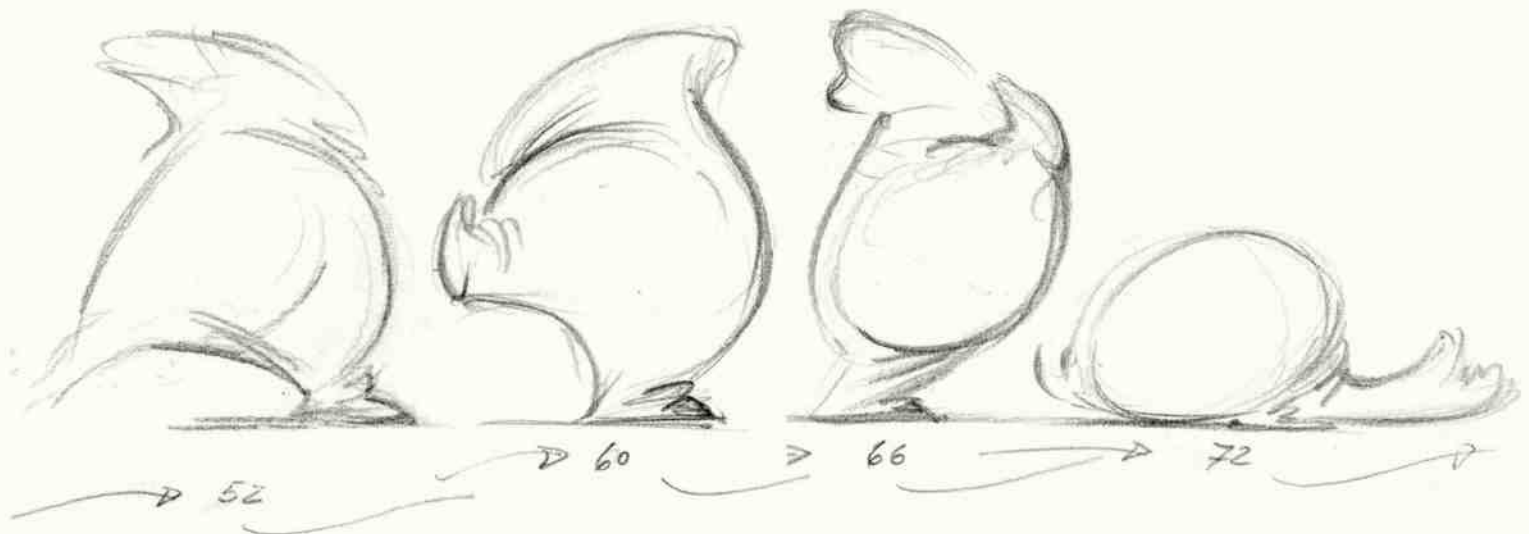


PETER PARR



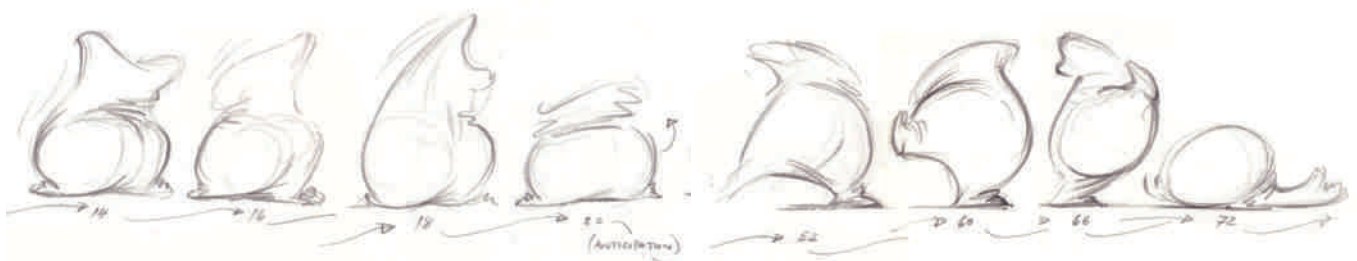
sketching for animation

Developing Ideas, Characters and Layouts
in your Sketchbook



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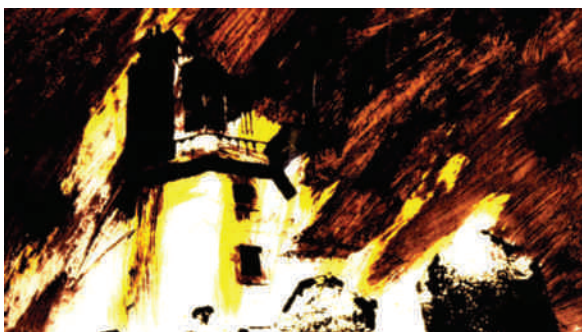
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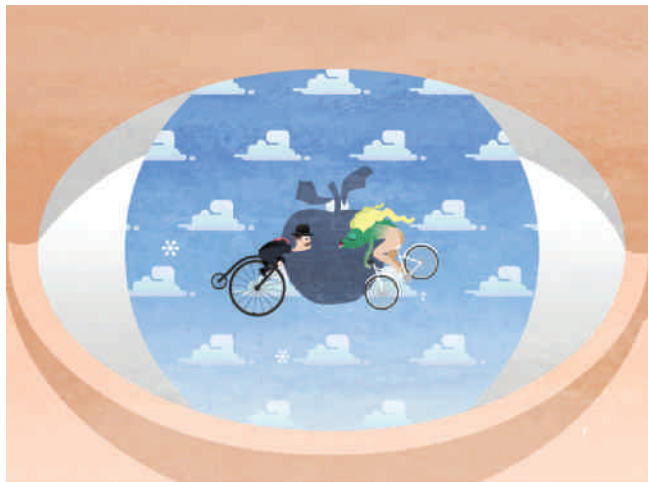
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INTRODUCTION

Most people think the word 'sketching' suggests an enjoyable and playful thing to do, and indeed it is! Sketching is a pleasurable way to gain confidence in your drawing, offering you a personal place to externalize your ideas at very little cost. *Sketching for Animation* celebrates a freedom of approach to gathering observations that may influence your ideas for designing and animating.

