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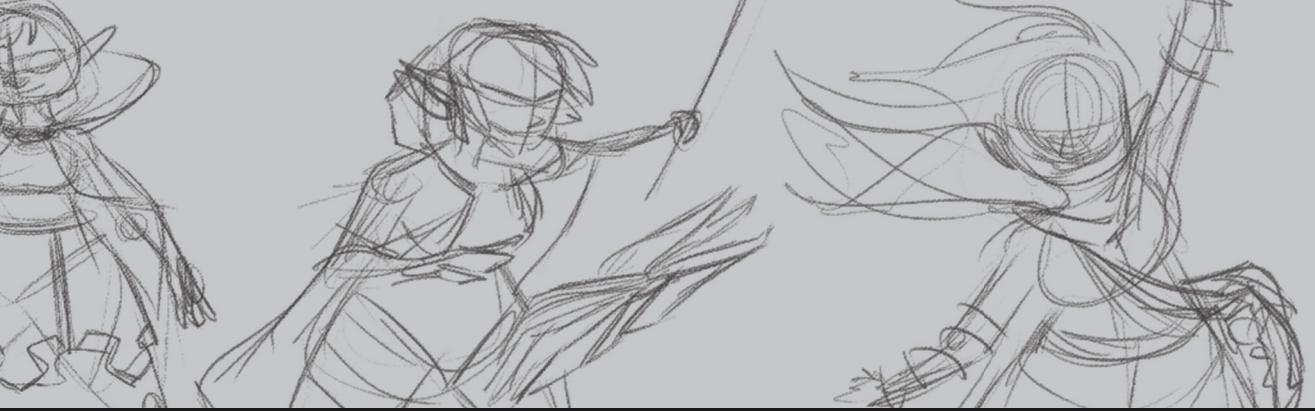
DRAW

ILLUSTRATOR'S GUIDEBOOK

VOLUME

2





21Draw

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For beginners, students, and masters

THANK YOU

TO OUR SUPPORTERS:

A HUGE thank you to all the incredible Kickstarter backers who have backed us over the years! This book would not exist if it wasn't for you. Thank you so much for your support, input, and patience.

TO ALL THE ARTISTS:

Kenneth Anderson
Randy Bishop
René Córdova
Rodgon
Meike Schneider
Aveline Stokart
Erika Wiseman

Thank you all so much for contributing to this book! It would not have happened without your support and your help in spreading the word. It was a pleasure to work with you all.

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for purchasing 21 Draw's *Illustrator's Guidebook*, volume 2! This is the long-awaited follow-up to the hugely popular *Illustrator's Guidebook*. This time around we did things a little bit different.

The chapters in this volume were created along with a set of video courses that match the corresponding chapters. You will have the option to check out the videos too.

You'll gain insights into the working methods of some of the most popular illustrators and animators working in the industry today. They will show you their unique methods for creating awesome images and how to go about achieving your own artistic goals, no matter if you are a budding artist or a seasoned pro!

We have worked diligently to condense the artists' long years of training and professional experiences into this new volume. In the *Illustrator's Guidebook*, volume 2, you'll get to compare the methods and insights of seven top industry artists from companies like Disney, Marvel, DreamWorks, and more.

You'll also learn how they approach concepts like digital drawing, character design, stylized character design, and loads more.

21Draw

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Feel free to read the book from start to finish in its entirety or just randomly browse its pages to check out some amazing artwork. Alternatively, you can look up the specific artistic areas you are interested in exploring in the contents section. If you're interested in learning more about a particular artist, you can skip directly to his/her pages or biography.

A corresponding video course was created along with each book chapter. At the end of each chapter, you will see that there is a QR Code. To check out the corresponding video course, open the camera on your phone and scan the QR Code. This code will take you to our website where you can watch the art course. Please note that you will have to subscribe to watch the course. If you already have an active subscription, then you can watch all the courses without extra cost.

It's important to note that there was a real effort to keep the artists' own words and actions as close as possible to what they submitted. This is important as it allows you to get an understanding of the exact process each artist goes through when completing an image from start to finish. Some artists use roughs, proportion lines, and other guides when drawing, and others start with clean lines and adjust as they go. In most cases, the artists followed the briefs exactly, but in some instances, they provided additions or minimizations that were even better than the original briefs. When this occurred, the artist's version was chosen over the original brief.

We hope that you enjoy the chapters and videos in this volume, and we hope that they will help you to reach your artistic goals along the way. So read on and have fun!

Truth me

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1

DIGITAL DRAWING

Using Procreate

ERIKA WISEMAN



DIGITAL DRAWING

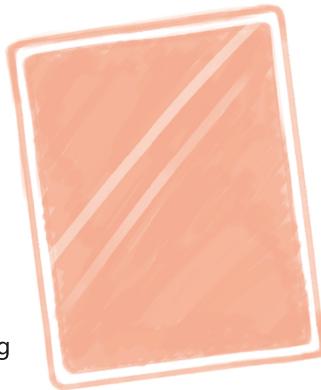
WITH ERIKA WISEMAN

Welcome! To get ready, I'll guide you through the basics of drawing in Procreate including the materials needed, how to set up a new canvas and navigate the gallery, as well as a review of the Procreate interface. We'll also get a creative start finding inspiration by creating a mood board together!

MATERIALS

We will use Procreate for the iPad as our software. For starters, you need an iPad, an Apple Pencil, and Procreate that can be purchased in the App Store for \$9.99. I am using a 2017 iPad Pro, a first-generation Apple Pencil, and the latest version of Procreate.

I like to use a few accessories for my iPad setup. I have a case with a magnetic front cover to protect my screen. Another option to protect your iPad is a screen protector. I don't mind the smooth feel of the pencil on the iPad screen, but some artists prefer a surface with more texture to draw on. If you prefer a more natural feel when drawing, there are paperlike, matte screen protectors available. One accessory that's essential to my workflow is an ergonomic Apple Pencil grip. Before I bought one, my hand would cramp up while drawing for long periods of



time. Since I've been using the grip, I don't have hand cramps anymore. Even better news—it was only about \$5! I also use a stand that props my iPad up at a 45-degree angle. I find that using a stand is better for posture and also reduces wrist pain. I think it is important to take care of your body by using preventive measures like these whenever possible.



All of the Procreate drawing and painting techniques in this chapter will easily apply to other software like Photoshop. In fact, I use both Photoshop and Procreate quite frequently. They are very flexible, and you can easily send files back and forth between the two. For larger pieces, I often start my sketch in Procreate then send the file to Photoshop on my computer to finish it. Or, if I want a change of scenery, I send my Photoshop file to Procreate so I can work from a coffee shop or outside—it is easy to pick right back up where I left off.

THE GALLERY

Now that we've covered what you need, it's time for us to jump into Procreate. The first thing you see when you open the app is the **Gallery**. The Gallery is where all of your artwork files are stored. Each artwork preview will list the file name and canvas size below it. To open an artwork file already

stored on your device, simply tap the preview in the gallery. You can add new files by using the **Files** menu, such as digital art files from other software by tapping **Import**. You can also import photos from your camera roll by tapping on **Photo**.

Before we create a new canvas, let's look at a few ways to organize files. To rename a file simply tap the title underneath the preview. You can move artwork around by tapping and dragging the preview where you want. By swiping left on a preview, you can share, duplicate, or delete it. To share, duplicate, or delete multiple files at once, tap select then tap on all the files you want to include.

Next choose the action you want to apply from the top right menu. You can also group files into folders called **Stacks**. To create a stack, tap **Select** and tap the files you would like to stack. Once you have them selected, tap **Stack** from the upper right menu.

Alternatively, if you hold and drag one file on top of another this quickly creates a stack. Drag any additional artwork you'd like added to the top of the stack, hover, and hold until you see the selected file in the stack. If you'd like to remove a file from a stack, tap the stack, then tap and drag the artwork to the top left corner until it is back in the Gallery.

CREATING A NEW CANVAS

Now that we are familiar with the Gallery, it's time to create a new canvas. Create a canvas by tapping the + symbol in the upper right-hand corner of the Gallery. Rather than selecting one of the presets shown, let's create a new preset. Tap the icon to the right of **New Canvas**. From here you can choose your dimensions. I typically change units to inches instead of pixels because inches are easier for me to visualize. As a rule of

thumb, I don't use less than 8 inches on the smallest side. For example, if I want to print my drawing at 5x7 inches, I double the dimensions and start my canvas at 10x14 inches. I can scale the file size down after I'm finished which helps maintain high image quality. Speaking of image quality—**DPI** plays an important role. DPI stands for dots (or pixels) per inch. If you use a lower DPI, the image will be more pixelated. I always create my canvas at 300 DPI (which is standard for quality printing). This ensures good image quality on screen as well as when printed. Note that a larger canvas size or higher DPI will limit the number of layers you can have in a canvas. Later on, I will show you a trick to work around the layer limit. To save and rename your new canvas preset, tap **Untitled Canvas**, then tap the orange **Create** button.

LESSON 1: FINDING INSPIRATION

The first step in creating a new drawing is finding inspiration. When I'm not sure what to draw, I gather images I find interesting and compile them into a mood board.

This helps me get inspired to create something new. I gather resources for my mood board by browsing sites like Pinterest or doing a simple Google search. When looking for mood board images, you're not looking for a single image to draw from. You want to find a variety of images that inspire you to create something entirely new.





For example, look for poses, hairstyles, or clothing, but don't draw that exact person. Something as simple as the colors or lighting in a photo can inspire me to create an illustration based on that color palette or lighting situation. As you find images on the web, save them to your camera roll by tapping and holding on the image until the menu pops up. Then tap **Add to Photos**. To save photos from Pinterest, tap the Pin, tap '...' at the right, then tap **Download Image**. Once you've gathered research, you can open up Procreate to create the mood board.

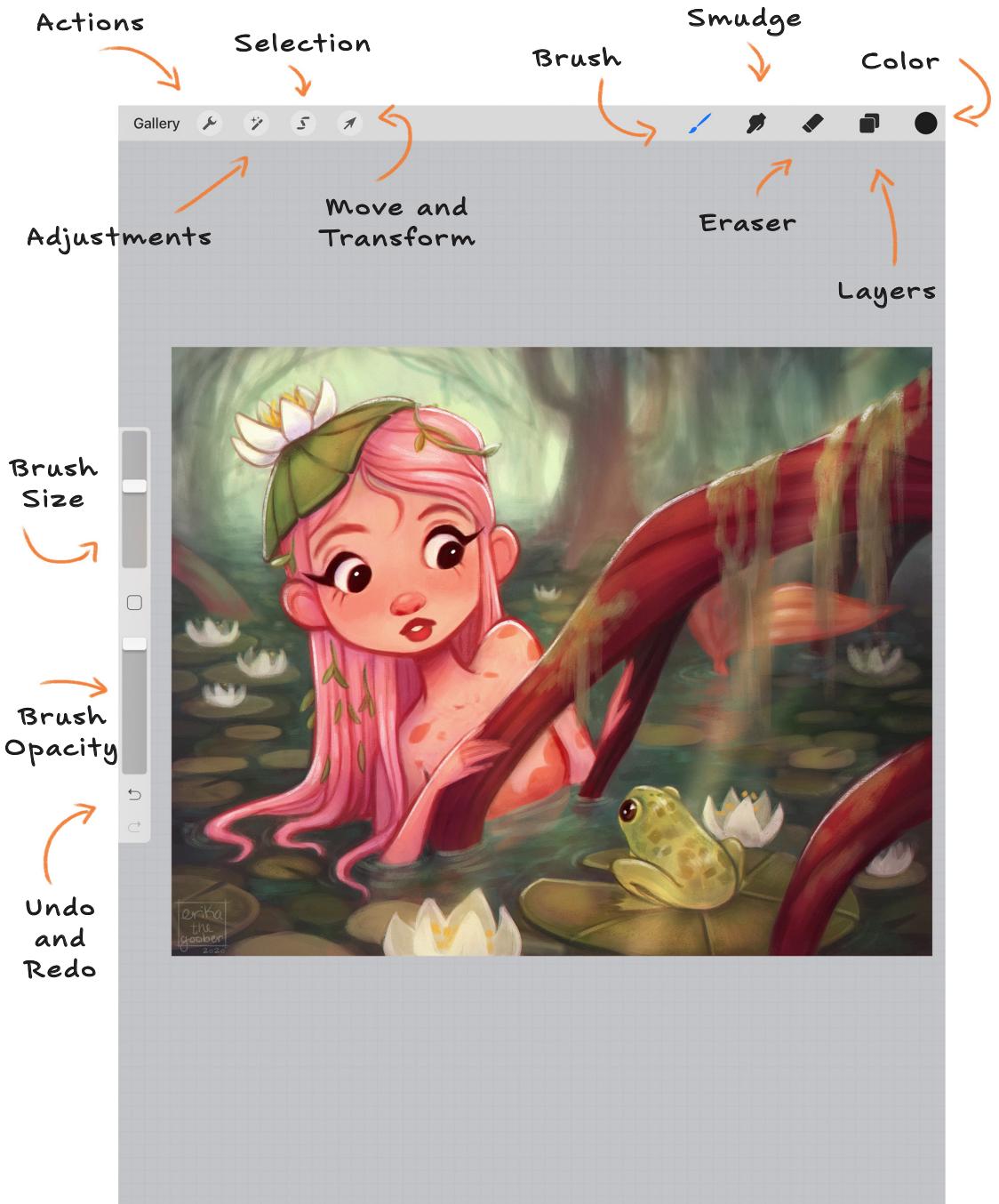
First, you want to utilize the iPad's multitasking feature. This allows you to have multiple app windows open at once, which is very helpful to free up space on your canvas. Go to your home screen and add your favorite apps to the bottom toolbar by holding and dragging. I suggest including at least Procreate, Photos, Pinterest, and an internet browser. Next to open Procreate, swipe up from the bottom of your screen to bring up your toolbar. Tap, hold, and drag the Photos app to either the left or right side of the screen (I move it to the left since I'm

right-handed). Your screen will be divided in half between the two apps. If you tap and drag the black bar in the middle, you can make one window smaller than the other. In this case, I like to have Procreate in the larger window and my Photos smaller. (For future reference, if you want to get rid of a window, swipe toward the left or right depending on which side of the screen the window is on.)

ADDING, MOVING, AND RESIZING IMAGES

To add photos to your canvas, simply drag and drop them from your Photos window to your Procreate window (alternatively, you can tap **Actions > Add > Insert a Photo**). Once imported, the **Move/Transform** tool will automatically be activated so you can move and scale your image. By default, the **Uniform** option is active and the proportions of your image are constrained so they stay consistent no matter the size. If you want to stretch your image, change the option at the bottom menu to **Freeform** and tap the blue points around your image. If you tap

PROCREATE INTERFACE



and hold on any of these points or select **Distort** in the menu, you can skew the image. To move your image, simply tap anywhere on the canvas and drag with one finger. Tapping with one finger next to your canvas will slightly nudge the image in that direction.

To **Zoom In/Out/Rotate** your image, pinch two fingers together and to enlarge expand two fingers apart. Once you're happy with the size and position of your image, tap the **Move/Transform** tool icon on the top left toolbar to confirm. If you want to move only a piece of your image, use the **Selection** tool to select the area you want to move, then tap the **Move/Transform** tool. *Be careful though!* If you move your image outside the canvas boundary and confirm, you'll lose any part of the image outside the canvas boundary. If you move the image again, that piece will be gone! Keep in mind you can always move an image after you've imported it by tapping the **Move/Transform** tool.

THE BASICS OF USING LAYERS

Place your second mood board image the same way as the first. You may notice when you move the new image over the first it appears on top. Procreate, like most digital image software, uses **Layers**. Layers are one of the largest benefits to working with digital drawing software. Working on one layer does not affect the layers below or above, so you're free to add brush strokes and experiment without worrying about messing up the work you've already done. When you import a new image, it is always placed on a layer above the current one.

ACTIONS GUIDE

NAME	WHAT IT DOES	WHERE TO FIND IT
Zoom In/Out/Rotate	Adjusts the view of the canvas.	Pinch and expand with 2 fingers to zoom in/out. Rotate 2 fingers to rotate canvas.
Undo	Undo your previous action.	Top arrow on side panel or tap with 2 fingers.
Redo	Redo an action you chose to undo.	Bottom arrow on side panel or tap 3 fingers.
Cut/Copy/Paste Menu	Allows you to cut, copy, and paste selections.	Slide down with 3 fingers.
Crop	Adjusts canvas area and deletes everything outside of the selection.	Actions > Canvas > Crop & Resize.
Flip Canvas Horizontally	Flips your canvas horizontally so you can get a fresh perspective.	Actions > Canvas > Flip Canvas Horizontally OR Quick Menu on sidebar (change in settings).
Share Image	Exports your artwork as various file types.	Actions > Share > Select File Type.

LAYERS GUIDE

NAME	WHAT IT DOES	WHERE TO FIND IT
New Layer	Creates a new layer above the current one.	Layers > + symbol.
Move Layer	Move a layer above or below another layer.	Tap, hold, and drag the layer you want to move.
Duplicate Layer	Create a copy of a layer.	Swipe left on the layer.
Merge Down	Merges current layer and the one below it into one layer.	Layers > Tap Layer > Merge Down.
Hide Layer	Allows you to hide a layer from view without deleting it.	Uncheck the checkbox to the left of the layer. Check again to make it visible.
Delete Layer	Deletes the selected layer.	Swipe left on the layer.

To view your layers, bring up the **Layers Panel** in the top right toolbar. If you want to move the new image behind the first (**Move Layer**), tap, hold, and drag the new image layer underneath the first layer. If you swipe left on a layer, you can **Lock** it (this means it can't be edited until you unlock it). **Duplicate Layer** will create a copy of a layer and **Delete Layer** will permanently remove the layer from your canvas. If you don't want to see the layer but don't want to permanently delete it, you can uncheck the visibility checkbox to the right of the layer. Check it again to make it reappear.

Tapping on a layer brings up a variety of options. For now, let's focus on **Merge Down** and **Combine Down**. Merge down merges the current layer and the one below it into a new layer. The two layers no longer exist as individual layers and cannot be separated back to the way they were.

Be aware that you cannot merge down on the **Background** layer. Combine down is similar to merge down but rather than merging layers together, it combines the current layer and the one below it into a group.

In a group your layers exist separately, but when a group is selected it can be moved and transformed together. To include more than one layer in a group, tap a layer then swipe right on any layers you want grouped together. Once they are selected, tap **Group**. To remove items from a group, select the images and drag them out of the group. Continue adding images to your mood board canvas and arrange them to your liking. When you're done, tap **Actions > Share > JPEG** and **Save Image** to export your mood board to your photos as a flattened jpeg file.

LAYERS GUIDE

NAME	WHAT IT DOES	WHERE TO FIND IT
Create Group	Organizes layers into collapsible, folder-like groups.	Select a layer and swipe right on any additional layers you want to group. Then tap "group" on the top right.
Layer Opacity	Controls how much you can see through the current layer.	Adjustments > Opacity or, Layers > Layer Blending Mode > Opacity Slider.
Alpha Lock	Locks the pixels on the current layer so that any additional brush strokes cannot go outside the boundaries of those pixels.	Layers > Tap Layer > Alpha Lock.
Clipping Mask	Clips your current layer to the layer below it. Only the brush strokes within the pixel boundary of the layer below it will be visible.	Layers > Tap Layer > Clipping Mask.
Layer Blending Modes	Changes the way the current layer interacts with the layers below it.	Layers > Tap "N" next to the visibility check mark and cycle through the options.

YOUR TURN: FINDING INSPIRATION

Create a mood board of images to inspire your next illustration. You can find images on the internet or take your own photos. Include poses, color palettes, lighting, fashion, and hairstyles, anything that you find interesting or inspiring.

Use Procreate to arrange your images into a mood board to help you become familiar with the interface and tools to prepare for the next lesson.

LESSON 2: SETTING UP YOUR WORKSPACE

In this section we learn about some settings, gestures, and shortcuts to help make your workflow easier and more streamlined. We'll also review brushes in more detail, including my personal favorites and how to make your own!

PROCREATE WORKFLOW

Before we start drawing, let's set up our Procreate workflow and learn about quick gestures and shortcuts that make creating an illustration faster and easier. Let's start by changing a couple of settings, go to **Actions > Preferences > Gesture Controls**. Under **General** make sure **Disable Touch Actions** is turned to **On**. This makes it so you can use the brush tool only with the Apple Pencil. When this is turned off, you'll find yourself making accidental brush marks with your fingers which can be really annoying!

Next, go to the **Quick Menu** option in **Gesture Controls** and turn on **Tap [I]**. Tapping the square on your sidebar will now bring up a **QuickMenu**. You can customize your quick menu by tapping and selecting one of the six options (I have mine on the default settings). You can also go to **Actions > Preferences** and toggle the options to match your preferences. For example, you can move the sidebar on the canvas to either side by toggling the right hand interface option. I prefer mine on the left since I draw with my right hand.

Gestures in Procreate are designed to improve the speed of your workflow. I'll review a few gestures that are essential to my workflow that I think you'll find helpful. A full list of the Procreate gestures can

be found by going to **Actions > Help > Procreate Handbook**. Let's start with a simple one, zooming in/out on your canvas. Using two fingers, pinch to zoom out and expand to zoom in. This comes in handy when you want to get a better look at the details in your illustration. Next is probably my most used gesture and every digital artist's best friend—**Undo!** To undo tap with two fingers anywhere on your canvas. To **Redo** the action, tap with three fingers.

The last gesture I use consistently is the **Cut > Copy > Paste Menu**. Slide down using three fingers to bring up the menu. The action you choose will only be applied to your current layer. Combining this menu with the selection tool will give you more control over where images are placed and on which layer. If you use the selection tool to select a specific part of an image, bring up the cut > copy > paste menu, select **Cut & Paste**, which moves the selection to its own layer.

Shortcuts are similar to gestures but shortcuts work with tools rather than actions. A tool I use quite often while painting is the **Eyedropper**. This tool allows you to select any color on your canvas and make it your current brush color. To quickly access the eyedropper, tap and hold anywhere on your canvas to pick up color. **Fill** is another color tool that comes in handy. Drag the color circle in the top right corner to an area of the canvas you want to fill with color. Remember only the layer you're on will be affected. If there's something on the layer, paint will fill around that area. If nothing is on the layer, the entire layer will be filled.

Lastly let's review **Quick Shapes** and **Lines**. Quick shapes allow you to create editable shapes and even turn them into perfect circles and squares. Draw a circle or square

but don't pick up your pencil for a few seconds. After the shape is created, keep your pencil held down and tap the screen with your finger to create a perfect circle or square. A similar shortcut is used to create a straight line. Try using the brush tool, create a stroke but don't pick up your pencil for a few seconds.

The **Brush** tool will be your most used tool for drawing in Procreate. The brush tool is the first option located in the top right menu. Tapping the brush tool again will allow you to change brushes. To change the brush color, tap the color circle located in the top right corner. I prefer using the **Classic Color Picker** rather than the **Disc** but it's up to you! To change the size of your brush tip, adjust the top slider on the sidebar. **Brush Opacity** is another option you can adjust on the sidebar. Opacity refers to how opaque your brush strokes are. The lower the opacity is, the more you can see through brush strokes. Your Apple Pencil is pressure sensitive. The amount of pressure you apply to the iPad while using the brush will also affect the size and opacity of your brush strokes for most brushes.

The **Smudge** and **Eraser** tools are also located near the brush tool on the top right panel. The smudge tool can be used to push paint around and blend colors on your canvas. The eraser will remove any brush strokes from your current layer. Much like the brush tool, you can change the "brush" style of the smudge and eraser tools by tapping the tool while it's selected.

TOOLS GUIDE

NAME	WHAT IT DOES	WHERE TO FIND IT
Brush <i>Your main tool for drawing!</i>	Allows you to create brush strokes on your digital canvas.	Top right menu. While the tool is selected tap to change brushes.
Brush Size	Adjusts how big or small your brush tip is.	Top slider on sidebar.
Brush Opacity	Adjust how opaque brush strokes are. The lower this is, the more you can see through your brush strokes.	Bottom slider on sidebar. You can also control the opacity with pen pressure.
Change Colors	Change your brush color.	Tap the circle in the top right corner.
Previous Color	Swap between your current and previous colors.	Tap and hold the circle in the top right corner.
Fill	Fill an area with paint.	Tap and drag the circle in the top right corner onto the canvas.
Eyedropper	Selects an existing color from your canvas.	Tap and hold on your canvas.
Straight Line	Creates a perfect straight line.	Using the brush tool, create a stroke and don't pick up your pencil for a few seconds.
Quick Shapes	Creates an editable shape, including perfect circles and squares.	Draw a circle or square and don't pick up your pencil for a few seconds. Tap screen with finger to create a circle or square.
Smudge	Pushes paint around to blend colors on canvas.	Top right menu. Tap while tool is selected to change brush.
Eraser	Erases brush strokes from the current layer.	Top right menu. Tap while tool is selected to change brush.
Move/ Transform	Allows you to move everything on the current layer and resize it.	Top left menu. Pinch/ expand to transform. Tap and drag to move. <i>Note: Transforming too much will decrease image quality!</i>
Selection Tool	Selects specific pixels on your current layer.	Top left menu.

ORGANIZING YOUR BRUSHES

Procreate already comes with a ton of default brushes and you can download even more online. It can be overwhelming to have so many options. Not to mention you can create your own brushes by tapping the + at the top right of the brush menu. While we don't cover creating custom brushes in this lesson, we will experiment with different brushes to help you discover favorites and how to best organize them for easy access.

Selecting the brush tool, then tapping it a second time opens up your brushes library. You will see two columns—your brush sets are on the left and individual brushes on the right. A brush set is basically a folder of different brush styles.

The default brushes are organized by type, such as **Sketching** and **Inking**. By tapping on a brush set, you see all the individual brushes in that set.

Let's experiment with different brushes to find our favorites before we start our sketch. Create a new layer in your current canvas and play around with different brushes.

Try drawing quick strokes, play around with pen pressure, or even draw a little sketch. Your goal is to find brushes that you find interesting and comfortable to use.

Over time you'll discover even more favorite brushes to use. As you do,

it's a good idea to organize them into their own brush sets for quick access. You can create a general favorites set or organize your favorites for sketching, painting, etc.

To create a new set, slide down in the brush sets until you see a + at the top. Tap this to name your set. Then go to the set with the brush you want to include and drag and drop it there. This will move your brush to the new set location. If you want the brush in both sets, swipe left on the brush, tap **Duplicate**, and drag the copy to the new set. If you want to rename, delete, share, or duplicate an entire set, tap the set to pull up the menu. You can also move your sets around by tapping and dragging to move them just like we did with layers.

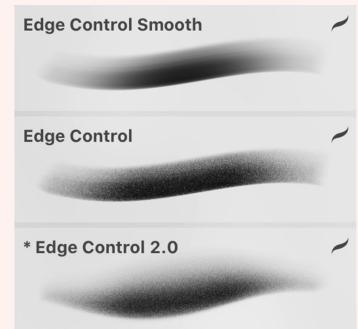
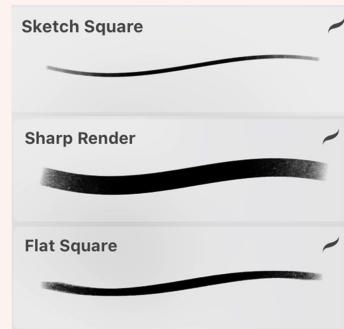
FAVORITE BRUSHES



DEFAULT BRUSHES



JINGSKETCH COMPLETE COLLECTION





LESSON 3: CREATING YOUR LINES

In this step, we get to work on our sketch to begin our illustration. I'll also show you a technique I've learned to refine sketches and keep lines looking lively.

ROUGH SKETCH

Now that we have our mood boards, workspaces set up, and brushes organized, it's finally time to start **DRAWING!** For my illustration, I am creating a simple character portrait. Begin by creating a new canvas for your illustration. Pull up your mood board and any additional windows by using multitasking. We will start with a rough sketch. Make sure you're on a new layer that is separate from the background. I find that it helps to start with a light color or to lower the brush opacity during sketching. Remember, this is a rough sketch so we're not focusing on details, just the main shapes. If you find yourself drawing too much detail, try a larger, messy brush—this helps force you to draw in big strokes. You also want to stay loose at this stage. Focus on the gesture, big shapes, and the emotion of your character.

As I sketch, I like to occasionally flip my canvas horizontally to view my drawing from a fresh perspective. By flipping my canvas, I sometimes notice things I didn't see while sketching. To flip your canvas, tap the quick menu on the side bar and tap **Flip Horizontally**. Follow the same steps to flip it back. If I find that my rough sketch is a little off balance or I want to make a small change without redrawing, I use **Liquify**. Liquify allows you to push the paint around on your canvas, expand it, shrink it, and more. You will find Liquify under the **Adjustments** menu on the top left toolbar. Once you're happy with your rough sketch, lower the

opacity of the layer by tapping on the **N** to the right of your layer. Then drag the slider to the left to make it less visible.

REFINING YOUR SKETCH

There are a couple of ways to go from here. You can create clean line art on top of your sketch by creating a new layer, then using a clean brush to outline. I started out using this method, however, I found it difficult to capture the gesture in my original sketch after drawing line art over it. If you want a more painterly or textured style in your final artwork, I suggest refining the sketch and including it as part of your line work.

When refining a sketch, your goal is to make the concept clearer while maintaining the gesture captured in the rough sketch. I like to do this by duplicating the rough sketch layer then hiding the original. Next I create a new layer above the duplicated rough sketch layer. I use this process throughout so I can compare changes to my original sketch. Begin by defining areas you want to bring attention to or have more detail. Once your sketch is looking more refined, take a moment to clean up any unnecessary lines in your duplicated rough sketch layer. Once you're happy with the results, merge your rough sketch and your refined lines together to create the line art layer you will use for the rest of your illustration.

YOUR TURN: BRUSH SETS AND SKETCHING

Experiment with brushes to find favorites to use for your illustration. Organize them in a brush set(s) so you can easily access them. Next create a sketch based on your mood board from Lesson 1. Refine your sketch to prepare for the next lesson.



ROUGH SKETCH FIRST PASS



ROUGH SKETCH SECOND PASS



REFINED ROUGH SKETCH



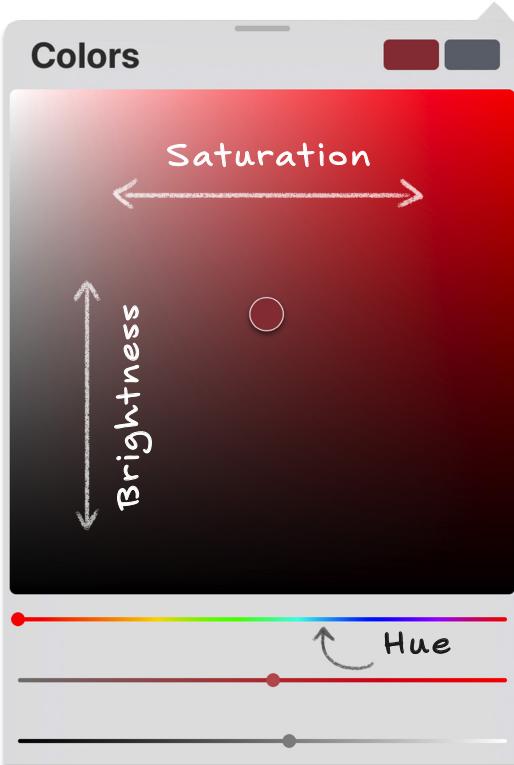
FINAL LINES AFTER ADJUSTMENTS

LESSON 4: ADDING COLOR

In this lesson we learn all about color. First I cover some basics about choosing colors, then I show you my steps to add and adjust color faster and easier in your own illustrations.

INTRO TO COLOR

Working with digital color can be intimidating, especially since the color possibilities are virtually endless. Before adding color to our illustration, let's talk a little about choosing colors. Bring up your **Color Picker** by tapping the top right color circle. For explanation purposes, let's switch our color picker to **Classic** view. There are three factors that make up your digital paint color: **Hue**, **Saturation**, and **Brightness**.



Hue is the purest form of a color. As you move the top slider, you can see that our hue changes across the spectrum. The second factor, saturation, refers to the intensity of the color. As you move the second slider to the left, the color will become less intense or if you move it toward the right it will become more intense. Observe the circle on your color picker as it moves from left to right. The last factor, brightness, refers to how much white or black is mixed in with your color. Slide the bottom slider back and forth to add more white or black to your color.

Notice the circle on your color picker as it moves from top to bottom. Most of the time you'll be choosing colors that combine hue, saturation, and brightness (colors found in the inner area of the color picker), rather than choosing colors that are at the extreme points (the four corners of the color picker). To create a more harmonious palette, it's best to start with more subtle colors and layer on more intense colors.

If you want to see your color picker at all times, simply tap the color circle in the top right and tap and drag where it says **Color** to create a pop out window. You can also quickly swap between your current color and previous color by tapping and holding the color circle.

COLORING YOUR ILLUSTRATION

STEP 1: SILHOUETTE LAYER

Start coloring your character by creating a new layer underneath your line layer. In this step we fill in the silhouette of our character. Choose a color and proceed to fill in your character, almost as if you were coloring in a coloring book. For now, the color choice



FINAL LINES AFTER ADJUSTMENTS



① SILHOUETTE LAYER

isn't as important since we will change it soon. You do want to stay inside the lines and be fairly precise in this step. Also make sure the silhouette is completely filled in—this helps hide your line layer. This layer acts as a base for adding color in the next steps.

STEP 2: ADDING COLOR WITH MASKS

The reason we need to be precise in Step 1 is so we can add colors using **Clipping Masks**. A clipping mask *clips* your current layer to the layer below it. This means only the brush strokes within the pixel boundary of the layer below it will be visible. In other words, you don't have to worry about coloring outside of the lines. *This makes coloring so much easier!*

To create a clipping mask, open the layers panel, create a new layer, tap the layer, and select **Clipping Mask** from the menu.



② COLOR USING CLIPPING MASKS

Start adding color to your character by creating a clipping mask above your silhouette layer and start coloring. It's best to focus on one material at a time and to create separate clipping masks for each. For example, I typically make individual clipping masks for areas like skin, hair, and articles of clothing. This saves you a lot of trouble if you decide to change colors in the future—*something I do a lot!*

ALPHA LOCK

A function similar to a clipping mask is an **Alpha Lock**. This allows you to lock the pixels of the current layer so you cannot color outside that boundary. While a clipping mask forms a new, separate layer that clips onto another layer, any changes made on an alpha lock layer affect the pixels on the same layer. Generally I prefer to use clipping masks so my original layer is unchanged, but there are circumstances where an alpha lock is very useful. For example, I may want to add stripes to my character's shirt. I have a clipping mask layer where I colored in the main shirt color, but if I make another clipping mask for the stripes the lines will be drawn onto the entire silhouette, not just the shirt layer. If I turn on alpha lock for the shirt layer, I can draw stripes without going outside of the shirt layer boundary. To turn on alpha lock, open the layers panel, tap the layer, and select alpha lock from the menu.

STEP 3: EASILY CHANGE COLORS

By this step, you should have the flat colors laid down for your character and each material should be separated into different clipping masks. Doing this allows you to make quick color changes using the hue, saturation, brightness,

ADJUSTMENTS GUIDE

NAME	WHAT IT DOES	WHERE TO FIND IT
Gaussian Blur	Creates a soft blur effect.	Adjustments > Gaussian Blur.
Noise	Creates a grainy texture.	Adjustments > Noise.
Liquify	Allows you to make adjustments to your drawing by pushing around the pixels.	Adjustments > Liquify. <i>Try playing with the other options too!</i>
Hue, Saturation, Brightness	Adjusts the hue, saturation, and brightness of the current layer.	Adjustments > Hue, Saturation, Brightness.
Color Balance	Adjusts the color tone of the current layer using the three sliders.	Adjustments > Color Balance. Tap and hold on the canvas to compare changes.
Curves	Adjusts the contrast of the current layer by moving points on a grid.	Adjustments > Curves. Tap and hold on the canvas to compare changes.



③ EASILY CHANGE COLORS

and **Color Balance** adjustment tools. I often use these adjustment tools to subtly change my character's colors and make the palette more unified. Hue, saturation, and brightness allow you to adjust the same three factors in determining color that we talked about at the beginning of this lesson. Color balance is a little different. Color balance adjusts the color tone of the current layer using three sliders: cyan/red, magenta/green, and yellow/blue. Using these sliders pushes and pulls color on your canvas between each of the two tones. Both options can be found in the **Adjustments** menu on the top left toolbar.

CHECKING YOUR VALUES

You want to create good contrast with your color choices. We see value or how light or dark a color is most clearly in grayscale, but that doesn't mean we need to desaturate colors to see values. To easily check if I'm headed in the right direction with my color choices, I create what I call a *value check* layer. To do this, create a new layer above all other layers and fill with white by using the **Fill** tool (reviewed in Lesson 2). After the layer is filled with white, open your layers panel and tap the **N** on the layer you just filled. Scroll down to the option that says **Color** and your image should appear to be grayscale. (This is what's called a **Layer Blending Mode**, but we'll go more in depth about this in Lesson 5.) Now that we can see the values more clearly, we can check contrast. Your goal is to have a variety of lights and darks. Are there any colors you chose that seem to be too similar in value? If so, adjust using hue, saturation, and brightness along with color balance for better contrast. You can toggle this value check layer on and off by checking and unchecking the visibility box.



④ COLOR VARIATION

STEP 4: ADDING COLOR VARIATION

Once I've checked values and decided on flat colors, I want to make these layers a little more interesting by adding color variations within those layers. I'll add different color tones in areas such as warmer tones on the cheeks, nose, and ears or light and dark tones in the hair.

I also start to think about lighting at this step by adding subtle shadows where elements are overlapping one another—for example, under a character's chin or where clothing sits on the body. You don't need to go overly detailed with this process right now since we'll be adding more details later. But I've found that adding color variation to your flat colors gives your illustration a little more life in these early stages.

STEP 5: COLORING YOUR LINES

Changing the line color to fit the colors chosen for your character will help bring the color palette together and make your artwork more cohesive. In most cases, I start by adjusting the line color with color balance to a dark red/burgundy tone. If your lines are black, you need to change the value in color balance by tapping the sun icon on the right side of the color balance menu then tap **Shadows**.

Next we'll color the lines just like we colored our silhouette layer by creating clipping masks for each material. When choosing line color, I use the eyedropper tool to select my main color from the material. Then I darken and slightly saturate the color before coloring the lines. I repeat this until each material on my character has a complementary line color.



5 COLORING YOUR LINES

STEP 6: ORGANIZING YOUR LAYERS

This last step is essential to prepare for the next lesson. You want to use what we learned about groups in Lesson 1 to organize layers. First create a group containing ALL of your character layers (including the silhouette, colors, lines, and line colors) by tapping a layer and swiping left on the additional layers. Within this main group we create two more groups for color and lines. Rename these new groups by tapping on the group and tapping **Rename**.

You can also rename the main group if you like. Now you can move the entire character around including all the layers, free from the background. Moving forward, everything should be organized and easy to find, just in case you need to go back and make adjustments.

YOUR TURN: ADDING COLOR

Follow Steps 1 to 5 to add and adjust the colors of your character. Then organize your layers in groups as reviewed in Step 6 to prepare for the next lesson.

TIPS FOR ADDING COLOR:

- **Make sure your silhouette layer is completely filled in.** If it is not, your clipping masks will not be applied correctly and you will not be able to add color to that area.
- **Use a value check layer to assure the colors you choose have good contrast with one another.** Adjust colors using hue, saturation, brightness, and color balance tools.

ORGANIZING YOUR LAYERS



8.

7

5

3

1

Layers		
Clean Up	✓	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shirt	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hair	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Eye Color	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Skin	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Character	✓	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lines	✓	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hair	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shirt	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Skin	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
LINE BASE	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Colors	✓	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Earrings	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hair Pink	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hair Variation	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hair	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Eyes Lips	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shirt (Alpha...)	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Skin Variation	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Skin	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SILHOUETTE...	N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sketches	✓	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Refined Sketch	N	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rough Second P...	N	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rough First Pass	N	<input type="checkbox"/>

LESSON 5: CLEAN UP

In this lesson I teach you how to make your illustrations look smooth and clean. We'll do a lot of painting and blending to prepare your character for the next lesson. This is actually my favorite part of the illustration process. I love playing my favorite music and getting lost in the painting and blending process. It can be very relaxing.

I call this the *clean-up* phase because I take what was completed earlier and make it cleaner to provide clarity to the viewer. Much like refining our sketch, the goal is to stay true to our original. Basically, we add paint to new layers above all the previous layers using the eyedropper to select existing colors from the canvas. We won't actually touch any of the layers in our line or color groups. This step is meant to be free flowing and less organized than earlier steps. Just let loose and feel free to paint on top of the lines to carve out and define areas. Think of this as sculpting your character with paint. I paint over any lines I don't think add to the clarity of the character such as construction or sketch lines. You can add even more texture in this step by trying out different brushes.

You don't need to do all your clean-up work in a single layer. You can create new layers for testing more substantial changes. Something I recommend doing often is to toggle on and off the visibility of your clean-up layer(s). By comparing your adjustments to the original, you can see if the changes are staying true to the original while moving in the right direction. If not, don't be afraid to hide the clean-up layer and try again in a new one. It's really up to you how far you take this step. You can clean up every little detail or only define a few areas. I tend to be somewhere in between. I like a painterly look but don't want too many sketch lines in areas of focus.

FINALIZING YOUR CLEAN UP

After I've cleaned up my illustration to a point I'm satisfied with, there are a few final steps to my process. At this point, you may be close to reaching the layer limit of your canvas. Remember, the larger your file size the fewer layers you have to work with. To view your layer limit tap **Actions > Canvas > Canvas Information > Layers**. We need additional layers for the next lesson so I suggest following these steps to free up layers. Go to your Gallery view and swipe left on your canvas. Tap **Duplicate** and open the copy. From here, go to your layers and merge the character group (all color, lines, and clean-up layers) by tapping on the group then **Flatten**. Since this is a duplicate canvas, we won't lose our original layered character. This allows us to free up layers, especially helpful when your illustration is complex with a lot of layers.

