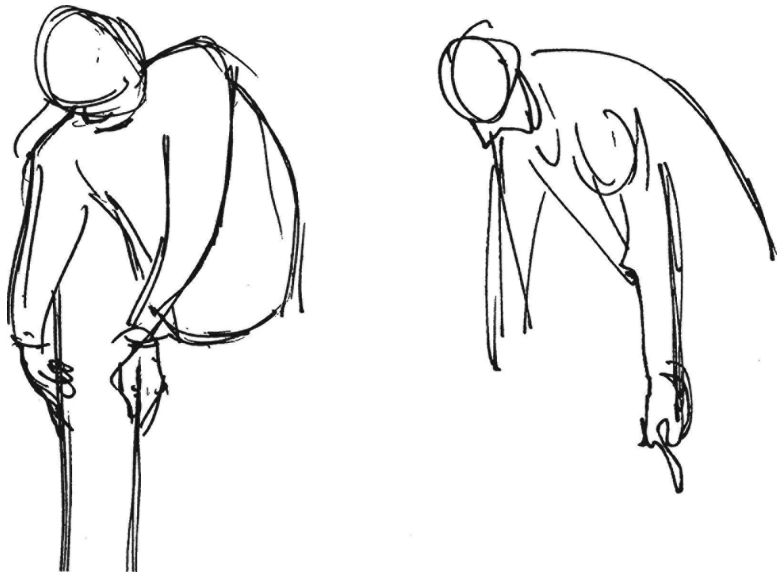
In the evening drawing class, many of the poses are of the Arnold S. type, that is, rather confined. So I encourage the artists not to copy what is before them, but add some zest to the gesture — to become the comic actor, so to speak, and step out of the ordinary.

Here is a student's drawing that I interrupted soon after he started. Any further work on it would have been like trying to high jump with a scuba outfit on. The pose was saying something like "What the hell is this?" or "How do I straighten this out?" or "I've forgotten how to use this thing"' or one of a hundred other fabricated stories. Any of which would supply motivation for the artist to make a clear and perhaps exiting drawing. In my sketch I simply wanted to assure the viewer that the character was concerned about whatever he is holding. So I bent him over in a sort of bewildered way, straightened out the front of his body (thinking that it would be nice to use a straight against the curve of his back) so the look goes rocketing down to the object of the gesture:

Here is another one where the model was combing his hair in a hand mirror. I do not have any hair to comb, but if I did, I would do it with a little flurry. I would pull my upper body, arm, and shoulder back, getting all that out of the way so I had a good look at the hair (the purpose of the pose), then thrust my head forward toward the mirror as if I were ducking something — perhaps by doing that I imagine I can see the top of my head and farther around the sides. I lowered his right arm to show that he was pulling down on a comb full of hair. I tried to clear the path of his look to the mirror that is being held up by the left arm (so up goes the left elbow). His right knee has to be higher than his left because the lower part of his right leg is more vertical.



One of the things we have to overcome in drawing gestures is our non-gesture type of anatomy training. For instance, we are taught that the shoulders are attached to the upper chest area and protrude (on males especially) upward and outward. But when a person bends over and stretches his arms downward — the shoulders are capable of helping that downward motion with great flexibility.



Here is a similar problem. The back is bent and the shoulders are pulled forward because of the nature of the gesture. Try this pose. You will feel your elbows jut way out and your shoulders follow suit. The elbows seem to fold up while the knees spread apart. Why? Because the top of the chair back is very narrow so the elbows have to squeeze together to fit. Contrariwise, the bottom of the chair is wider, forcing the knees apart:

4 Sketcher

The cartoonist, when he sketches is going through a process of study. He concentrates upon the model, plumbs its movement, bulk, and outline. Then he sets it down, remembering that he wants only the spirit — the "guts" of the thing he's after. He puts into his drawing (even though it may be as big as your thumbnail) all his experience. He simplifies. He plays with his line. He experiments. He isn't concerned with anatomy, chiaroscuro, or the symmetry of "flowing line." There's nothing highbrow about his approach to the sketchpad. He is drawing because he likes to draw!