THE SKETCHBOOK

A sketchbook is a book in which to sketch, draw and have fun. That is enough to fulfil many people's needs, but for others, this is where the story only begins.

My own sketchbooks have been constant lifelong companions that have fostered my curiosity and have developed my observational skills to such an extent that they have played a central role in my work as a teacher, illustrator, animator and filmmaker.

It's been a part of my career, and my pleasure, to encourage students to nurture their skills through observational drawing, while enjoying the benefits of drawing as an art form. The practice of sketching is always beneficial; it will develop your ability to look, draw and, at the same time, refresh your sense of wellbeing.

Animation is a performance art. Therefore, I believe that when we look, think and draw, we do so as performers. To observe and then interpret what you see involves you becoming your subject. Your sketchbook is also where you grow as an artist, learning to trust your eye and your hand in response to the world around you, removing barriers that may limit your creative thinking and mark making.

Doodles are a playful, relaxing way to create decorative images that can inspire and communicate your ideas, which can be particularly useful if you work with others. Your sketch can provide a definitive image that avoids confusion and saves you time. It's also possible that your first scribbles can become the stuff of legendary stories, character and layout design: a springboard towards the bigger picture.

Many artists find it convenient to draw directly onto their tablets, but it's worth remembering that these same artists very often honed their skills with paper sketchbooks, giving them the flexibility to create using a variety of implements.

We are all aware that we continually need to renew our appreciation and connection with nature as it informs our art. Watching and analyzing the natural world – seeing the underlying simple shapes – makes it easier to take a practical look at sketching from first to finished artwork. So begin by using a sketchbook on a regular basis, using techniques for drawing a wide range of subjects, to see how observational drawing can help you create new characters and worlds with truth and conviction.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Ever since a stick was first used to make a line in the sand, drawing has been recognized as a useful means of communication. Teaching methods were devised to pass on hard-won skills to the next generation. Here, my contributors and I continue this age-old tradition by sharing our ideas and working methods in the hope that we, too, will find something new to inspire our enjoyment of sketching and drawing.

Sketching for Animation has been conceived in two parts. Part 1: Drawing and Sketching Techniques has five chapters based around skill building. Part 2: Design and Development has three chapters of practical examples and exercises. This final part of

the book encourages you to showcase what you have gained in your newfound sketchbook. A number of free-hand assignments run parallel with each topic so that you can sketch and witness your own developing skill.

The generosity of many specialist contributors provides us with many examples of their work throughout this book, so we can share in the experience of artists, illustrators, sculptors and animators who all started their journeys with a sketchbook in their hands. Using your own sketchbook, you can follow their examples by practicing skills to a level worthy of further study or a career in this field.

WAYS OF USING A SKETCHBOOK

Sketchbooks come in many sizes and formats and are used by students and artists in different ways, depending on personal taste. Some artists will fill pages with sketches and drawings that release their imagination and allow it to run free. Others will use them more like a scrapbook or notebook, collecting a wide variety of information from cutouts and writings and doodles to satisfy their curiosity.

For students of art, a sketchbook has always been an essential part of their kit. It is a portable place to practice and develop their drawing and observational skills. The important thing is that you do draw! Personally, I have always carried a sketchbook; it's now a part of my anatomy.

My drawings, first and foremost, are always made for pleasure: the natural way to draw. Although many are made at high speed, they are fixed in my memory to support me in my future work at some future date.

If you have not done so already, I would encourage you to select the sketchbook that you will use throughout the rest of this book. Celebrate the beginning of your new relationship by drawing the first thing to catch your eye!



0.1

0.1 The author's sketchbooks

Some hardback, some spiral bound, these are a selection of the sketchbook sizes I like to use, all of which I find convenient and accessible for travelling or storing my work.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: THE BOHEMIAN ON THE BUS

As an art student in Wigan (UK), I drew everywhere: on buses, in car parks, at fairgrounds and wherever I could make studies of artists' techniques. I was an obsessive sketcher, on a quest to improve my ability to draw. Once snared, my sketchbook became attached to my arm forever – *Edward Sketchbookhands!*

As a freshman, I began by carrying my sketchbook like the badge of my trade. Vainly, I thought that people would single me out as being 'different', so imagine my delight when I overheard bus passengers call me a 'Bohemian'. However, as I continued to draw every day, my vanity turned to commitment as I became engrossed in my work, filling page after page with everything from people and places to objects and ideas. My sketchbook was somewhere to test materials and to steal and learn from the masters, hoping to develop a signature of my own. Every drawing helped build my skill; my sketchbooks grew into a collection, a tangible timeline and resource.



0.2



0.2 Student sketches

These are pages from my early art student days, bursting with drawings of anything that happened to catch my eye. I drew because it felt good!

A VALUED COMPANION

As time went by, my sketchbook became a valued travelling companion. If you're going on a trip, expecting to see new sights and discover new experiences, never go without your sketchbook; it's your passport to life.