Once I have the flattened character, I duplicate and hide this layer so I can compare it to the changes. I take a good look at the edges of my character. I'm looking for any stray brush strokes or if the silhouette doesn't appear clear enough. I use the eraser tool to clean up lines. I'll flip my canvas horizontally to check on things like proportions and balance. If there's anything that needs correcting, I can also use the liquify tool (like we did with the sketch in Lesson 2).

YOUR TURN: CLEAN-UP PHASE

Use the clean-up phase on your character. Follow the steps to prepare your file for the next lesson.

TIP FOR CLEAN UP:

- **If you are adding a background block in colors during this step.**



BEFORE CLEAN UP



AFTER CLEAN UP

LESSON 6: LIGHTING USING LAYER BLENDING MODES

In this lesson we learn about ***Layer Blending Modes*** and how they can be a useful tool to quickly add lighting to your illustration.

These options change the way the current layer interacts with the layers below it. Think of them almost like filters that are on top of the rest of your illustration. Using layer blending modes can help you quickly achieve effects that would take much longer using traditional paint. I find them most useful for adding lighting to an illustration. You can access the layer blending mode option by tapping the layers panel and tapping the **N** on a layer. This will bring up all twenty-five layer blending mode options for you to scroll through and select.

You can get an idea of the effects of different layer blending modes by filling a layer above your character with solid color and cycling through the options as Procreate updates your canvas live. Twenty-five is a lot of different options so make sure you experiment with their effects. You may find that you like some better than others. Honestly, for my process I only use a select few. These include ***Multiply, Color Dodge, Overlay***, and ***Soft Light***, but there have been circumstances where a blending mode I'd never used before worked better than my go-tos!

Before we start lighting our character, we need to identify the light source. The light source determines where we add in shadows and highlights to our character. When lighting your character, you want to think in 3D shapes even though our illustrations are 2D. Think about how light would wrap around the shapes. It may help to create a new layer and draw a line showing where your light source is coming from. You can mark the areas you think the light would hit. We also want to think about the color of our light source. The color of your lighting affects both your highlight and shadow colors. For example, warm light will produce cool shadows.



CLEANED UP & FLATTENED



SHADOWS WITH MULTIPLY



WARM GLOW WITH OVERLAY

After you have a good idea of where light is coming from, start by adding shadows. There are a couple of ways I usually go about this. If there is a faint light source and my character is mostly in shadow, I fill a layer set to **Multiply** and erase out the highlights. In this case, I want my character to be well lit so I paint in the shadows on a layer set to multiply.

In this situation my light source is warm so I use a cool purple for my shadow color. You may need to adjust the color you choose if it looks too dark since multiply makes colors appear darker. While I add the shadows, I think about my light source and which areas are not exposed to the light. Before adding intense highlights, I add a warm glow light using an **Overlay** layer in a light pink/orange color. Overlay tends to be intense so you may want to lower the layer opacity.

If I have a light-colored background, I add a **Soft Light** layer and use a soft brush in a light color to soften the edges of my character. This can help your character appear within the background setting better, creating a sense of atmosphere. Lastly, I add an intense rim of light to the edges of my character using a **Color Dodge** layer.

YOUR TURN: LIGHTING

Find or take a photo for a reference for your lighting effects. Identify your light source and create a similar lighting situation using layer blending modes.

TIPS FOR LIGHTING:

- **If you are having trouble finding your light source use a reference photo.**
Observe where the light is brightest and the shadows are cast.
- **Remember to add shadows and highlights to any background images.** Use the same techniques used for your character.



ATMOSPHERE



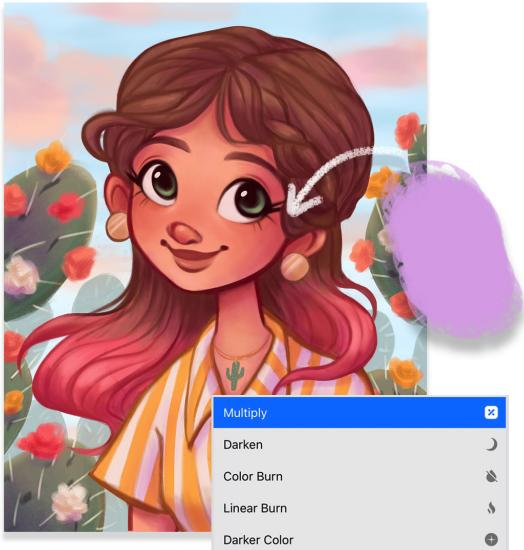
RIM LIGHT WITH COLOR DODGE



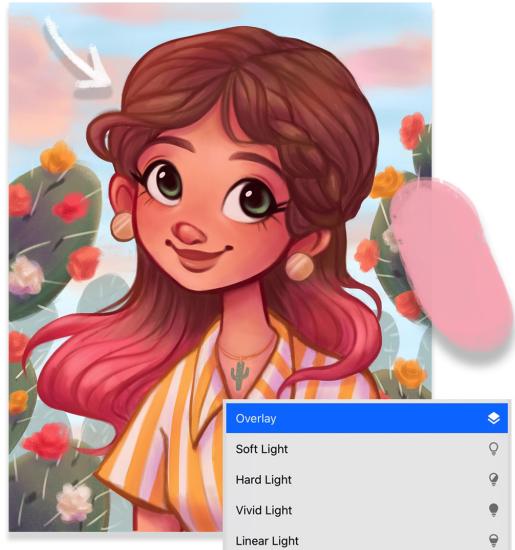
DUPLICATED RIM LIGHT GLOW

LIGHTING WITH LAYER BLENDING MODES

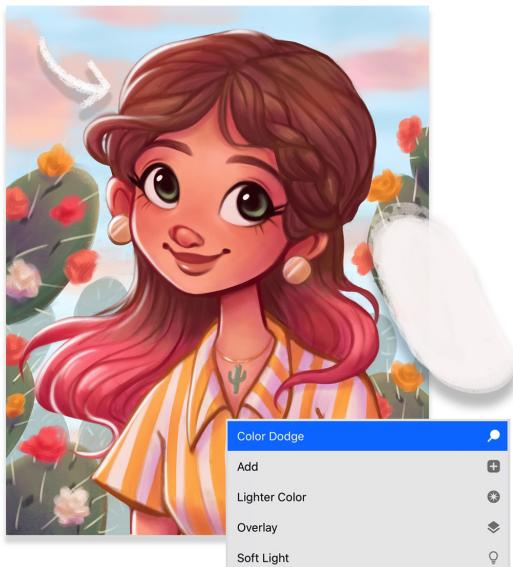
SHADOWS



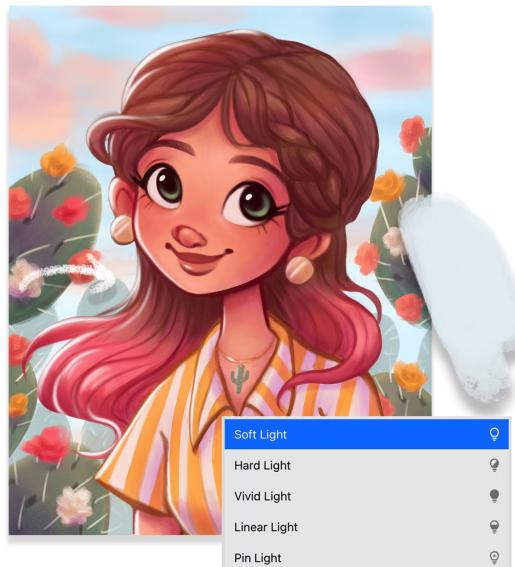
WARM LIGHT



RIM LIGHT



ATMOSPHERE



LESSON 7: FINISHING UP

In this lesson we review final adjustments you can make to your illustrations to make them look more professional.

SAVING

With lighting established, we can save the illustration to make our final adjustments. To do this we'll save it as a JPEG by going to **Actions > Share > JPEG > Save Image**. Once your illustration has been exported, return to the Gallery view and tap **Photo** in the top right corner. Tap on your saved illustration in your Photos to add it to Procreate as a new canvas.

FINAL ADJUSTMENTS

Now we are ready to add final adjustments and effects to our illustration. First, let's duplicate the illustration layer so we can compare it to any changes we make. I also suggest creating another value check layer (as we did in Lesson 3) to check your contrast.

The first adjustment I typically make is to contrast using **Curves** which can be found in the adjustments menu. Adjusting curves is different from the other menus we've used so far because it uses a graph to make adjustments. Pull points on the graph to adjust the contrast. The left side of the graph represents shadows, the middle midtones, and the right highlights. Moving points up or down will increase or decrease the brightness of each value. You want to make sure you don't increase the contrast so much that it blows out your whites and causes your illustration to lose detail. Next I use color balance to adjust my colors and balance them to the tones as I see fit.



BEFORE ADJUSTMENTS



COLOR AND CONTRAST

Sometimes I add a soft blurring effect to areas that would be out of focus. To do this I duplicate my edited layer and apply a **Gaussian Blur** to the copied layer. Blurs are found in the adjustments menu. Next I erase out areas of my blur layer that I want to have in focus with a soft brush. Once I'm happy with the blur effect, I merge my blur layer and the layer underneath it. Lastly, I add **Noise** to add a little bit of a gritty texture to my illustration. Noise is also found in the adjustments menu.

These are a few of the adjustments I commonly make, but each illustration is different. Once you get the hang of using different effects, you can add other layer blending modes or create different adjustments when you feel an illustration needs them. When you're ready to wrap things up, sign your illustration and save it as a JPEG.

YOUR TURN: FINALIZE YOUR ILLUSTRATION

Wrap up your illustration by adding any final adjustments and effects you like. Remember, all of these final adjustments are optional. Try these or discover your own adjustments and keep finessing until you are happy with your final work. *Don't forget to sign and save!*

TIPS FOR FINALIZING:

- **Hope you enjoy all the tips and useful techniques I've learned through the years. Most of all, practice all the assignments for the lessons and have fun!**

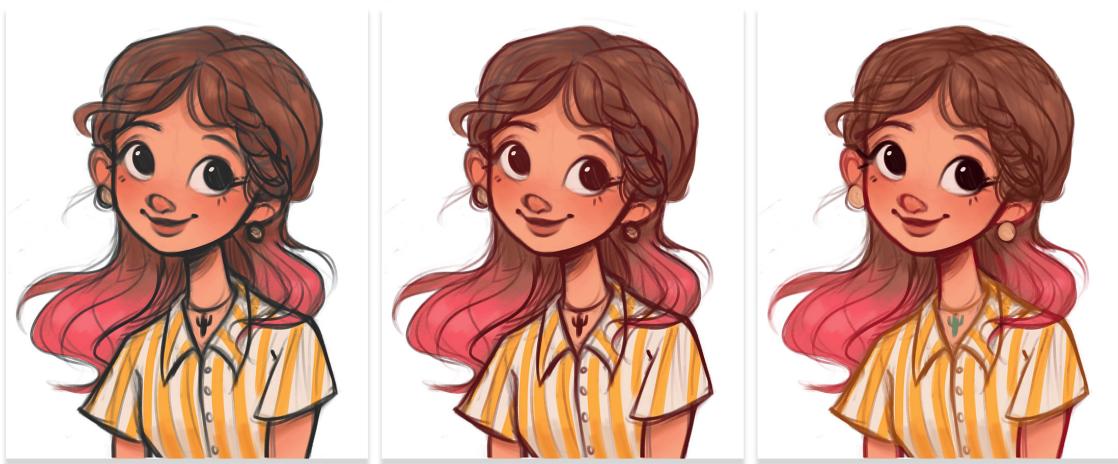
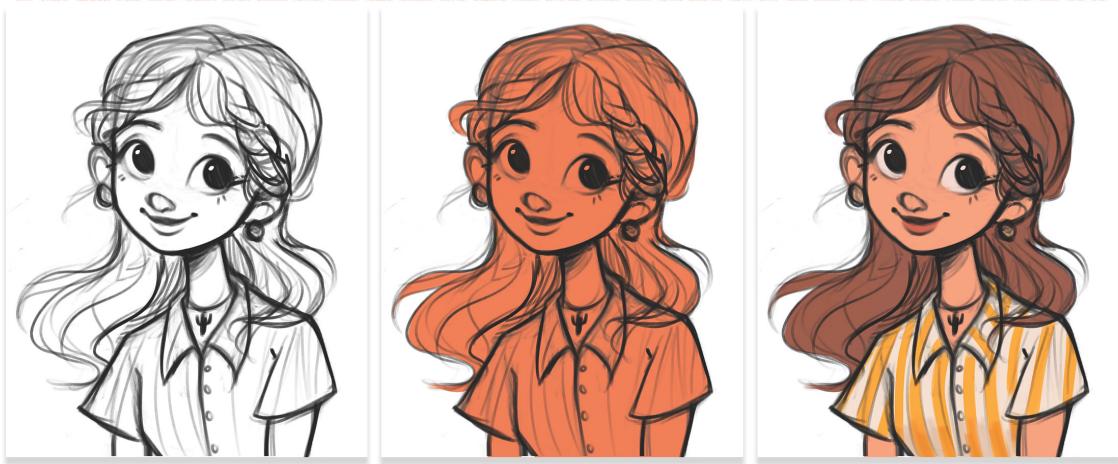


BLUR



NOISE

DIGITAL DRAWING STEP BY STEP



DIGITAL DRAWING STEP BY STEP



BEFORE AND AFTER FINAL ADJUSTMENTS



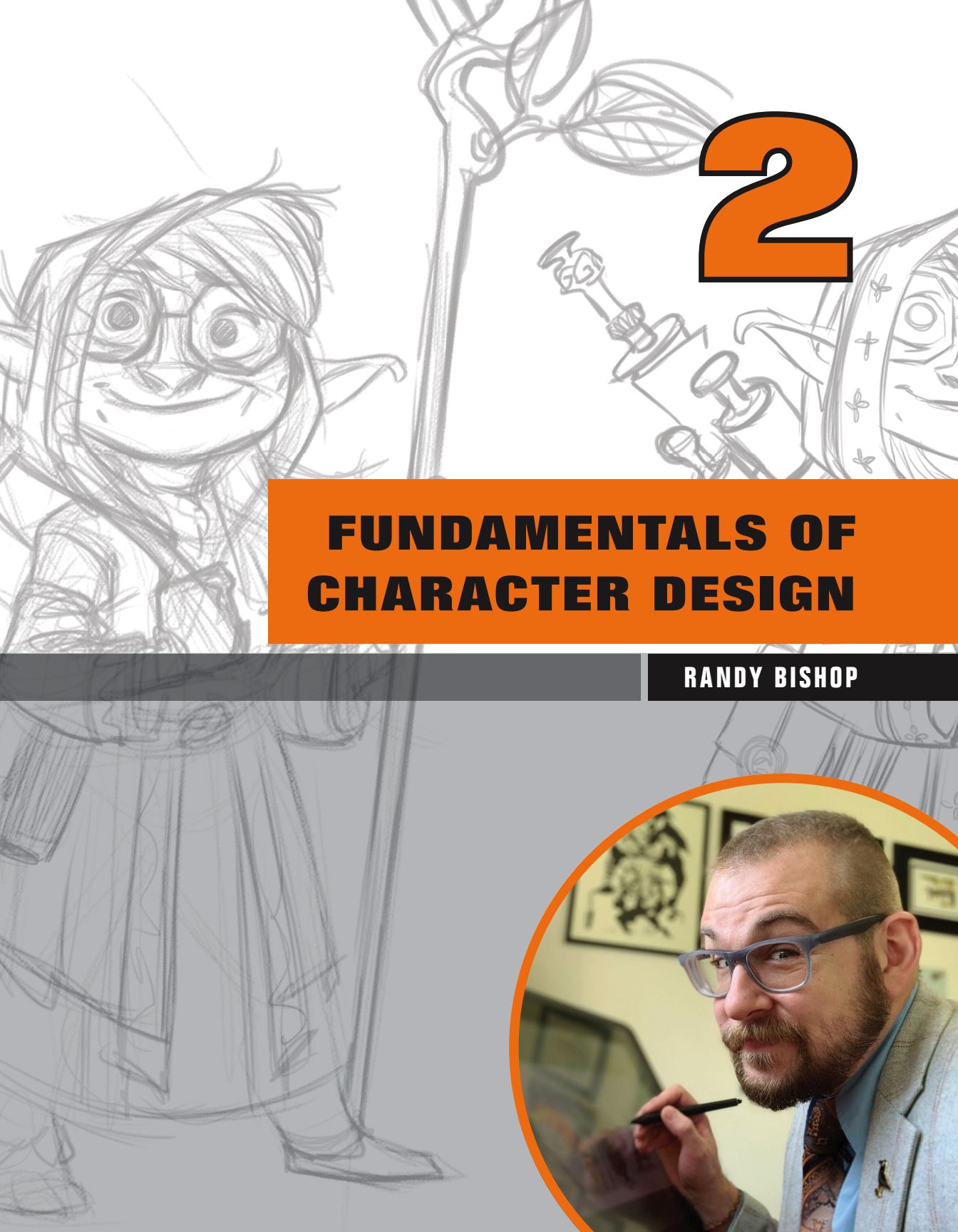


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 SCAN ME



2

FUNDAMENTALS OF CHARACTER DESIGN

RANDY BISHOP



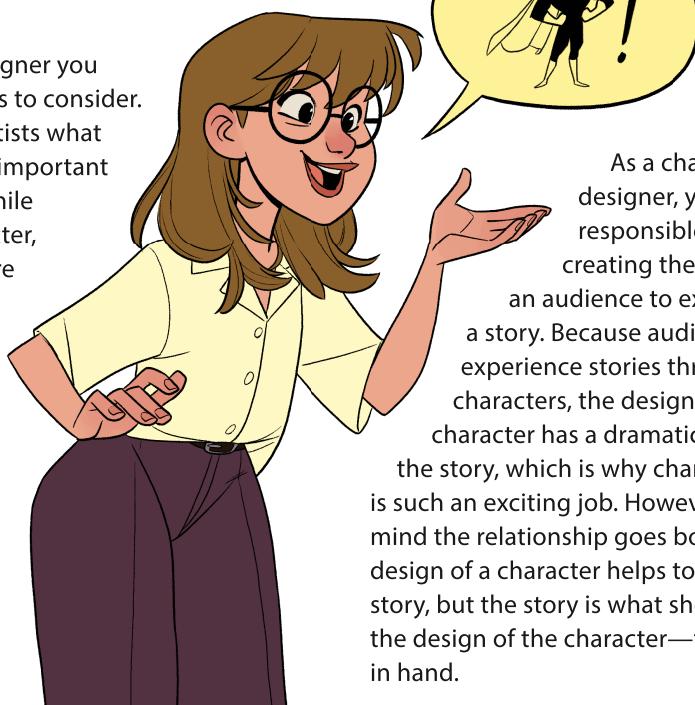
FUNDAMENTALS OF CHARACTER DESIGN

WITH RANDY BISHOP

Character design is a very broad subject and requires years of research to learn in depth. There are so many things to consider and avenues to explore along the way; it can be easy to get lost. Understanding this, in this chapter I provide you with a broad perspective as well as focus in on enough detail to more fully engage and benefit you.

Before we begin, I want to clarify that the concepts I'm sharing with you are based on my experiences as a character designer. Other artists have their own methods, but these techniques are what work well for me.

As a character designer you have a lot of details to consider. I've asked other artists what they think is most important to keep in mind while designing a character, and the answers are almost as varied as the people themselves. No matter what type of character you create, there's one thing that needs to be at the forefront of your mind as you make every design decision: the story.



CONSIDER THE STORY

You can't talk about character design without discussing storytelling, since the two are (in my mind) the same thing. Art in all its forms is about communication. You're saying something with your art whether you're a painter, a composer, a writer, a designer, a performer, or actually anyone skilled in one of the fine arts of life! Everything you do as an artist is tied to communication. Creating a piece of art is the same as telling a story in many ways.



As a character designer, you're responsible for creating the conduit for an audience to experience a story. Because audiences experience stories through characters, the design of a character has a dramatic effect on the story, which is why character design is such an exciting job. However, keep in mind the relationship goes both ways. The design of a character helps to shape the story, but the story is what should shape the design of the character—they go hand in hand.



Good character design requires planning. Story is the most important factor in every decision you make as a designer, so your planning needs to revolve around questions to support the story. What kind of story are you telling? What is your target demographic? How many primary and secondary characters are there? What is the character's role in the story? What is the character's personality like? What



is the character's personal history or background? What sort of research should you be doing in order to be fully informed about the story and characters?

There are many items to explore before you jump into designing a character. The more prepared you are before you begin, the better your final design will be.



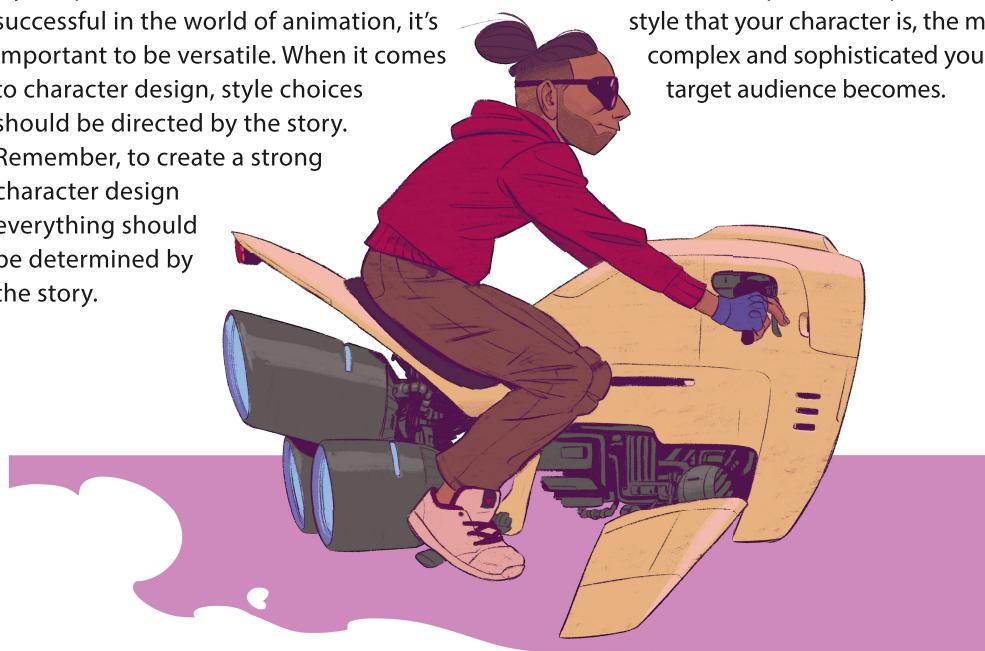
STYLIZATION

An important decision to contemplate before you begin designing is what style would be most appropriate for your story.

When I say “stylization,” I’m not talking about establishing a personal artistic style. In my opinion, too many people obsess over establishing a “personal style” rather than letting the circumstances dictate what style they work in. Different styles speak to different audiences. To be successful in the world of animation, it’s important to be versatile. When it comes to character design, style choices should be directed by the story. Remember, to create a strong character design everything should be determined by the story.

Style is a tool to be used in telling your story, just as any other element or principle of design is a tool to help you communicate in your artwork. What does a particular style say to an audience? For example, a simple, innocent style gives the impression that your story is simple and innocent, which has a strong appeal for young audiences.

The more complex and sophisticated style that your character is, the more complex and sophisticated your target audience becomes.



SIMPLIFICATION AND EXAGGERATION

Stylization can be broken down into two things: *simplification* and *exaggeration*.

SIMPLIFICATION: WHAT IS IT AND WHY USE IT?

Simplification means to take something complex and break it down into more basic or general parts. Simplifying an idea into its most basic and pure form makes that idea more memorable and impactful. There's a famous quote that reads, "If you can't explain it to a six-year-old, you don't understand it yourself," which is usually attributed to Einstein. If you want your characters to have an impact, you need to understand the underlying theme or purpose of their role in the story and be able to communicate it effectively.



EXAGGERATION: WHAT IS IT AND WHY USE IT?

To exaggerate means to emphasize or call attention to specific details. You could, for example, give a character unusually large eyes to make them seem in awe of the world around them. Or make a character's mouth exaggeratedly small to suggest that the character is soft spoken or shy. Creating a square-shaped character that has the same width and height can make a character seem immovable or unopposable. There are countless ways to exaggerate parts of your character's design.



To be an effective designer, you need to know how to use all the tools available to you. Let's look at a couple of different ways to use stylization to say specific things about a character.



Here's a generic character that's been stylized a little bit. The design might be kind of interesting, but there's nothing about him to tell us who he is or what sort of story he's a part of.



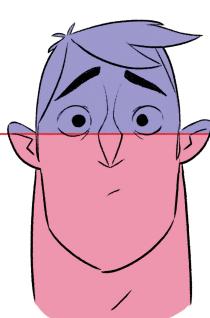
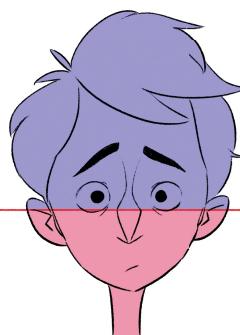
If we change his proportions slightly, we get a character with a little more story. Suddenly, the character looks smart, but not particularly strong.



If we change the proportions again, the character looks strong, but not particularly smart.



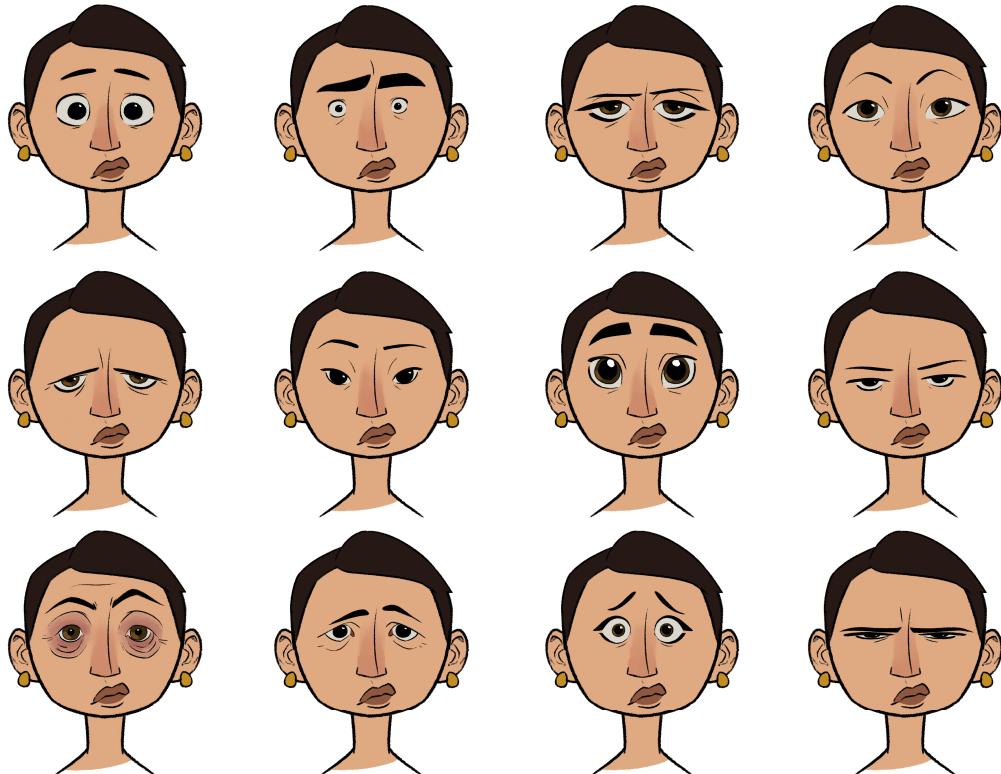
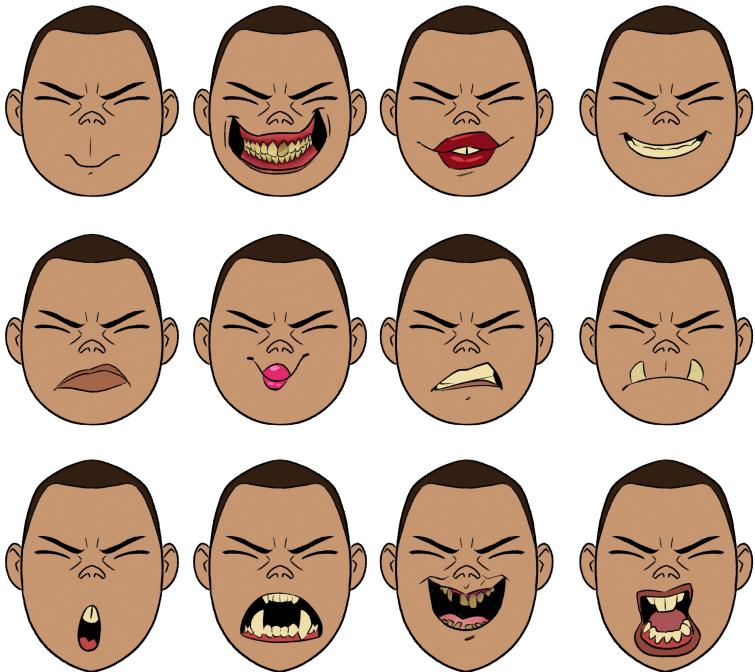
The facial features on this character have remained the same, but by exaggerating the relative sizes of his cranium, jaw, and neck, we were able to visibly express variations in his intellectuality and physicality.

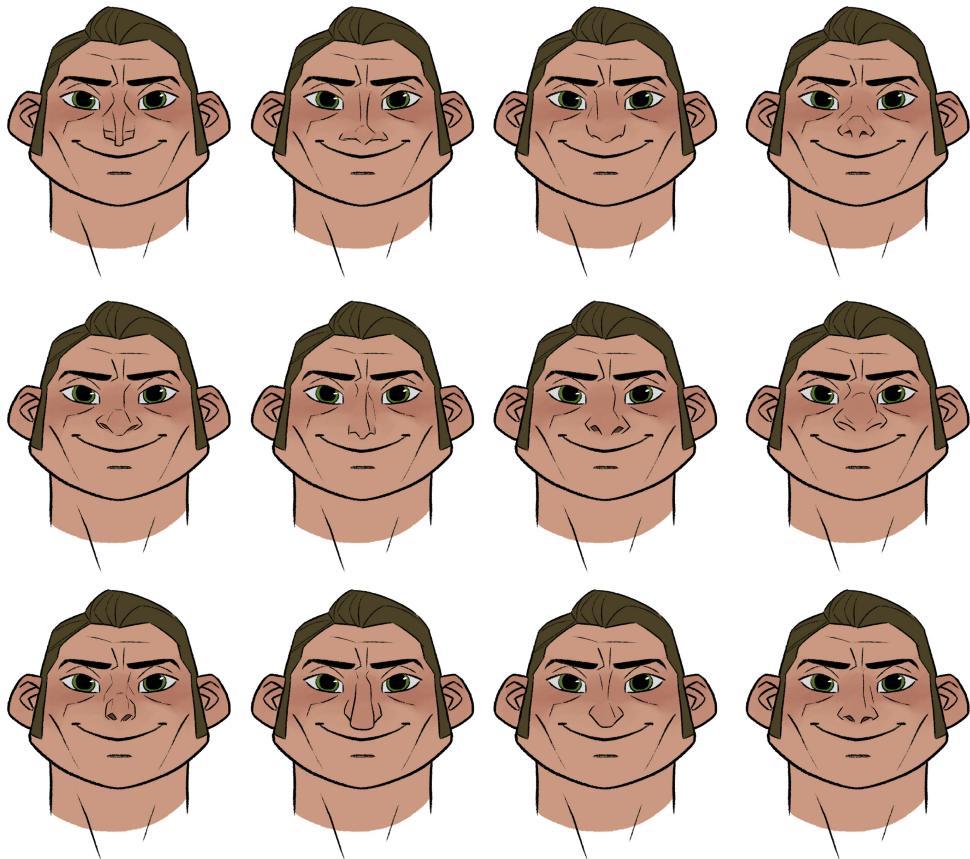


A strong jaw and neck are both generally associated with physical strength, whereas a large cranium is associated with intelligence. By emphasizing or deemphasizing these physical traits alone, we can create a range of identities and personalities, adding depth to the storytelling from our characters.

Every aspect of a character's design affects the way an audience experiences the story and how they view the character. Exploring alterations to even just one element of your character's design can have a huge impact.

Here are just a few examples featuring changes only to the mouth (right), eyes (below), or nose (next page) of a character.





CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

In storytelling, there are several commonly referenced character archetypes. These archetypes are roles that characters play in the narrative. An advantage of using character archetypes is to help limit the complexity of your characters. People are infinitely complex and therefore impossible to fully capture in a story. Limiting characters to a particular theme can help to provide them with a proper direction and purpose which makes it easier for an audience to follow.

Even biographies and documentaries tend to be constructed in a format that

focuses on a specific message to better communicate and entertain. Concentrating on a clear message in a story has a tremendous impact on an audience, while trying to say too much can have less impact.

Archetypes are a useful tool to limit and focus the roles your characters play in the story. While characters can fill multiple roles, generally, it's a good idea to concentrate on a dominant part for each character. That said, on the following pages are some common archetypes along with a few of their attributes.



"The Everyman" or "Regular" Guy/Gal:
Down-to-earth, Underdog

"The Child" or "Innocent"
Young at heart, Naive

"The Hero" or "Warrior"
Courageous, Bold, Talented



"The Rebel" or "Outlaw"
Questions authority, Selfish

“The Explorer”

Adventurous



“The Creator”

Inventive, Creative



“The Ruler”

Controlling, Stern



“The Magician”
Visionary, Unconventional



“The Caregiver”
Nurturing, Generous



“The Lover”
Devoted





"The Jester"

Lives in the moment,
Often comic relief



"The Sage" or "Herald"

Shows others the path to follow

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PROCESS

When a client or studio hires a character designer, they're not simply choosing based on technical skill, they're also looking for an artist that can think through the process. Consequently, a strong portfolio needs to provide insight into your conceptual process.

Any good design starts from an artist brief or a good understanding of who the character is meant to be in the story. Here is an example of a brief I created for a personal project designing characters for a hypothetical *Dungeon & Dragons* campaign: A gnome-like wizard whose magic is nature based. She is a friendly and nurturing character who is devoted to seeking knowledge about magic from sources near and far.

In my mind, sketches and thumbnails help to pull ideas from your brain so you can place them onto the canvas. They only need to communicate your ideas effectively, so sketches for my personal projects are pretty rough because I'm the only one who needs to see them. Sketches for clients are usually a bit neater because I need to be sure they can see what I have in mind. Once I've narrowed my ideas down to a concept I really like, I start to focus in on the details.

Over the next few pages is the evolution of a character from sketch to final design. See if you can tell what design choices were made in order to better communicate the character as she was described in the brief.



Step 1: Thumbnail sketches



Step 2: Rough in character



Step 4: Clean line art



Step 3: Clean-up sketch



Step 5: Value and shading



Step 7: Final artwork



Step 6: Flat colors

COSTUME DESIGN

The design of a character's costume is a vitally important part of the overall design process because clothing is how people present themselves to the world.

It's part of how we, as humans, tell others who we are or how we want them to see us. Changes in the way a character dresses can completely alter an audience's expectations for a character and, therefore, the story.

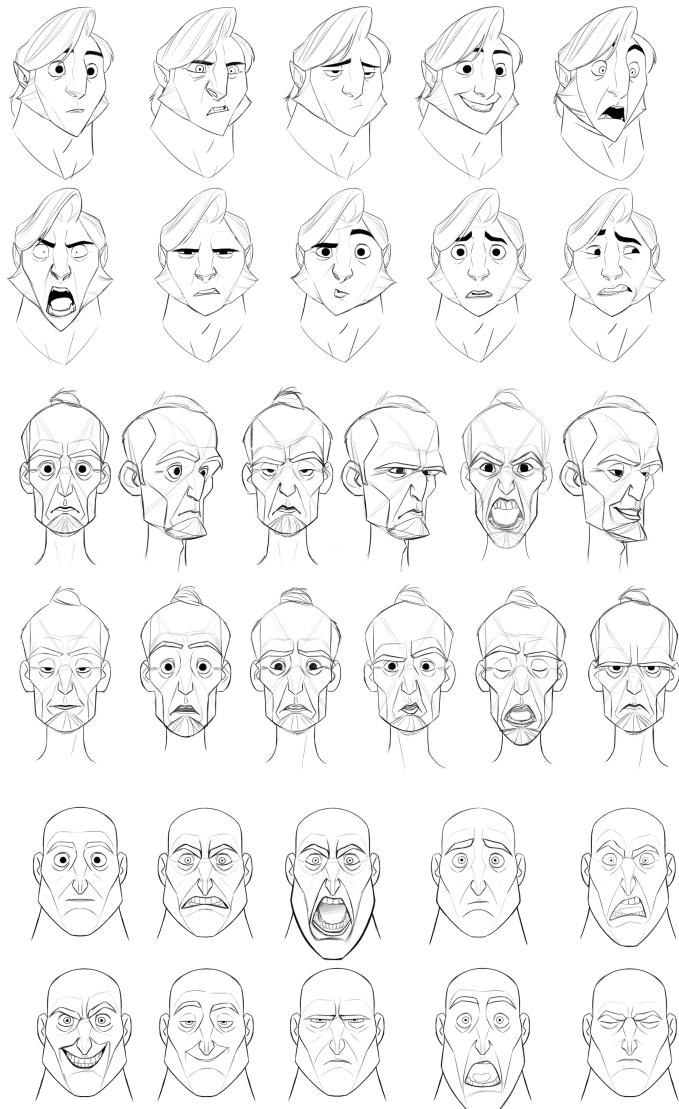


MODEL SHEETS

Character model sheets are resources that you create in order to explain the different aspects of your character's design to the production team. As a designer, you could be responsible for creating anything the production team needs to take a character through all the stages of production.

Model sheets are a good way to feature the attitude and personality of your character.

This character is a “gentle giant,” the sort of character who is generally good natured but can also be ferociously protective.



This character is secretive and angry by nature. He rarely smiles, and when he does it's never out of genuine happiness.

This character is emotionally and mentally unstable. He is prone to extremes in temperament, so his expressions encompass a wide range of movement and emotion.

When you have multiple characters with their own model sheets, those sheets serve to highlight the differences between the characters.

Here are three expression sheets for characters from the same story. The way the characters emote tells us a lot about them and serves to show how different their attitudes and behaviors are:



CHARACTER LINEUP

When you have multiple characters in a story, it's important to think of the cast as a whole during the design process. Seeing characters next to one another helps people get a good idea of what's normal in the culture of the story and highlights anyone who doesn't fit in with those norms.

It's also a good way to provide an idea of the relationships between your characters. Character design plays an important role in a story. And the story plays an important role in the character design.

Developing your own techniques for design are up to you and may take time to develop. But keep in mind—you are also telling the story through your character design. Remember to prepare ahead of time.

Have fun!