Lawrence Lariar

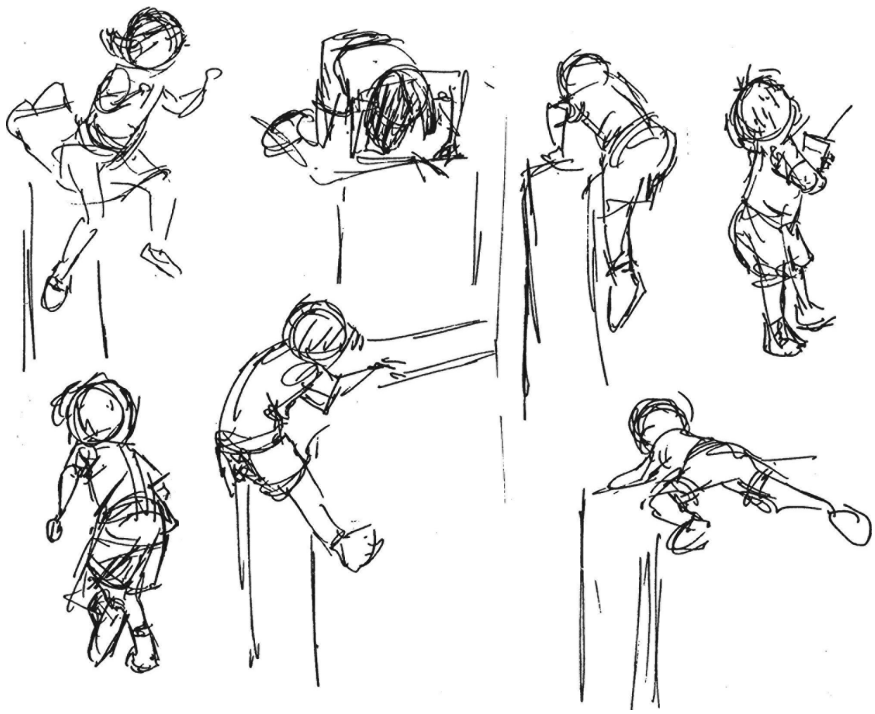
Sketching is to the artist what shadow boxing is to a boxer; keyboard practice is to a concert pianist; practice is to a tennis player, or a participant in any sport (or endeavor). I have often quoted artists and cartoonists who swear by and recommend sketching as a necessary part of an artist's daily ventures (adventures). And occasionally I reproduce drawings from sketchbooks for the purpose of promoting interest in sketching and for just plain old inspirational purposes. This week I feel privileged to bring some of animator Ron Husband's work to you.

Ron appears to be a quiet guy who just goes about his business in an even-mannered way. But he is an inveterate sketcher — his pen is constantly searching and probing for incidents of every day life, attempting to push them beyond the ordinary — into the realm of entertainment. The 100 filled sketch books in his room (there are a 100 more at home) might hoodwink you into thinking that is all he does when not animating, but he has several "irons in the fire," and is more than capable of doing justice to all of them. He is an illustrator for children's magazines, and is involved in some very imaginative books of his own; Ron does not confine his drawing to just the small sketchbook format, either.

I recall an exhibit a year or so ago where he displayed many drawings about 17 3 22 inches. They ranged from humorous to dramatic, and were most elegantly done.

Ron believes quick sketching is an aid to animation. He maintains sketching will enhance drawing ability, quicken your eye, help you to analyze action in a shorter period of time. He says the benefits of quick-sketching are the ability to capture the essence of a pose, to acquire believability in your drawing, and to sharpen your awareness of "grid" or ground planes and backgrounds. A greater familiarity with depth, perspective, and third dimension also frees you from thinking in terms of the standard 3/4 front or rear view.

I had only time to go through a few of his sketchbooks, but in those few was a wealth of material. Here is a sampling.