For example, I was lucky enough to visit Venice, and just a few days before I left I began to anticipate the atmosphere of that legendary city of canals, architecture and colour. I dug out a new foldout concertina sketchbook, with the thoughts of ribbons and canals packed with interest. My sketchbook was ready to support my ideas of yet-undrawn images, freeing me to gather whatever might catch my attention.

The main reason for digging out my old student sketchbook is to show you what my skill level was like when I started to draw. At that stage in my development, I had no idea that one day I would be working in animation and that it would affect my method of drawing. There is no doubt that you can discover a new way of seeing, drawing and thinking if you remain receptive.

To share my experience of using sketchbooks, I invite you to thumb through some of my sketches to see some of the drawing methods I use.



0.2



0.3 Concertina sketchbook

My concertina sketchbook pages with mixed media sketches of my four days in Venice. I was certainly influenced by the format of the sketchbook, freely sketching whatever caught my eye. It was exciting to sketch glimpses that would later remind me of my short stay.



0.3

So far, you have thumbed through drawings primarily of people, but do not consider subjects in isolation. Whatever you draw, demonstrate movement and rhythm to show what you see and feel. If you have become used to drawing for animation, then personality and intension (the internal aspect of a person or thing) should never be very far away. Animal, vegetable or mineral, everything you draw must be alive and ready to spring off your page!

Although you may only have a few moments to make a rapid sketch, it's important that you grab the feel of the scene, place or object, so that when you look back at your drawing at some future date, its atmosphere triggers your memory to work with fresh ideas. These considerations are vital if you are thinking of becoming a concept, layout or background artist.

A sketchbook should be used as freely as you might look through a window. However, not everyone feels comfortable using a sketchbook in public. The activity of drawing has a magical attraction, particularly for those who wish they too could draw. In these cases, remember that your onlooker's curiosity is a form of compliment. Enjoy.



0.5



0.4

0.4 A Tunisian camel driver and tent dwelling

The Tunisian camel driver playfully flicks a straw as he sits and rests. To seize immediacy in the sketch, I used the minimal line of a quill pen and ink. By contrast, a palette of harmonious and complementary colour washes, laid over a brush pen sketch, captures the cool shade of the Tunisian tent dwelling.

0.5 Chinese Mahjong players

It seemed appropriate to use the speed of a Chinese brush pen to record the intense concentration of this group of retired villagers spending time together. Even though the focal point is out of sight, the body language of the old men tells us what is happening. There seems to be an impending stalemate on the board!

0.6 Uglich locals, Russia

Sometimes speed is an important aspect of the working method to catch what drives a narrative. After seeing my sketch, drawn with brush pen and watercolour, my Russian student commented on the importance of the cabbage to everyday rural cuisine.

0.7 Texan sun seekers, USA

To snatch what I saw – volume being the goal – these fine point and coloured pencil sketches were made relatively quickly. No matter how caricatured people become, it is important to respect their anatomy.



0.6



0.7



0.8



0.9

0.8 Old Budapest

The atmosphere and jaunty perspective of Old Budapest, captured here with brush pen and coloured pencil, is busy amid brightly coloured buildings and people in motion. Forget the door handles and the net curtains; ambience is paramount.

0.9 Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

Practice speed drawing, as I did here with this brush pen drawing of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Speed drawing will teach you to assess your subject's salient features. The companion of speed is accuracy; but neglect your meditative study drawing at your peril, for the two methods go hand in hand.

FOCAL POINTS

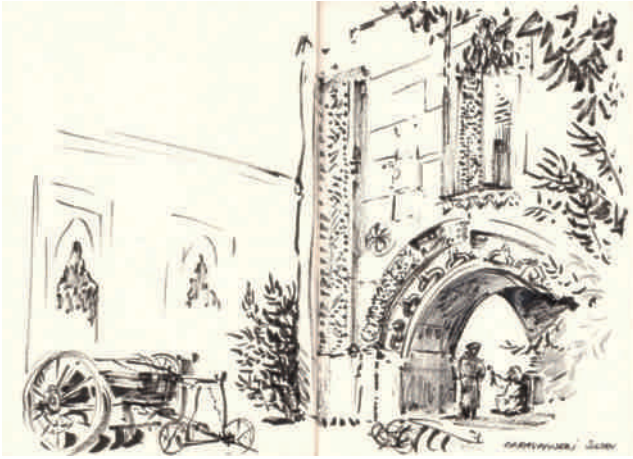
When starting a fresh sketch, try to zero in on what you consider to be the most important feature – the focal point. For example, Figure 0.10 leads the viewer's eye by prioritizing points of interest: 1) the gatehouse, 2) the castle ruin, and 3) the farm buildings. When my seven-year-old son Byron and I both drew this ruined castle in France, he looked at my drawing and said, 'You've left out the blue bucket!'. This is good observation; the focal point for him was the 'Blue Bucket', but for me it was the gatehouse.

It's essential to catch the character of your subject, as shown in Figure 0.11 a, the sturdy architecture of the caravanserai, a busy watering station built to withstand the heavy hustle and bustle of nomadic Asian traders. For Figure 0.11 b, I switched my approach to draw the rustic cottage at Tintagel, but my intentions remained the same: to grasp the character of the place. In both cases it was a treat to be able to spend time drawing a subject with a variety of drawing tools to hand.