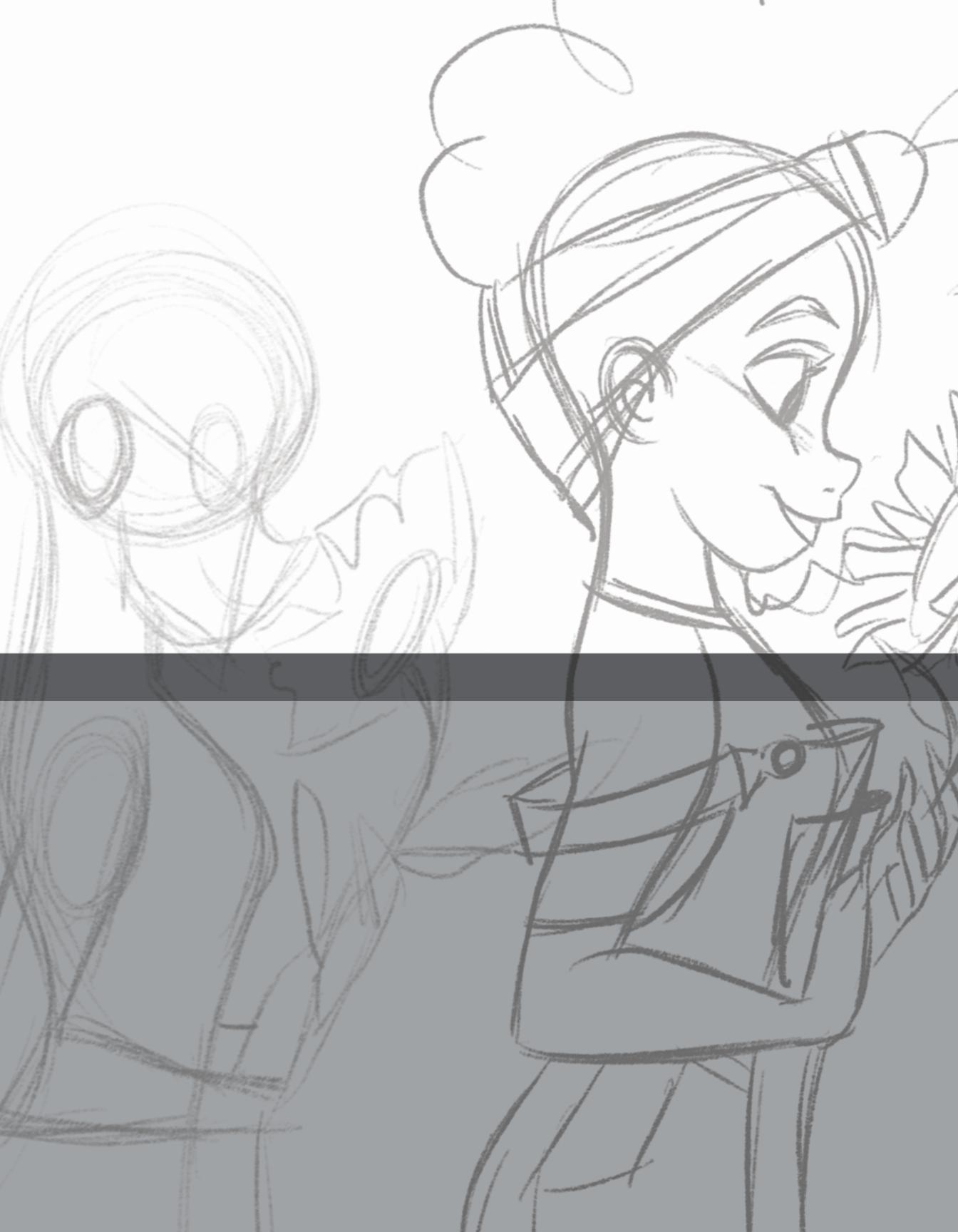


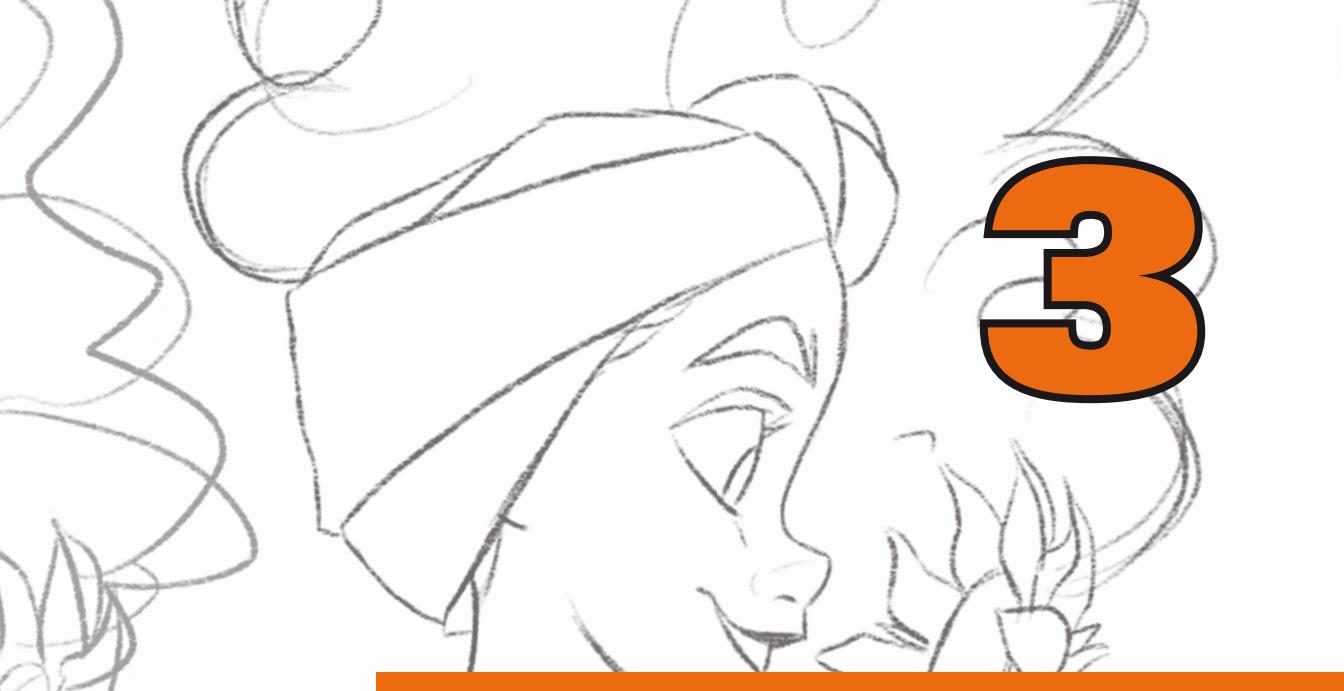
A group of four characters in a dynamic pose. From left to right: 1. A leaping figure with a red cape and a green tunic. 2. A small figure with a staff and a glowing orb. 3. A woman with a staff and a yellow tunic. 4. A large figure with a white cape and an axe. The background is a solid brown color.

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SCAN ME





3

DRAWING A FEMALE CHARACTER *In Procreate*



MEIKE SCHNEIDER



DRAWING FEMALE CHARACTERS

WITH MEIKE SCHNEIDER

FINDING INSPIRATION

Being inspired is essential when designing and creating new characters. Have you ever felt uninspired and just didn't know what to draw? If you find yourself stuck without ideas, try one of my favorite sources when I need a spark of inspiration:

- Music
- Movies
- Real life (nature, travel)
- Fashion design
- Color schemes
- Hobbies that you enjoy
- Artwork by other artists

USING REFERENCES

Having good references is another critical part of the design process. Not a single movie was made without research and a ton of reference material. If you want to create believable characters and worlds for them to live in, it's a good idea to use reference material to help you think through every little detail.

REFERENCE TIP: Create a reference library by saving pictures you like in different folder categories (such as poses, facial expressions, hairstyles, hands, feet) and save this on your workstation for easy access. After building

your library for a while, it will be a valuable source of reference material and inspiration. Some great reference sources are:

- Google
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- Artstation
- Fashion apps for outfits and poses (ASOS, Zalando, etc.)

Utilizing reference material is not cheating like many new artists think. It's actually smart to use references! Be careful, however, not to copy someone else's work in the process. Instead mix and match ideas from multiple resources, gathering inspiration from a wide variety of references that will help you create a unique design.

QUICK TRICK FOR CHARACTER IDEAS:

One of my favorite methods to quickly create a new character design is to use word groups. I think of up to four random words and use them to create a character. The more different the words are from one another, the more interesting the design can become.

For this chapter, I'll demonstrate digital painting techniques using three words to design a character: sunflower, afro, and overalls.

LESSON 1: INSPIRATION AND REFERENCES

Pick three to four random words or choose one from my word-groupings example. Search for reference material that you can mix and match together. Try to pick at least three different images for each element of your character (such as color, pose, facial expression, outfit). If you feel insecure about drawing hands for example, pick very clear references for hands to make sure you get them right.



EXAMPLE WORD GROUPS:

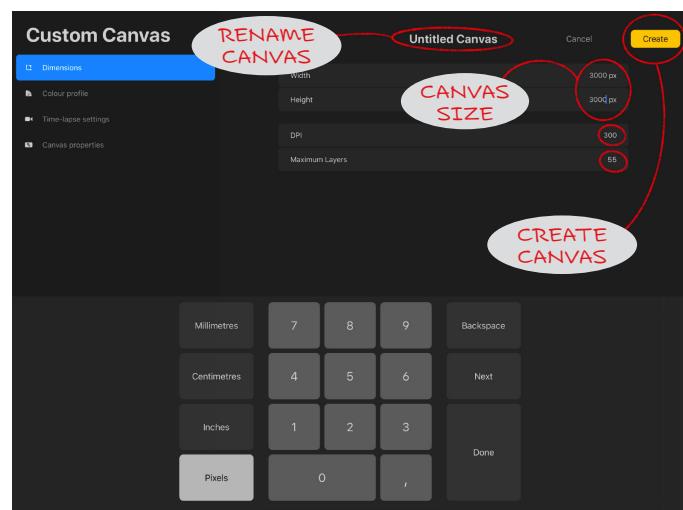
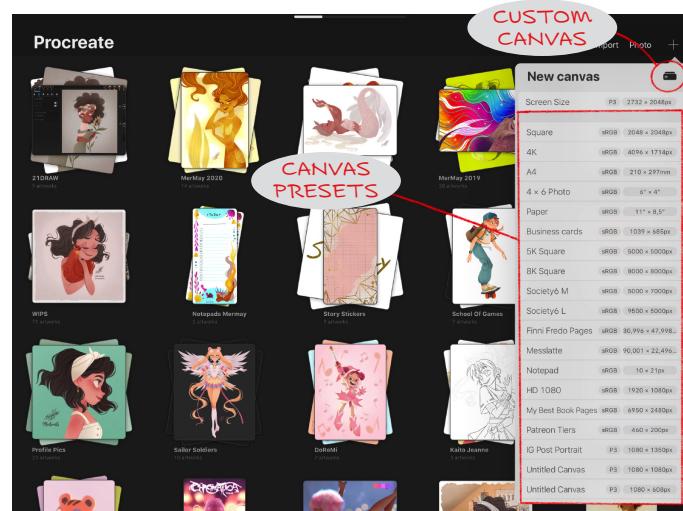
- Seashell, beach, pineapple
- Dog, umbrella, boots
- Scarf, tea, gloves
- Lavender, straw hat, basket

HOW TO SET UP YOUR CANVAS IN PROCREATE

Open Procreate and click on the “plus” symbol + (top right corner) to create a new canvas. You can pick from a default preset or create and save your own canvas settings for future use. For this artwork, I create a new empty canvas.

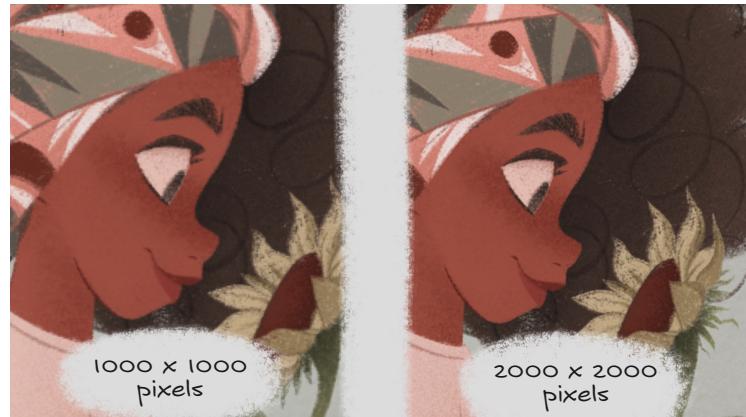
On the left you will find the settings for time-lapse recording, color profiles, and canvas properties. Here we can also choose a canvas size. I start with a size of 3000 x 3000 pixels, but you can change or crop the canvas later. Click on **Create** to open your new canvas.

The canvas size you choose depends on what you intend to do with your final artwork.



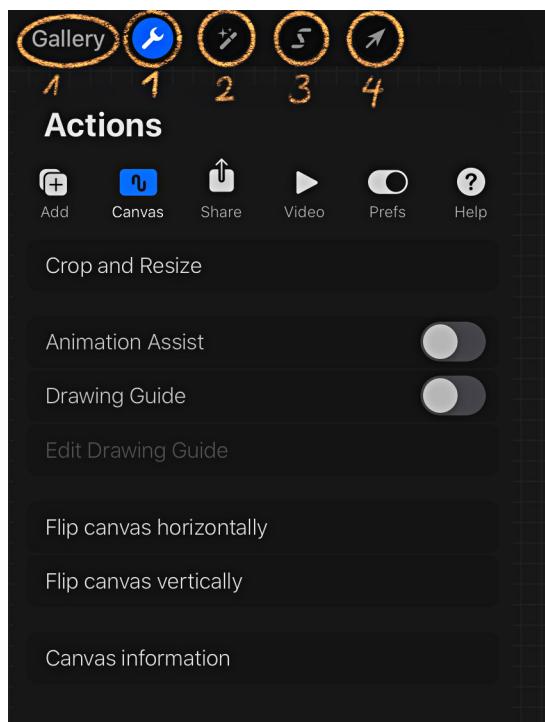
If I want to print my art on a large banner, I need to set the ppi/dpi (pixels per inch/dots per inch) to a minimum of 300 (which is the standard for printing). The higher the pixels the closer you can zoom in on the canvas before it becomes pixelated.

You want to start with a large enough pixel count that your artwork will not need to be enlarged for reproduction later on. When images made up of pixels are enlarged the software needs to “fill in” extra pixels to resize the file. This can create a visibly pixelated edge to areas with changes in color and linework. It is a best practice to know the largest resolution and



measurements that your artwork will need to be reproduced at when you start.

If you’re not intending to print your artwork, it is okay to work on a smaller canvas at a lower resolution, but remember that you won’t be able to simply enlarge an image later on.



A QUICK TOUR OF THE PROCREATE UI

TOP LEFT MENU:

GALLERY is a link to a gallery view of all your previously created artwork.

1 — ACTIONS TOOL has options for canvas properties, exporting files, time-lapse videos, adjusting preferences, or adding text and photos.

2 — ADJUSTMENT TOOL applies different types of filters like blur, noise, or liquify. Also includes options to adjust colors such as curves and color balance.

3 — LASSO TOOL is used to select and work on a specific area of the canvas.

4 — TRANSFORM TOOL allows you to rotate, scale, and move layers.

TOP RIGHT AND SIDE MENUS:

5 — BRUSH TOOL is used to select different types of brushes from a variety of categories and change their properties by tapping on a brush.

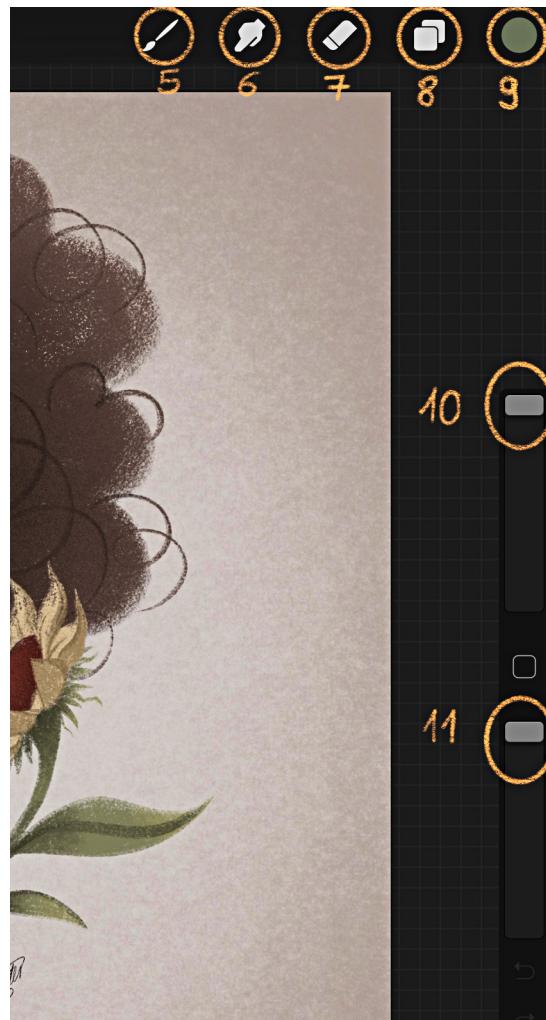
6 — SMUDGE TOOL works exactly like the Brush Tool, except it blends colors and strokes.

7 — ERASER TOOL is useful to remove strokes and also to change a stroke by adding texture.

8 — LAYER MENU is for creating new layers to keep shapes separate from one another. Layers can be merged or grouped, and you can also apply layer effects for properties such as opacity.

9 — COLOR WHEEL lets you pick and save colors. Also includes options to create custom color palettes and create color schemes using color harmony.

10 and 11 — BRUSH SIZE SLIDERS will be located on the left or right side, depending on your preference settings and allows you to adjust the brush size (10) and opacity (11).



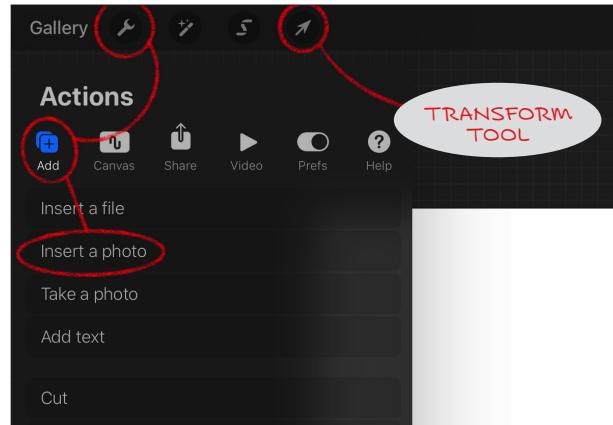
IMPORTANT PROCREATE IPAD GESTURES

- **TWO-FINGER TAP** to undo one or more of your recent actions.
- **THREE-FINGER TAP** to redo an action—when you undo a step too far, redo is just a three-finger touch away.
- **THREE-FINGER SCRUB** to instantly clear a layer—as you move your fingers side to side in a scrubbing motion.

- **THREE-FINGER SWIPE** invokes a floating menu with all the cut, copy, and paste options you need.
- **DRAW AND HOLD FOR QUICKSHAPE** allows you to draw a shape or line and hold down that image—quickshape will “snap” it to perfection.

IMPORTING REFERENCES

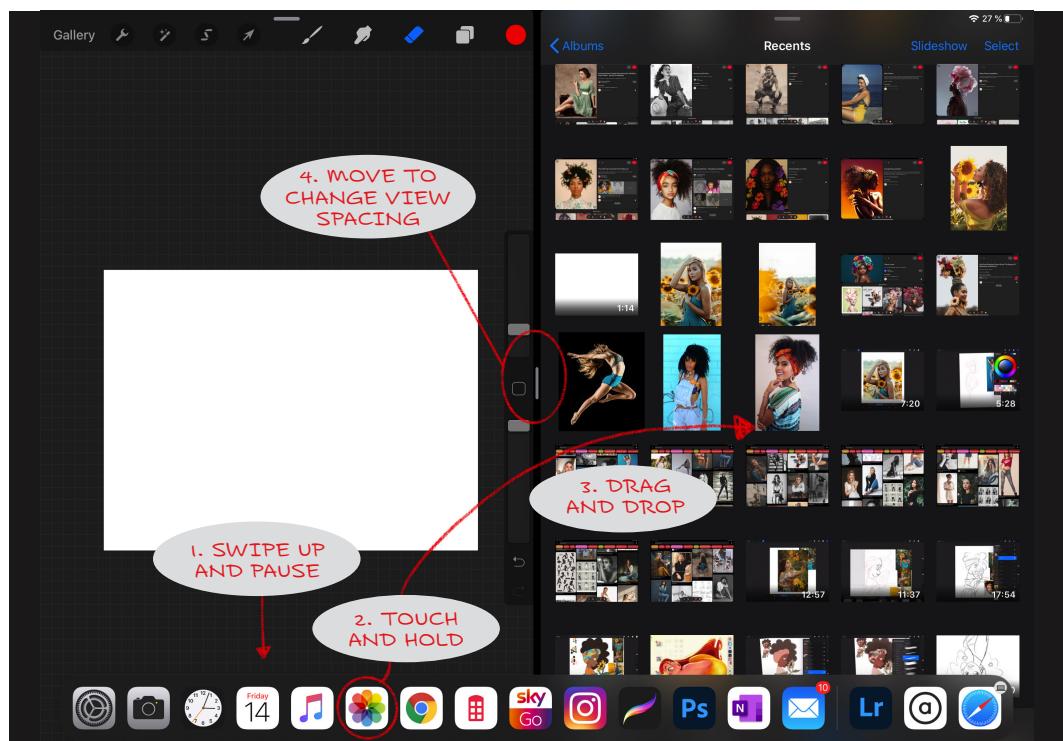
To place your saved reference material, go to the top left menu and click on the **Actions** button. Now click on **Add** and choose **Insert a photo**, then select your image from your device. Use the **Transform Tool** to move and resize the reference picture, then place to the side. Now we can select and move each individual picture by going to the layer menu, selecting a layer, and using the Transform Tool to move it.

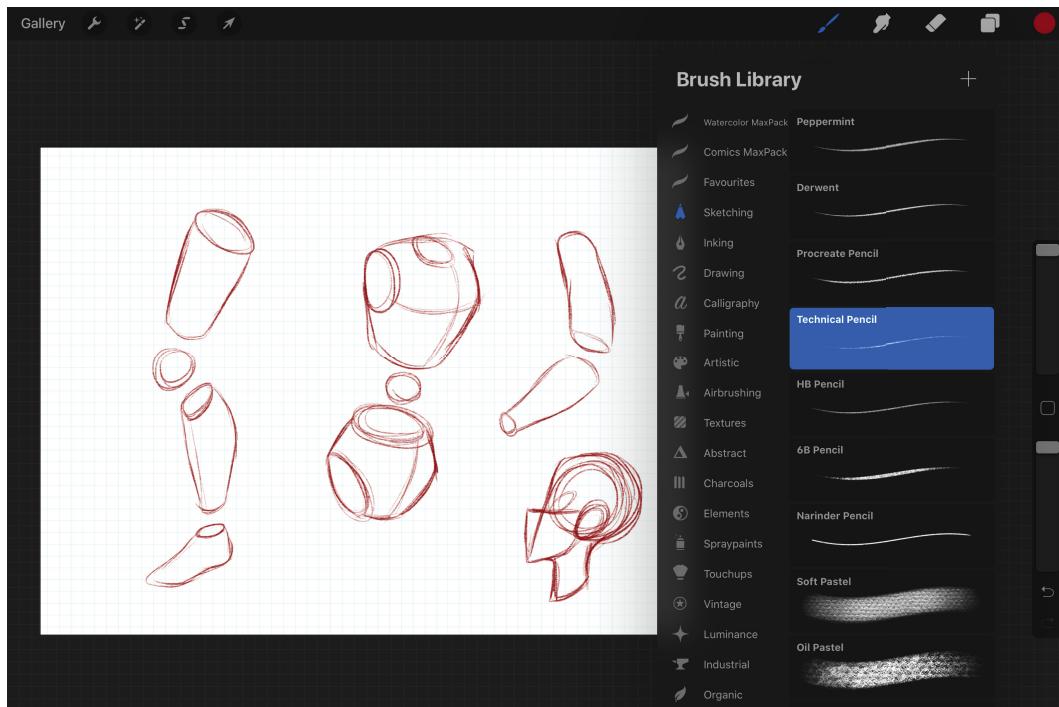


iPad Split View can be used to view references from the gallery. While in Procreate, swipe up from the bottom edge and pause to reveal the **Dock**. Touch and hold an app in the Dock, drag it to the right or left edge of the screen, then lift your finger. To give both views equal space on the screen, drag the divider to the center.

LESSON 2: SET UP A NEW CANVAS

Open a new canvas, then import the reference material you chose during the first lesson. Practice adding images to new layers and get familiar with using the Procreate UI from our overview including the iPad Split and gallery views.





SKETCHING YOUR CHARACTER

HOW TO SKETCH A SIMPLIFIED BODY

SKETCH PENCIL: For sketching, I prefer to use a thin brush that looks most like a regular pencil. In Procreate, I use the **Technical Pencil** brush. For the first few drafts, I recommend using a blue or red color tone, because the contrast isn't as strong as a black line. In traditional media, red also blends better with other colors than black. I only use black for the final outlines.

SIMPLIFY SHAPES: When sketching poses from references, I simplify body parts to quickly create poses. I tend to use circle shapes for bones and use various cylindrical shapes for the other body parts. I slightly shape these into the organic form they will later become.

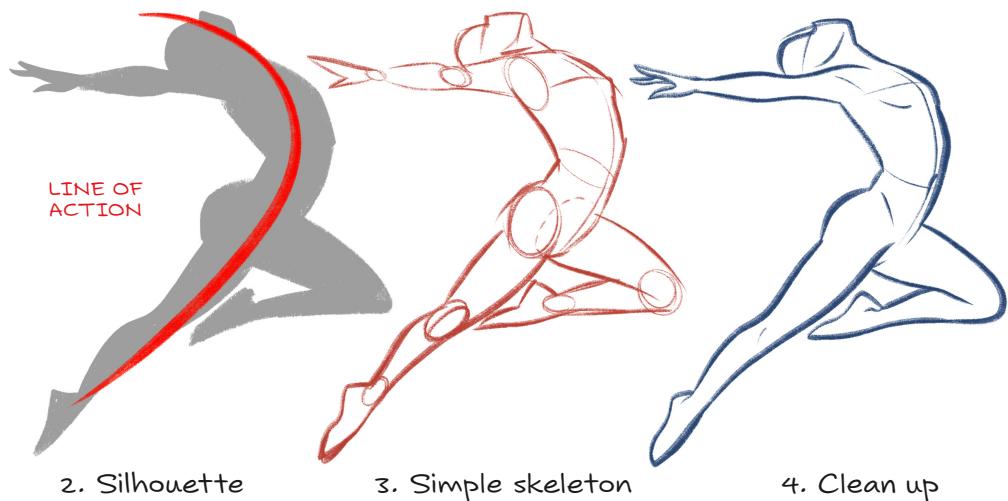




SIMPLIFIED SKELETON TECHNIQUE

I start by analyzing the reference to make sure I understand the direction certain body parts are pointing. Next I paint a very rough silhouette using a bold brush in dark grey to capture the basic pose and shape. Don't worry if the pose isn't right the first time—you can easily adjust the silhouette shape by erasing parts or using the *Liquify* filter.

1. Photo reference

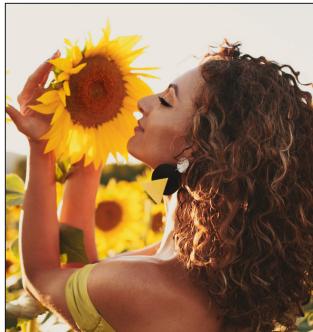


Once I'm happy with the silhouette, I reduce the opacity and create a new layer on top of it. I use a red pencil to draw a simplified skeleton for the different body parts using cylindrical shapes. The red lines stand out well over the grey background. This first draft of the body shapes can be very simple.

For the next step, I create a new layer above the red—here I usually change to a blue-colored pencil that will stand out from the red. I turn off the silhouette layer and reduce

the opacity of the red sketch underneath my new layer. Using the blue pencil I draw with more precise shapes to clean up the lines of my drawing.

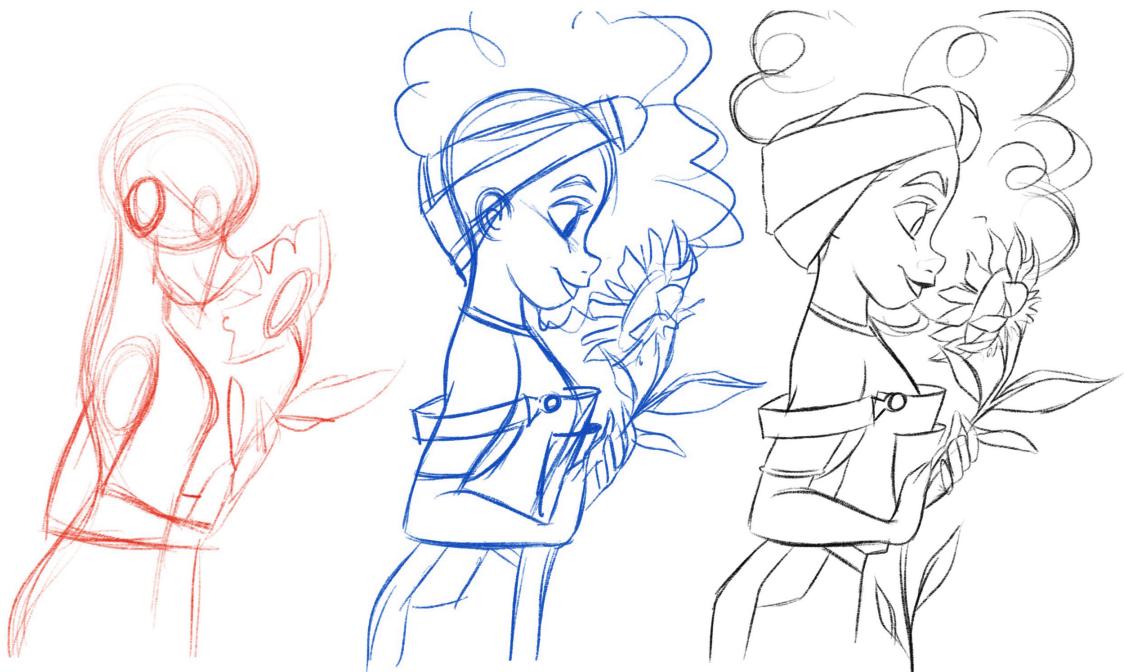
For the final outline step, I reduce the opacity of blue lines, create another new layer for drawing my final outlines in black. At this point I go ahead and add all the details needed. You can also see this technique used during development of my character for this lesson on the next page.



LESSON 3: DRAW A SIMPLIFIED SKELETON

Your turn to try this technique by creating a sketch of your character. Start with a silhouette, then sketch as many draft layers as needed until you have final clean outlines. If you're struggling with certain areas of the body, remember to use more references!

1. Gather photo references



2. Simple skeleton

3. Clean up

4. Final outline



COLOR SCHEMES



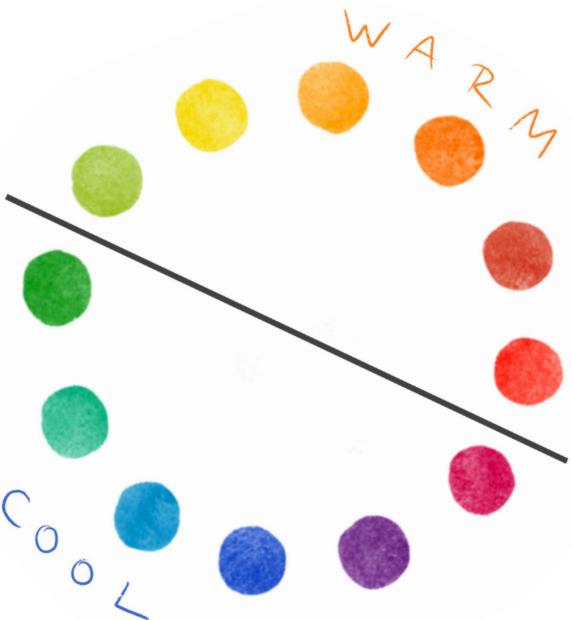
CHOOSING COLOR SCHEMES

COLOR THEORY BASICS

A character's color scheme is one of the most important design decisions you will make. When used correctly, color can reflect a certain emotion, mood, and atmosphere. Colors can be divided into two main categories:

WARM COLORS like red, orange, and yellow are usually associated with passion, energy, enthusiasm, and excitement.

COOL COLORS are often found in nature scenes, like water, and at nighttime, they are often associated with calm, abundance (green), peace (blue), and spirituality (purple).



Colors also have different meanings. See the **COLOR PSYCHOLOGY** chart (on the next page) for some examples.

COLOR PSYCHOLOGY



Energy, sunshine, bright, cheerful, happiness, joy, positivity, spontaneity



Fun, creativity, warmth, optimistic, adventurous, autumn, youthful



Love, blood, fire, strong, intense, energetic, excitement, passion, courage, attention



Compassion, love, playful, immature, admiration, sweet, sophisticated, sensitive, feminine, assertive



Power, wealth, ambition, noble, royalty, mystery, spirituality, imagination, sensitivity, compassion



Trust, stability, depth, sea, sky, tranquil, responsibility, honesty, loyalty, inner security



Freedom, self-expression, trustworthy, wisdom, joy, perspective, modern, ambition, calm, careless



Growth, harmony, fertility, kindness, dependable, nature, freshness, balance, safety, healing



Comfort, honesty, natural, stability, reliability, simple, disappointment, dependable, earthiness



Sanity, realism, sadness, depression, neutral, formal, quiet, conservative, practical, balance, timeless



Classic, void, suppression, foresight, power, control, discipline, elegance, authority, security, dramatic

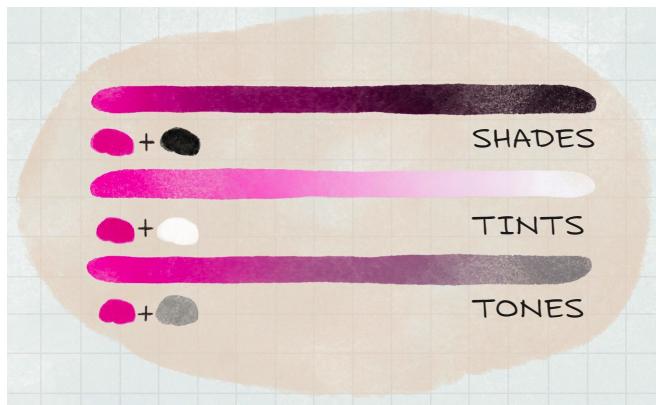
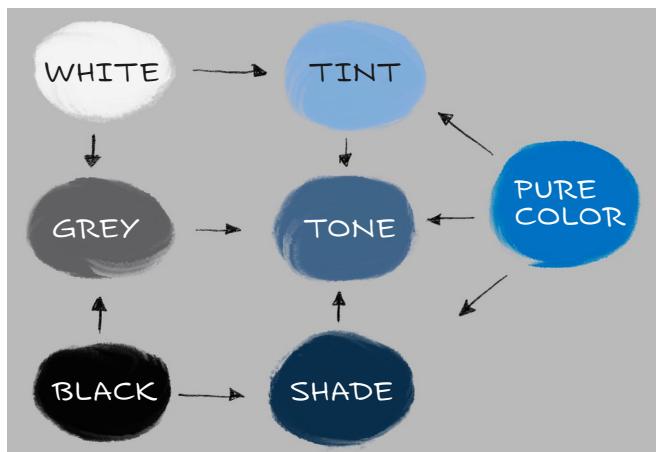
COLOR PROPERTIES (HUE, TINT, TONE, AND SHADE)

In painting, the word **color** is the general term for everything we see. However, the word **hue** refers to a pure, unmixed pigment on the color wheel.

SHADE is the mixture of a color with black, which reduces lightness.

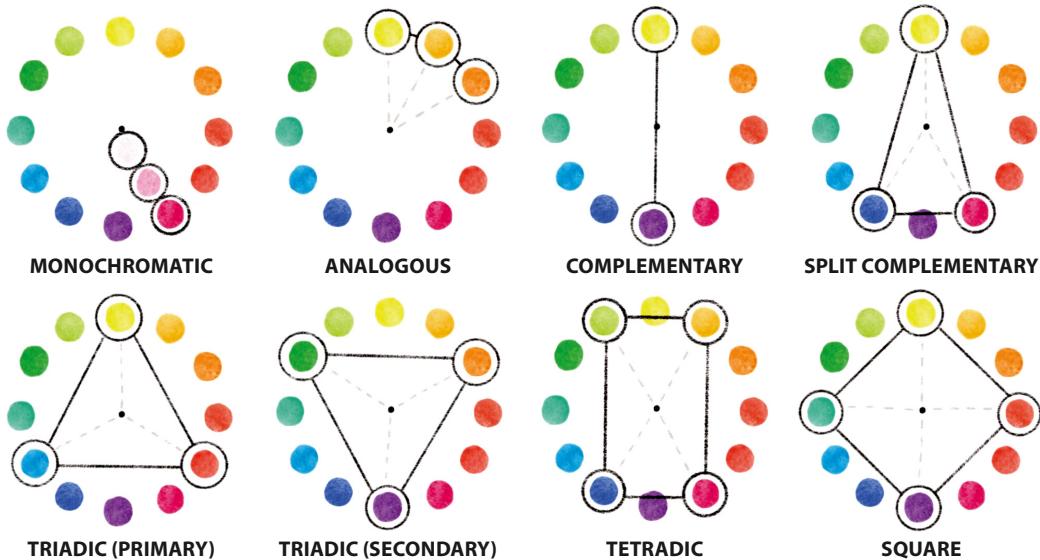
TINT is the mixture of a color with white, which increases lightness.

TONE is produced either by the mixture of a color with gray, or by both tinting and shading. The color remains the same, only less vibrant. The values can range from very light to very dark.



COLOR SCHEMES

MONOCHROMATIC is the most simple scheme and is made from using tints, tones, and shades of a single hue.



ANALOGOUS is created by choosing three colors that appear next to one another on the color wheel.

COMPLEMENTARY uses color pairs that are opposite on the color wheel, for example, red and green to maximize contrast.

SPLIT COMPLEMENTARY uses colors from either side of a complementary color pair to soften contrast.

TRIADIC are made of three colors which are equally distant on the color wheel, such as red, blue, and yellow (triadic primary) or green, orange, purple (triadic secondary). Some triadic combinations may not be vibrant, but the scheme can be as it maintains harmony and high contrast.

TETRADIC uses four colors from two sets of complementary pairs, such as orange + yellow and blue + purple, and one is chosen as a dominant color. Be sure to pay attention to the balance between warm and cool colors.

SQUARE is also made up of four colors evenly spaced on the color wheel, but unlike tetradic, square schemes can work well even if you use all four colors evenly.

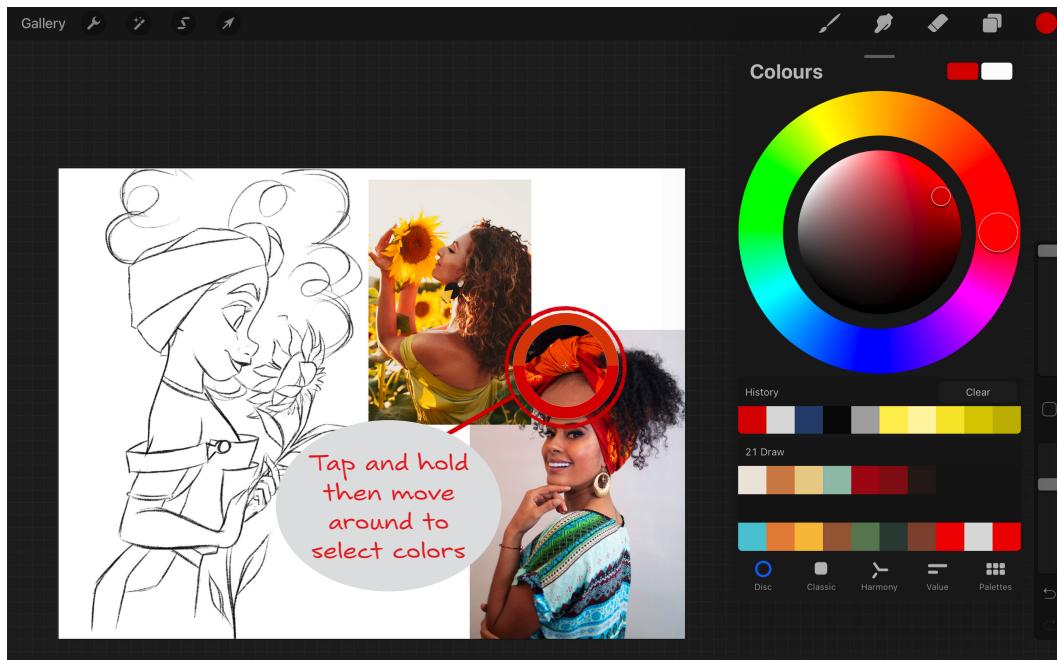
The fewer colors you use the more simple things will be. Some artists prefer to use only two to three colors. Using five colors is popular as it works well for illustrating concepts. I suggest starting with five colors, then you can add or subtract as you work.

COLOR THUMBNAILS

Artists and designers often use color swatches and thumbnails to plan a color scheme in advance of starting their artwork. A thumbnail is a quick color sketch that includes only rough, basic shapes. See my character's color thumbnail progress below.

These thumbnails allow artists to identify how much area a specific color should take up in a design. How much space a color takes up in a design can drastically change the mood of the artwork. For example, when using the complementary contrast pair of orange and blue: if blue takes more space than orange, the image feels cool. If orange takes more space than blue, it feels very warm. I recommend you try different color schemes in advance by using thumbnails and color swatches.



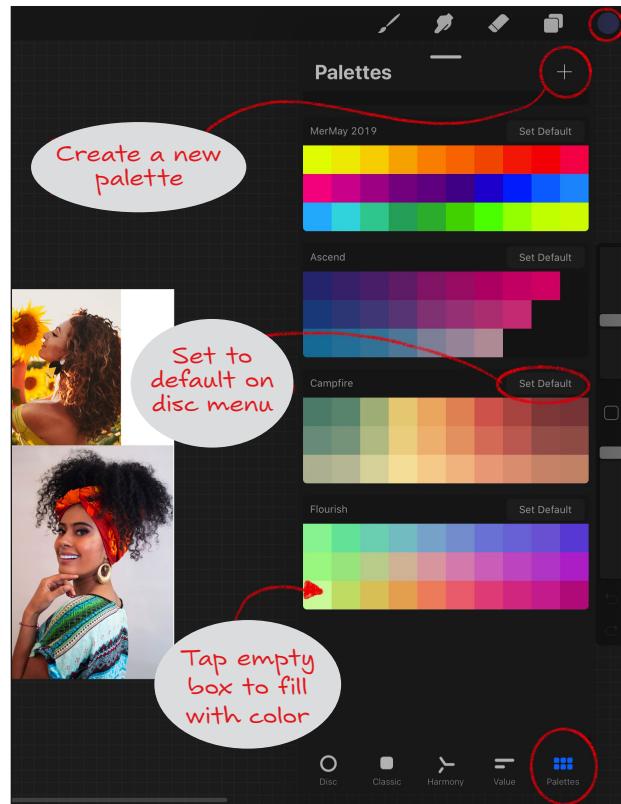


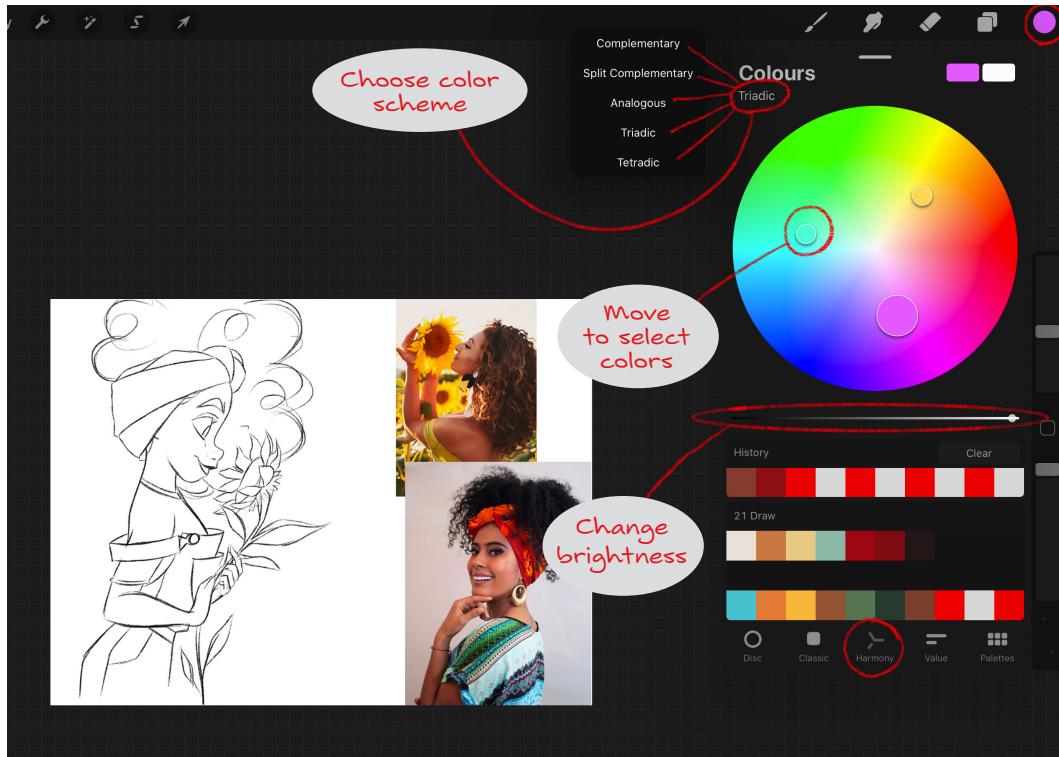
CREATING COLOR PALETTES AND THE COLOR PICKER

We can either create our own color scheme or use an existing one from a picture or photograph. When picking colors from a photo, we can sample colors with Procreate's **Color Picker Tool** or create similar colors from imagination.