5 Plus or Minus

Years ago I got into developing color film. I do not know how it is done now but I used to have to keep the developing chemicals plus or minus one-half degree. In sketching, if you keep within plus or minus one-half degree of the pose, you will end up with an uninteresting tracing. To do the pose any justice at all, you have got to go at least 10 or 15 degrees on the plus side. Drawing is unique in that sense. We are so used to being herded into that one-half degree plus or minus syndrome: set your carburetor mixture just so or you will waste gas, use the right amount of baking powder or your cake will either fall or blow up, adjust your radio to the station or you will get static, etc. Realism for the cartoonist is not copying things from nature to the nth degree, it is caricaturing those things — turning them into entertainment (and having fun at the same time).

I found a new positive thinking statement I am trying to put into practice: IT IS OKAY TO HAVE FUN. And who of all people should have more fun than cartoonists, except maybe the audience those cartoonists draw for. It thrills me to see artists come into the class after a grueling day of hard work, and still dig into their fun bag to come up with some delightful "pot shots" at their fellow artists. Here are a few by Hans Bacher.

Here is one by Dan Boulos:

Dan treats the models with the same lighthearted approach.

If I were a cleanup artist, those are the kind of animation drawings I would like to clean up. They are teeming with expression, the gestures are unmistakable, and the drawings are unencumbered by superfluous lines. They are far from being finished drawings, but the raw material is all there. "Tracings" of the model show only that the artist is capable of copying what is before him. There are so many possibilities beyond that.

There is always a lot of intense looking while drawing from a model, but intensity in itself does not ensure an entertaining drawing. We often see what we are taught to see, or what we are comfortable in seeing. I have been in the business of drawing since 1937 and I still do not trust my ability to see. I am a master of looking — but I have a filter system like everyone else. This system blanks out things my unconscious does not want to recognize. But it will accent those things I want to see. I have a notoriously bad memory, so I cannot trust that, and being a right-brained person, I realize I take the elements that are before me and reorganize them into something different — something I can call my own.

In the latest *Natural History* magazine, there is an article by Stephen Jay Gould, wherein he tells about some experiments made on college students. One of them was showing a film of an accident, followed later by a misleading question: "How fast was the sports car going when it passed the barn while traveling along the country road?" (There was no barn in the film.) A week later 17 percent of the group stated that they had seen the nonexistent barn.

"Thus," the author says, "We are easily fooled on all fronts of both eye and mind; seeing, storing, and recalling. The eye tricks us badly enough; the mind is infinitely more perverse. What remedy can we have but constant humility, and eternal vigilance and scrutiny? Trust your memory as you would your poker buddy."

We also have habits that stick to us like glue. It seems like the first way we do something or see something is the way we remember it.

It might take two minutes to learn something the wrong way and then five years to unlearn it. When I started playing tennis years ago, the way to hit a topspin was to roll the racket over the top of the ball. When the method changed to hitting the ball with the racket going from low to high, it took me years to change the groove my body had gotten into. The body has a memory that is harder to change than the mind, and it takes part in drawing, too. If it learns to draw something a certain way, your creative spirit may be hard pressed to try something new. That is why changing hands gives your drawing a new look. Your "left" hand does not even know how to hold the pen or pencil, and has no memory of how to draw anything.

What's more, your left-brain mode will back up the body 100 percent. "Yeah," it will say, "hip bone connected to the thigh bone, thigh bone connected to the knee… just the facts man — none of that gesture, mood, and caricature stuff — just the facts." The poor, sometimes suppressed, right brain is saying, "Darn, I see something cute or funny here but I just can't seem to get this pencil to loosen up. It feels like there's a groove in the paper that the point is stuck in." Like that sign on a country road that says, "Be careful which rut you pick, you're gonna be in it for the next twenty miles."

Boy! You just have to keep your wits about you, 'cause the more wheels that go over that rut — the deeper it gets.