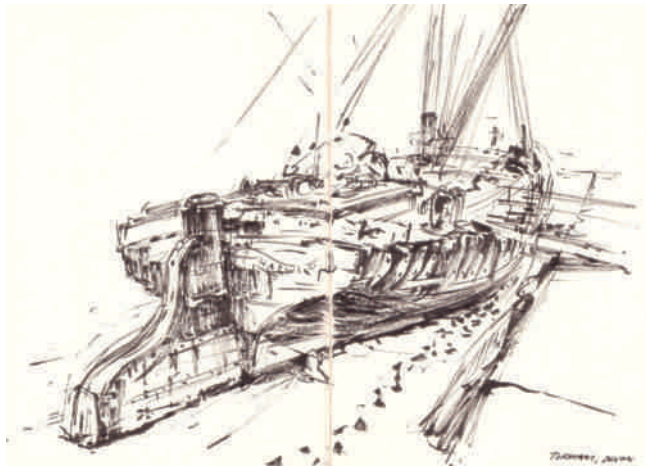
0.10 Finding your focus

When you make a sketch, set your eye towards the most important feature. Why are you making your sketch? The answer is central to the layout artist's work. The blue bucket obviously caught my son Byron's attention!





0.11 a-b



0.12 a-b



0.11 a-b A caravanserai in Turkey and a rustic cottage in Tintagel, UK

These studies help the viewer feel the external strength of one building and the cosy warmth of the other. Either of these sketches could, without much difficulty, become appropriate locations for animation. My imagination alone would not have unearthed such rich information.

0.12 a-b Topsham Quayside, Devon, UK, and Poole Baiter Boatyard

If your aim is to gather research information, experiment with your choice of medium to suit the mood of your subject. Figure 0.12 a, Topsham Quayside, was a quick sketch, so texture was my goal. For Figure 0.12 b, I had additional time to work, which allowed me to study the light and colour in the boatyard. Researching a location from life can turn up fascinating details that you may never have dreamt up if you took a lazy approach to designing a layout. Honest research and lively observation will always reward you.

0.13 a–b Saint-Émilion, France and Portland Fair, Dorset, UK

These sketches of Saint-Émilion and Portland Fair are two prime examples of honest observation. An inert attitude toward concept design would not deliver such a variety of truthful informative detail. The weathered architecture in Saint-Émilion settles into the steep hillside and bristles with unusual features. The ephemeral nature of the travelling stalls set against the crumbling local structures surrounding Portland Fair encapsulates the old coastal town. These scenes of old places couldn't be more different; differences can add real flavour to a layout design.



0.13 a–b

Much of my professional work has benefitted from a consistent use of my sketchbooks. The majority of my drawings were made because, like any tourist, I wanted to take my souvenir home with me to remember what I had seen. And the bonus: another step towards improving my drawing skill, gratis!

As I'm sure you'll find in your own work, sketches buried in sketchbooks have a spooky habit of springing from the past. This phenomenon happens because you have taken the time to look and to draw, committing the image to your memory. This is an excellent reason for drawing a subject rather than using a camera. A case in point is Figure 0.14, which shows a ruined cottage I came across in Dorset, long forgotten, now resurrected to tell a tale. Originally it provided an enjoyable subject to sketch; little did I realize that it would be used some years later as a background to my designs for *Topper's Tales*, a Yorkshire Television children's series by Julian Orchard and produced by Joy Whitby.



0.15



0.16



0.14

0.14 A ruined cottage, Dorset, UK

Years after making this initial sketch it provided the inspiration for a background to a children's animation.

0.15 Priorities

Characters need backgrounds, but in terms of pecking order, characters come first while the background is secondary, creating the atmosphere and mood for the action. In this image from the 'Rainbow's Gold' episode of *Topper's Tales*, the scripted priorities are: 1) Topper first in Medium Close Up (MCU), 2) his friends, and then 3) a Wide Shot (WS) to include the old well settled in the derelict cottage garden.

0.16 Leading the eye

Drawing to illustrate a story within a single image should prioritize the elements in strict viewing order to reveal your message. To tell the story, these drawings were designed to be used for a rostrum camera move. In this static frame from 'The Ghost Hunt' episode of *Topper's Tales*, the story slowly unfolds; the old man's shock is about to be realized. This is where you must lead the viewer's eye. First you look at the old man nervously carrying his lantern, then his terrified friends, and then Topper, covered in white flour. 'Oh, calamity!' Imagine their fright.

assignment

HAVE YOU GOT A PENCIL?

- As an introduction to the fantasy worlds of animation, try this game as a warm-up exercise. Follow each of the seven drawing steps in your sketchbook without looking ahead to the next. Just do it!
- Go step by step to discover your prize.
- Start with an A4 or US letter sheet of paper at landscape orientation.

Step one

Draw a horizontal line across the centre of your paper.



Step two

Divide the line equally with three vertical lines.



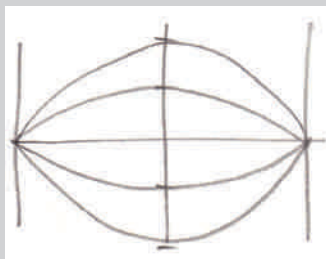
Step three

Divide the centre vertical line with four points. Place two above and two below the horizontal centre line.



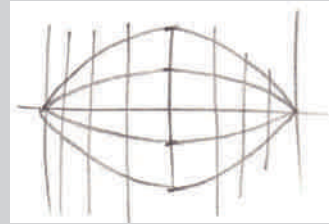
Step four

Connect the left-hand vertical with the right-hand vertical using four curved lines running through the central vertical line. Your drawing will look like an American football or a melon!



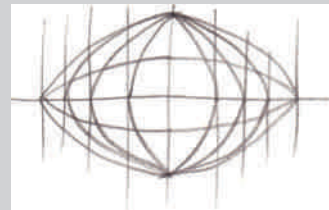
Step five

Draw three vertical lines on either side of the central vertical. The spacing should decrease (become smaller) as you approach the outer verticals – the end points.