If you want to sample colors from an image in Procreate, tap and hold onto that spot and Procreate will pick that color. You can move around to sample other colors nearby. You can also compare a new color to the previously picked one.

And there's a way to save your own color palettes. Click on the color menu and switch to **Palettes** at the bottom right corner. By clicking on the “+” symbol on the top right,





you can create a new empty color palette and name it as you wish. If you set a color palette to default, it will always appear under the color wheel. Just pick a color and tap on one of the empty palette spots to add a color to it.

COLOR HARMONY

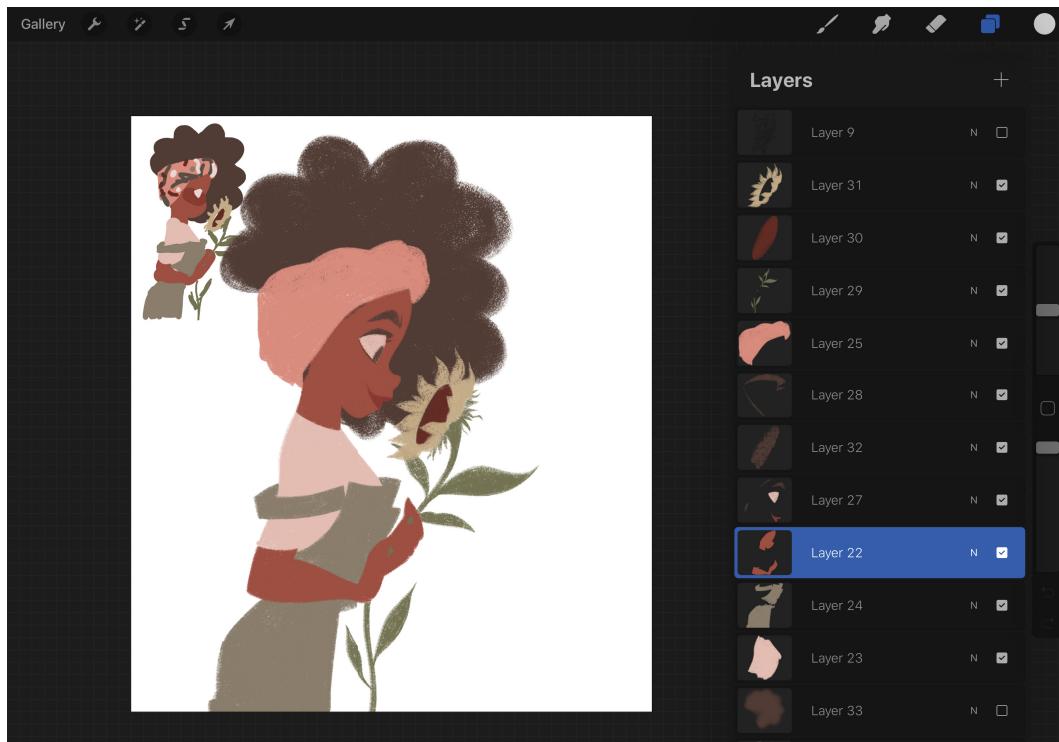
Procreate integrated a feature called **Harmony** which helps you pick color schemes. Go to the color menu and click on Harmony. At the top you can switch between different color schemes such as split complementary, analogous, and so on. Simply click on a color and move the selection tools to saturate or desaturate the color. You can also adjust the brightness. In my screen grab, I am testing a few color variations for my artwork and will compare them at the end to pick my favorite.

LESSON 4: CREATING COLOR THUMBNAILS

Your turn to create a few quick color thumbnails for your artwork. Experiment with the different color schemes you've learned. Try to give a certain color more or less space in your artwork and see how that changes the mood of your composition.

BASE COLORING CHARACTERS

To create base colors, I like to split the entire character into separate shapes on individual layers. Painting the entire illustration on a single layer doesn't give me the ability to change or move things during the design process. I prefer to separate my character layers by the head, body, facial features, hair, and also different parts of clothing. That



way I can easily adjust the color of a single object and move it around if I need to. You can apply an alpha lock to objects, which allows you to work on painted areas without overpainting borders. I will go into detail with that option later in this lesson.

BLOCKING AND LAYOUT

When blocking in colors, you are actually painting a solid base shape for areas that need to be separated from one another. At this stage, it is still easy to change colors. Make sure to turn down the opacity on the sketch you created. I pick a brush with a rough edge to add some texture to the artwork so it looks more like it's painted with traditional media.

One of my favorite brushes to use in Procreate is the **Chalk Brush**. I create a new empty layer and sample the skin color I

previously created for the thumbnail and start outlining the cleaned-up sketch I made earlier.

COLORDROP TOOL

There are two different ways to fill shapes. The traditional way would be to just fill the inner part by painting over it, but a faster way is to use Procreate's **ColorDrop Tool**. I prefer the traditional way, because it retains some of the brush texture so it looks more hand painted. However, if you are working on a more solid shape, you can save time by using the ColorDrop method.



Outline a shape so that the outline is 100% closed because any open pixels will indicate the outline is open and the tool will not work. Then click and hold on the little color circle in the top right corner and drag and drop it onto the middle of the outlined area.

The area should now be filled with that color. If it didn't work, try moving your finger left and right to adjust the threshold.

LESSON 5: BASE COLORING

Separate your character into multiple layers, then draw a solid shape for each part of the character. You can fill these shapes either by hand or use the ColorDrop Tool.

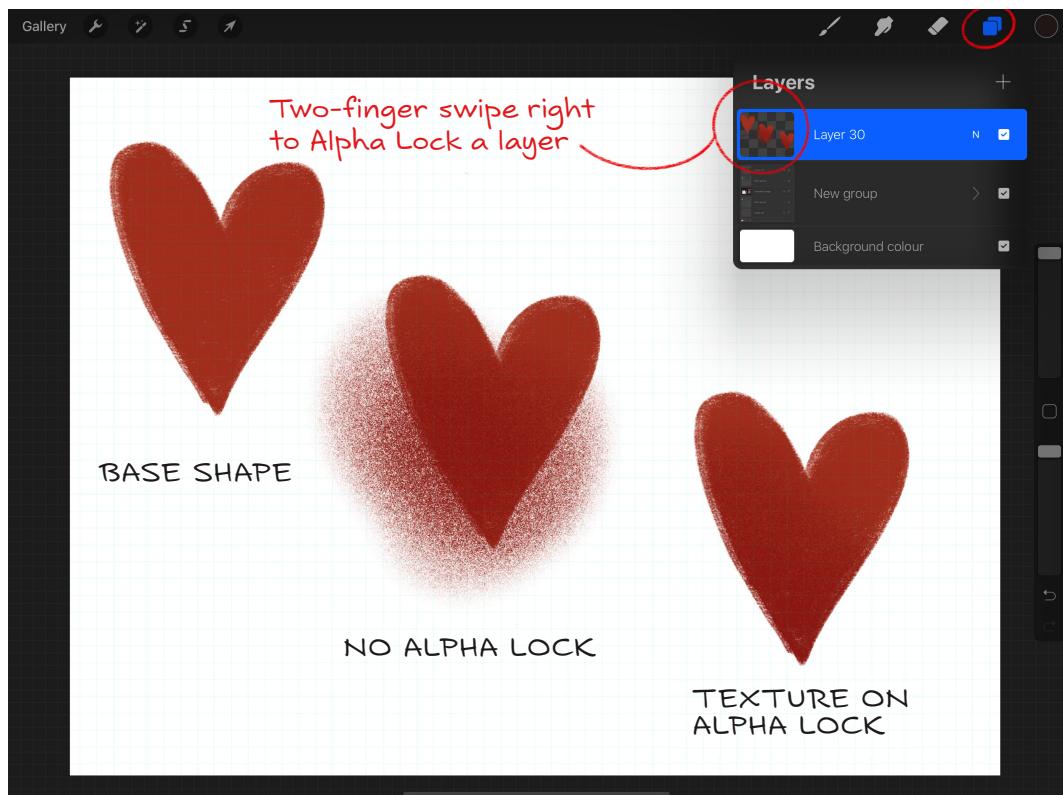
ADDING SHADING, DETAILS, AND TEXTURE

Now that you've finished blocking and separating out the parts of your painting into single layers, you can start shading and adding texture. Make sure you are satisfied with the base color before you start adding texture because it is more difficult to change colors after adding these details.

ALPHA LOCK

This tool locks all the empty pixels around brush strokes made on a single layer.

To apply **Alpha Lock** to a layer, use a two-finger swipe right on the layer. The background in the layer image will appear as a checkerboard, which indicates the



layer is alpha locked and the background is transparent. Now you can paint without painting over the borders of the blocking you created in the previous steps.

This is very convenient and makes coloring much faster, but you can only color areas that have been previously defined.

CLIPPING MASKS

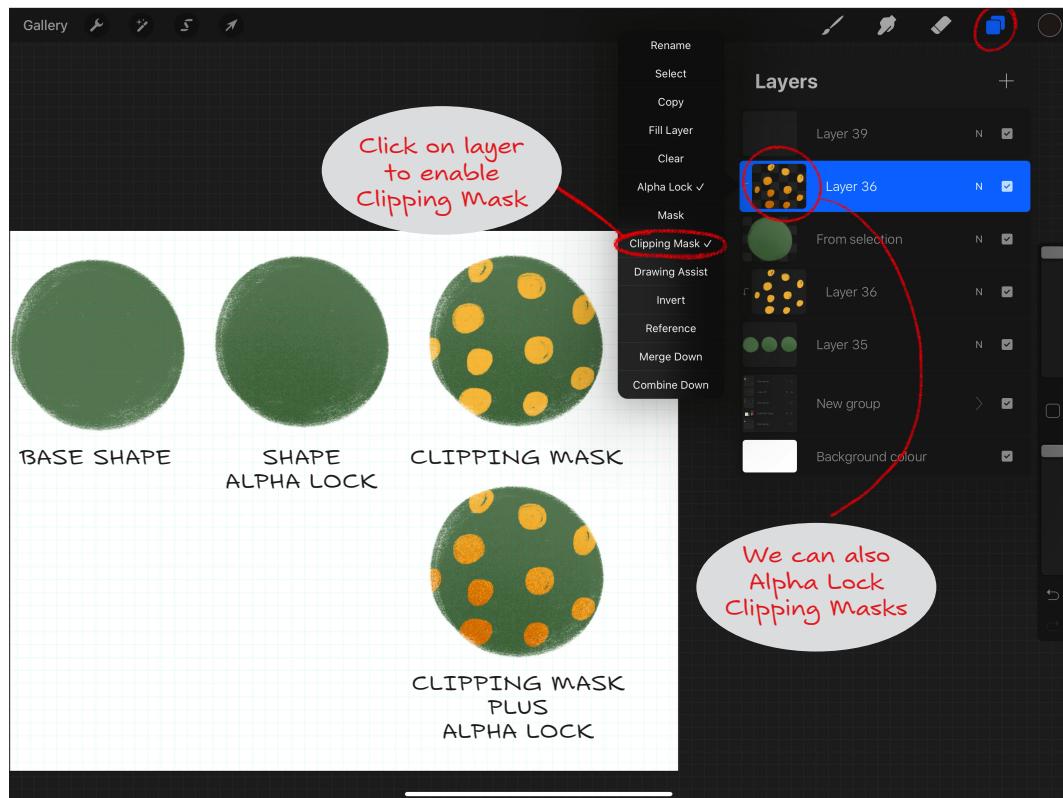
Clipping Masks are helpful if you want to have details for a shape on a separate layer (like shadow, light, or texture). Create a new Clipping Mask by tapping on an empty layer and select the Clipping Mask from the menu.

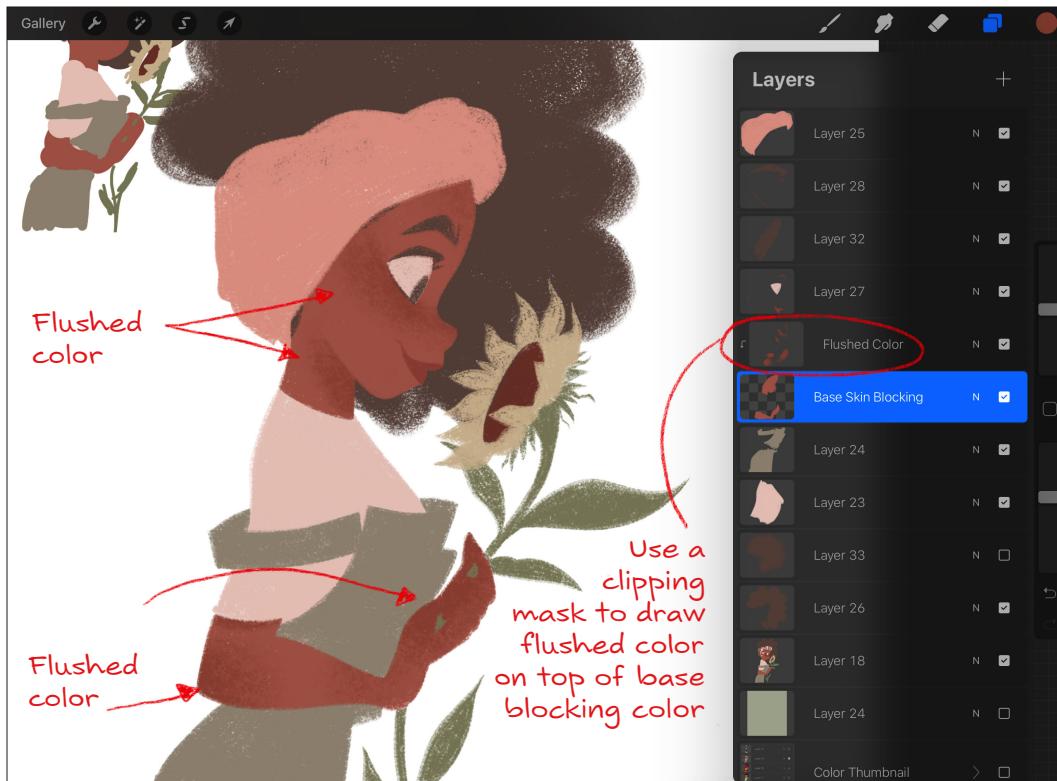
A Clipping Mask is indicated by an arrow pointing to the layer below. The Clipping

Mask needs to sit above the layer you want it attached to. If you paint on the Clipping Mask, you will notice it has a similar effect as an Alpha Lock—only that you are painting on an entirely new layer and you can still change or adjust the base layer. Clipping Mask layers can also be alpha locked.

FLUSHED COLOR

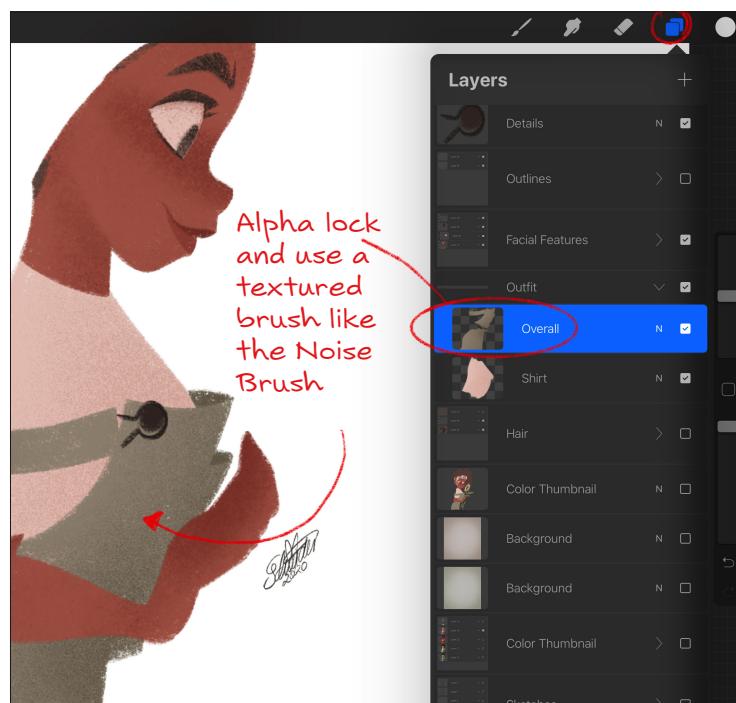
I usually start by adding a bit of flushed color to body parts such as the shoulders, nose, cheeks, knees, and fingertips. I like to use a textured brush, such as the **6B Compressed Brush** from Procreate. I tend to use a slightly darker and more saturated tone of the base color. Don't go too far though; be sure to keep the transition soft and smooth.

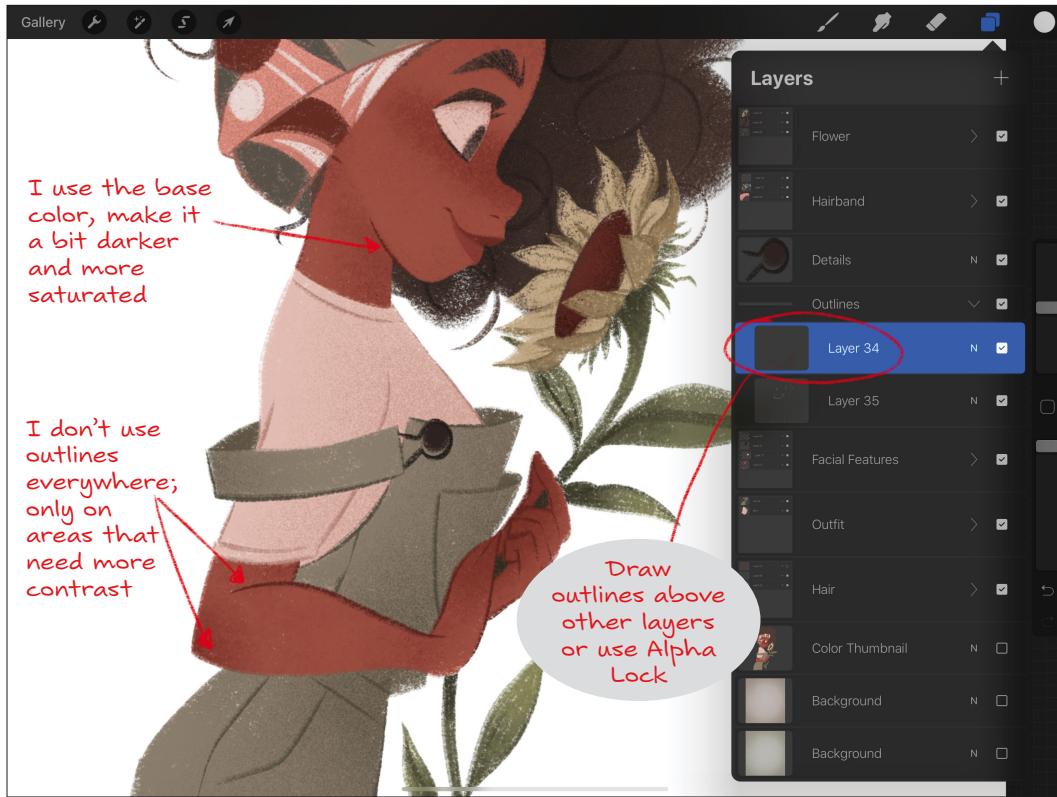




ADDING TEXTURE

Textures can make the artwork look more traditionally painted. I like to use brushes like the **Bonobo Chalk** or **Noise Brush** in combination with a slightly darker or brighter color to add texture. Simply Alpha Lock your layers or use a Clipping Mask on top of a solid shape then add some texture with a slightly darker or lighter color.





OUTLINES

You can either draw outlines on a new layer above all the others, use Alpha Lock on a layer, or use a Clipping Mask to avoid overpainting the borders.

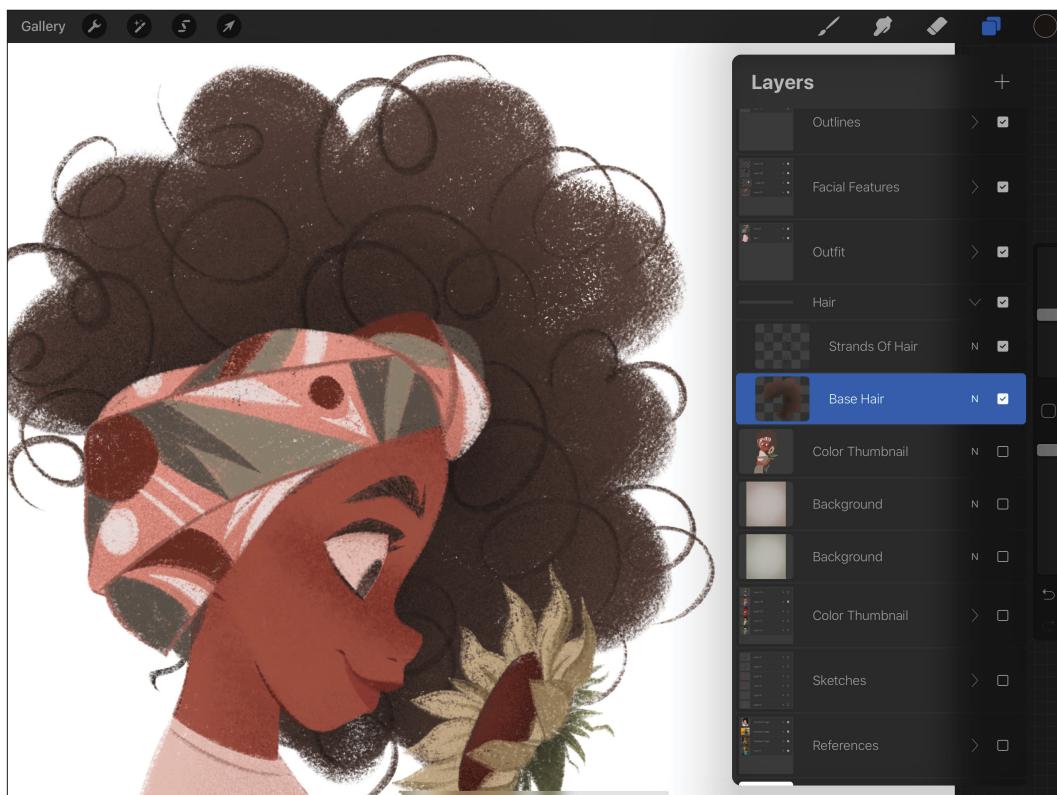
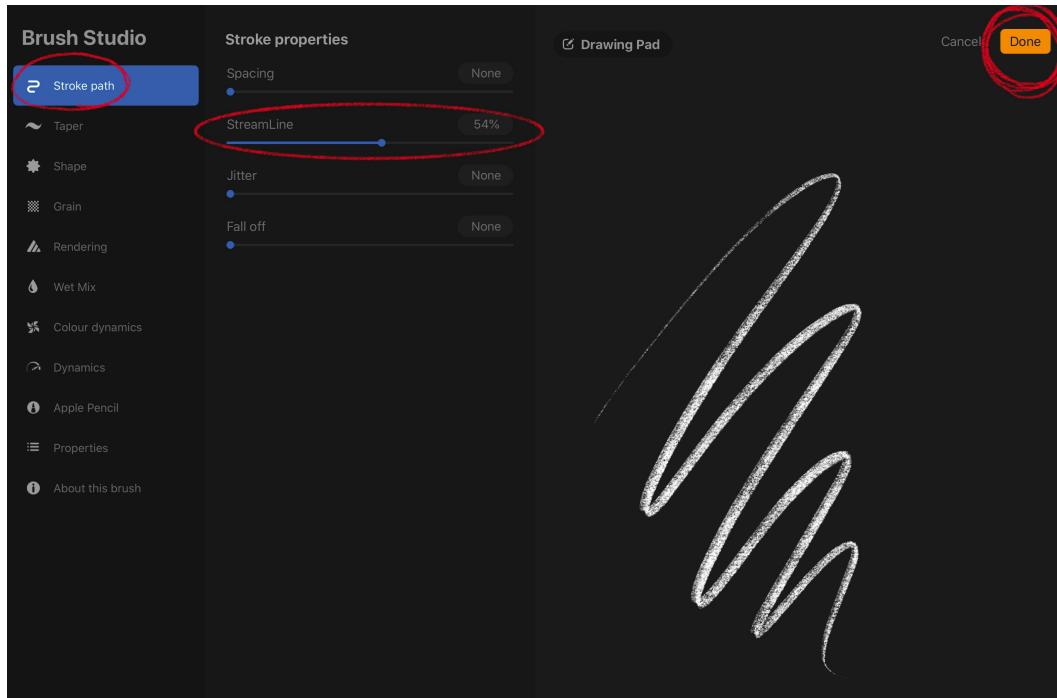
Most people associate outlines with black outlines all around a character, but I prefer my outlines to be in a similar color to the base color for less contrast.

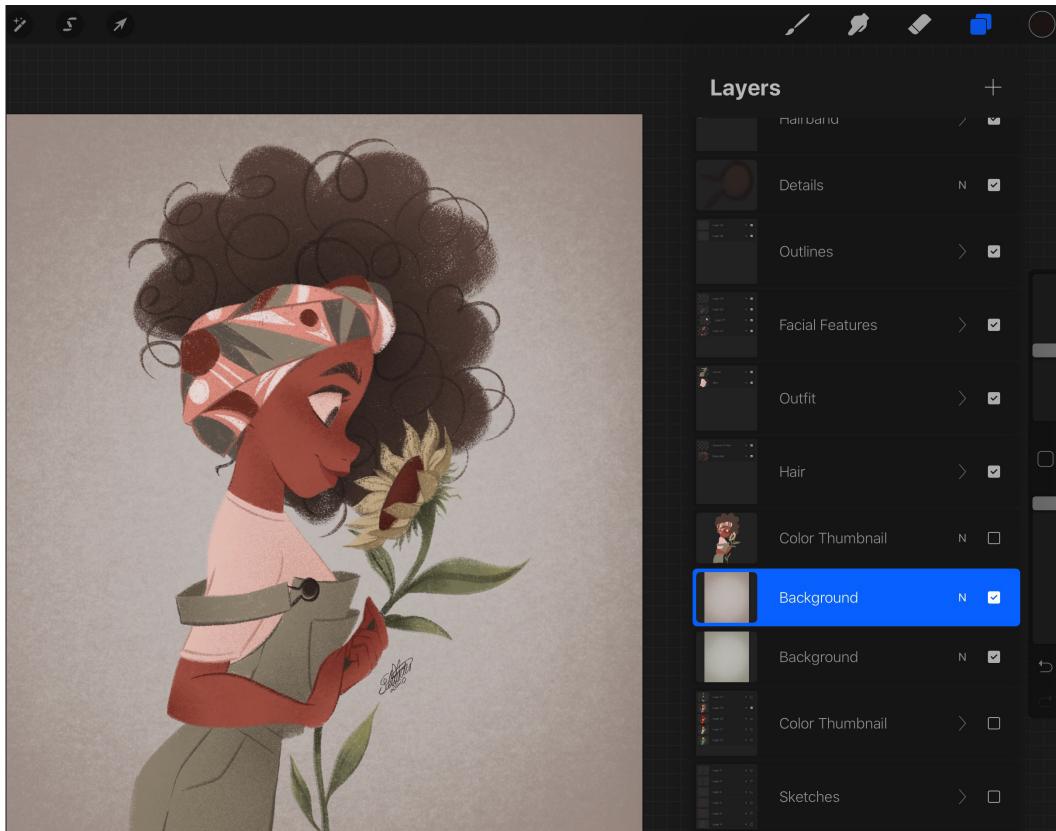
I also don't draw outlines all around the entire character. I only use them in areas with low contrast to emphasize certain areas such as fingers or wrinkles. I usually pick a slightly darker and more saturated color than the underlying base color. I like to use the Chalk Brush or Technical Pencil to draw outlines.

HAIR

When drawing hair, I prefer to change the **StreamLine** settings on my Procreate brushes. StreamLine makes it easier to create nice clean lines. Here I decide to use the Chalk Brush to draw some curly strands of hair. I click on the brush to open up the settings. Then I go to **Stroke Path** and move up the slider on the StreamLine setting.







BACKGROUND

Last but not least, we need to add a background. You can add a bit of texture by adding a slightly darker or brighter color to the background. If you didn't test background color schemes in your thumbnails, be sure to choose a background color early in the process to see how well the contrast works with the character.

LESSON 6: ADDING DETAILS

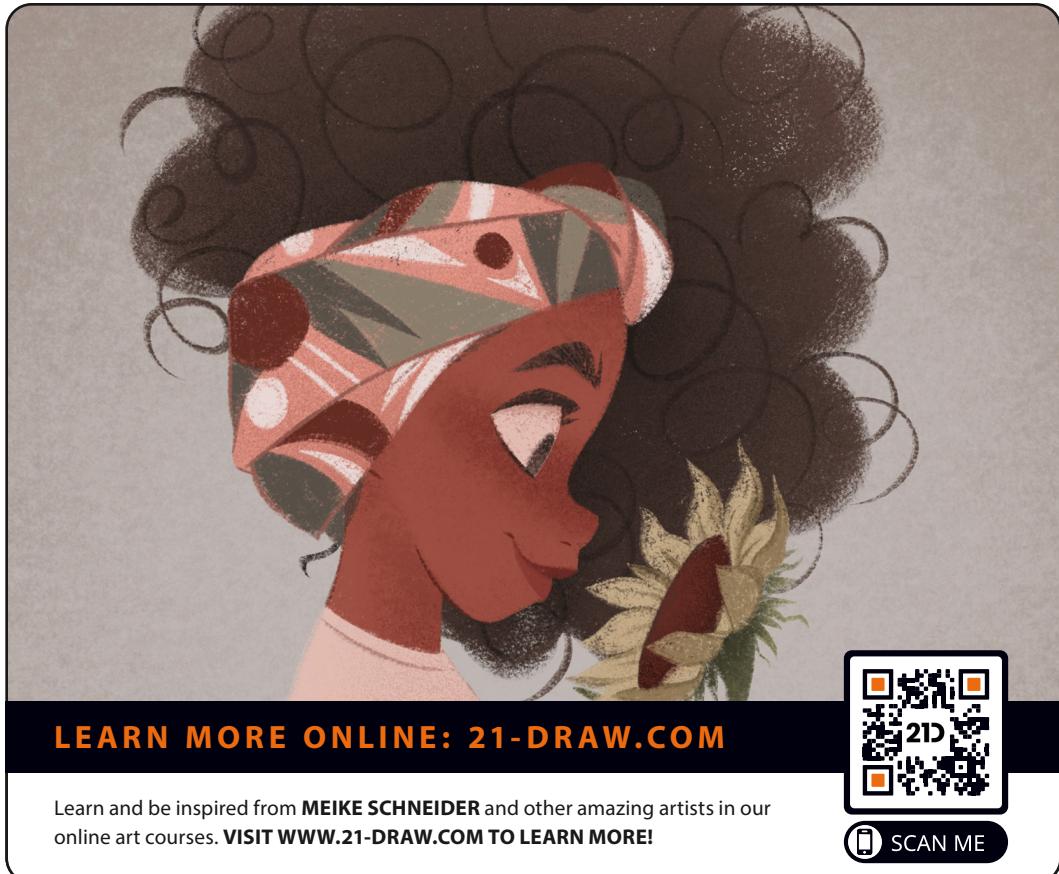
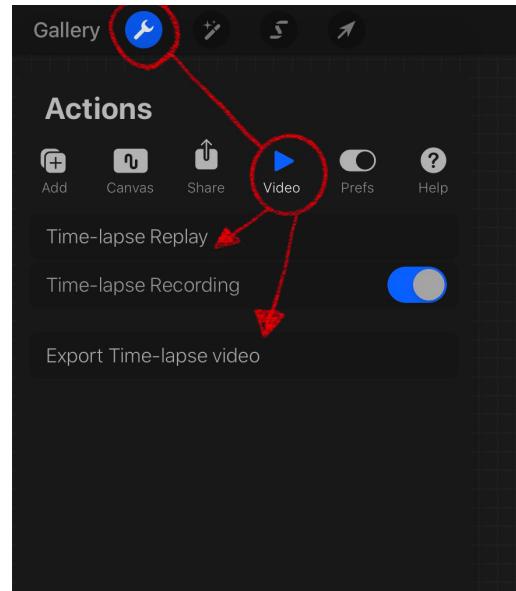
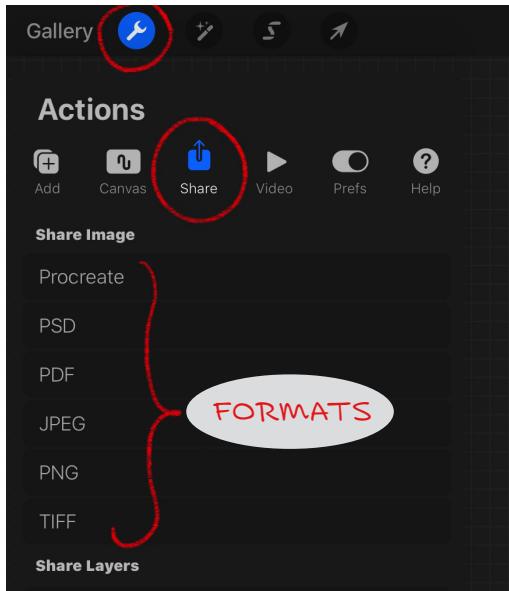
Your turn to try adding flushed color, shading, outlines, and more details to your artwork. You can apply some of the techniques you've just learned such as StreamLine, Alpha Lock, and Clipping Masks to make your painting work faster.

EXPORTING FILES

When you are ready to export your artwork, go to the top left corner and click on the Actions button. Click on **Share** and choose a file format. (See windows at top right on the following page.)

You can export your artwork as a Procreate or Photoshop file, or in an image format such as a PDF, JPEG, PNG, or TIFF. You can also save files to your device, upload to Dropbox, iCloud, or share via AirDrop.

Procreate automatically records a time-lapse video, which you can view or export by clicking the Actions button, select **Video**, then **Time-lapse Replay** or **Export Time-lapse video**.





4

STYLIZED FIGURE DRAWING

RENÉ CÓRDOVA



STYLIZED FIGURE DRAWING

WITH RENÉ CÓRDOVA

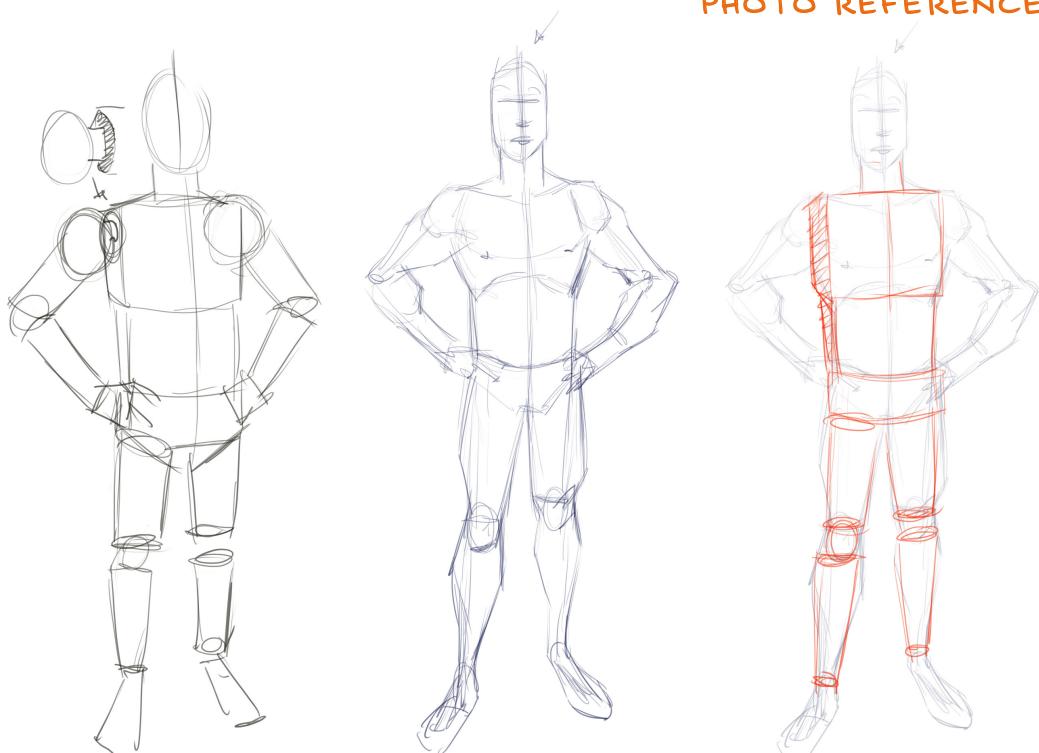
It's extremely important to understand body structure and anatomy before drawing your characters. This is why to start, I will give you an overview of how to visualize the anatomy of bodies. That way later on you will be better able to draw characters in many different styles.

MALE FIGURE

You start with the basic body structure. Using a photo reference, it is important to first consider the geometric shapes and forms that work together to make up the body. In a very pragmatic way, I chose cubes, cylinders, rectangles,



PHOTO REFERENCE



BASIC STRUCTURE

BASIC SHAPES

EXAMPLE

and other simple shapes to build each part of the body. I think in tridimensional form to create volume which will help us later on when we render light and shadows.

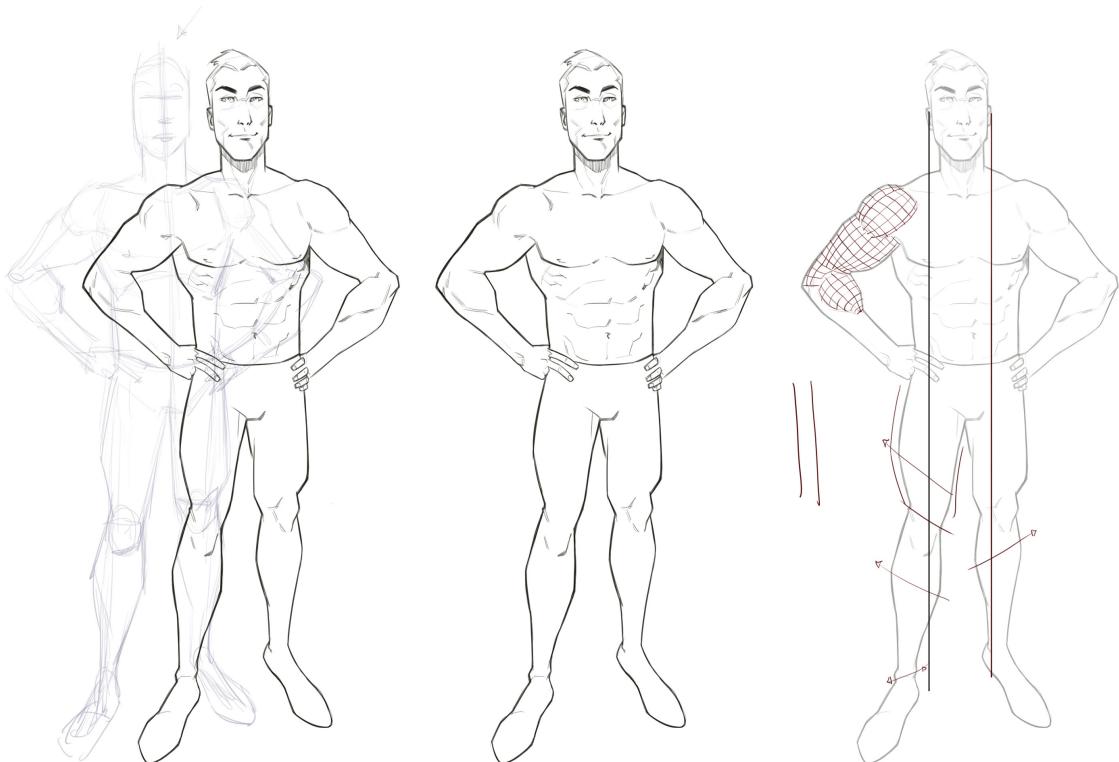
Now I begin to sketch in basic shapes and lines for the figure. You can see in the image labeled *example* (see previous page) how I visualize these geometric shapes and use them to build out the structure of the body.

The next step is to clean up my line work—this is call the inking stage—and my drawing is now ready to be colored. I do my work with Photoshop in Cintiq, where I can create separate layers. This allows me to have my clean lines on their own layer so they are not disrupted when I add color.

Before moving on to color the artwork, it is important to check our drawing to be sure it is structured correctly. You need to make sure the extremities follow human anatomy correctly.