On the following page are some examples of plus and minus drawing. The student's drawings are all on the minus side. Angles were un-angled, tension was un-tensed, and the whole gesture straightened up. In a word, they were nonplussed. My suggestion sketches were an attempt to go maybe 10 percent on the plus side:

6 Mood Symbols

Recently I came across these symbols buried in the archaeological-like layers in my studio. They were done many years ago, I think by Richard Haines, artist, painter, and teacher, who conducted some classes at Disney Studios. Originally they were done in wash, but I transposed them into grease pencil so they could be Xeroxed. There was no explanation other than the suggestions accompanying each drawing. Although they speak for themselves, I would like to comment on them from my point of view. They suggest moods, states, conditions, or behavior. They seem to be inherent in the nature of things, or at least in our interpretation of them. If this is so, then these symbols can work as sort of emotional shorthand, and when used in a drawing or action, can subconsciously arouse in the observer the emotion with which they are associated.

Drawings are but symbols. They are an arrangement of lines and shapes that merely *represent* real things to the extent that these symbols can be incorporated in a scene (layout, background, or animation drawings) and to the extent that the emotion communicated will hopefully be kindled in the audience. Using these symbols will not only enhance the scene but will actually work as a short cut to illustrating your ideas.

These symbols may be a little harder to apply to drawings than are the common everyday gestures we are so well-acquainted with, but they do have a psychological effect on a viewer or audience, so they are worth investigating. They are applicable to all phases of animation. If indeed any of these symbols are used in the evolution of the story (story development, story sketch, or layout), the animators should be made aware of them so there might be a more perfect marriage of ideas.

The psychology of color can greatly enhance the effects of these symbols. I am sure Judith Crook, who recently conducted a color seminar at the studio, could add much to the enlightenment on the subject. There has been much research done in that field, not only for artistic purposes but also in the realm of physical and mental healing.

We in animation are mainly involved in motion, which is the thing that attracts the eye, delineates the movement, and carries the story. However, these symbols, along with color, are part and parcel in setting the proper mood, although the audience is rarely consciously aware of them.

My current involvement is in the realm of gesture (acting) and I strongly feel that in body gesture, people (and cartoons) make use of certain of these symbols. We had Harry Frazier, a Shakespearian actor, model for us. On each of the three nights I had him deliver a speech from a Shakespeare play. I watched him carefully as he twisted his body into shapes that described the text. I suspect he has either made a study of something similar to these symbols or he is just a "natural" actor who feels those means of expression intuitively.

These symbols as presented may seem static and possibly only helpful in a still life or some other type of painting, but that is only one aspect of their value. They represent a dynamic force, not a fixed, changeless, immobile design. It appears that Richard Haines must have spent some time in gathering and classifying these symbols, but that does not mean he has exhausted their possibilities. Perhaps a similar study could be done for gesture as applied to animation.

In the meantime, look these over carefully. Mull them over in your mind and see if you can use them to embellish your gesture drawings (or your story development, story sketch, or layout drawings).

SYMBOLS OF VIBRATION

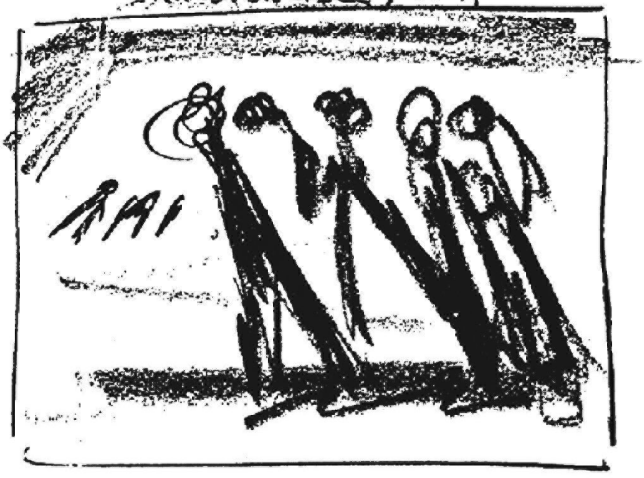
DOTS, DASHES, BROKEN LINES
VIBRATION OF COLOR, AND DESIGN.

FOUNTAIN

SPONTANEOUS, CAREFREE,
IRRESPONSIBLE, GAY.

CASCADE

PLEASUREABLE, PLAYFFUL,
SWIFT, POWERFUL, RHYTHMIC



UNSUPPORTED DIAGONAL

MOVEMENT ACROSS OR IN AND OUT
OF SPACE.