Step six

Draw three curved vertical lines on each side of the centre vertical. Decrease the spacing from the centre to the left, and then decrease the spacing between the centre and the right-hand vertical. Your football/melon should look wrapped in a grid of lines.



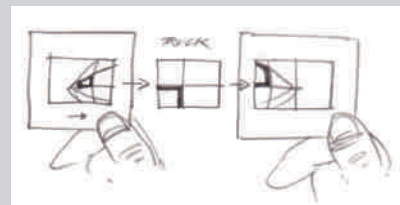
Step seven

Emphasize some of the distorted shapes on the football/melon grid.



Step eight

Cut a small rectangular viewfinder from a piece of card or paper. Place it over the left-hand side of the central horizontal line. Move it slowly from left to right – surprise, surprise, you have created the visual effect of turning to look down a corridor from left to right!



This covert lesson in perspective is known professionally as a ‘wrap pan’. It’s designed as a camera move to create the illusion of a camera turning through 180 degrees to look in opposite directions from a single central stand point – the artwork is drawn on a flat sheet of paper.

The audience will never see this artwork as a whole. Rather, it will be revealed to them as the camera moves over it, creating the illusion of a long room. The beginning and end of the wrap pan can be spaced further apart on a longer sheet of paper to give a less distorted or exaggerated look to the image.

In the first instance, I like to introduce students to this technique as a taster with a surprise ending! Many students really get fired up and ready to go further after this game. Later we will see how and why this game is important to the professional animator.

Let’s finish off our introduction with three quick assignments to get warmed up.

0.25 *The Artists’ Studio*

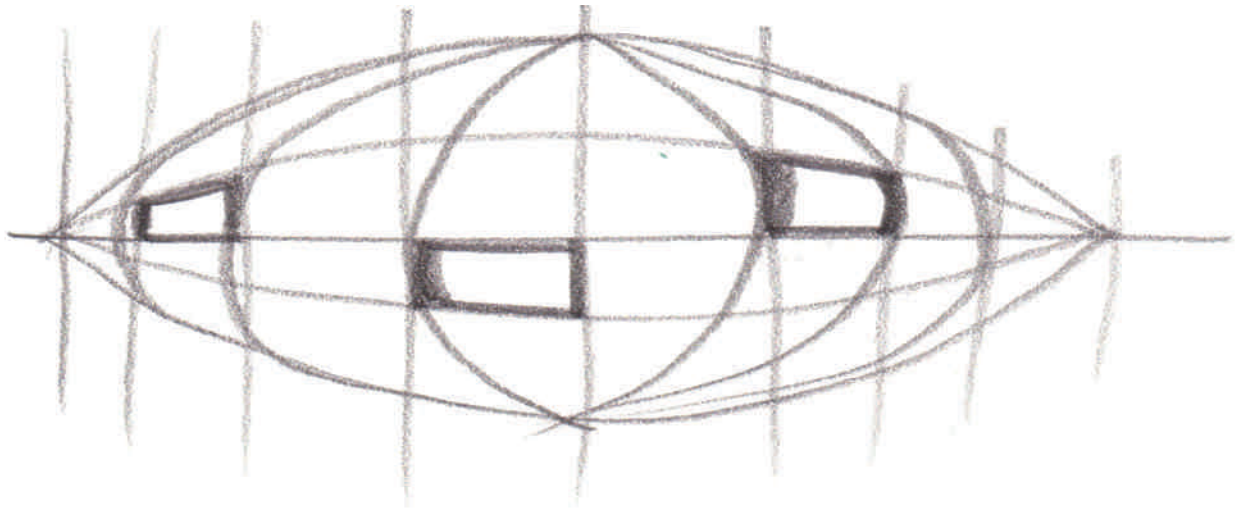
Designed and painted by first-year student Anna Stylianidou.

0.26 a–b *Take it further!*

This grid can also be flipped on its side and used to represent looking up or down a tall building – even sneakier! But remember to hold on to a handrail before you try this at home.



0.25



0.26 a-b

assignment

WARM-UP SKETCHES

1: Sneaky, but fun!

Try out the wrap pan exercise using one of your location sketches.

2: Where do you live?

- Where do you live? A simple question that requires a simple answer.
- Walk outside and fill a sketchbook page with a number of small sketches to describe your locale.
- Spend no more than one minute on each sketch.

3: The people keep moving!

- A common complaint is that people keep moving. The answer? Keep drawing!
- Fill a page with one image of a busy interior or exterior.
- Keep to one position and continue to draw the activity by overlapping figures.
- Spend ten minutes continuously sketching.
- Did you experience the animation of your location? No? Then you got it wrong! Don't worry, just turn the page and try again – that's just one of the joys of sketching!

part one

drawing and sketching techniques

All the chapters in Part One are designed to either introduce or refresh your knowledge of the fundamental building blocks of drawing. Even as a professional, I do this unashamedly to gain confidence whenever I start a new project. It's my method of remembering to get my intentions across in as simple a way as possible, both in work and when drawing for enjoyment. Our sketchbooks are where we can play out our ideas, free from constraints in our search for answers.

You'll find it helpful to try the exercises, examples and assignments in this book with your sketchbook close at hand.

1

Using Simple Shapes

As you might expect, this chapter begins at the beginning by encouraging the use of simple shapes to make it easier to analyze and develop objects into complex but recognizable images – an approach to drawing that remains with us throughout our careers.