I like to check my work by thinking in points of reference. Our extremities are not perfectly parallel. A good point of reference is usually in direct line with the ears. I also like to imagine a mesh that dictates the volume of each muscle (see the image labeled *notes* below).

Reviewing these structural details helps improve our drawings, no matter the style you plan to use, be it a functional drawing or one that is stylized for animation.



CLEAN UP LINES

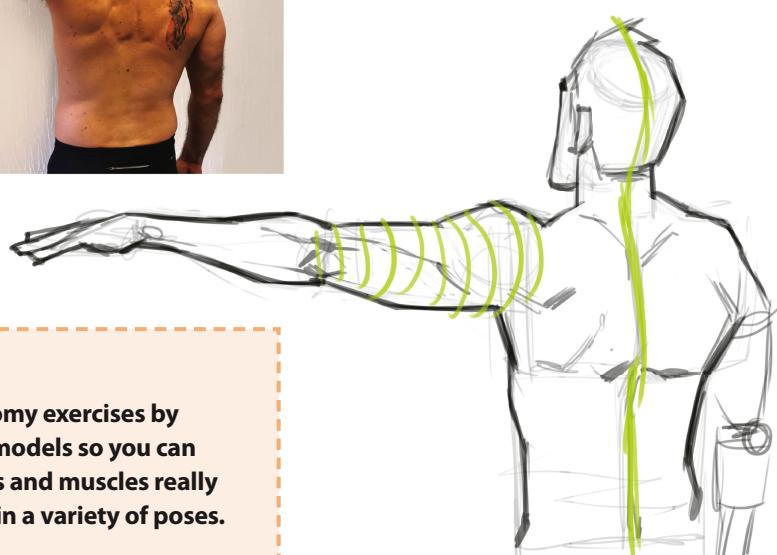
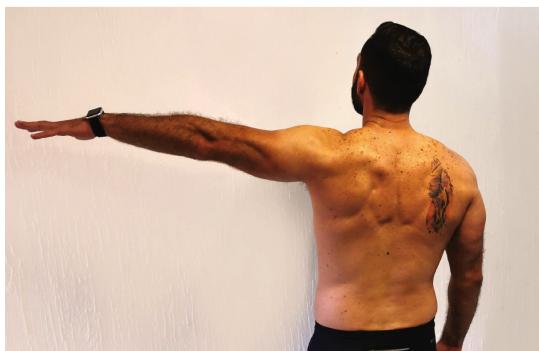
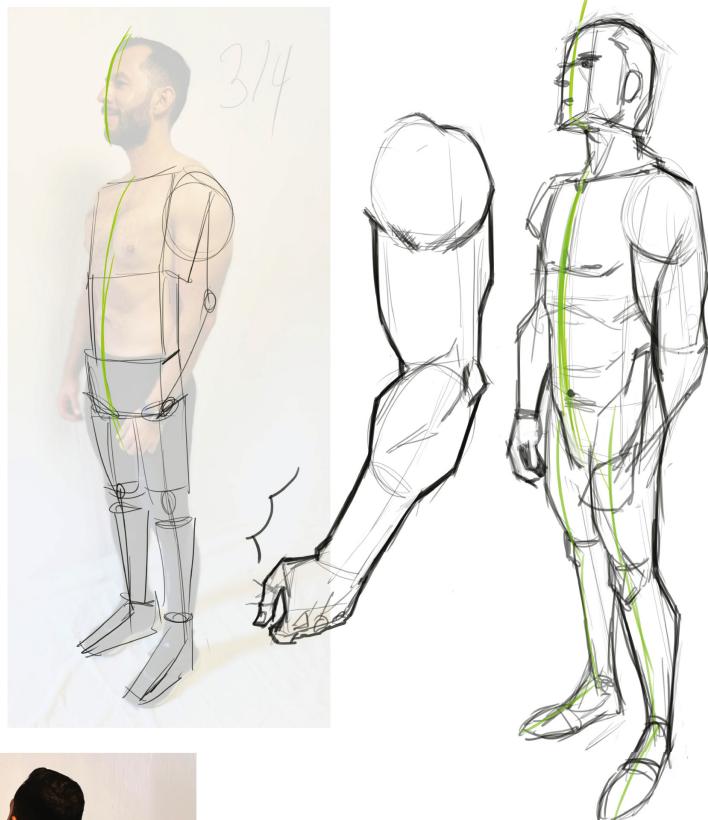
INK LINES

NOTES

ANATOMY EXERCISES

It is best to practice your anatomy exercises using real-life body references. If you have the opportunity to participate in drawing sessions that include live models, that is even better because you are able to see how muscles move and tense up in different positions.

Being able to make these kinds of real-life anatomical observations is very helpful for creating strong character designs.



PRO TIP:

Practice your anatomy exercises by drawing from live models so you can observe how bones and muscles really move and interact in a variety of poses.

CHARACTER DESIGN

After practicing and after you feel confident with this process, try this exercise: using a real body for reference, draw in the basic body shapes and structure, clean up your line work, then finally check your drawing to make sure it is anatomically correct. At this stage you are ready to work on creating different character designs. You can use the same format as we did for the figure drawings. As before, I start with a base structure and for this character I decide to exaggerate the volume using a larger sized body; however you can choose to stylize the figure in any way you like.

There is an important tip we need to take into consideration: always draw the entire body first and then add your clothing design over the top. This is how to correctly dress characters because it allows you make sure your underlying body is anatomically accurate so the clothing overlays on the body frame with the correct volume and shape. This makes a big difference in how well your characters turn out.

PRO TIP:

Draw the entire body first, then add clothing design and detail over the final body drawing.

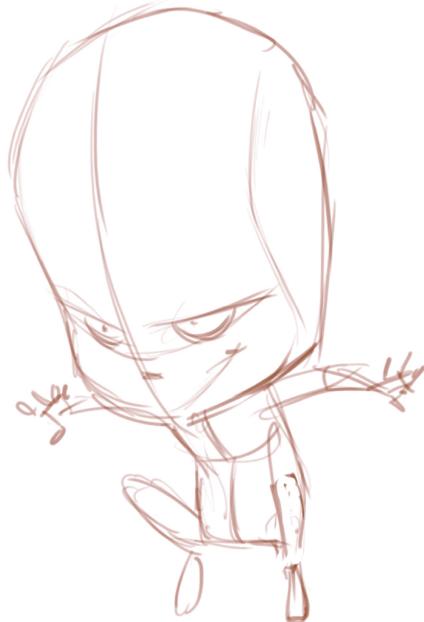


STYLIZED FIGURES

Since you spent the time needed to practice, you now better understand basic body shapes and structure. Next, you can start to elaborate by creating characters in a variety of styles that are intended for diverse purposes like comics, animation, or video games.

This process of visualizing the body's structure first has helped me a lot in my job, from putting together complex to cute, bigheaded characters (that's what I call them, see examples on next page) that I have a lot of fun drawing.





PRO TIP:

I sketch my base structure using red, blue, or any other color that is not black so I can easily tell my sketch from the black ink lines. Remember to also use different layers for your sketch and a new clean layer above the sketch for inking.



FEMALE FIGURE

A good understanding of basic body structures and how they work is fundamental in order to draw functional characters for comics, video games, and animations. The more anatomy studies you can complete, the better your results will be. Your effort will definitely be reflected in your artwork.

Using the same process as the earlier male figure, you start by recognizing the general structure and form of the body using a real-life reference so you can visualize from different perspectives. I took this picture of my daughter Nahomi from the floor angled upward at a $\frac{3}{4}$ view. This perspective gives me the opportunity to better show how to work with geometric figures to create volume in your figures.



PHOTO REFERENCE



BASIC STRUCTURE



BASIC SHAPES



EXAMPLE

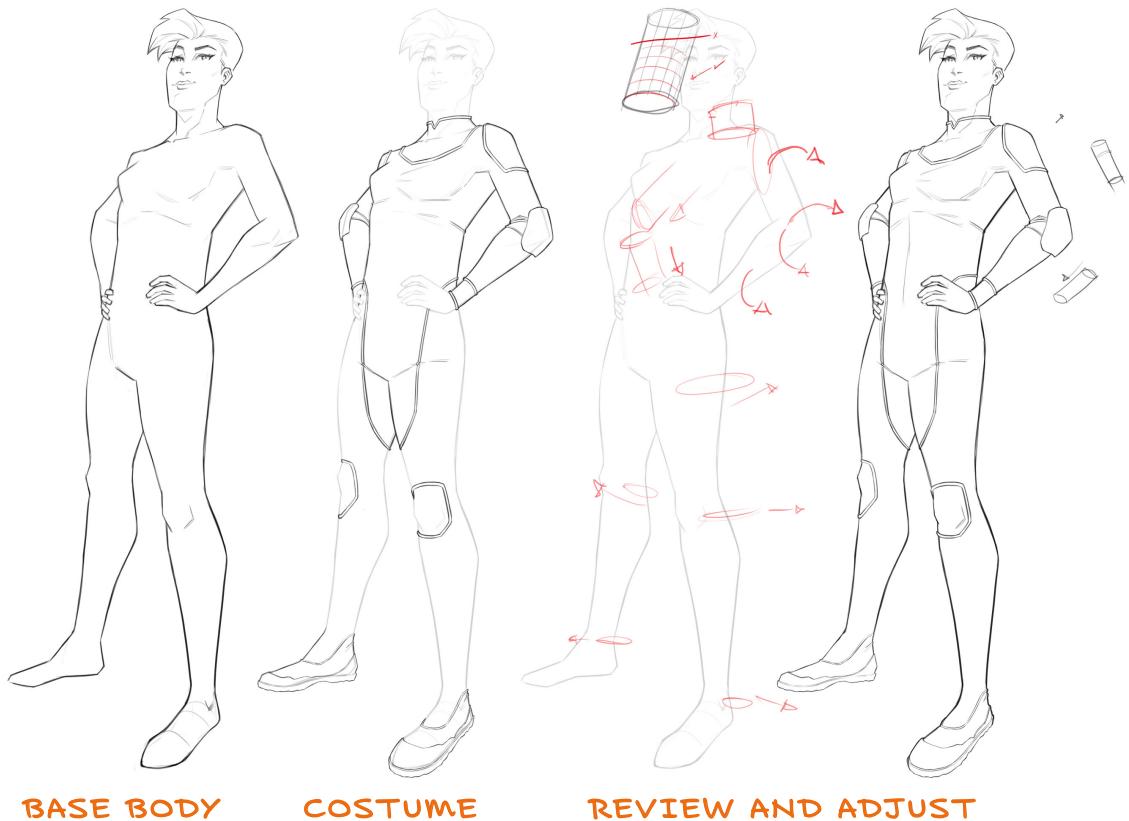
Creating perspective and volume correctly is very important—let's explore more about this process using the following steps to costume our characters:

1. Start with the base body line art.
2. Then add the costume design over your base body.
3. Review and adjust the direction of each element—this will help your costume to wrap over the body's shape and volume correctly.

By following these steps your character will be ready for action!

PRO TIP:

Although it is easy to find online references, I recommend taking your own pictures. You can ask friends and family to help so you can plan out your photo references that will help you create better illustrations. Also, while taking your own pictures you see details in the hands, feet, and expressions that you may not pay attention to using pictures from the internet. All you need is a cell phone and you are ready to go!



BASE BODY

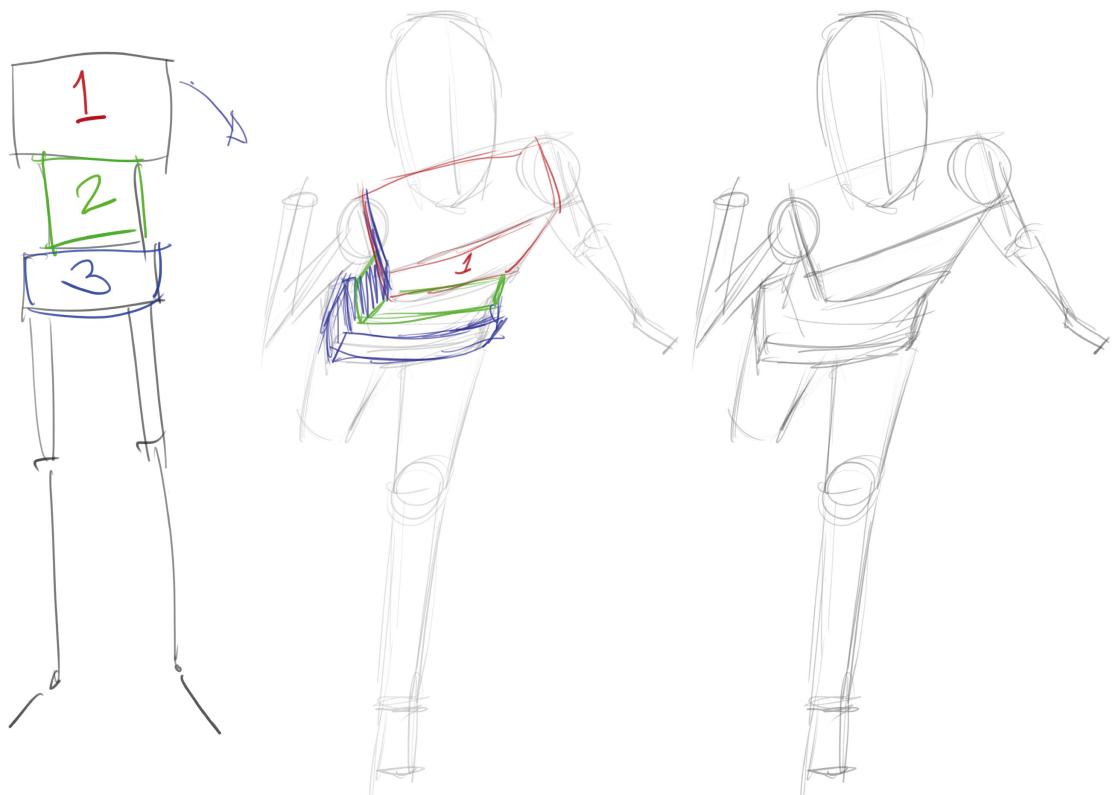
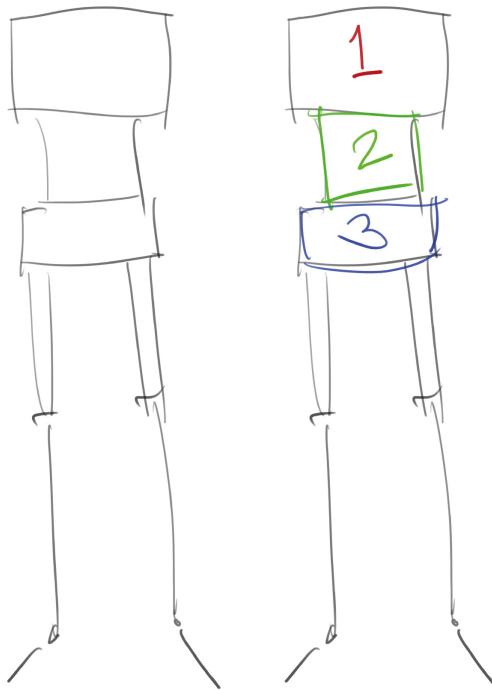
COSTUME

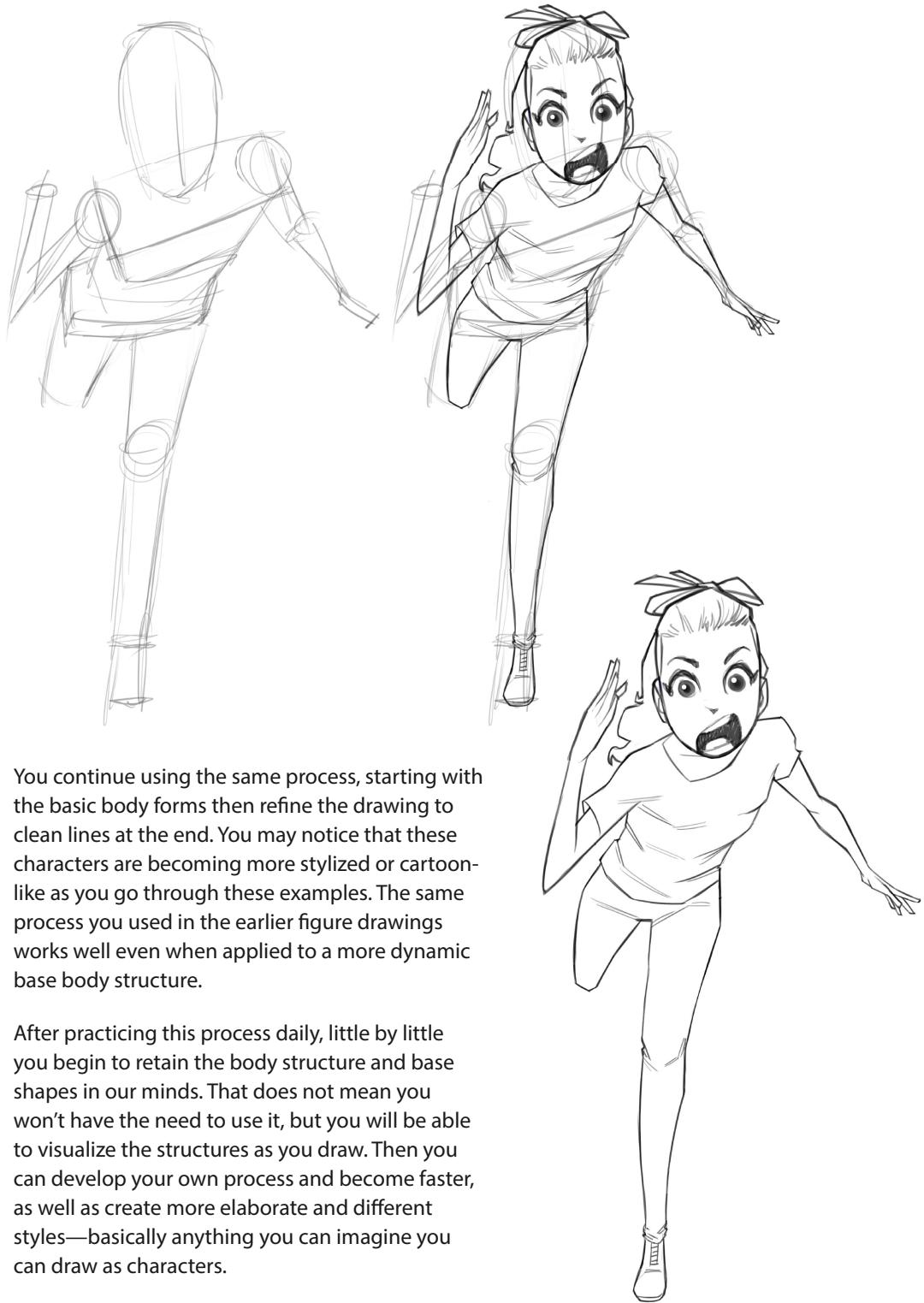
REVIEW AND ADJUST

ADDING DYNAMIC ENERGY

It is time to give our figure drawings more dynamic movement and energy!

Now that you understand how to draw basic body structures, I'll show you a practical way to create a sense of dynamic energy. In this example you can see how a 2D image (front view) changes as you add perspective, transforming the figure into a 3D image. You can see that by adding just a few simple strokes, you can create volume which adds dynamic movement.





You continue using the same process, starting with the basic body forms then refine the drawing to clean lines at the end. You may notice that these characters are becoming more stylized or cartoon-like as you go through these examples. The same process you used in the earlier figure drawings works well even when applied to a more dynamic base body structure.

After practicing this process daily, little by little you begin to retain the body structure and base shapes in our minds. That does not mean you won't have the need to use it, but you will be able to visualize the structures as you draw. Then you can develop your own process and become faster, as well as create more elaborate and different styles—basically anything you can imagine you can draw as characters.



CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

For this example, I've included a page of sketches showing a wide range of variation in character shape, style, movement, and energy.

I choose one of these sketches and using the same process you've been learning, I create a character that can be used for a wide variety of design purposes.



FINDING TIME TO SKETCH

Next, I want to share with you some pages from my sketchbook. Something incredibly important to me is my *time*. That is why I use pocket-size sketchbooks. I call them my *waiting* sketchbooks since I always have one with me to take advantage of any waiting time. For example, when I'm out with my daughters or wife and waiting for them in the car, that time is very valuable to me. I use it to sketch with my multicolored pens and I always learn something. I draw the people I see on the street, capturing their likeness in my mind for when I have time to draw them in more detail later on. I am often inspired by things I see outside and by doing these practice sketches I continue to learn and improve my skills.

Why do I draw these quick sketches with a pen? Because I don't want to erase any strokes; a sketchbook is meant for practice and to loosen up our hands and wrists. This helps us refine our skills and develop simpler, quicker ways to draw.

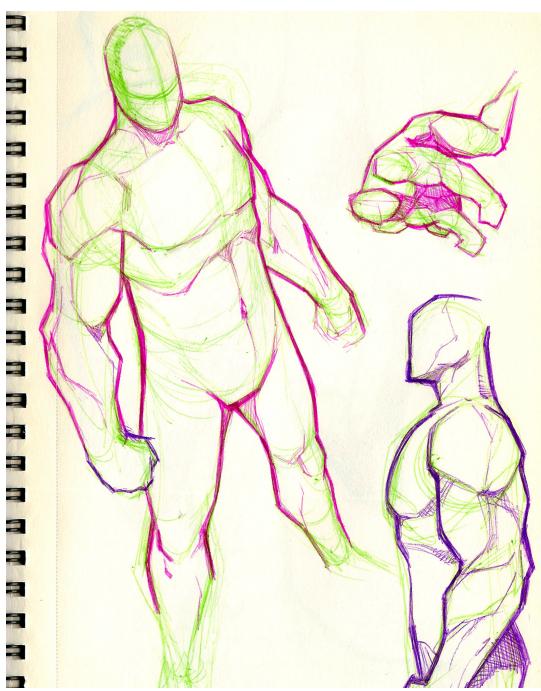
VERY IMPORTANT ADVICE: only practice sketching any new techniques or materials when you have time. Please don't worry about being overly precise during practice. Pay attention to what you are doing, but be sure to have fun too. Don't practice under pressure—the key to learning how to draw is motivation and enjoying the process. Your artwork will reflect how much time and energy you invest, and I want you to practice so you can become a better artist!

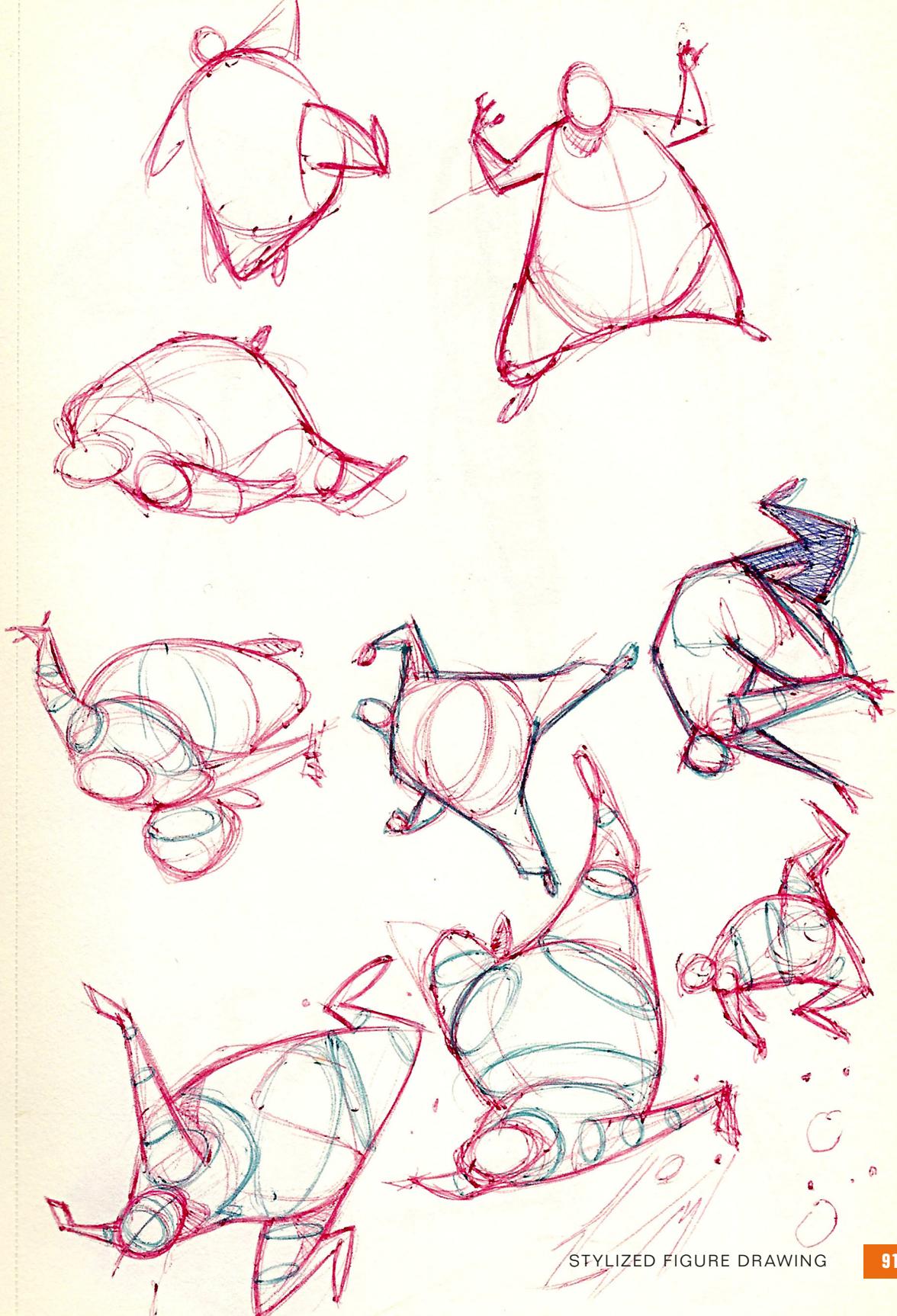
PRO TIP ON PRACTICE:

**Don't practice under pressure—
enjoy sketching and make it fun!**

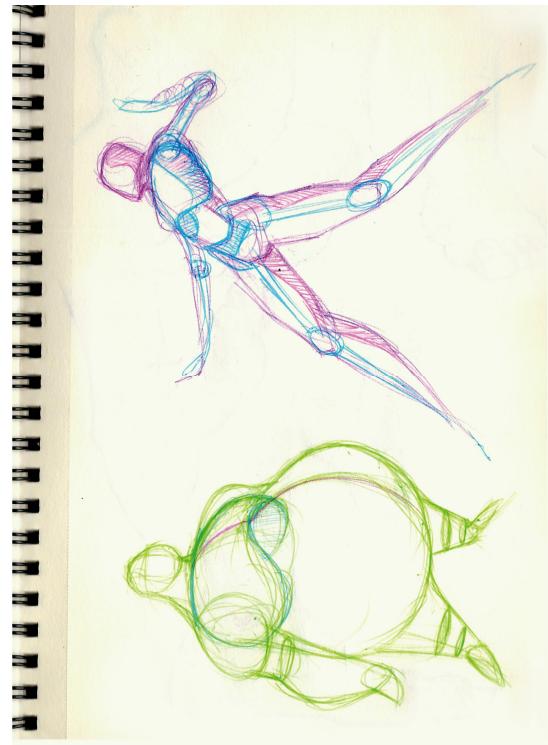
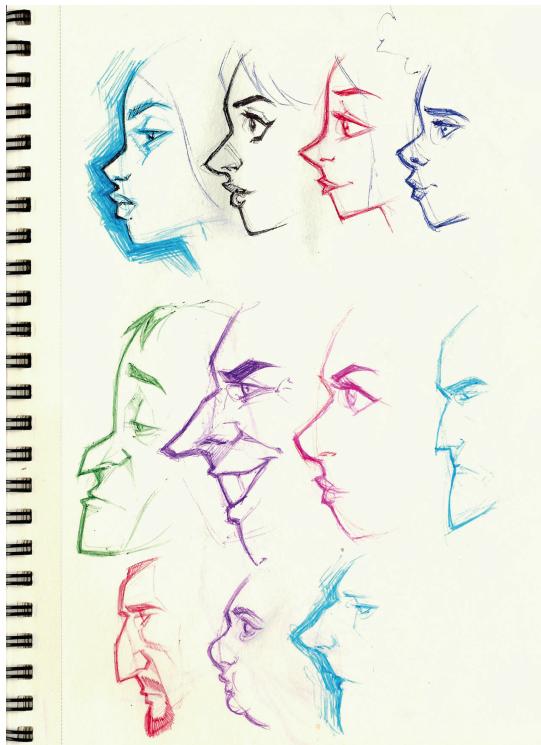


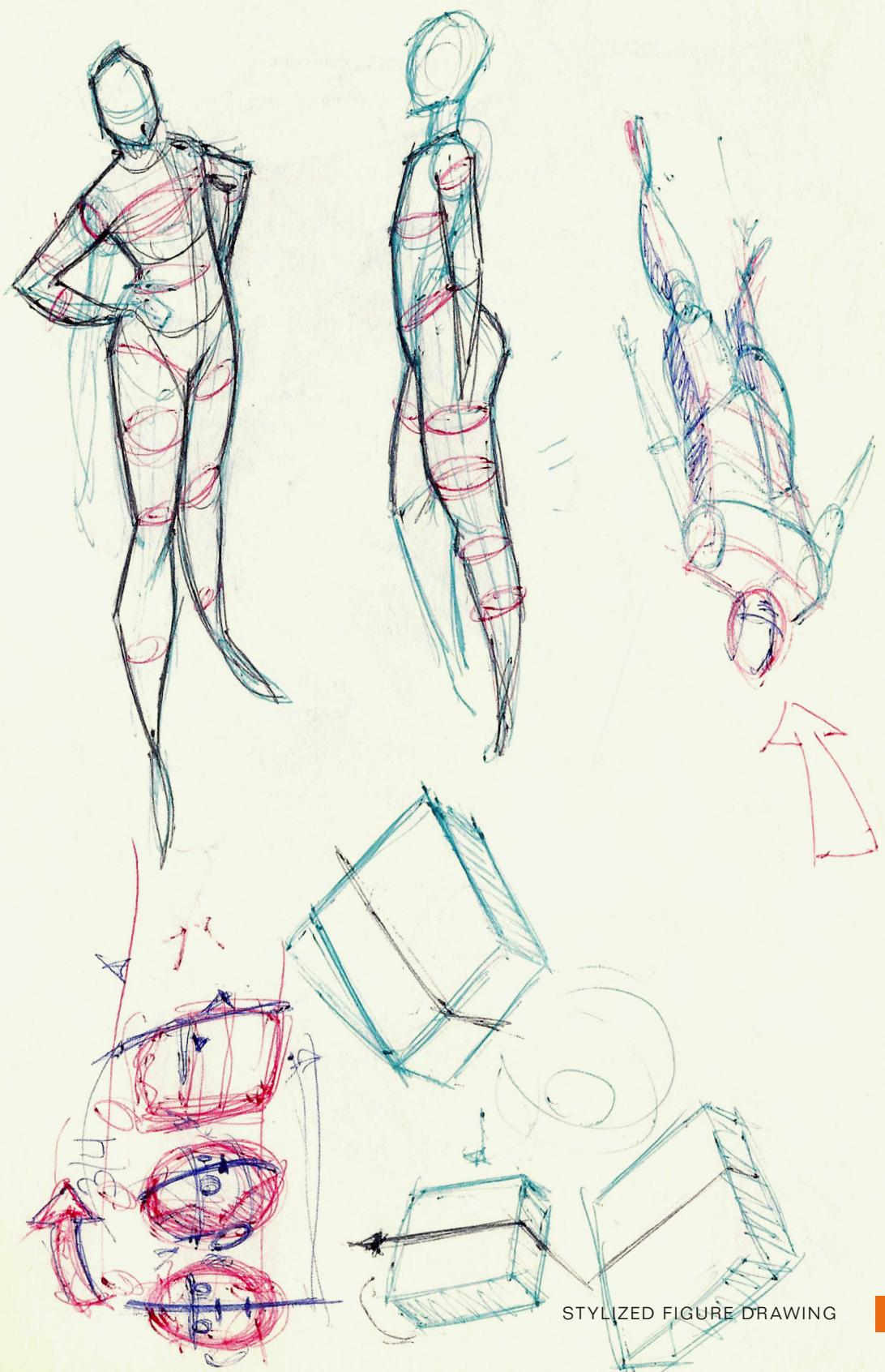




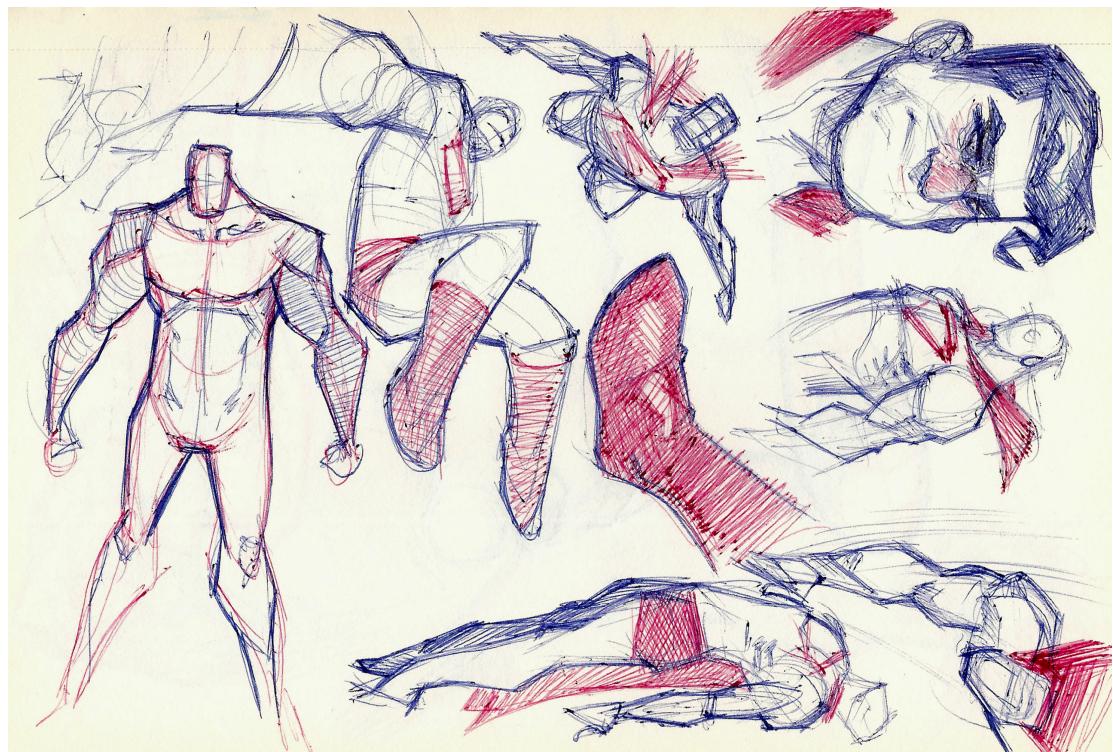


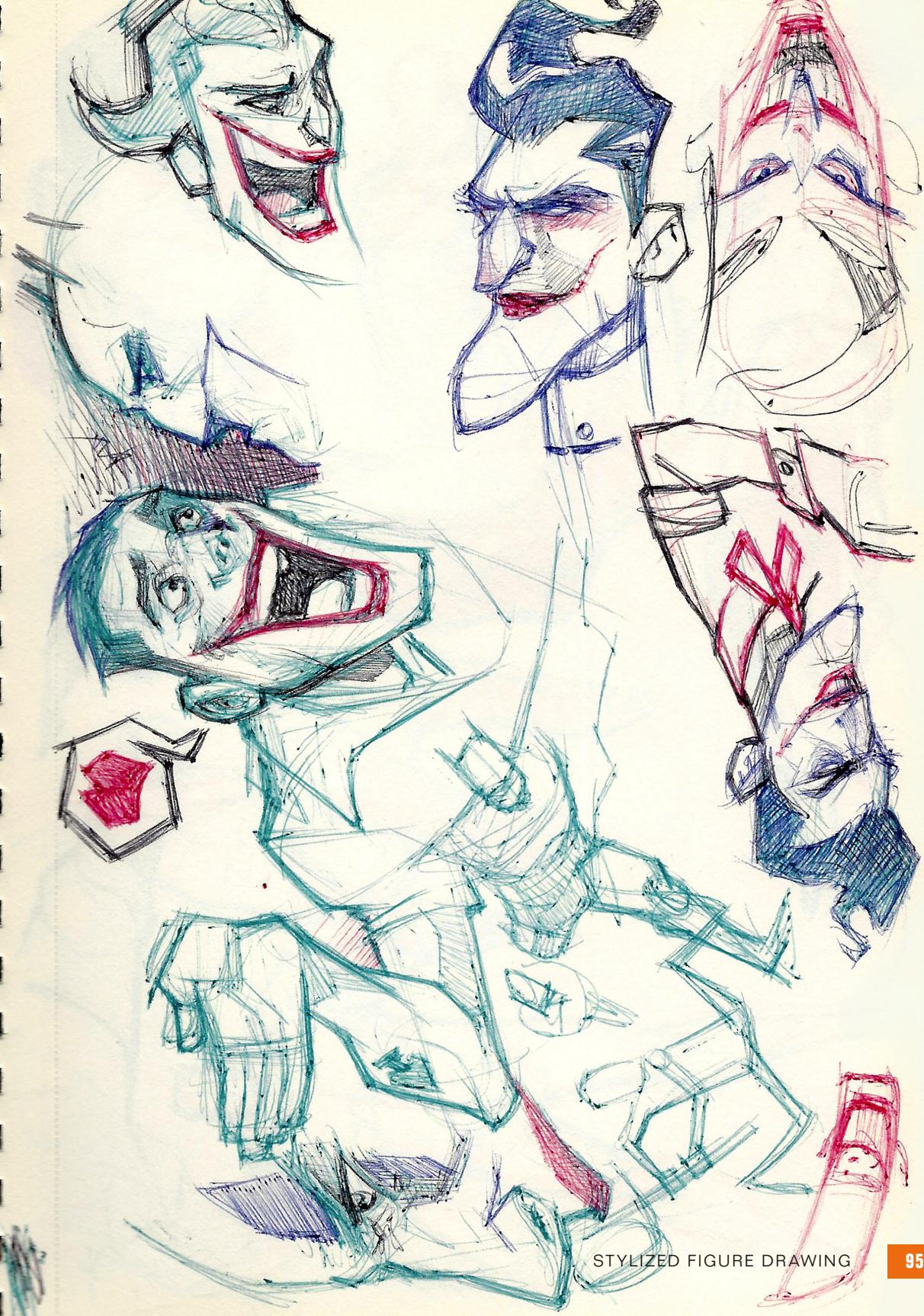
STYLIZED FIGURE DRAWING





STYLIZED FIGURE DRAWING



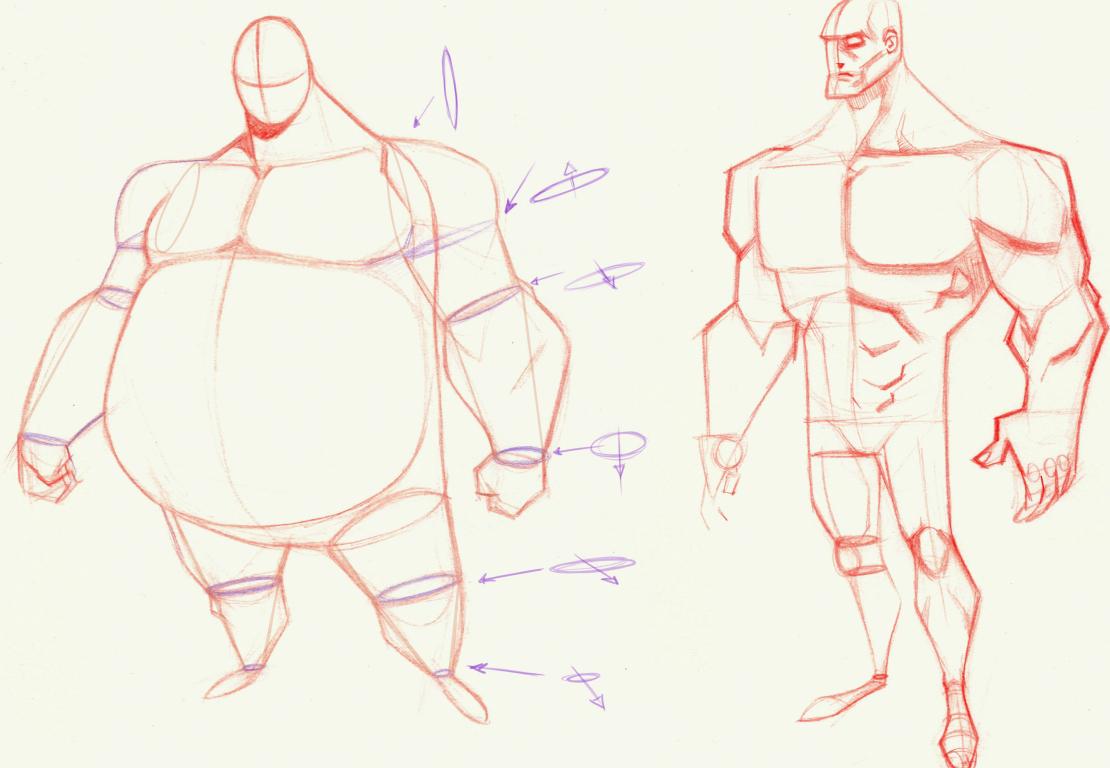


DAILY PRACTICE

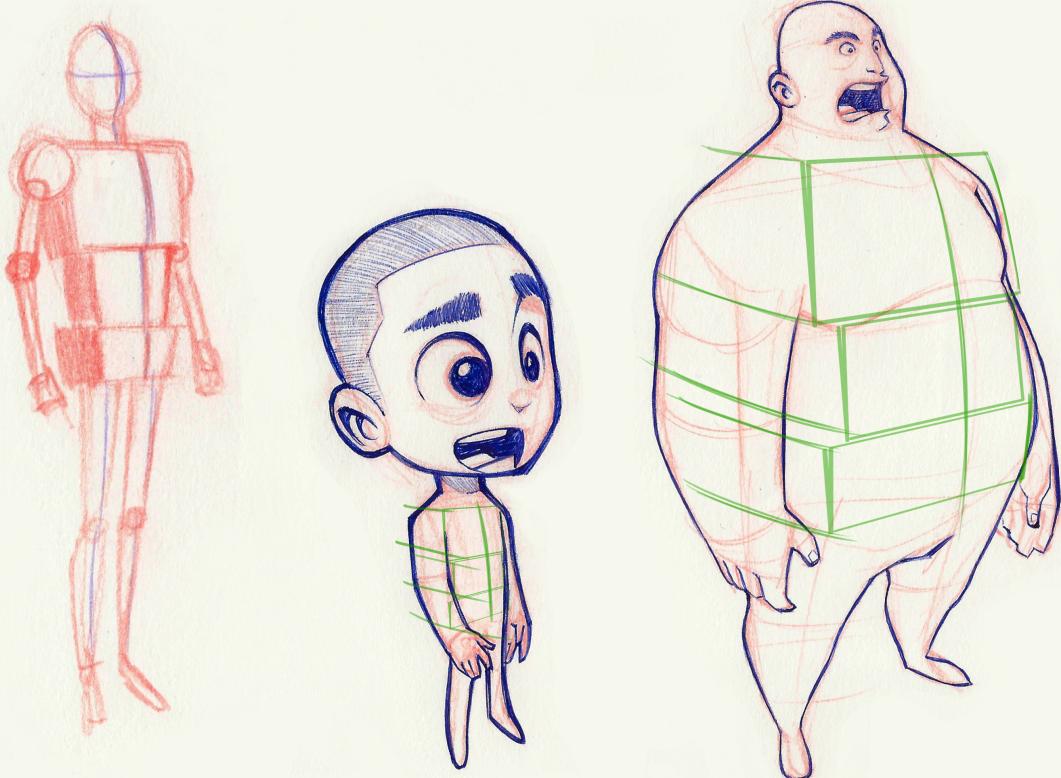
I often tell my students that sketchbooks should be used every single day—**this is very important**. If you don't practice daily you will stop learning. It is also extremely important that artists become close observers of everything around them. During drawing practice, be sure to carefully observe the people you see around you. This helps bring life to your characters. We can capture in our mind the unique characteristics that each person possesses, then later download them to paper through our pen strokes.