1. From scribbles to signs: the confidence of a child
2. The big three: the square, circle and triangle
3. Overlapping shapes
4. Foreshortening
5. Draw to tell stories
6. The plot thickens – have fun!
7. Case study: *The Wooden Leg* by Darren Doherty and Nick Smith



FROM SCRIBBLES TO SIGNS: THE CONFIDENCE OF A CHILD

As children our scribbles are free and devoid of form. This is where our ability to draw begins. As we grow through those early years, we begin to master and assemble vertical or horizontal strokes and slashes to represent things, and for a short time, these marks are sufficient to satisfy our needs. As our confidence grows, we draw natural curved lines and circles. They become faces. Circles combined with vertical and horizontal lines allow us to draw people and animals.

Soon afterwards we want to draw real people, people with whom we are familiar: their eyes, their expressions and features, enlarged because they are so familiar. By the age of five our ability to draw picks up pace. Reading and writing soon follow, but our drawings represent things more accurately!

All too soon, our simple view of things becomes crowded with detail, and the turning point comes when we demand more accuracy from our drawings. We forget the significance of our first scribbles. Pursuing an interest in drawing takes courage to rediscover the underlying simplicity of form in the world around us if we are to regain that childlike confidence and belief in our drawings.

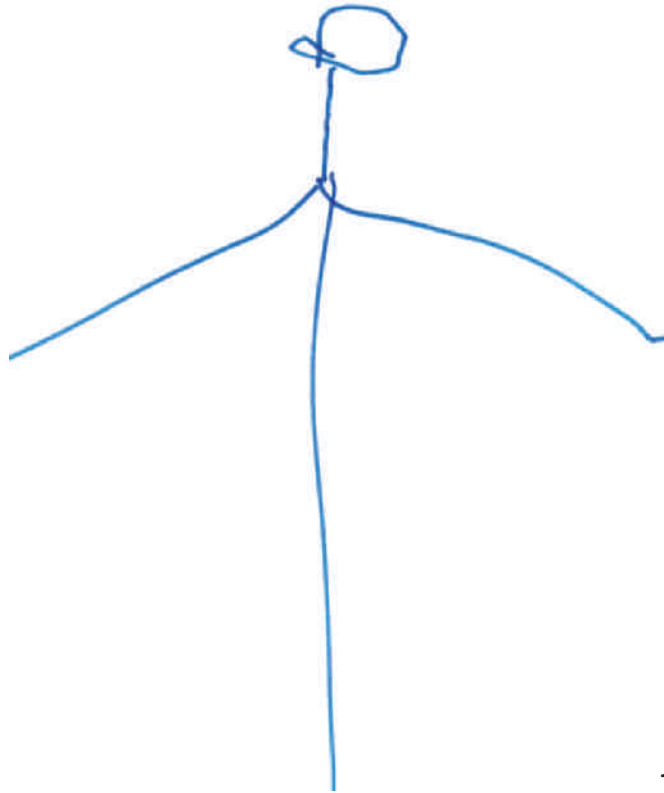
As adults, many of us are all too ready to discard our thoughts and notions without giving them an airing. We seem to be in too much of a hurry. But before rejecting ideas, give them a chance by making them appear on paper. If you don't 'scribble on the napkin' you may never know what might have been the beginnings of a groundbreaking idea. Draw your ideas using simple shapes and you'll be glad that you did!



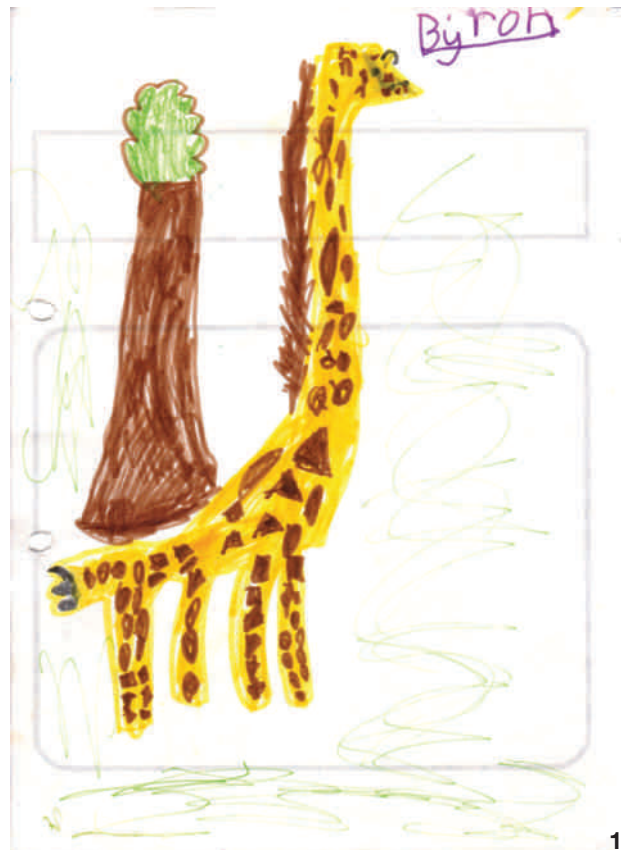
1.1

1.1–1.3 The firmament

The childlike pleasures to be found by making contact with colour and paper are shown in Figure 1.1. Figure 1.2 is 'man from imagination' by my grandson Oliver, age 4, and Figure 1.3, a giraffe drawn from life, is by my son Byron, at age 5. Much of the pleasure of sketching as an adult comes from getting back to the early joys of these very first attempts at interpreting the world.