In the example below, I want to show you why it is so important to continue studying and practicing anatomy. After you have a good understanding of how to draw the human body, you can start to distort and change characters as you design them, stylizing their bodies using different shapes and volumes.

I created these example sketches using the same process you've been learning, but stylized them differently. The drawing on the left is created using only circular shapes while the right is drawn using angular shapes to achieve different body types.



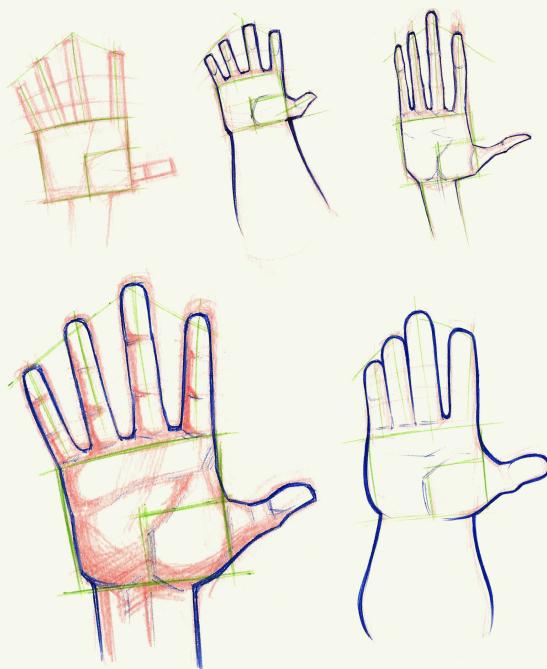
PRO TIP: Understanding anatomy is important so that you can distort and change characters as you design them.

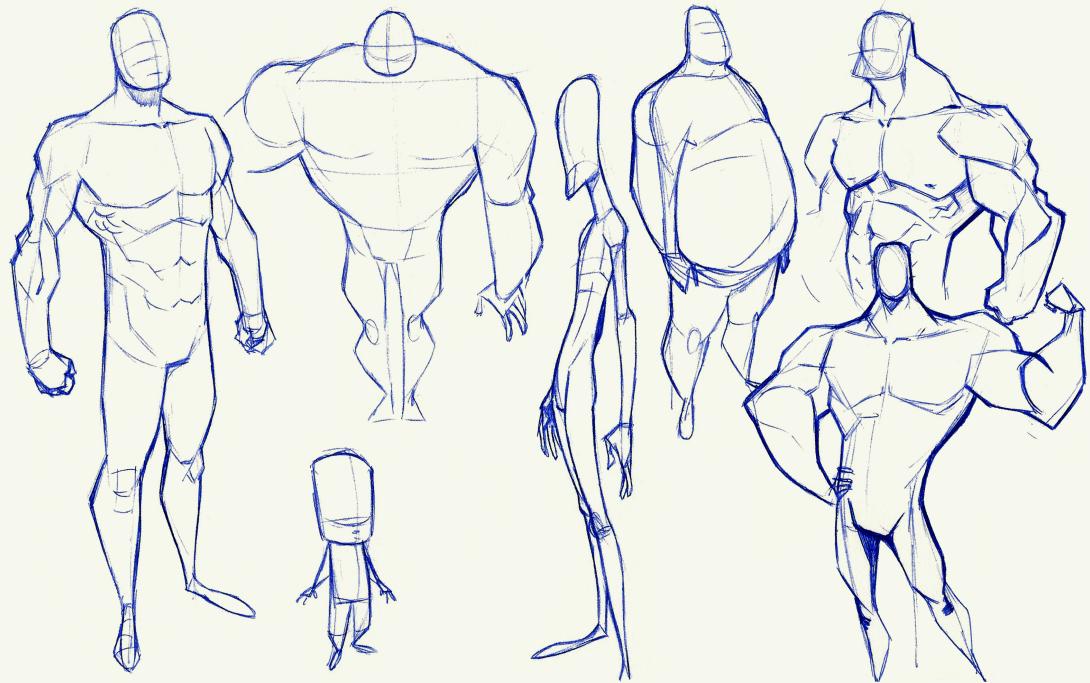


CHARACTER EXERCISE

Let's do an exercise together—select a pose (see above), again start with basic geometric shapes and then apply two very different styles and body structures to each character. The basic body structure will help us apply styles, sizes, and different strokes, but where your designs end up only depends on your imagination.

In all these examples, I worked quickly using a red pencil then used a blue pen for my line work. These exercises clearly show that it doesn't really matter what style of drawing you have in mind—the key is to start from a clear base structure (I've drawn this here using green). Then from the base structure you can distort and stylize to achieve a wide variety of designs.





QUICK SKETCHES

The previous page has examples of quick sketching exercises that I drew without using photo references. This type of practice should be done very quickly—remember you don't need to show these drawings to anyone. Try to create a variety of body shapes and proportions and keep in mind these sketches are meant to be completed in the least amount of time possible. This is the best way to improve your skills. I really enjoy doing these quick sketch studies.

As I shared with you earlier, if possible, it is best to take your own photographic references by asking friends and family to pose for you. But if you can't do this, the internet provides us with an infinite amount of references to draw from. You can easily find many examples of various styles of clothing, shoes, and people in real-life photos and stylized for comics or manga.

Be sure to practice different kinds of clothing too. For example, practice drawing people in winter clothes so you can visualize how a body moves under heavy clothing. Use the same process you've learned—start by sketching each body part using geometric shapes. You'll soon see how easy it is to visualize a human body in various positions and clothing styles.

Remember to become a close observer of people around you—look at different body shapes and hairstyles. Fill your mind with as many reference images as possible, then without looking at those references draw from your memory. This is a great way to boost creativity and eventually you will be able to easily stylize your characters in many different ways. Most important of all, remember to have **fun** while you draw so you will continue to practice and improve your artistic abilities!



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2D



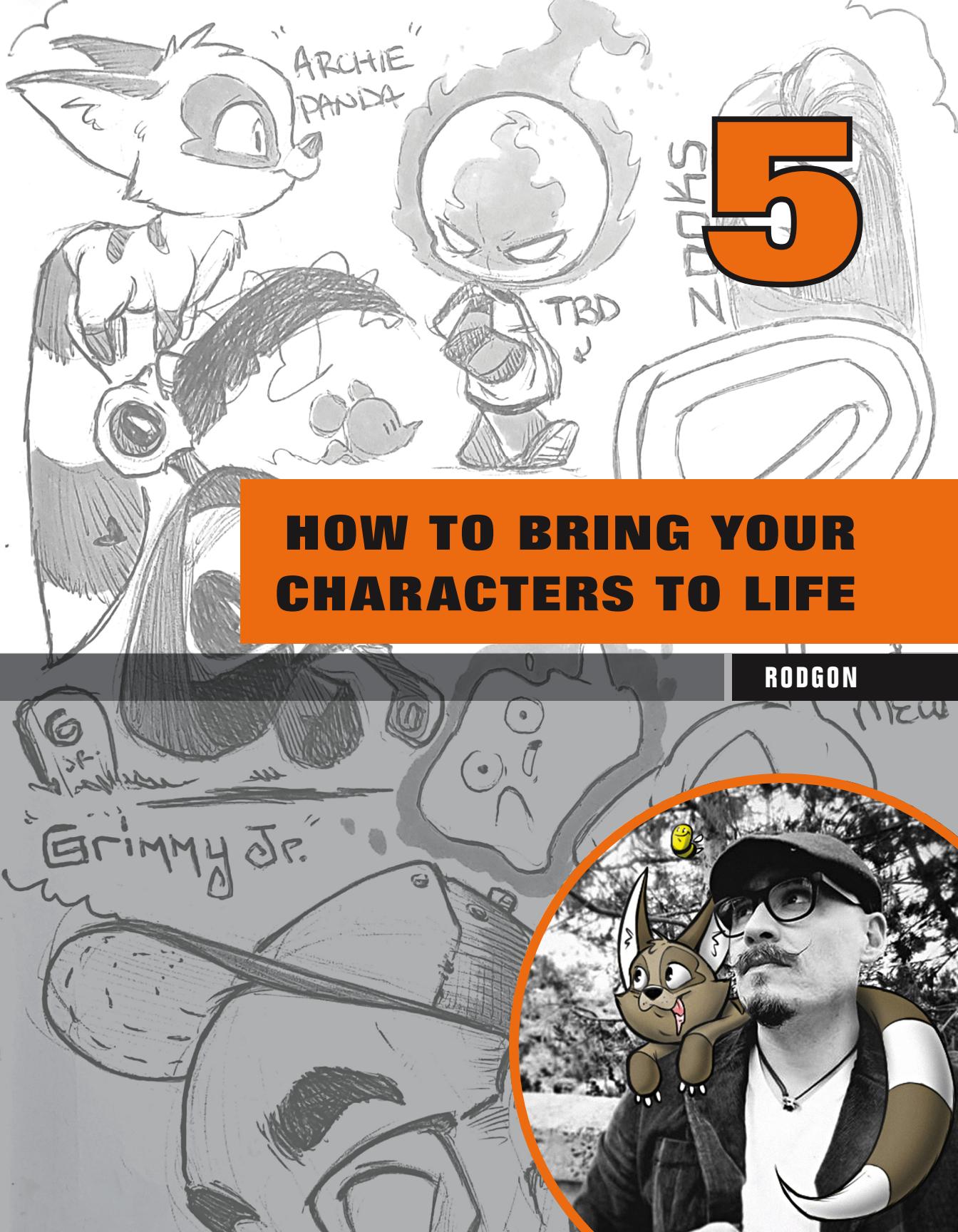
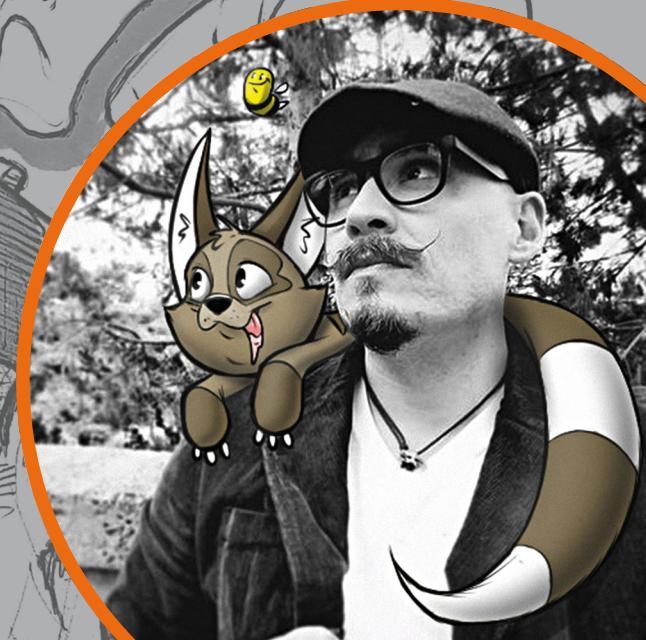
SCAN ME



5

HOW TO BRING YOUR CHARACTERS TO LIFE

RODGON



HOW TO BRING YOUR CHARACTERS TO LIFE

WITH RODGON

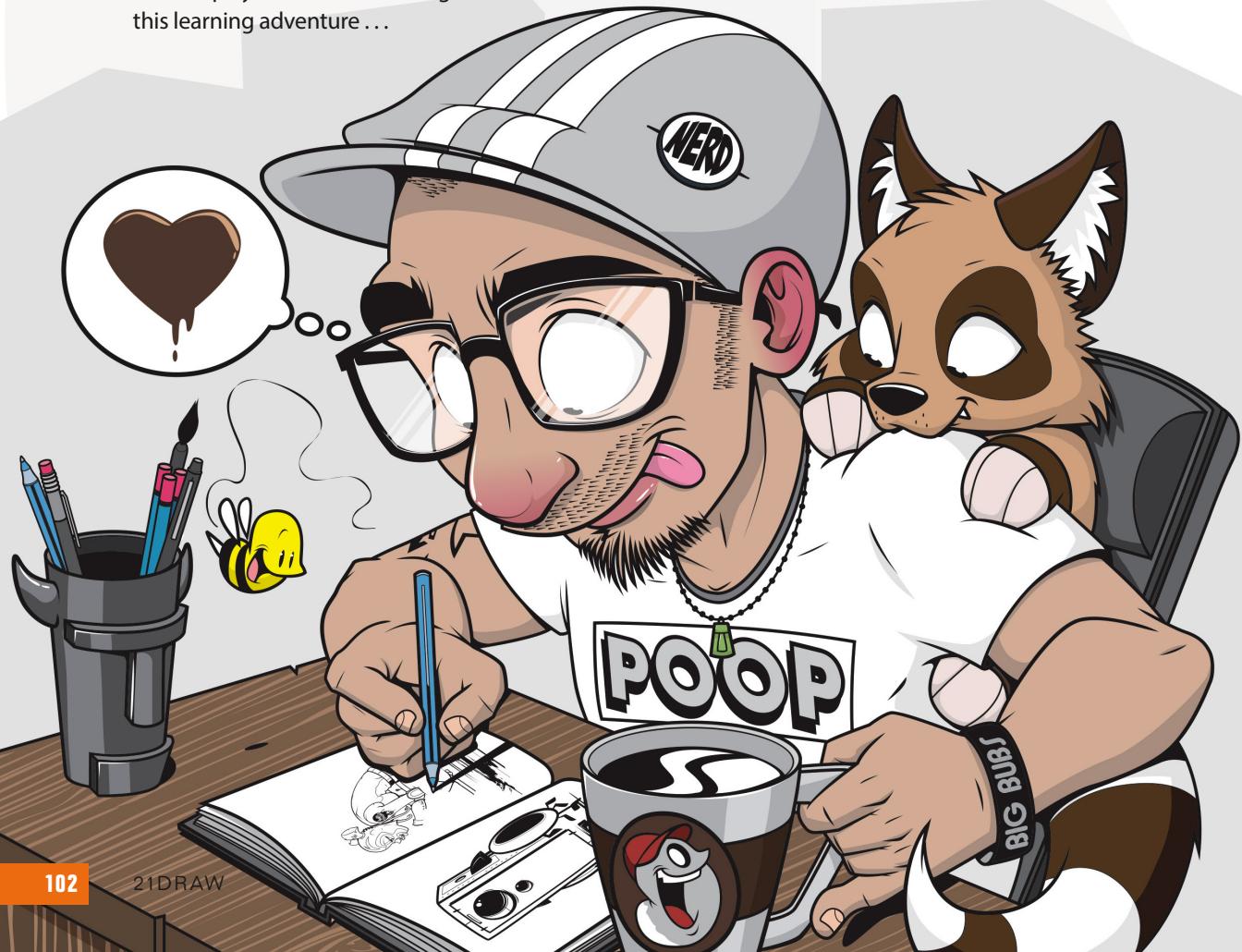
Welcome Peeps! I'm excited to have this opportunity to teach you how to improve your drawing skills and make your art come alive.

This chapter is full of techniques to help you throughout your artistic career. You can take these lessons with you anywhere and practice at any time.

It is my sincere pleasure to be your instructor and I hope you learn a lot. Let's get started on this learning adventure ...

YOU WILL NEED:

- **A small sketchbook** (choose a size that is easy to carry with you at all times)
- **Your favorite drawing tools** (use art supplies that are easy for you to get)
- **Visual references** (you can take pics with your phone, find them online, or in magazines and books)



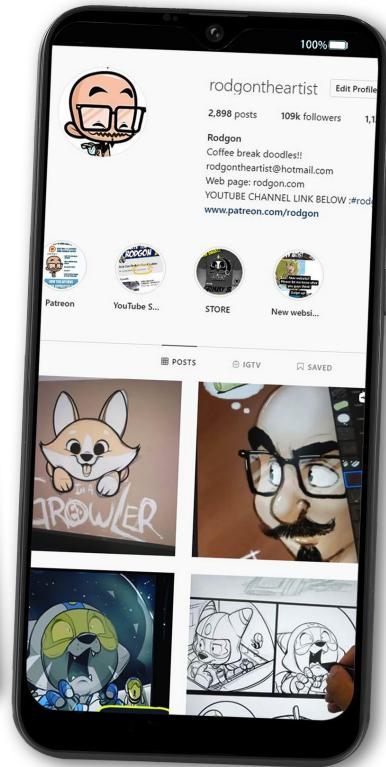
I recommend you choose drawing tools you can carry with you at all times and are easy to purchase.



I limit art supplies to what I can easily carry and purchase. I recommend getting a small sketchbook so you can take it with you wherever you go. That way you are ready to practice any chance you get. I like my materials to be affordable too. You don't want the cost of art supplies to be a block to your creative process. The kinds of supplies are not what make your art good; in reality these are just tools at your disposal. True talent lies within you not in your pencil.

So use tools that work best for you and learn how to love creating art with them. The goal is to keep your creative ideas flowing!

Grab your favorite sketchbook, pens and pencils, put on a big smile, and let's start drawing ...



WHY YOU SHOULD USE REFERENCES . . .

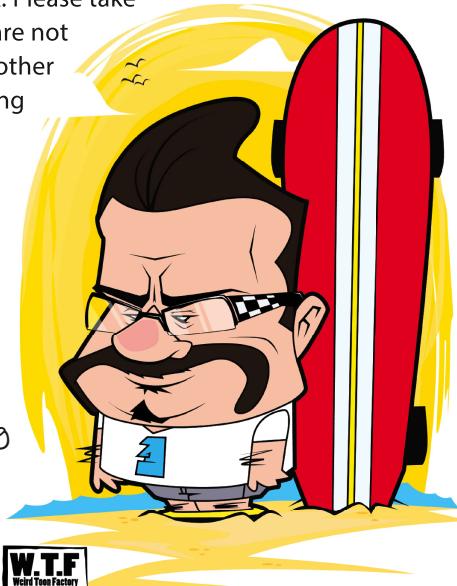
(And how they will help you draw better.)

There is a big misconception among new artists who believe using references is somehow cheating or you aren't a *real* artist if you use them. This is incorrect, since using references is one of the best and fastest ways to dramatically improve your skills and artwork.

The reason is pretty simple when you think about it. When you first start creating art, you begin to slowly build what I call a mental library of images. This mental library is what allows you to draw from memory. This library grows each time you draw something new and gets stronger with each drawing you repeat.

However, there is a big difference between referencing images and taking credit for another artist's work. Please take care to be sure you are not copying designs by other artists when gathering your references.

Using visual references makes capturing details much easier.



YOUR MENTAL IMAGE LIBRARY

This library of visual references is easy to grow and I have a great tip that many new artists forget: **DRAW THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO DRAW.**

Don't know how to draw birds? Dogs?

Women? Vehicles? The solution is simple—start drawing new things and keep at it until it sticks. Repetition is the key to success. There will be times when you really don't like these new drawings and they may not be as strong as your other artwork—yet. Take time to draw what is new or difficult for you—this is a surefire way to improve

your skills as an artist. Drawing something new is also when your image references really come into play. Visual references help you draw cool images you wouldn't have thought of and is a big step forward to building up your mental library.



When you compile all your references, that compilation is called your vision board. Try to have one for each big project!



HOW TO DRAW EYES . . .

(And make your characters look alive!)

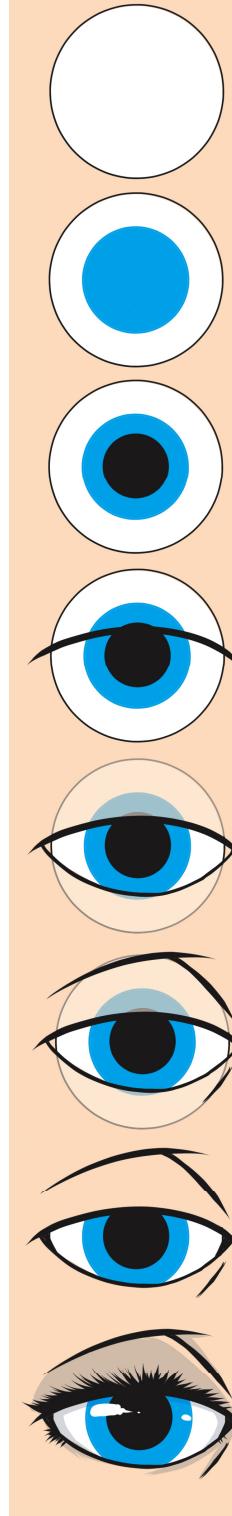
Eyes, as some people say, are windows to the soul. Therefore eyes are one of the key elements that can bring your characters to life. A character's eyes and how they are drawn can instantly tell you a lot about their story. In this section, I give you all my tips and tricks for drawing lovely, dynamic, and very cool eyes with relative ease.

Often when people start drawing, they look for the coolest design style they can find and try to reproduce that exact style. They forget to first practice the basics and learn the fundamentals. I was one of those people and it hindered my progress and growth for many years. That is until I learned the one thing that changed everything—ANATOMY! The very thing I thought was boring turns out to be what helped me the most.

HOW TO DRAW EYES: STEP 1

First we need to break our subject down to its most simple shapes (top right). In this case we start with a sphere for the eyeball, from there we layer on more shapes to create all the parts that make up an eye.

Let's go step by step through the process so we can see how the elements layer to create the eye as a whole.



1 Start with a simple sphere to represent the entire eyeball.

2 Then add a circle inside to show where the colored part of the eye will be.

3 Now add the center of the eye, represented by a black circle.

4 Next, draw the upper eyelash line. Make sure to wrap it around the eye, like a blanket laying over the eyeball.

5 The bottom eyelid is normally layered under the top lid at the corners. It will typically be a thinner line than the top eyelash.

6 Then add volume by defining the top of the eyelid and a little of the lower lid.

7 Now clean up the lines and define the overlapping sections to create more volume.

8 Finish by adding details like lashes, highlights, and shadows—you end up with a pretty cool-looking eye!

HOW TO DRAW EYES: STEP 2

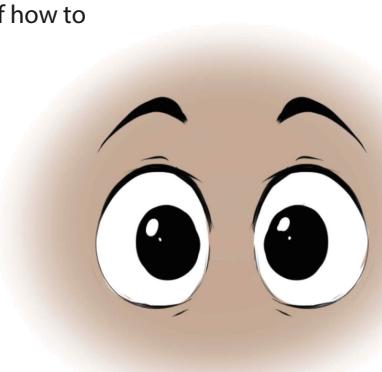
Now that you understand the different steps to drawing an eye, you can simplify the process in order to draw them more quickly.

As artists we simplify parts of the body to create a style we like, or as a shortcut to creating concepts we have in mind. Let's figure out the easiest way to draw eyes then look at examples of how to implement shortcuts into your own drawing style.



COMPLEX

VS.



SIMPLE

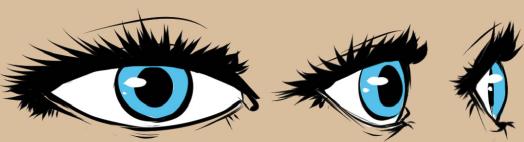
Defines every aspect of the eye in detail including shading. This creates a lot of volume and a high level realism. This drawing style takes a long time to learn and do correctly.

Simplified to extremes while still representing every aspect of the eye. This is great to make quick and fun drawings that capture emotion well. Allows for quick design and storytelling that is easier to learn.

FRONT

3/4

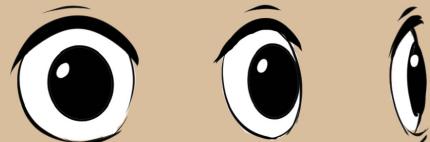
PROFILE



FRONT

3/4

PROFILE



As you learn to draw eyes at different angles, keep in mind all the parts that make up the eye and the fact that eyes are objects that have three dimensional volume.

Even the simple drawing of eyes includes slight overlaps where the thick and thin lines create expressive and lively eyes. Make sure to always add volume to your drawings.

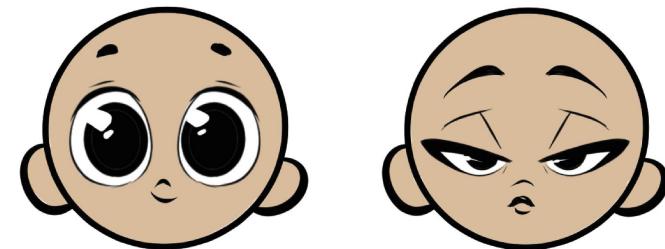
HOW TO STYLE EYES

We have reviewed how to draw the specific elements that make up detailed eyes and how to break them down into simple elements. Now you get to do something very cool—make fun eye styles!

Here are some examples of how you can make cute, sexy, evil, and super stylized eyes just by playing around with different elements.

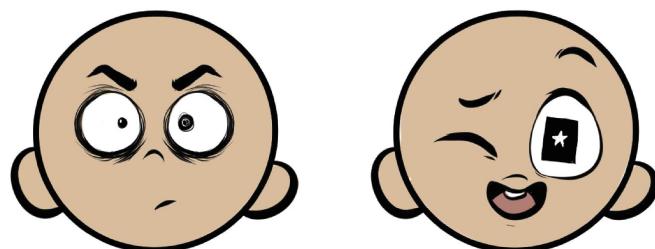
PRO TIP FOR EYES:

Make a goal to create a generic set of eyes that you can easily draw. They should be eyes that you can place into any design you make. Whether for a human, an animal, or object, creating a generic eye design is a great tool to have at your disposal.



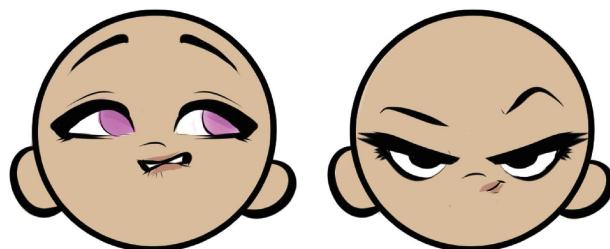
Larger eyes and highlights make characters look younger and cuter

Thicker eyelashes and larger eyelids give a sensual sexy look

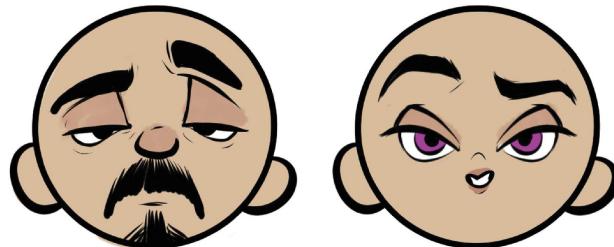


Adding little distress lines causes someone to look disturbed or angry

Create your own style using fun shapes with silly or weird highlights



Making the upper line of an eye thicker gives the impression of gorgeous eyelashes without the need to draw a lot of lines.



Eyelids can also express a lot of personality. Include variations in eye designs to avoid “same face syndrome” where all characters look the same.

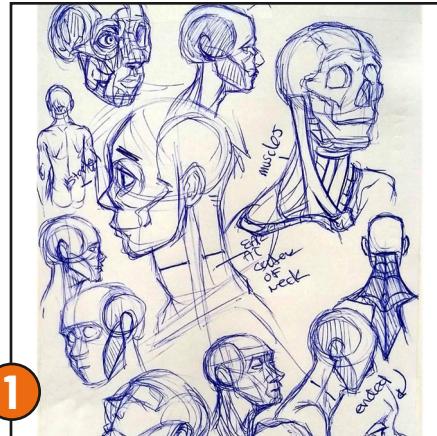
EYE EXERCISES TO PRACTICE

The following are my all-time favorite exercises to do when I want to practice drawing and styling eyes.

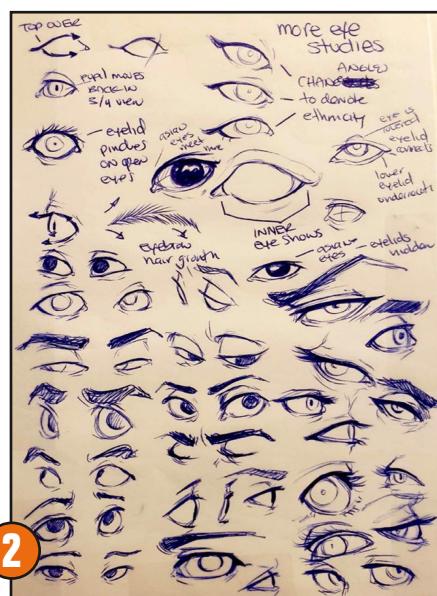
EXERCISE 1—ANATOMY STUDY SKETCHES

Do you feel like something just doesn't look quite right? You can find online tutorials (Instagram and Pinterest) showing how to draw the real life anatomy of the head.

This not only helps you draw the head and position better, it definitely improves your ability to draw eyes.



1



2



3

EXERCISE 2—FILL A PAGE WITH SKETCHES, THEN MAKE NOTES

Fill a page with reference drawings of eyes, then make notes on any areas that don't look right to you. Next research why these areas need improvement. This self-critical review is key to learning how to improve when you do not have an instructor available.

EXERCISE 3—ONLINE REFERENCES AND PEN SKETCHES

When I want to develop different ways to draw and style eyes, I like to use random people I find online for reference. I prefer drawing with a ballpoint pen for these developmental sketches. Pens are less forgiving than pencils since you can't erase lines and I find practicing with a pen improves my linework.



Using a few simple tricks and a basic knowledge of anatomy, you can create amazing expressions.

As we did with eyes, we will first explore the basics and how to breakdown facial expressions. The same process will easily translate to any character you want to design.

So once again, grab your sketchbook and pens and let's get started!

PRO TIP:

You can use different levels of detail for characters in your artwork.

INTRO TO FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Faces are capable of making countless variations in expressions, and each person has their own unique looks and reactions. It is our task as artists to recreate them in our artwork.

There is nothing better than being able to translate an idea you have in mind onto paper. This lesson will help you learn how to do just that.

Facial expressions are one of the best ways to make your drawings come to life. Whether a simple cartoon or majestic fine art painting, facial expressions are a large aspect of creating any character.



FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

How are you able to distinguish when a person is happy, sad, mad, confused—the various emotions we all experience daily? It's all thanks to facial expressions!

Drawing expressions can be difficult, but I will teach you some tips and tricks I use regularly to draw them better.

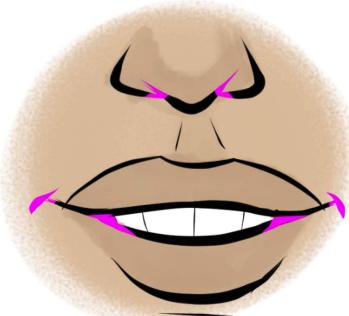
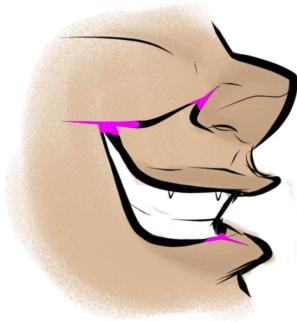
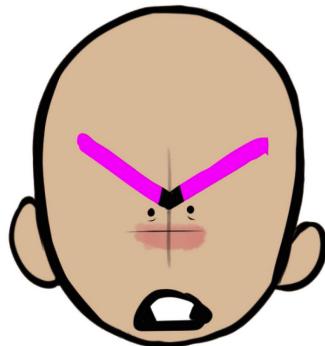
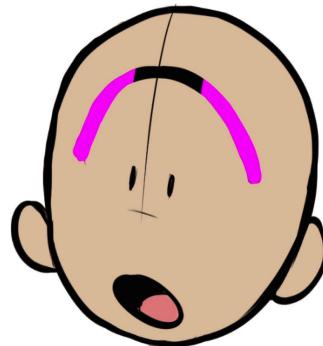
THE CATERPILLAR EYEBROW APPROACH

An art instructor told me about a "caterpillar eyebrow" approach to facial expressions. It involves taking both eyebrows and drawing them as one long unibrow across the forehead.

You then move the unibrow around like a caterpillar to see how many different expressions you can make. You can definitely discover a lot of fun expressions using this method. This is also a great way to break free from overusing the same expression.

OVERLAPPING SHAPES AND LINES

Learning the correct way to overlap shapes and lines will help you create depth and add character to your drawings. Good areas for adding lines are on the cheeks, mouth, eyes, and eyebrows.



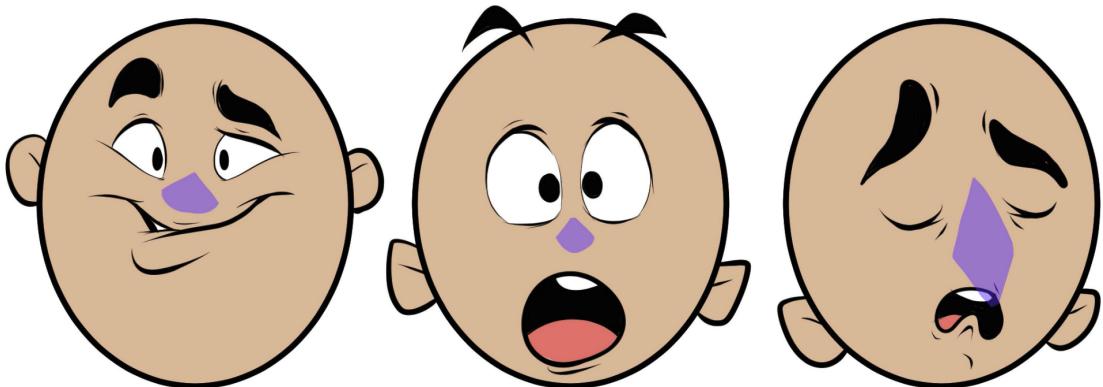
Good areas for adding lines are on the cheeks, mouth, eyes, and eyebrows.



HOW BROWS AND CHEEKS INTERACT WITH EYES

One aspect of facial expression that is often overlooked is how the brow and cheek muscles affect the eyes.

There are muscles under the eyebrows that tend to cover your eyes during expressions of anger or frustration. Cheeks will also overlap your eyes when you smile or laugh. Learning the anatomy of facial muscles can help your skills improve—I guarantee it!



FOCUS ON EYES, MOUTH, AND EYEBROWS

The eyes, mouth, and eyebrows are where most facial expressions come from. I find that when you focus your attention on these specific areas, it is easier to create great facial expressions. Parts of the face such as the nose and ears play a much smaller role since they do not move much regardless of the emotion shown. Focus your creative energy mainly on the eyes, mouth, and eyebrows when drawing facial expressions.

EXAMPLES OF FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Here is a compilation of facial expressions including various levels of detail to give you a head start on your own drawings. Simply apply the concepts we've reviewed and practice!



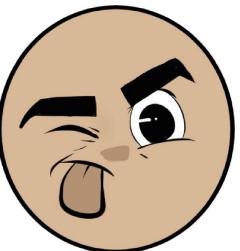
HAPPY



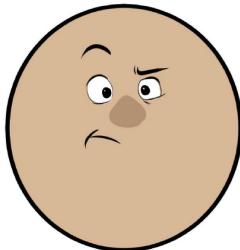
SAD



ANGRY



UPSET



CONFUSED



NAUGHTY



JOYFUL



SCARED



DERPY



TIRED



FLIRTY



IN LOVE

These facial expressions are a good starting point for you to play with. After you study and practice with them, try to create some of your own designs. There is an amazing array of potential facial expressions, and each new character will provide you with even more to draw. So have fun creating characters and discover as many different emotions as you can imagine!

EXERCISES TO PRACTICE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

These exercises can be done in your sketchbook anytime and anywhere.

Remember keeping notes and self-critique of your work is a good process to help you improve. By taking notes when something isn't working well, you are less likely to make the same mistake in the future.

EXERCISE 1—PRACTICE USING YOUR CHARACTERS

My absolute favorite way to practice facial expressions is to have my characters make them. I love to take my existing characters and draw them making every facial expression I can think of. It takes a lot of practice to get really good expressions, but the results are very satisfying.

EXERCISE 2—USE A MIRROR

I always carry a little mirror with me. This allows me to make faces and practice new fun facial expressions any time I want. I highly recommend you get a little pocket mirror and try this for yourself. It is an incredibly fun exercise and a great way to learn.

PRO TIP FOR EXPRESSIONS:

Anatomy studies and watching cartoons will help you immensely on your path to drawing better facial expressions.



POSING YOUR CHARACTERS

The ability to pose characters in fun and dynamic ways is something we all aspire to do. Many of us are captivated while reading superhero comics.

Good character posing can evoke more excitement in your audience and is what we strive for. I understand how daunting this can be to achieve because there are so many areas to consider: anatomy, perspective, proportions, movement limitations, and more.

Tackling all these aspects at once can feel overwhelming. Don't worry—I am here to help with fun and simple ways to break down character poses, including tips and tricks so you never draw bland boring poses again!

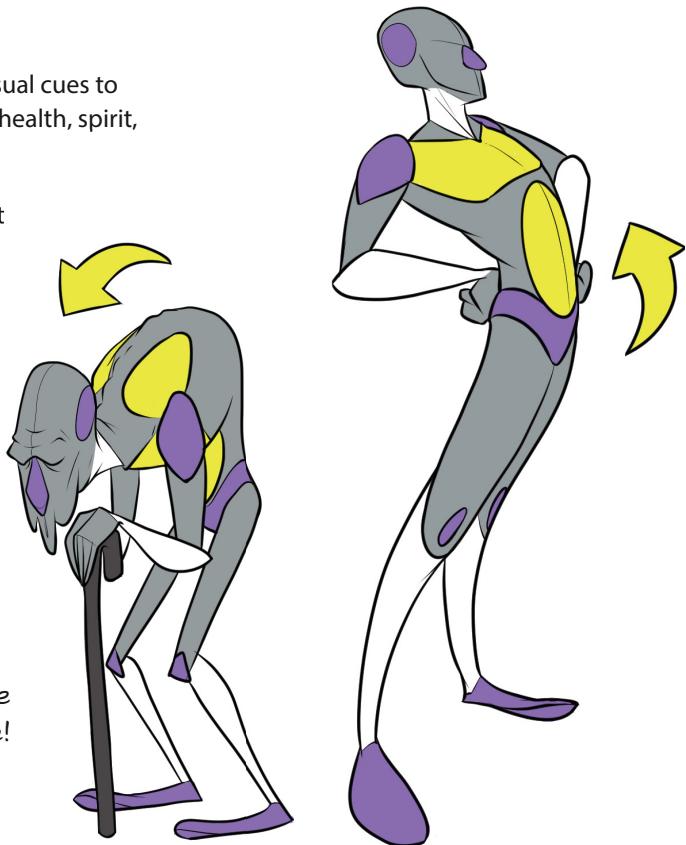


WHY IS POSING IMPORTANT?

The pose of a character provides visual cues to their age, personality, style, fitness, health, spirit, intelligence, and much more.

Posing is one of the most important aspects to determine when you decide who your characters will be. If you want your characters to truly come alive, posing is how you make it happen. This is very important to practice as much as you can and strive to continue learning throughout your career.

Posing is how to truly make your characters come alive!



MOTION AND STORYTELLING

This tip is pretty straightforward. This doesn't require a great deal of effort, but many artists miss it:

Whether it is a simple doodle or a more complex illustration . . . ALWAYS TELL A STORY WITH YOUR DRAWINGS!

Telling stories should become second nature on your path to developing into a professional artist. Storytelling is the essence of what artists do—we tell a story with each drawing and each doodle we create.

Try not to overthink the storytelling process. It is easy to become lost in the idea of crafting the perfect story and that in itself can prevent us from creating art. There must be a balance, and it is simple to find once you start drawing from a story mindset.

PRO TIP FOR CREATING MOTION:

Use motion lines and background elements to create a sense of movement in your drawings and they will quickly improve.