1.2

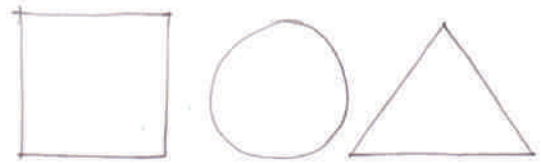


1.3

THE BIG THREE: THE SQUARE, CIRCLE AND TRIANGLE

You can make a two-dimensional drawing by using a square, a circle or a triangle. These simple shapes are sufficient to communicate your ideas and can be used to create quite elaborate patterns, designs and drawings. Collectively they can become anything you might see or wish to imagine. For an example of just how versatile they can be, take a look at the film work of German-American abstract animator Oskar Fischinger (1900–1967). His work vibrates with music and a colourful use of these simple shapes that become ever more complex and charged with meaning.

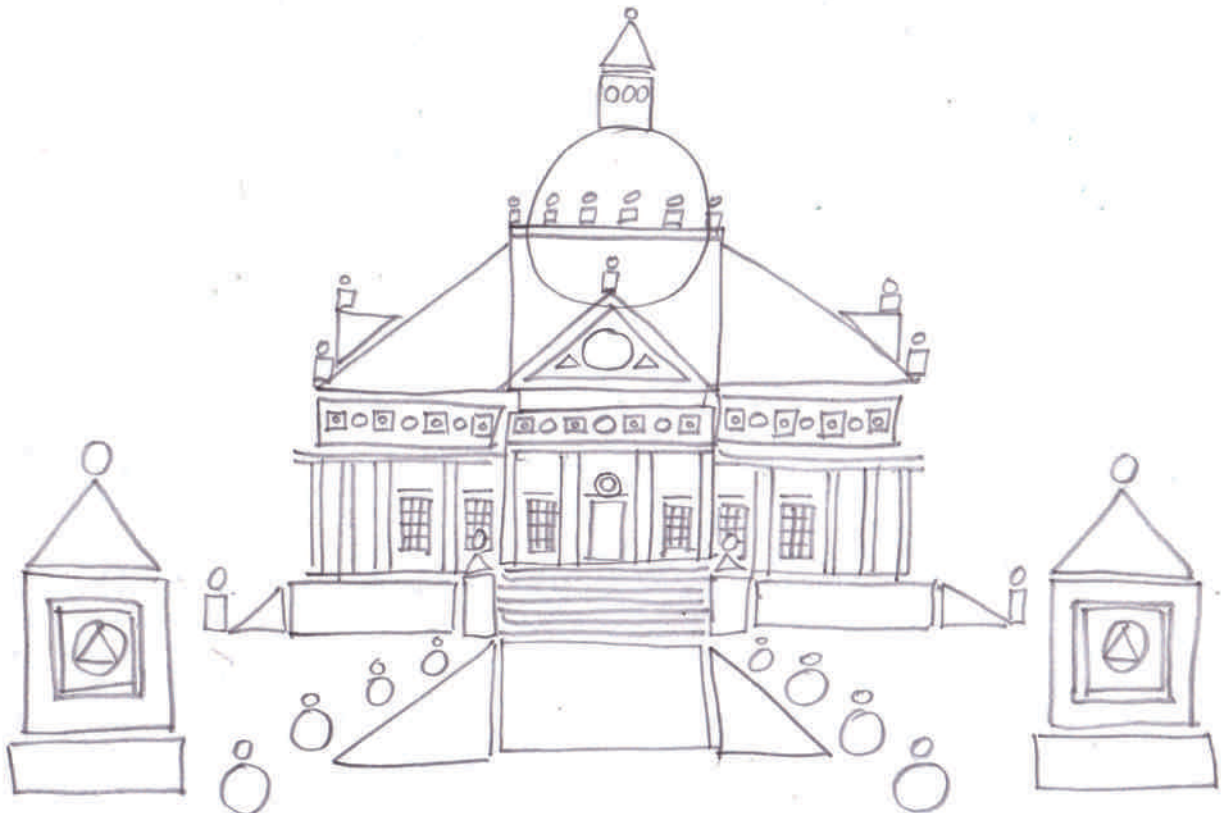
These shapes can become your allies and the structural foundations of everything you want to draw; they allow you to analyze your subject as you draw.



1.4

1.4–1.5 Three basic shapes

A square, a circle and a triangle – our building blocks! There is no limit to the number of design combinations that can be made from just three shapes.



1.5



1.6

1.6 Thames view – The Houses of Parliament

Animator and illustrator Matt Cruickshank demonstrates a playful and vibrant use of the square, the circle and the triangle. The British Houses of Parliament pop and shout to celebrate being one of London's iconic monuments flanking the busy River Thames. Even the rain looks cheerful!

1.7 Parrot

Cruickshank prepared this cheeky parrot design to illustrate Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, published as an e-book by Space Dog Books (2011). This development work is just one of many roughs he made before working them up on his Cintiq tablet, colouring them in Photoshop. He discarded many of his ideas. He points out: 'That's the nature of quick thumbnails. You hope to capture the energy of the doodles in your finished artwork.' © Space Dog Books 2011



1.7



1.8

assignment

BUILDING IN SIMPLE SHAPES

Look at an object or building from where you are sitting and then analyze and draw it using squares, circles and triangles. Don't worry about the details.

1.8 Still-Life

The square, the circle and the triangle find further expression in Matt Cruickshank's colourful *Still-Life*. The red and orange furniture are complemented by the cool blue-greens and textures of their surroundings.