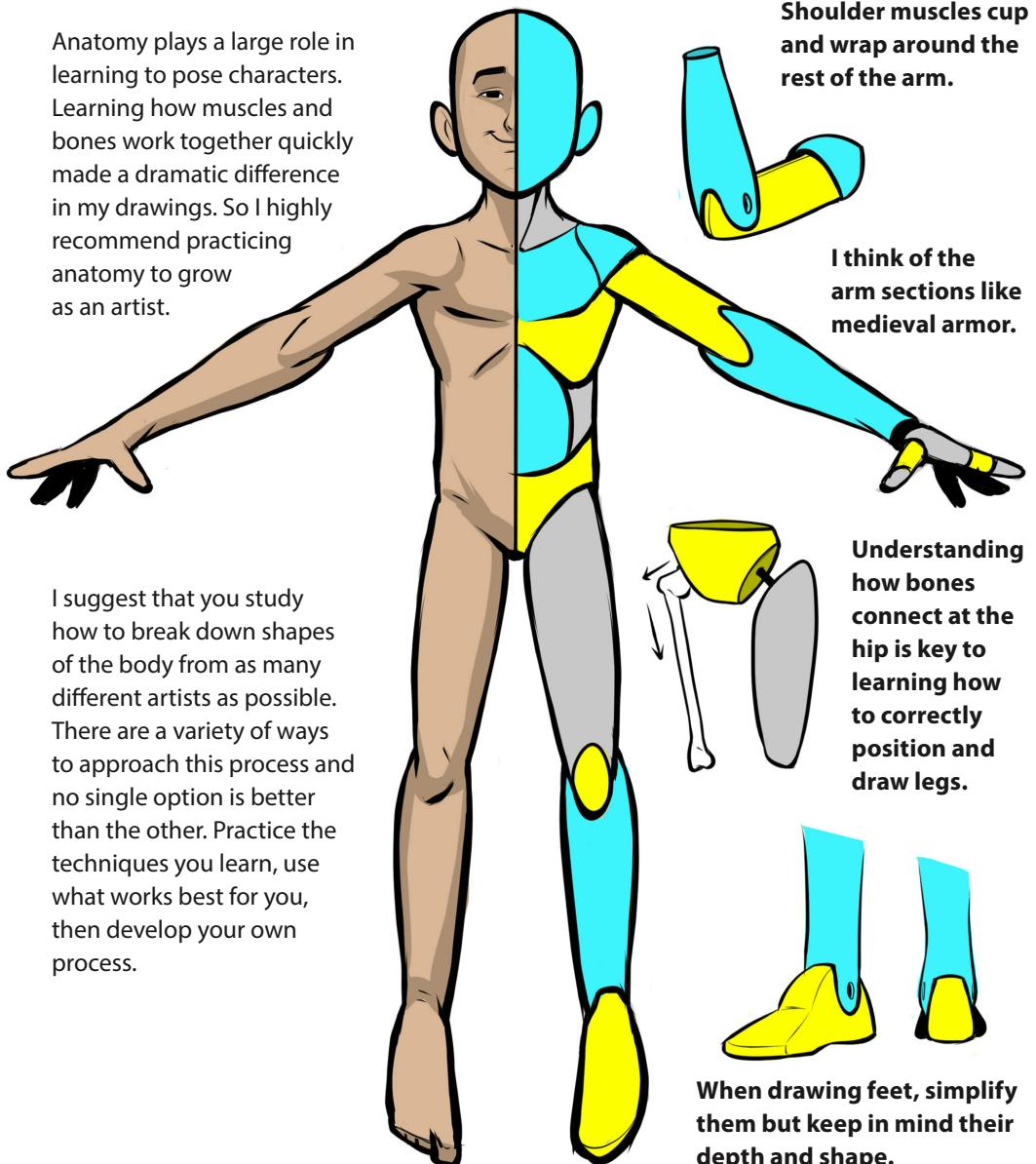


DRAWING THE HUMAN BODY

There are various ways to approach drawing a body. One basic process is to break bodies down into their simplest elements and shapes. I like simplifying the body down as if it were a robot, then putting the parts back together link by link.

SIMPLE BREAKDOWN OF THE HUMAN BODY

Anatomy plays a large role in learning to pose characters. Learning how muscles and bones work together quickly made a dramatic difference in my drawings. So I highly recommend practicing anatomy to grow as an artist.



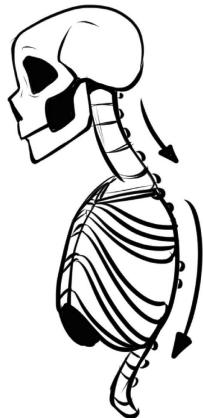
I suggest that you study how to break down shapes of the body from as many different artists as possible. There are a variety of ways to approach this process and no single option is better than the other. Practice the techniques you learn, use what works best for you, then develop your own process.

DRAWING THE BODY IN PROFILE

When you draw bodies using a side angle viewpoint, the form changes a bit, especially between women and men. Here are my top tips to help you improve posing when you are drawing side angles.

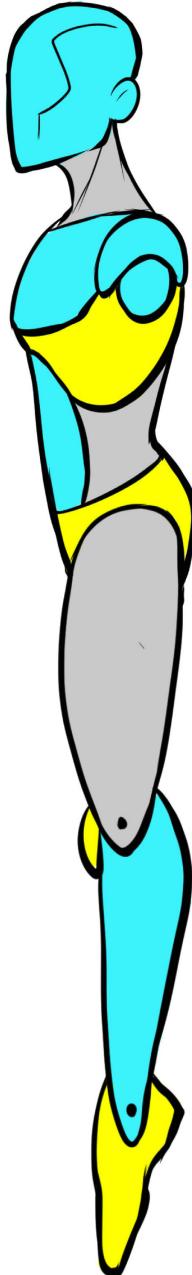
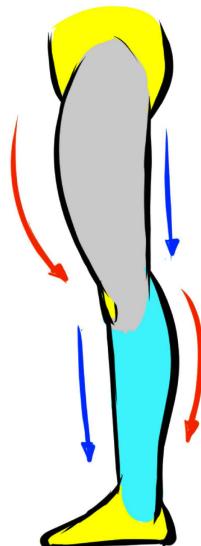
While you simplify the head shape, be sure to use an actual skull for visual reference.

The spine comes out of the skull at a curve. This is one aspect many people miss and it is very important.

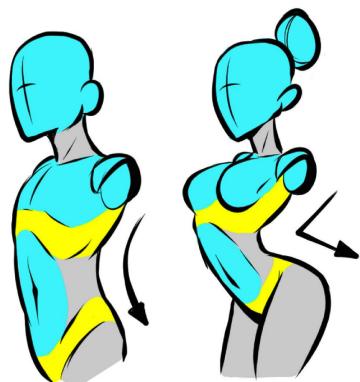


Legs have both a curved and flat side. Keeping this in mind will help you nail tough poses.

The use of color coding in these body studies is a massive help so that you don't forget a section of the body.



Differences in body angles between men and women:



As you can see, we often draw women with a more pronounced back curve which makes a character look more sensual

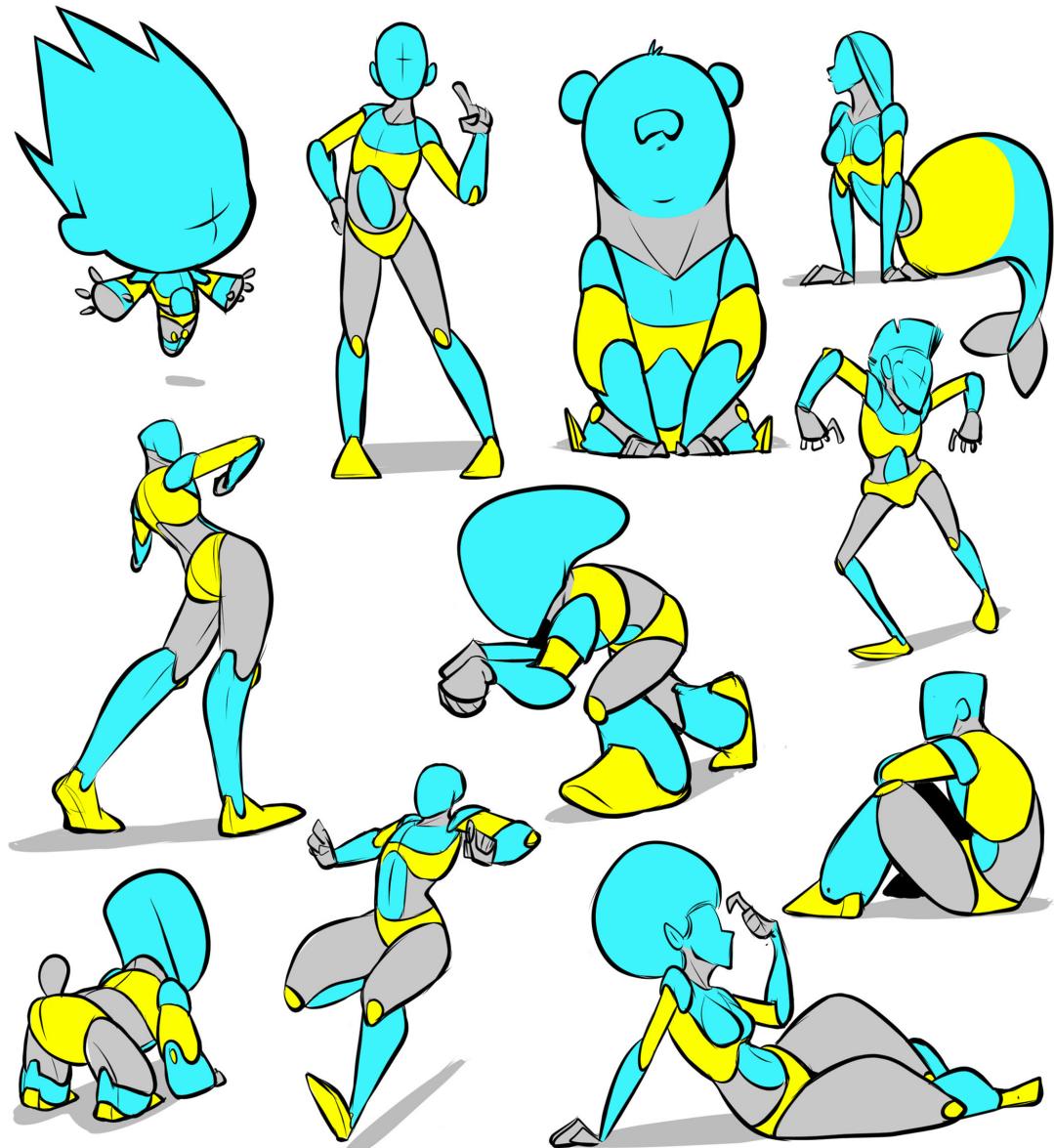
Just like arms the legs are more complex than simple cylinders. Think of legs as links that connect, and it will help you understand positioning. This makes drawing complicated poses easier as well.



EXAMPLES OF POSING

What I love about my process for breaking down body shapes is that it can be applied to any art style. You can apply it to anime, realism, cartooning, comics, etc.—it will work really well!

Here are examples of various styles using animals, monsters, and more to show how flexible and effective this process can be.



EXERCISES TO PRACTICE POSING

The following exercises are meant to teach you how to pose characters more effectively. My hope is this will help you break free from current drawing habits and gain a new perspective on the process.

EXERCISE 1—THE PUZZLE

One of my favorite exercises to help me pose a character is to fill up pages with the same character, drawing different poses to fit into any empty spaces—much like fitting a puzzle piece into place. This helps you see shapes and poses you would never have imagined before.

EXERCISE 2—CREATE YOUR OWN CHARACTERS

It is even more satisfying when you nail the perfect pose on your own character. Creating characters is also a fantastic way to increase your storytelling ability. Developing unique characters and worlds for them to inhabit motivates you to continue making stories. I believe working on designs of your own also inspires you to practice more often. If you use these lessons and practice, you will see great improvement in your posing.

I hope that you have learned something new from all these lessons, and you feel motivated to go out and create some amazing art. *I wish you all happy doodles and big smiles!*



1



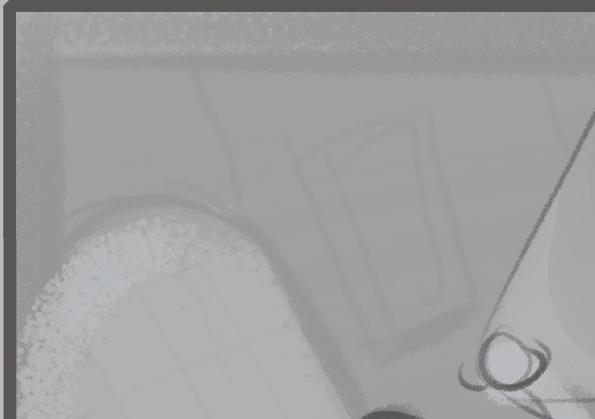
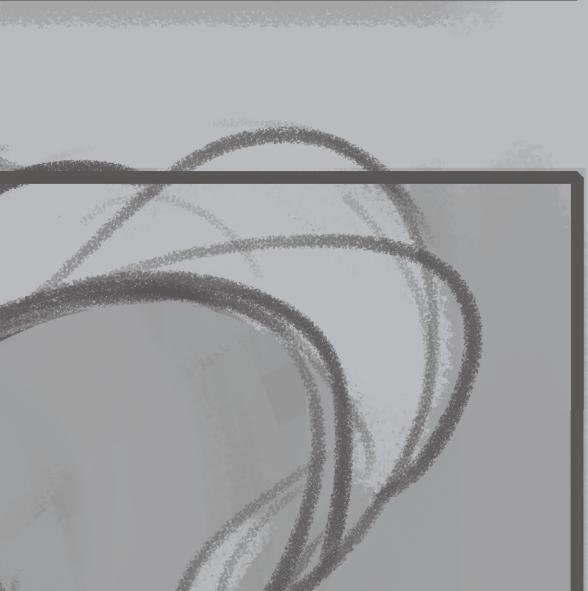
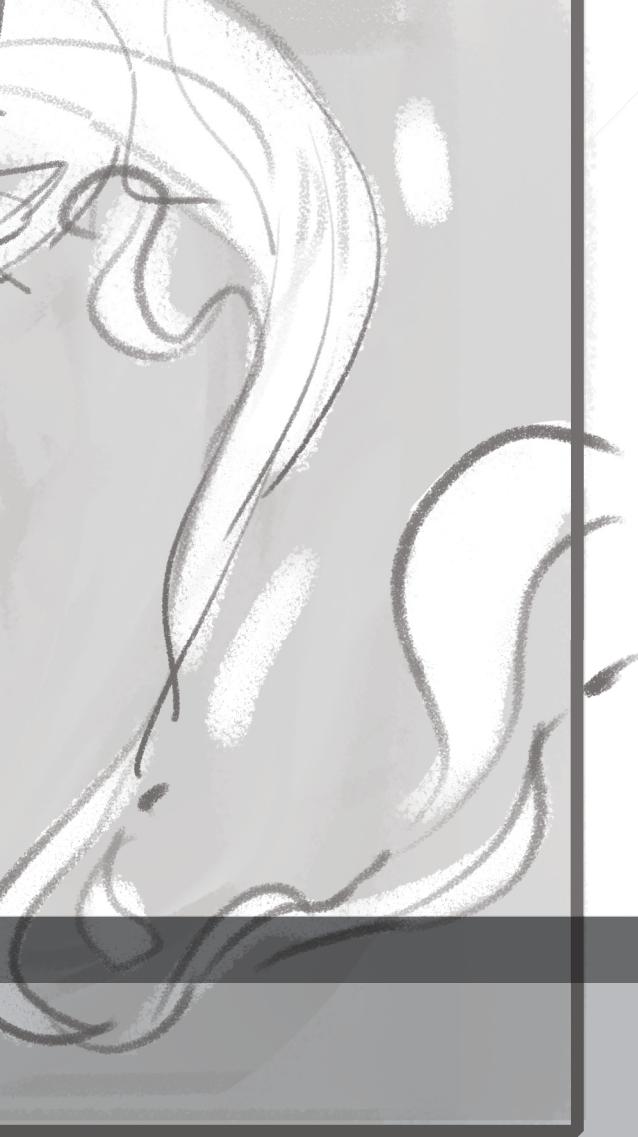
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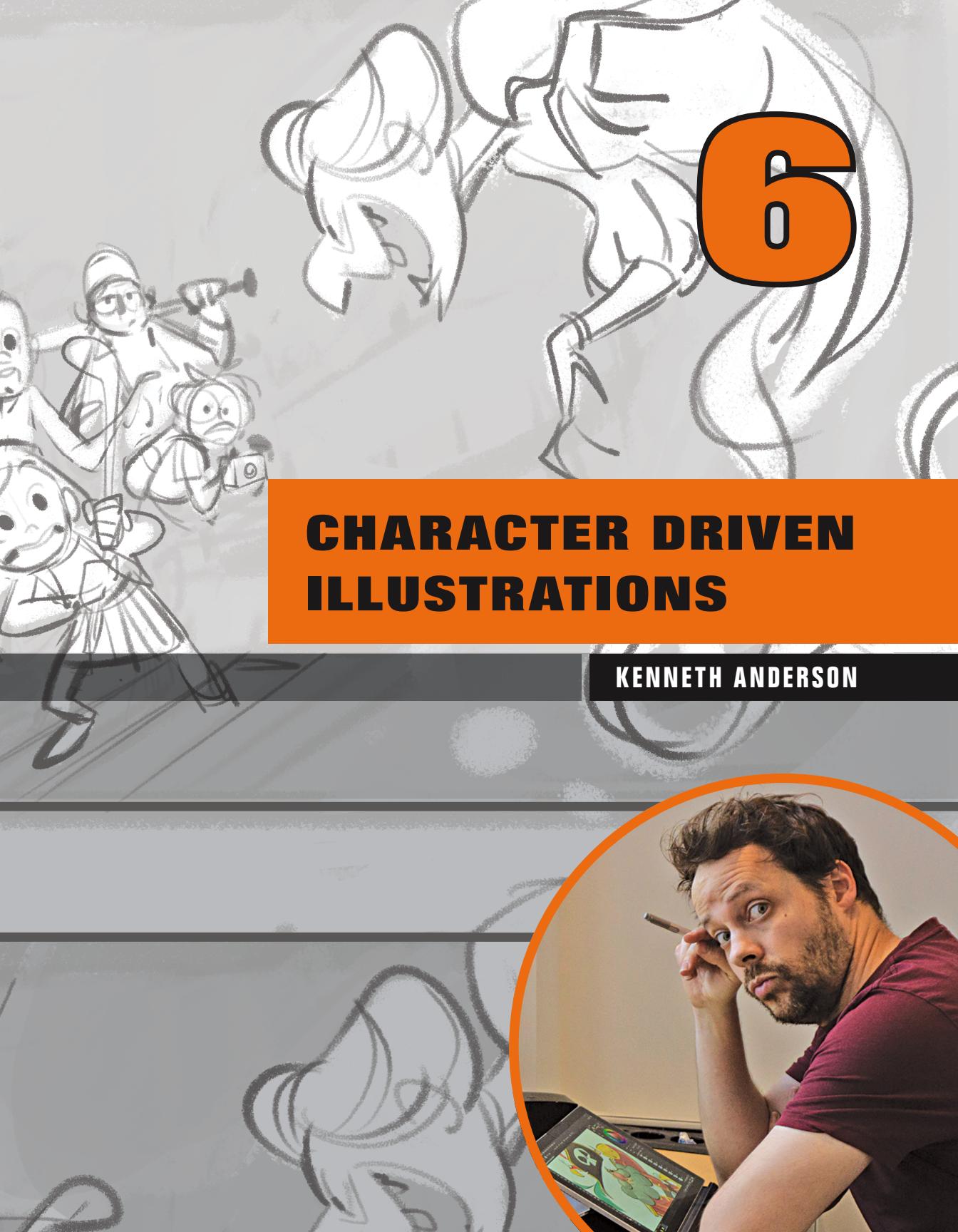


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6

CHARACTER DRIVEN ILLUSTRATIONS

KENNETH ANDERSON



CHARACTER DRIVEN ILLUSTRATIONS

WITH KENNETH ANDERSON

I love drawing characters! I also love to illustrate. My favorite is when I combine the two into a character driven illustration that tells a fun and engaging story through characters performing in some kind of drama. While not all illustrations need to feature characters, for me, illustrations are more exciting and entertaining when they do!

In this chapter, I show how to create a character driven illustration from start to finish. This is by no means the only way, but I hope it is helpful for you to learn about my process.

Illustration at its core is about storytelling and clearly communicating an idea. I like to call this a “story moment”—just a snippet in time of an event unfolding. This story moment can be simple or complex. Regardless, this snippet of a story is the foundation of the whole illustration and affects mood, setting, and ultimately the characters.

It is the characters that drive a story moment and bring an illustration to life. That is what character driven means—it’s all about storytelling!

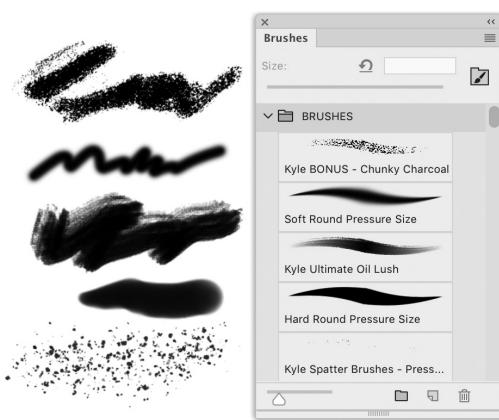
I WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH THESE STEPS:

1. Idea generation and how to develop an illustration from a key story moment.

2. Research and how to find references to help develop an idea further by fleshing out the world of our story.
3. A review of thumbnailing and how quick sketches can help us problem-solve and plan out the best approach to our illustration.
4. Take a deeper look at our characters, their performances, and how to effectively use them to bring life to our illustration.
5. Next, we discuss mood and how our setting, lighting, and color enhance our story moment, creating a stage for our characters.
6. Now we are ready for the final steps in the process—blocking in our image, refining, tweaking, and improving character performances and making final design choices to support and enhance our character driven idea.

For this tutorial, I am using the latest version of Photoshop and a Wacom 22HD. I want to stress, however, that this process is not software specific—these principles and ideas apply to any software or medium.

For brushes, I mainly use a combination of Kyle T. Webster’s Chunky Charcoal and the default Photoshop soft round brush and



hard round brush. Sometimes I use an oil brush and spatter brush if needed.

Now let's get started with the foundation of any illustration—the idea!

THE IDEA—FINDING YOUR STORY MOMENT

Illustration is the art of conveying an idea or a story moment in a single image. We don't have the luxury of time or sound, like an animated film does. Instead, we need to focus on the limited elements we *can* control, such as composition, character performances, color, and tone to convey our idea successfully.

Much of my work is client based and in those cases a client comes to me with an idea in mind for me to articulate. In my own personal work, however, I wait for a moment of inspiration to hit, an image in my mind of a story unfolding that I am compelled to draw! My goal is to find an idea that is fun and appealing to me that has a clear story moment with enough ingredients to be exciting visually.

For this piece, I play around with various ideas before settling on a haunted house theme. I want to draw something I haven't before (I draw a lot of pirates!), a drawing that is appealing and fun with lots of potential for conflict and drama. I can easily imagine a group of kids exploring an old haunted manor—this seems like a perfect idea to build on.

Alongside the story, I need to consider the purpose behind this illustration. Is it just to entertain or does it need to serve another purpose? In this case, I want my drawing to entertain *and* be a useful tool for this tutorial, effectively showing my process for creating a character driven illustration.

I tend to mull over an idea for a while before drawing anything. I write down notes or ideas that come to me about how best to approach the illustration. By first visualizing a scene in my mind, I can think through the different elements and allow any quirky ideas to surface.

I often bring influences from my childhood into my work; my designs are heavily inspired by these memories. I was a fan of *The Three Investigators* and *The Hardy Boys* books. I love the concept of a group of kids going on adventures and solving mysteries. This is also tied to my love of films like *The Goonies* and other similar 1980s adventure films. TV shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Stranger Things* are also on my mind alongside a general vibe of kids' Saturday morning TV shows.

I also like reading mysteries and a bit of horror. The past few years I've been getting into Stephen King and Ray Bradbury—their

novels often feature kids confronting an evil which they must defeat and an odd haunted house or fairground to boot!

These are examples of the inspiration I want to bring into this illustration. A group of kids exploring a haunted house is an old trope and not the most original, but it is a *fun* idea. I will put my own vibe into the execution and tell a playful story through the scene and characters.

In a dramatic illustration, it helps to establish a main conflict to build the story around. For my piece the main conflict is obvious—I want to show the moment a group of kids meets a ghost or monster for the first time! It will include plenty of action and the crisis is clear—a bunch of kids scared out of their wits. What will happen to them? How will they get out of this situation? The conflict helps to make things more interesting for the audience by forming exciting questions in their minds.

I also need to consider who the actors are in my piece. I want at least one ghost or monster in the mix, but it could be worth exploring the idea of adding more than one. As for the kids, I want at least three, at most five, a group of buddies. Maybe they are part of a gang like the Losers Club in Stephen King's *IT*. Might be fun to make them a ragtag bunch, a gang of misfits, and perhaps they came together for the common purpose of exploring the haunted house.

Another key element will be how the characters interact with one another or rather with a ghost they encounter? Will they run away? Or stand their ground and try to fight? Maybe they want to be its friend!

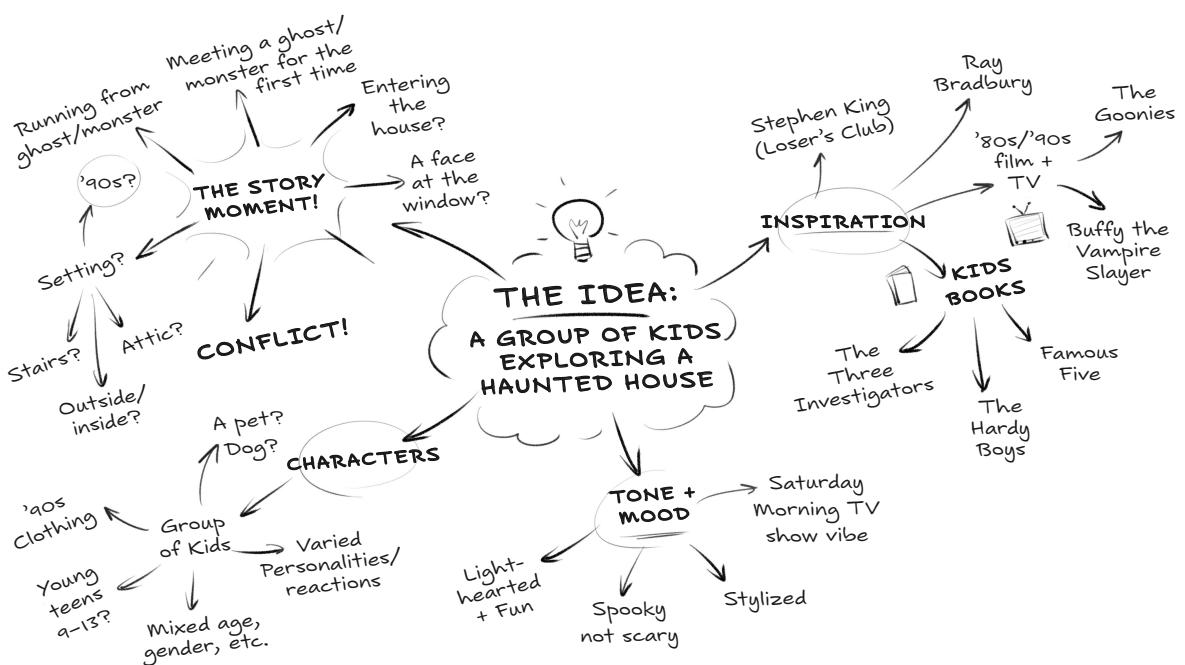
I also need to give some thought to where this event takes place. Yes, a haunted house!

More specifically, is the encounter inside the house? Are the kids creeping up the stairway or descending into the basement? Or are the kids too scared to enter the house, only peeking inside the front door. I can tell these decisions will affect the drama of the illustration. Placing the kids outside looking in might not have as much tension as them being trapped inside the house. Unless one of them is inside, oblivious to the danger behind them as their friends look on.

Another important aspect of setting is the time period. Is it set in present day or the past? I like the idea of giving a nod to my childhood and using the '90s, which provides a nice contrast between the age of the kids and the house and ghosts. I can put a lot of color into the kids and use that to contrast with a dull colored environment. Could be fun to include '90s fashion or tech-like shell suits, hi-top trainers, cassette players, and retro film cameras.

Finally, I need to consider the tone or mood I am looking for. Do I want my story moment to be serious and gritty? I don't think so! My style lends itself to exaggerated and light-hearted illustrations. I decide that "spooky fun" sums up the mood I want—a bit silly and over the top but with an old school spooky vibe.

Taking time before you start to think through your concept and clarify these points is always a good idea. This can also help to generate new views that weren't obvious at first. Jumping in and starting an image without thinking it through is okay, but slowing down can help, especially when making design choices. We want all our design choices to aid in communicating the story moment. Having clarity about what exactly your story moment is will make design choices much, much easier!



LESSON 1: FIND YOUR STORY MOMENT

Come up with an illustration idea of your own! If you get stuck, think about what inspires you or things you enjoyed in childhood. Maybe a favorite movie or book? What excites you and sounds like a fun idea for you to draw? What kind of story moment or key conflict can you create and build a concept around? Who will become your cast of characters?

RESEARCH—FLESHING OUT YOUR IDEA!

Research is an important phase of design and a good opportunity to solve problems identified when thinking through a concept. It helps to fill any gaps in knowledge, adding a layer of authenticity to illustrations while also opening us up to new ideas or approaches.

Now that my idea is established, I know my illustration needs these key elements:

- An old abandoned house.
- A ghost or monster of some kind.
- A group of kids, 9 to 13 years of age.
- A high conflict story moment.
- A creepy but fun atmosphere and vibe.

Having a clear checklist in mind makes gathering references much easier!

Where is the best place to gather references? I like to use a variety of sources: books, museums, movies, photographs, the library, and of course the internet. Whenever I am out and about I take photos or buy random postcards. I'm continually building up a file of useful information. Inspiration can come from almost anywhere!

For this lesson I am a bit more restricted. I want to share the references I use with you, but to do so my images need to be free

and/or in the public domain. This limits what I can show you to some degree, but there is a wealth of information available from free stock image sites. One of my favorites is pexels.com. I also pay for some images from istockphoto.com and use a couple of my own photographs. While researching I discovered the British Library has a massive online archive of public domain publications and images from very old publications—perfect for this illustration!

THE KEY ITEMS I NEED TO RESEARCH:

- **THE HAUNTED HOUSE** — I want images of old and grand interiors with a Victorian style.
- **THE KIDS** — How will my kids look? What do kids around 9 to 13 years old look like? I vaguely know but I need some help! I also want to include the look of '90s clothing and colors.
- **THE GHOST** (or monster) — What will my creepy character look like? If they are a ghost I think Victorian in style, so I need to research this too.
- **THE STYLE** — While I intend to paint in my own style, I do want to research the old illustrations I can find in the British Library archives. Maybe they will inspire the look!

Keeping all these details in mind, I like to gather images then place them into one large image file. I use Photoshop for this because I like to draw and add notes on top of my references. Of course, you can use other software or online image organizers like Pinterest if you prefer.

My final mood board mainly consists of older house interiors, some fancy, others run down and falling apart. I chose images with interesting lighting and some that have big sweeping staircases. (I have a feeling a staircase will be featured in my final illustration.) I also include the exterior of houses to provide context, although I don't think my scene will show the exterior. I have various images of kids with a variety of clothing and features. Alongside these, I place Victorian era photographs which might help with the design of my ghost.

Finally, I include old public domain images from the online British Library archive. These are mainly Victorian style illustrations featuring ghosts. They could inspire me along the way—I love how they portray the ghostly forms!

Gathering references helps me solidify a concept and clarify details about how the illustration might look. This allows me to visualize characters and their setting more clearly. Even if I never look at the reference material again, it has been a useful tool in the developmental design process. I keep this mood board on another monitor as an easy reference while I start to draw.

LESSON 2: MAKE A MOOD BOARD

Your turn to make a mood board! Think through your idea and figure out any key problems you need to solve. Is there anything about your design that could use visual references?

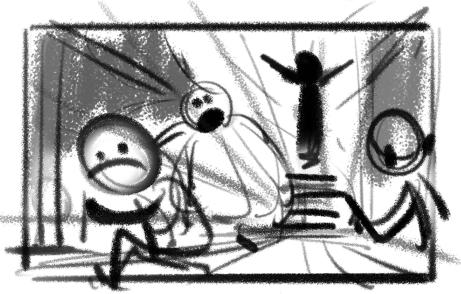
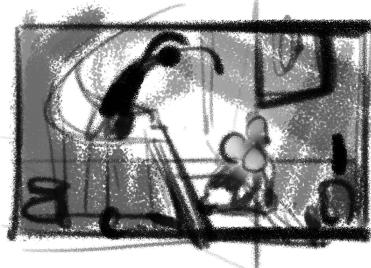
What about your characters? Are there any images with a similar style to what you are aiming for? Collect relevant resources and compile them into a mood board.

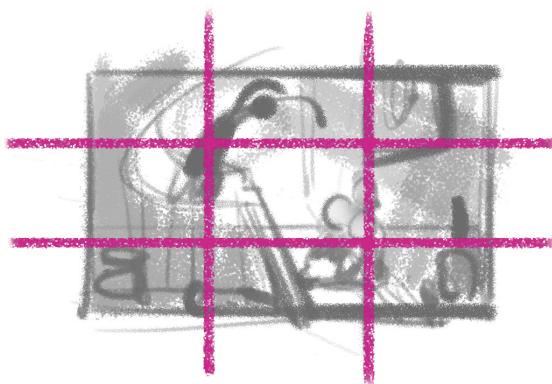


THUMBNAILS—CRAFTING YOUR STORY MOMENT

Creating the perfect story moment for an illustration isn't easy. There are so many variables that can aid or hinder the execution. This is why I start with thumbnail sketches—small, quick drawings that allow me to explore the ideas in my head. This helps me work through early concepts on paper without investing too much time or effort in the wrong direction.

My story moment is all about the characters and their interaction. I need to keep this in mind as I explore ideas. Other things to consider when thumbnailing are the big picture design choices. It is important not to get lost in the details at this stage.



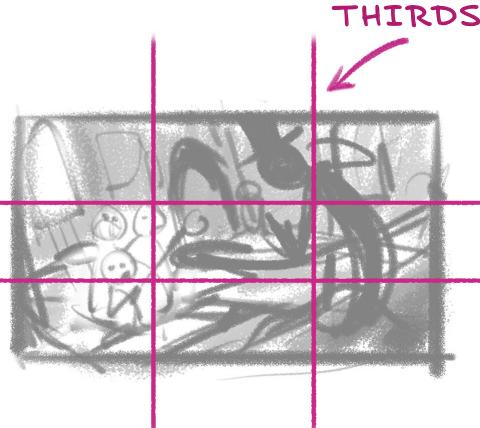


Divide images in thirds and place key elements on dividing lines for a more interesting composition.

I tend to focus on composition at this stage. Who and where my characters are, how they interact as a group, and how they are arranged to make a strong composition. I want to make sure there is a clear focal point, so I lead the viewers' eyes to important details (such as the characters). I want major elements in my image positioned to create a balanced and interesting illustration. It can help at this stage to divide an image into thirds then place important design elements on the dividing lines (see examples above). This is visually more interesting than having all the elements placed symmetrically.

I also explore various canvas ratios—some are portrait or landscape, long and thin, others are a bit more squat. I don't want to limit myself at this stage. I am drawn, however, to a landscape image because it will fit the video production portion of this course better.

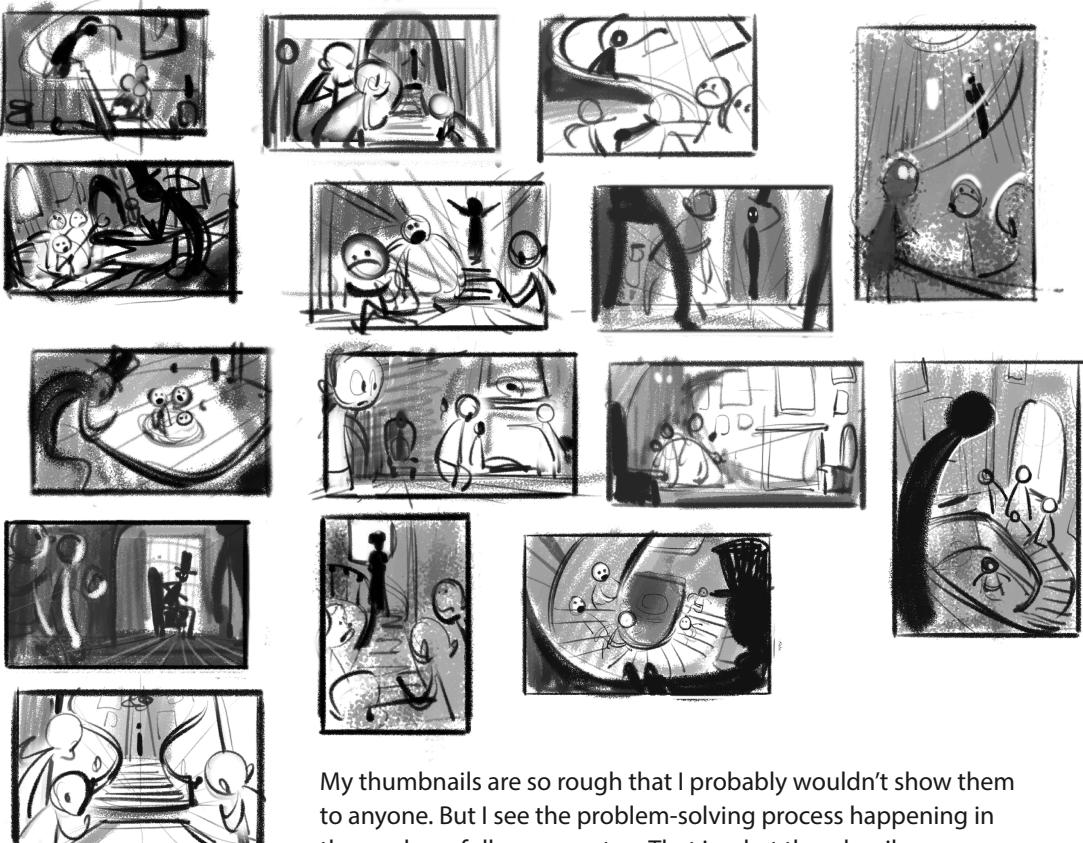
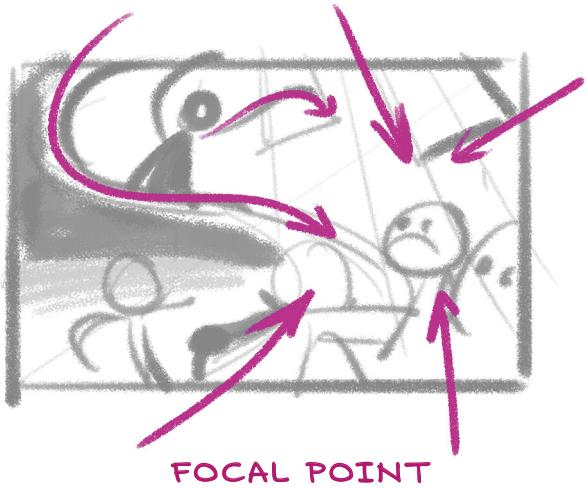
I indicate my setting using rough shapes and loose perspective lines to give a basic understanding of perspective and angle of the point of view. I am aiming for something dynamic, full of energy, and with good character positioning to sell the story moment.



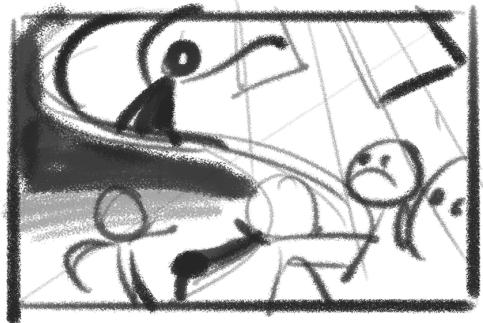
I play around with the exact moment unfolding, too, exploring the kids meeting a ghost for the first time on a stairwell, to running away, or to looking in a doorway at a shadowy shape. I don't want to rule anything out in this freestyle idea dump stage! Some of my composition ideas come from directly drawing over the top of my reference images.



I also play around with tone and lighting, establishing possible light sources and thinking about how to use my value composition (the greyscale version of my image) to lead the eye but also to suggest mood and atmosphere. Another key element I think about at this stage—what is the focal point? Where do the lines, forms, and lighting lead the viewers' eyes? I can use the focal point to make my illustration more effective, guiding the audience to important parts of the image, in this case the kids!



My thumbnails are so rough that I probably wouldn't show them to anyone. But I see the problem-solving process happening in them—hopefully you can too. That is what thumbnails are—problem-solving sketches. They don't need to be pretty, they just need to help us figure out any big problems.



Once I have a full page of rough thumbnails, I choose a few to tighten up and clarify.

I select ideas that sell my story moment best and create a clear statement. I pick sketches showing the kids meeting the ghost for the first time on the stairs. The kids look more invested in the situation rather than simply walking in the front door. I also like the direct confrontation—this makes the event dramatic and full of energy. I choose two different angles of the same event, one from the top of the stairs looking down, the other from inside the group of kids looking up. Both have their own merits and are worth exploring.