1.9 Cemetery-shortcut

Let's take our three simple shapes further by looking at Matt Cruickshank's *Cemetery-shortcut*, inspired by the world around him. By observing buildings as simple shapes, he constructs a picture by overlapping squares and triangles, which allows him to consider and balance colour in his designs – shapes before details.



1.9

BASIC STRUCTURES

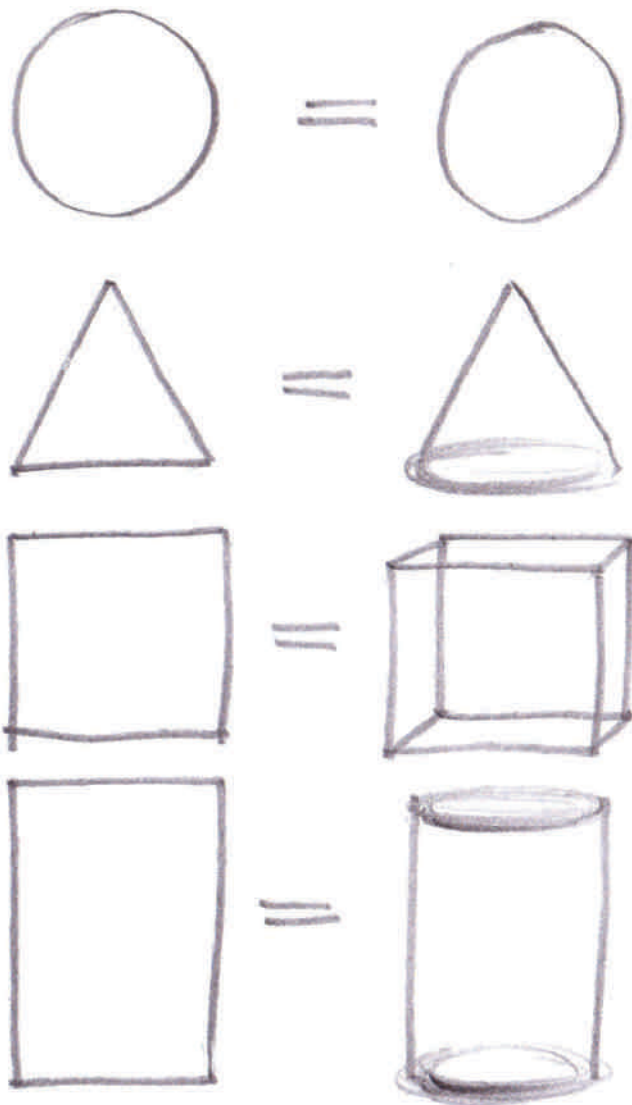
The square, the circle and the triangle are familiar to us, so let's draw with what we know. Let's look at the three flat shapes again, but this time in three dimensions. If you've got your sketchbook with you, try this.

1.10 Going 3D

Depending on the angle of view, the circle can become a sphere; the triangle, a cone; and the square can become a cube or a cylinder.

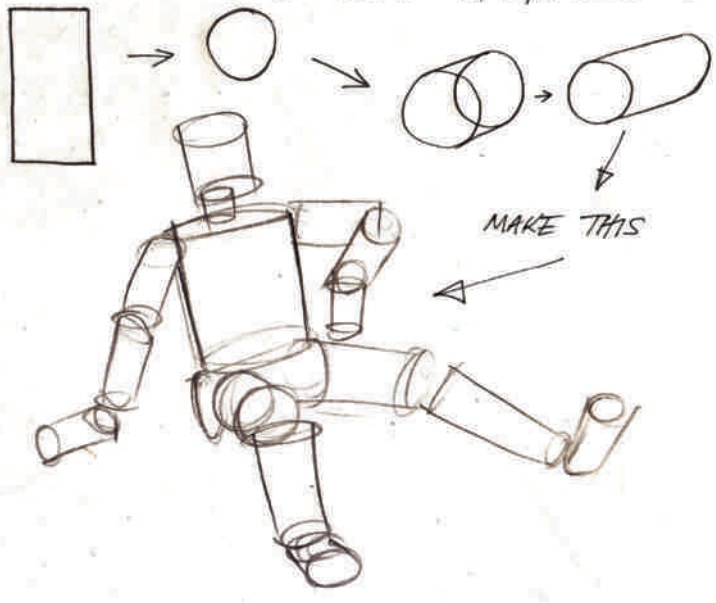
1.11 2D shapes become 3D forms

Our 2D shapes become 3D forms. Now we can introduce foreshortening when shapes overlap or lie on their sides.



1.10

THIS IS THIS! HOW? A CYLINDER FORE-SHORTENED



DRAW WHAT YOU SEE

Whatever you look at, whether it's landscapes, animals or objects, you can break them down into simple shapes. This will simplify, clarify and speed up your drawing process. If you know that all objects have an underlying structure, a skeleton, begin by drawing simple overlapping shapes to represent that underlying skeleton. When you're satisfied with the balance and proportions, you can confidently apply the detail. Don't listen to negative interference from your brain! Look and draw what you see.

Take a look at Figure 1.12 – what is worth note here is that shapes overlap to make a whole! The pyramid glass allows the building to show through, so if you apply the 'show through' overlap principle to the way you draw, the question of where to begin is eradicated. The structure you see is simplified and you will quickly find the confidence to draw anything you wish. Try it!

However, you must still concentrate on what you see and *not* on what you think you know. This takes a lot of practice before it becomes second nature.

1.12 *The Pyramid at the Louvre, Paris*

The simple shapes and the highly reflective glass surface of the pyramid contrast with the mellowed stonework of the building – three triangles and two rectangles – done!