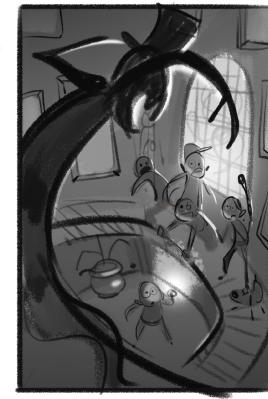
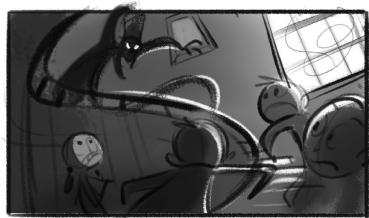
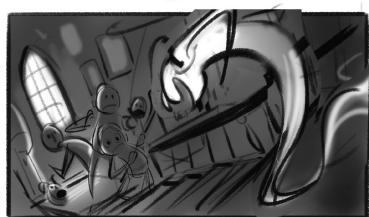
I fine-tune these two designs, clarifying setting and characters while keeping my sketches loose. I use detail sparingly, since I need to evaluate if the ideas are working well or not. At this stage, I develop the lighting further. Drawing directly on top of

an earlier thumbnail saves time and allows me to expand on the concept. Soon I have a set of thumbnails that are clear enough to convey all the major elements of my scene. Now I'm in a good position to determine the next steps. I decide on the angle looking down the stairs toward the kids with the ghost filling the top right of the image frame. This view places the ghost in a threatening position of power and shows each kid's face and unique expression.

LESSON 3: CRAFT YOUR STORY MOMENT

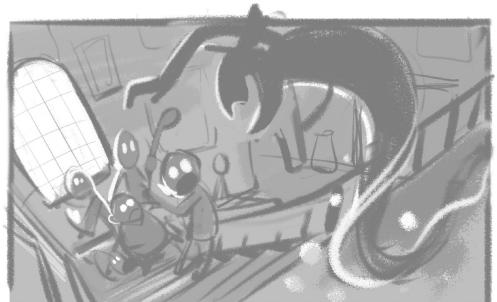
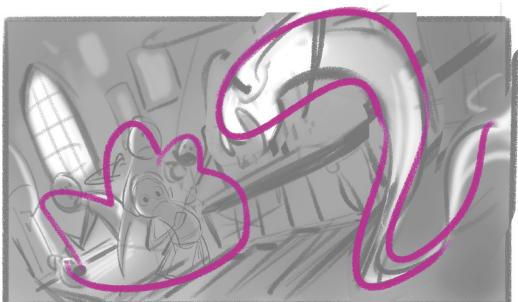
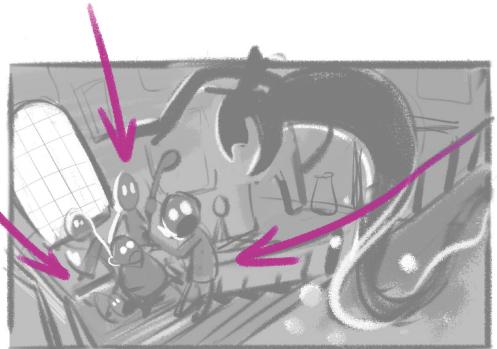
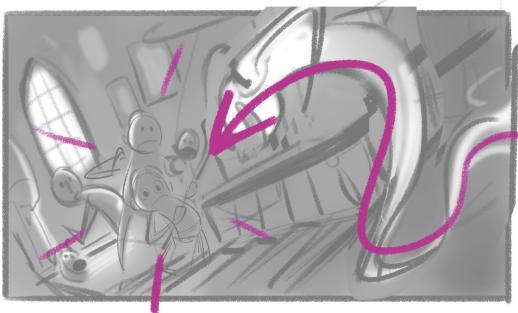
Create a set of thumbnail sketches and use them to explore and problem-solve your idea. Try to explore as many solutions as possible to see what works and what doesn't. Keep your thumbnails loose—try not to invest too much time detailing an image at this stage. Once you have a page of thumbnails choose the most effective two or three and tighten them up further.

FINAL
CHOSEN
DIRECTION



I choose a view that places the ghost in a threatening position of power and shows each kid's face and unique expression.

FOCAL POINT



CHARACTERS—STORY THROUGH PERFORMANCE

Next, I look at the characters with the aim of refining their performances. I want each character to be unique, so my design has plenty of variety and visual interest. The characters' performances need to work well to sell the idea while also working with not against the composition.

When I design characters, I like to work with an understanding of who they are from the inside out. These characters exist for just this single illustration. So their backstories don't need the same complexity as characters created for a TV show or a book where the story needs to be longer and more developed. That said, I want to put enough time into these characters to assure the scene is engaging and their personalities shine through.

I think of a character as having three main facets: a personality, current mood, and desire or motivation. These three things influence one another and drive a character's action and performance.

Personality gives us a baseline to work with in a character. Are they happy go lucky or nervous and twitchy? Perhaps confident and assured or pensive and calculating? Each personality will respond to a particular scenario in different ways—no two characters perform the same action in the same way.

Then we layer mood over a character's personality. How does a brave character respond in a frightening situation compared to a nervous character? If a character is sad will he or she react to the same scenario differently than if the character is happy? Of course, this also works the other way

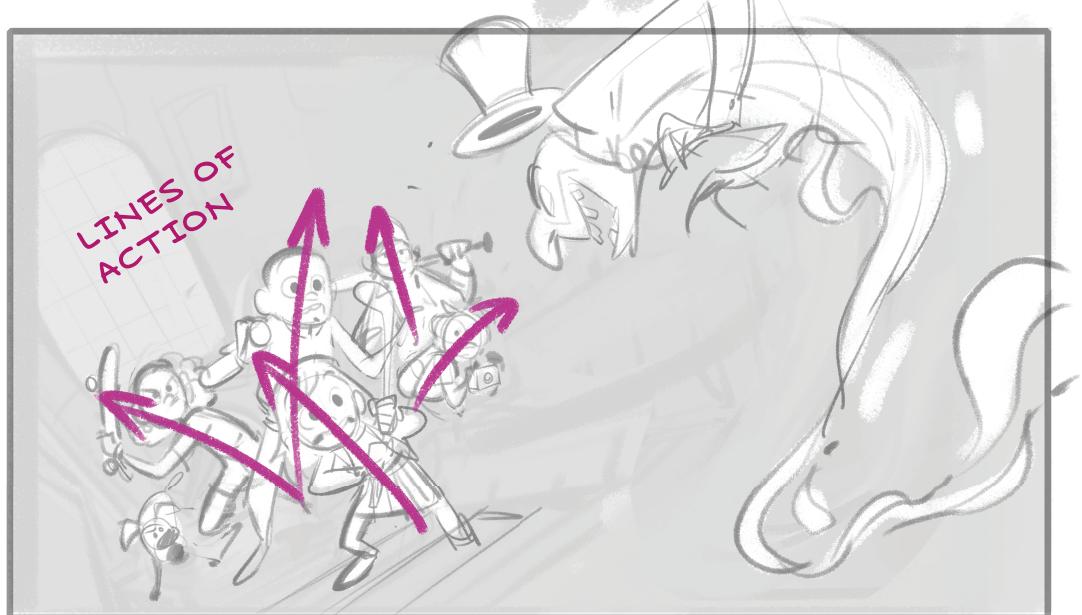
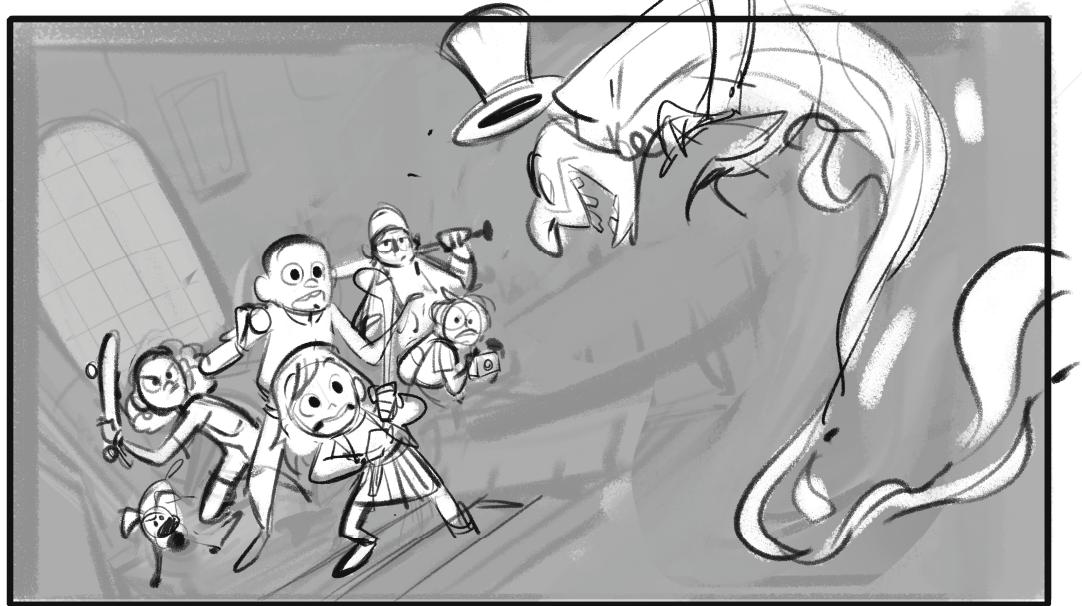
around—think about your story moment and what effect it will have on a particular character's mood.

Finally, we have desire—a foundation stone of storytelling. What characters want drives their actions, pushing them against the conflict they must overcome in pursuit of their desires. It can be difficult to fully explore a character's desires in a single image, but it is worth having each character's desires in mind and hinting at it if you can.

I have a clear idea of who my characters are and what they want—a group of kids, between 9 and 13 years of age exploring a haunted house, along with a ghostly character. The ghost is likely from a long gone Victorian era, possibly with a love for frightening anyone who ventures into his dusty abode. As I start to flesh them out on the page, I think about various personality types for each kid so that each kid reacts differently. I like the idea of one or two of them being easily scared, but one should be a bit more confrontational to the ghost, while another might be unimpressed or disbelieving. At the very least, each character should react to the event in a subtly different way, either in posing or expression.

I like the idea of one of my characters being a bit like Data in *The Goonies*. I imagine they could have an old '90s camera, maybe a Walkman, and recording equipment. Possibly even a video recorder? Although they weren't as common back in the '90s! Obviously this character intends to study any ghost they find.

I think it would be fun if one of my characters has a skateboard—perhaps to use as a weapon? Another might be



brandishing a hockey stick or a baseball bat. These aren't just props for props' sake—they tell us something about the intent of these characters. If they came to the haunted manor with a baseball bat, perhaps they anticipated trouble!

As I build up my rough character poses, I need to make sure they work well in the composition. I play with their lines of action, so they aren't all moving in the same direction. This helps keep the illustration interesting. I also make sure the poses gel

with the overall scene. I do not get too detailed, just fleshing out their expressions, poses, and rough ideas of the costumes.

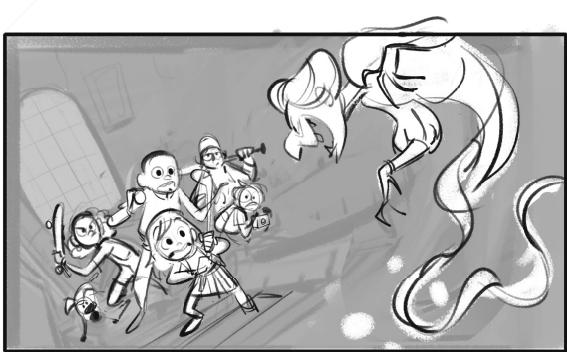
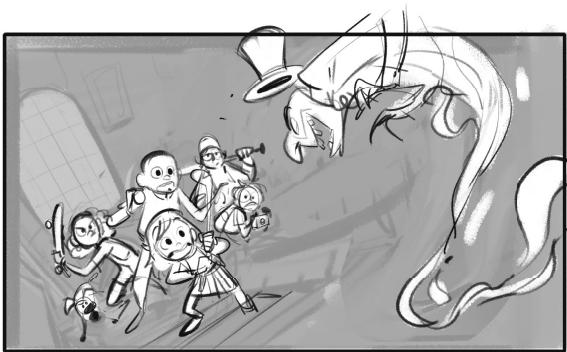
For my ghost character, I aim for that spooky fun vibe! He should feel intimidating and a bit creepy but not so much that it breaks the overall tone of the piece. By exaggerating and almost caricaturing his performance, I think he fits right in. I also try a female version of the ghost, but I prefer the original male for one reason—his top hat! It floats above his head adding an ethereal comical feel.

I really push his design so the swoop of his form leads the eye into the image and toward the kids. Inspired by one of the illustrations on my mood board, I try an upside down view of him greeting the kids. While I like it, it is a little distracting so I decide to keep his pose straightforward.

Now I have four variations of my original thumbnail concept with more fully developed characters. These designs help me see what's working and what's not. I prefer the first one in terms of character layout and posing—all the characters work well together and the design is clear and balanced.

LESSON 4: PLAN YOUR CHARACTERS

Pick your favorite thumbnail, then draw over it to start planning character performances. What is each character doing and how does that relate to the overall story being told? How does each character react to the circumstance based on the character's own unique personality and mood? Finally, how can you pose and group your characters so that they work with and not against the composition?



MOOD—SELLING THE IDEA THROUGH LIGHTING AND COLOR

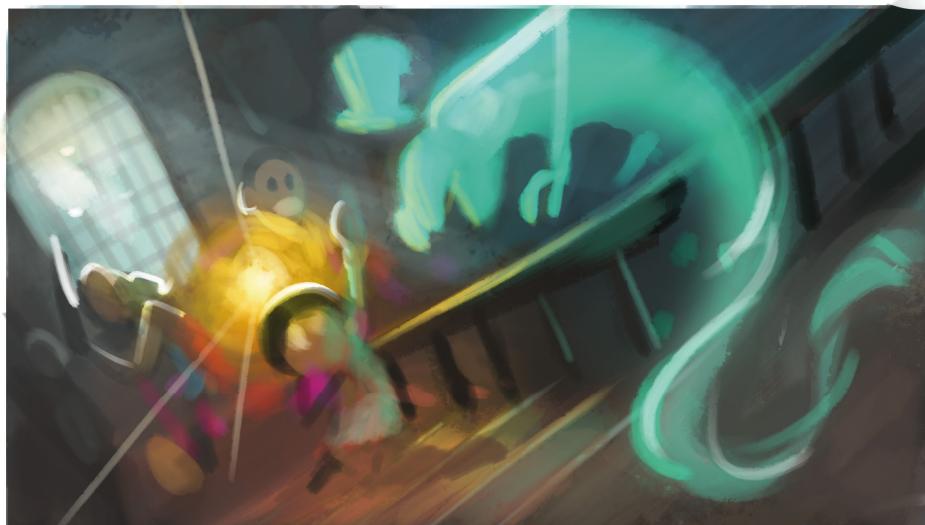
At this point, I have a clear idea of my illustration in terms of composition, the story moment, and a general idea of the major character performances. But this image needs to make the viewer feel something too—we want to convey an emotion to the audience using lighting and color. This can help add a lot of drama to a scene and really set the tone of the piece. I focus on three things—the setting, lighting, and color.

I want my setting to be right for this story moment. I know the illustration will be set in a haunted house but we need to get more specific. Is it clean and tidy or dusty and worn down? Is it light and airy or dark and mysterious? What sort of set dressing can I bring in? Paintings on the walls? Old withered potted plants? At this stage I can start hinting at a more fully developed environment for my scene. The setting is key to making the illustration come together—it becomes the stage my characters perform on. At this point, I'm still working in thumbnails, so I don't get too detailed.

I already established a couple of light sources in my piece: the flashlight and window. I want to consider how to use these to enhance the mood. I think the window light should be cooler in color and more diffused, bathing the background in enough light for clarity and making the scene cool and shadowy. I contrast this with the flashlight which will add a bright warm counterpoint and help to illuminate key points in my scene. The ghost character will likely give off an eerie glowing light too!

Lastly, I think about color. I decided the window light should be cool, so I try a cool desaturated blue to create a dark nighttime look. For the flashlight, I use a warm yellow, which is good for bathing some of my characters in enough light to contrast them with the dusty old manor interior.

For my ghost character, I start with a luminous green-blue so it harmonizes with the background and the window light. It is also a nod to Slimer from *Ghostbusters*, another character from a cartoon and film I loved as a kid! It also works well by providing a creepy, green glow.



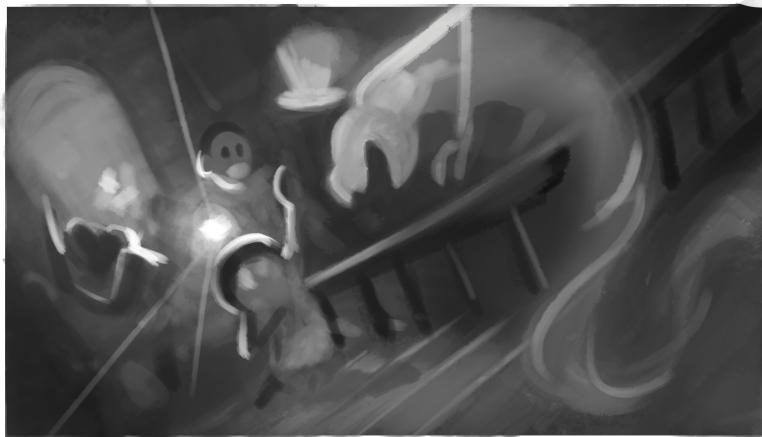
I play around with the scene lighting, using the flashlight as a focal point with a high point of contrast, also adjusting the lines of the light pointing toward the characters. I want the lighting to create enough murky shadows that the background is somewhat ambiguous, contributing to that creepy vibe. I desaturate my color thumbnail and play with the lighting in greyscale only. I want to make sure I have a strong value structure underneath everything. Color can be a bit distracting; by working in greyscale I can see the values more clearly.

Lastly, I experiment with an alternate color palette, trying a pinkish ghost and

other changes. I decide my first thumbnail works best overall. It has a nice split complementary color scheme that adds to the atmosphere and mood I want.

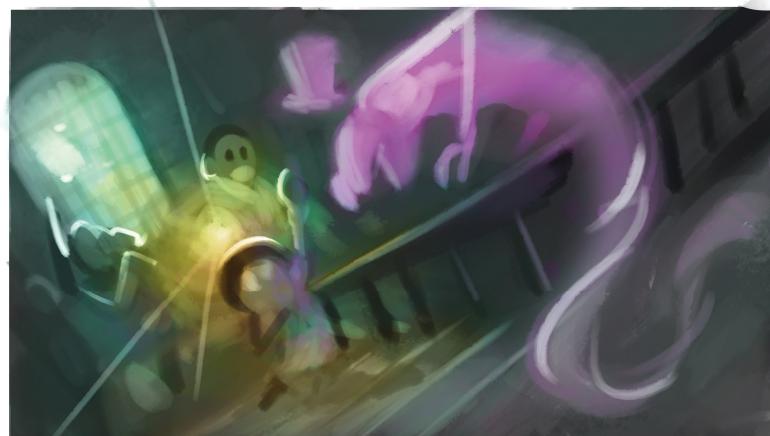
LESSON 5: COLOR AND LIGHT

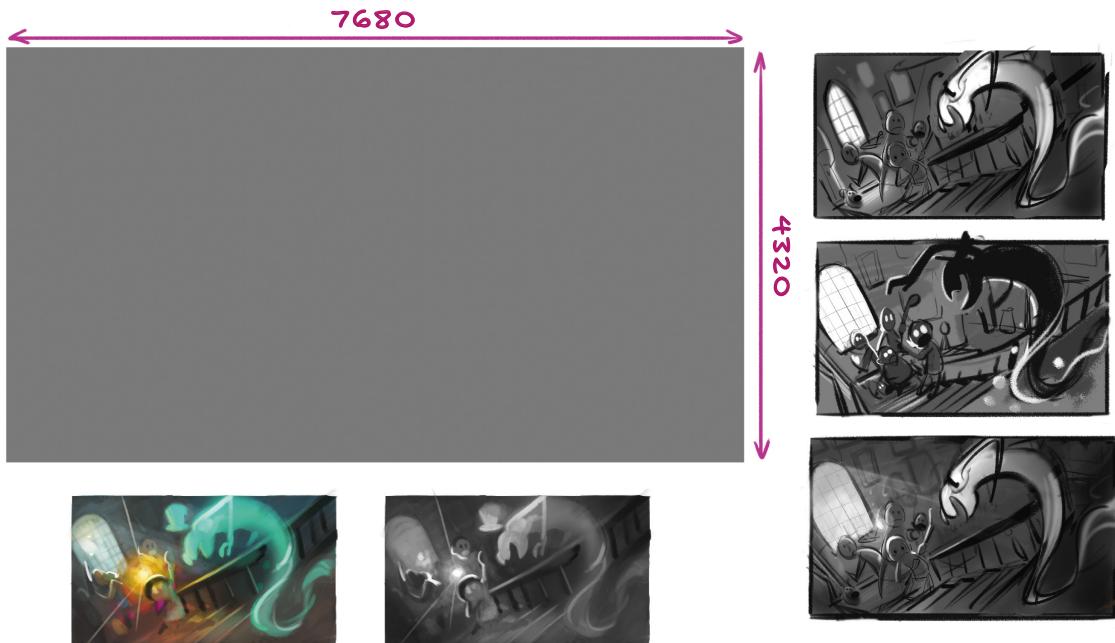
Working from your favorite thumbnail sketch, begin to explore color and lighting options. Think about what best suits the mood of your story moment and how to use color and light to lead the eye through the image. Also consider the setting and how to make it a more effective stage for the characters to perform on.



Working in greyscale can help to see the values more clearly.

I test a different color palette with a pinkish ghost, but decide my first version works best.





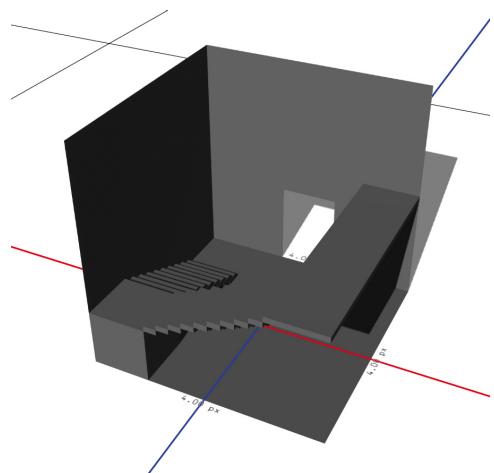
THE BLOCK IN—STARTING THE FINAL IMAGE

Everything is largely in place! All the difficult design choices have been made. Now it is time to paint the image and bring it to completion. I like to paint in high resolution; that way I can print my image out to review. For this image I go with 8K resolution (7680 x 4320 pixels) at 300 dpi. This is a bit larger than the A3 size, so it should print well. I place my 8K canvas over a larger image leaving space around it for bleed and reference materials. I like to place my thumbnails around my drawing as I work, so I can color pick them or reference them as I go. Later when I get close to completing the illustration, I crop the image down to size.

I begin the main painting process by blocking in, first a rough block in of the background. I start with the background so I can establish the setting for the characters.

After the background is more defined, placing characters in the scene will be easier. It also helps me see how the light and color of the scene will affect rendering.

To help me with the background, I decide to use a 3D mockup of my manor house room. It isn't anything fancy, just some blocks for



the steps and the walls. Since I don't work in 3D modeling myself, I ask a friend who throws it together in 20 minutes—thanks Tom! I don't always do this step, but in this case I feel the 3D model will help me get the stairs and the overall perspective just right. This also allows me to focus my time more on the characters and less on fretting about the background construction.

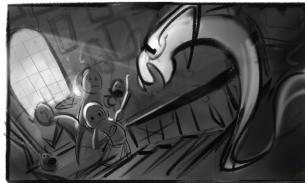
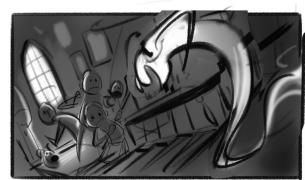
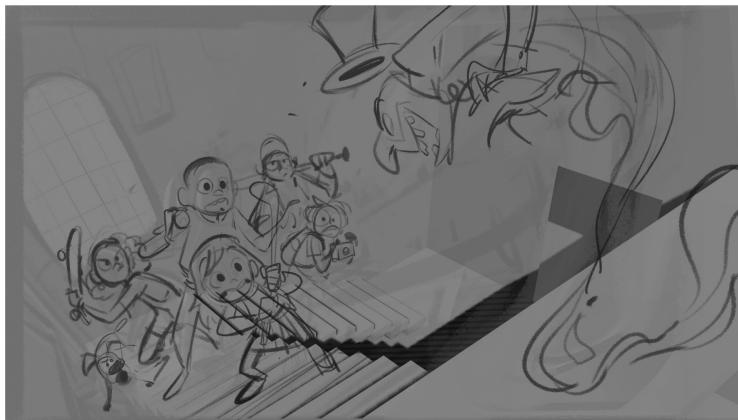
I bring the 3D OBJ file (a universal 3D model file format) directly into Photoshop and move it around until it matches up with my thumbnail sketch (see below). Once I'm happy with its placement, I rasterize the 3D into a 2D layer and tweak it to fit using the distort and transform tools. I'm now in a good place to start blocking in!

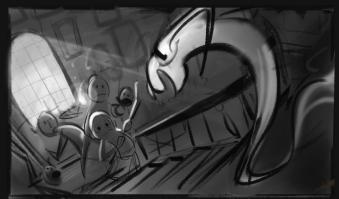
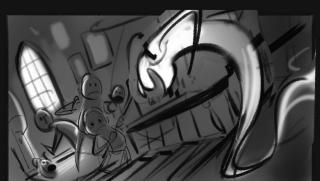
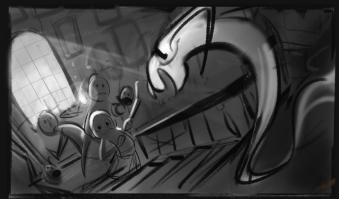
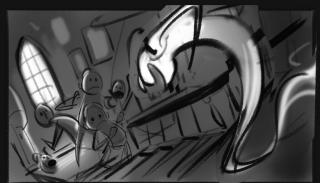
I start roughing out the background in line, defining the stairs, the room perspective, doorways, window, and picture frames on the wall. Having a line drawing as a guide helps me keep my perspective and structure during initial block in (see top of next page).

On a new layer, I begin adding color. I keep my color thumbnail close by on my canvas, so I can color pick from it and build my image fairly quick. I already decided most of the overall color scheme, so this work goes smoothly. I add in the ghost color since that is pretty set in stone.

With the background and ghost blocked in, I shift focus to the characters. I follow a similar process, using the line layer established in my character pass, then I paint the character colors on a new layer underneath, eventually painting out the lines.

To simplify the process, I start with flat local colors only—meaning only the color of objects as they look without the effect of light. I'm not interested in showing shadows or the effect of light hitting my characters just yet. I only want to establish their general color palettes. That said, during this step I adjust my color choices slightly to work well with the background ambience.







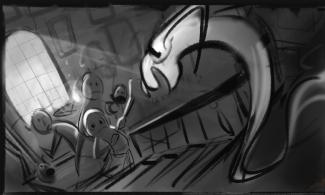
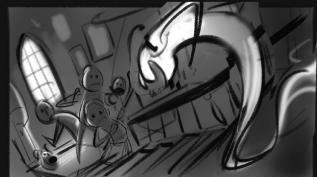
I like to take the time needed at this stage, reviewing the image alongside my reference board helps me figure out if it is all working well.

I design my characters further as I paint, making choices about their costumes, hairstyles, and subtleties of their poses and performances. At this step in the process, I like to take the time needed to get this right. My reference board comes in handy, helping me make decisions on colors and costumes.

By the end of my block in process, I have a rough color background that establishes the mood and light source of the window.

My characters are blocked in using flat base colors. I also establish the flashlight as a second light source. Reviewing the image at this stage helps me figure out if it is all working well.

I adjust and tweak the characters so they fit well together as a group. I keep important elements of the illustration on their own layer or in groups that allows me to make changes easily and quickly.



One thing to note—it is important to maintain the integrity of the strong foundations built up in the thumbnail stages. I don't want to get so carried away while painting the image that I mess up my focal points and compositional elements. Doing a block in based on the line drawings helps me maintain control and avoid painting myself into crazy tangents!

LESSON 6: BLOCKING IN FLAT COLOR

Take your color thumbnails and your rough illustration and start to paint. Start with a rough pass on the background before moving to the base colors of your characters. Remember this isn't just about coloring in—your design process continues. You will be making design choices about your characters and background as you go. The key is to build on decisions already made and refine them, moving from rough to a more developed design.



PAINTING

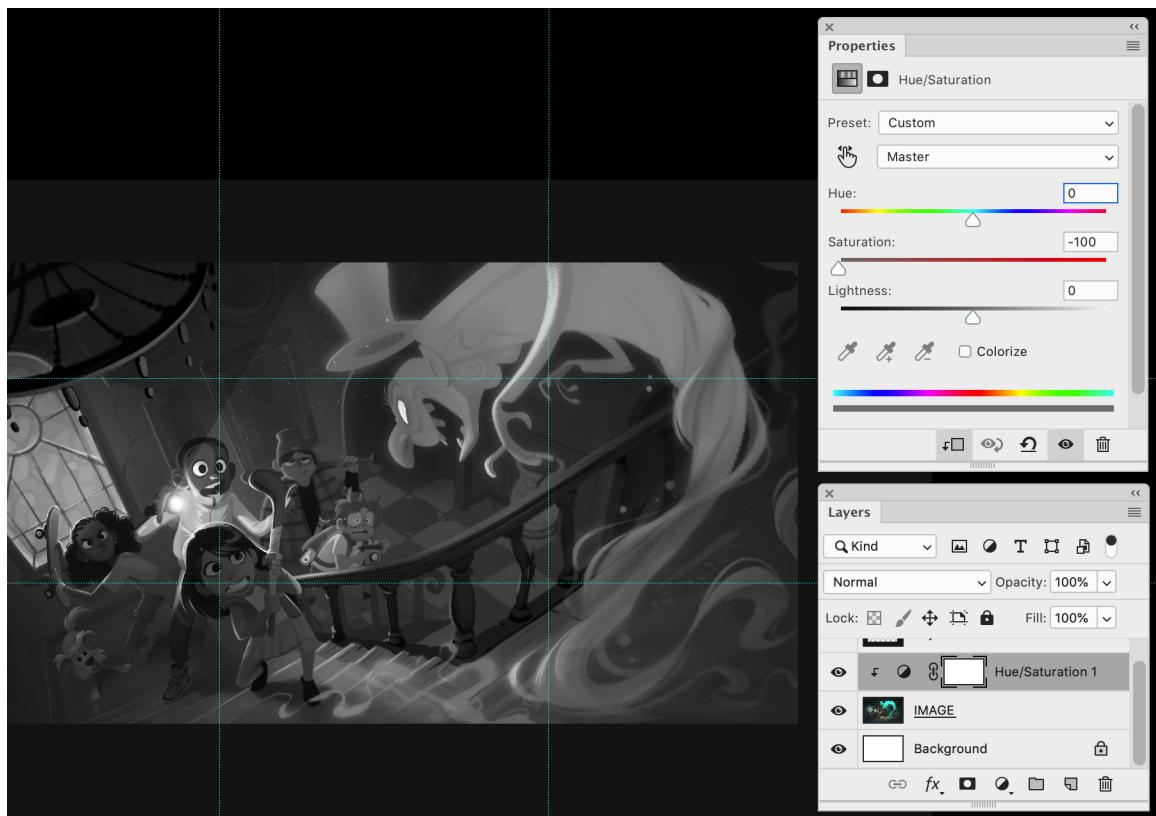
With elements blocked in and more established, the next step is to start painting! Again, you build on the steps before and refine the image further.

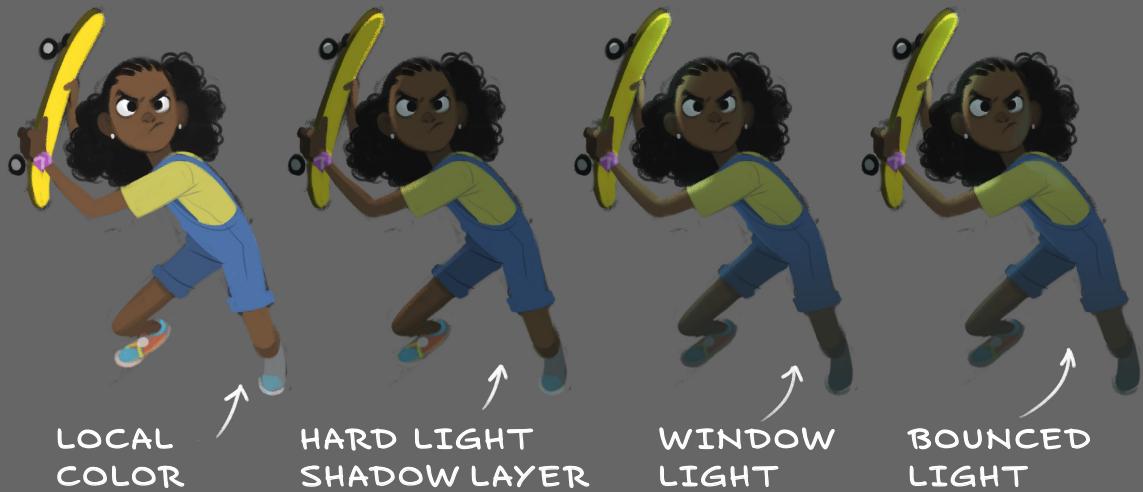
A step I always make during painting is to create a hue/saturation adjustment layer on top of my layer stack. I set the saturation to minus 100 so I can toggle the layer visibility on and off; this allows me to quickly check my image in greyscale to be sure it is working well without the color.

This is useful since I'm not great at seeing the value structure of my image when the color is showing. Now I can quickly check the tonal values of my piece and fix anything that isn't working.

I start the painting process by adding shadows to my characters. I like to build them using a new layer on top of my base color layer. I usually set this layer to the multiply blending mode, but in this case hard light looks best. I use a bluish color similar to the background and start sculpting the forms of the characters in this layer. I also set this layer to a lower opacity.

Having the light sources established in the block in stage really helps while I'm building the forms. I need to consider how light is hitting the characters, and I build up their forms with that in mind. Many of my characters will be mostly in shadow (with the exception of the boy with the flashlight), so I follow the same process on each character using a hard light layer to build the shadow layer.



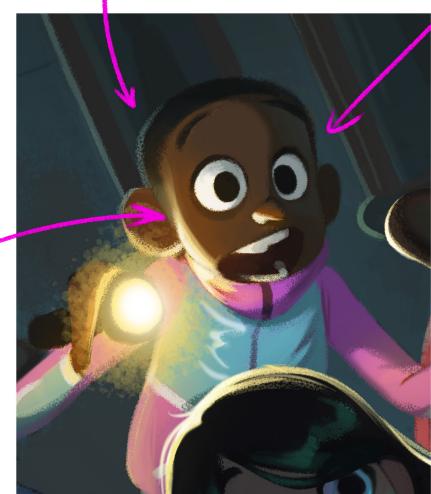
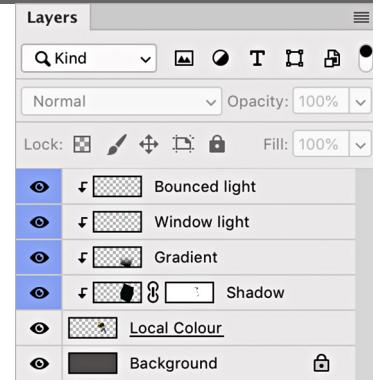


After the shadows are established, I think about the way light is hitting my characters. Most of them have a thin rim of light created by the window. This helps them stand out from the background, so I exaggerate this effect to give my characters more impact.

I also need to incorporate the flashlight. Since the flashlight is very close to the boy holding it, light will hit his face, bathing him in warm light. The flashlight will also create a stronger rim of light around the girl in front with the hockey stick.

With my shadows and light sources accounted for, I move on to bounced light. Light from the environment will bounce around and hit the characters. For example, in the face of the boy with the flashlight, on the opposite side of his face, I paint in some subtle blues from the setting. This fills out the forms nicely but also serves to make a character feel like they are immersed in the scene rather than just painted on top.

As I work on the lighting of my characters, I also add more and more details. Rendering out the forms of the hands, clothing, and hair. The main areas I focus on are the faces, hands, and overall poses. These three things contribute the most to the character performances!

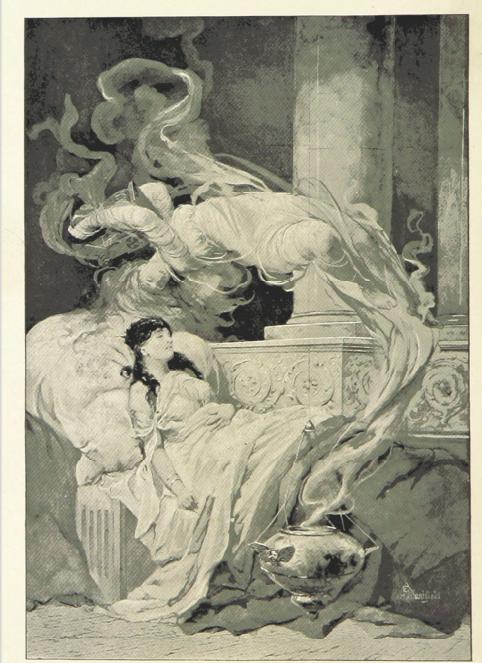




I use my favorite reference image to help me—an illustration of the ghost emerging above a sleeping woman.

I also develop my ghost character further, painting in more detail. I want the forms of his ethereal “tail” to twist and turn and feel like smoke or ectoplasm. This adds to his personality—he is sort of a trickster whose intentions aren’t clear. I need to make sure my ghost contrasts enough to read well but does not overpower the main focal point of the flashlight and the kids. I use my favorite illustration of the ghost emerging above the sleeping woman.

Building upon the foundation of my background, I paint out the lines and define key areas such as the window and picture frames, the hall flooring, and the stairs. I want just enough detail in the background to sell the setting; if I go too far, I risk distracting from the main action, characters, and their performances. I need just enough to set the scene.



I do this stage of the painting holistically. I don’t paint one area to completion and then move on. I build up the whole image slowly, moving around the illustration and gradually focusing my attention on key areas, like the characters as I progress. This way I ensure the whole image looks unified. Although I do like to keep some areas of my image impressionistic. I don’t need to paint intricate details over the entire piece, just where it is important for clarity of the scene. Everything else can be simply suggested.

LESSON 7: PAINTING IN DETAILS

Building on your block in, start to add shadows on the characters while being mindful of light sources. Think about how light is hitting the characters, either in the form of direct lights or rim lights and don’t forget ambient bounced light from



the environment. This process applies to everything in the image—slowly refine, painting in details to more clearly define the forms.

THE FINISH

I'm almost done! Everything is pretty much rendered—I just need to make tweaks here and there and then do a final polish. At this point, I like to take a step back and evaluate my image, taking note of anything I need to focus on or fix. In this illustration, I notice the following:

- The paintings in the background need work. It would be fun to add other Victorian style characters—maybe they are looking down toward the kids on the stairs. I don't want them to be too obvious—just visible enough that a viewer would notice them after studying the image for a bit.

- I want to elaborate on the plant and make it look a bit more withered and dead. I could bring the dead plant stems out and over so they trail along the floor like tentacles.
- The girl with the hockey stick needs more work, something doesn't feel quite right. Especially since she is at the front of the characters, I need to give her extra attention.
- The chandelier looks a bit lazy in design. I decide to get some references and improve on it. I need to be careful, however, not to overdo it by making it too distracting an element in my illustration.
- On the kid with the flashlight, I want to try a subtle smile on his face to bring a unique flavor to his personality.

I go through each element in turn, taking time to fix or polish up each one.



The chandelier looks better as an old wooden frame with half-melted candles. This adds context, suggesting the house is from another era, while the gnarly candle wax increases the creepy factor!



The slight smile added to the kid holding the flashlight brings a fun, new dynamic to his character to give him a more unique personality.

I tweak the ghost a bit so his tonal structure contrasts better from the background. I want to make him stand out so a viewer's eye goes first to the flashlight, then jumps to the ghost before exploring the rest of the image.

I adjust other little elements as I work, adding dust particles reflecting in the flashlight, reducing the contrast of the floor tiles in the hallway. Working to improve my illustration, the concept becomes clearer for the viewer. I also fix up the background paintings!

Something I try to keep in mind during the painting process is to avoid getting carried away in the details and overpainting. Especially details in the shadows that are not in the focal point of my piece. My focus is on the characters, so I make sure to paint them in as much detail as necessary to convey personalities and performances. Everything else should support the characters but not distract from them.

As I near completion of my image, I create a layer (in this case, a bluish-grey color) at the top of my layer stack, I set it to overlay or whichever blending mode



LAYER SET TO
OVERLAY 29%
OPACITY



LIGHTS
LAYER SET TO
OVERLAY
65% OPACITY

looks best, and then paint it out and adjust opacity. Doing this step helps to unify colors in the overall image.

Next, I add a new overlay layer above all the layers and paint it to enhance glows from the flashlight, ghost, and window. I work sparingly; if I overdo this, I run the risk of making my whole image overly saturated. I only want to punch out colors in specific areas. Finally, I crop my image to its final image size: 7680 x 4320 pixels. The illustration is now done!

I hope I created a fun and dramatic character driven illustration. Starting with the simple idea of a haunted house, then drawing from my childhood using influences from books, films, and television, I make the concept my own. I focused on a clear story moment with lots of conflict and thought about my characters—who they are and how they should perform under the circumstances.

Using the setting, lighting, and color, I created a mood to support my story moment and give the characters a good setting to perform in. The process has been one of problem-solving while making key design decisions along the way that build on strong foundations to make my life easier.

Thanks for following along as I created this illustration. I hope you learned something and enjoyed watching my characters come to life. Now you can apply these concepts to your own character driven illustrations!

LESSON 8: FINISHING TOUCHES

By now your piece is almost done. Take a step back and evaluate it—is everything reading well? Is anything not working? Is everything clear—tonally, color wise, and in composition? Make a note to fix any issues as you move forward into your final polish!

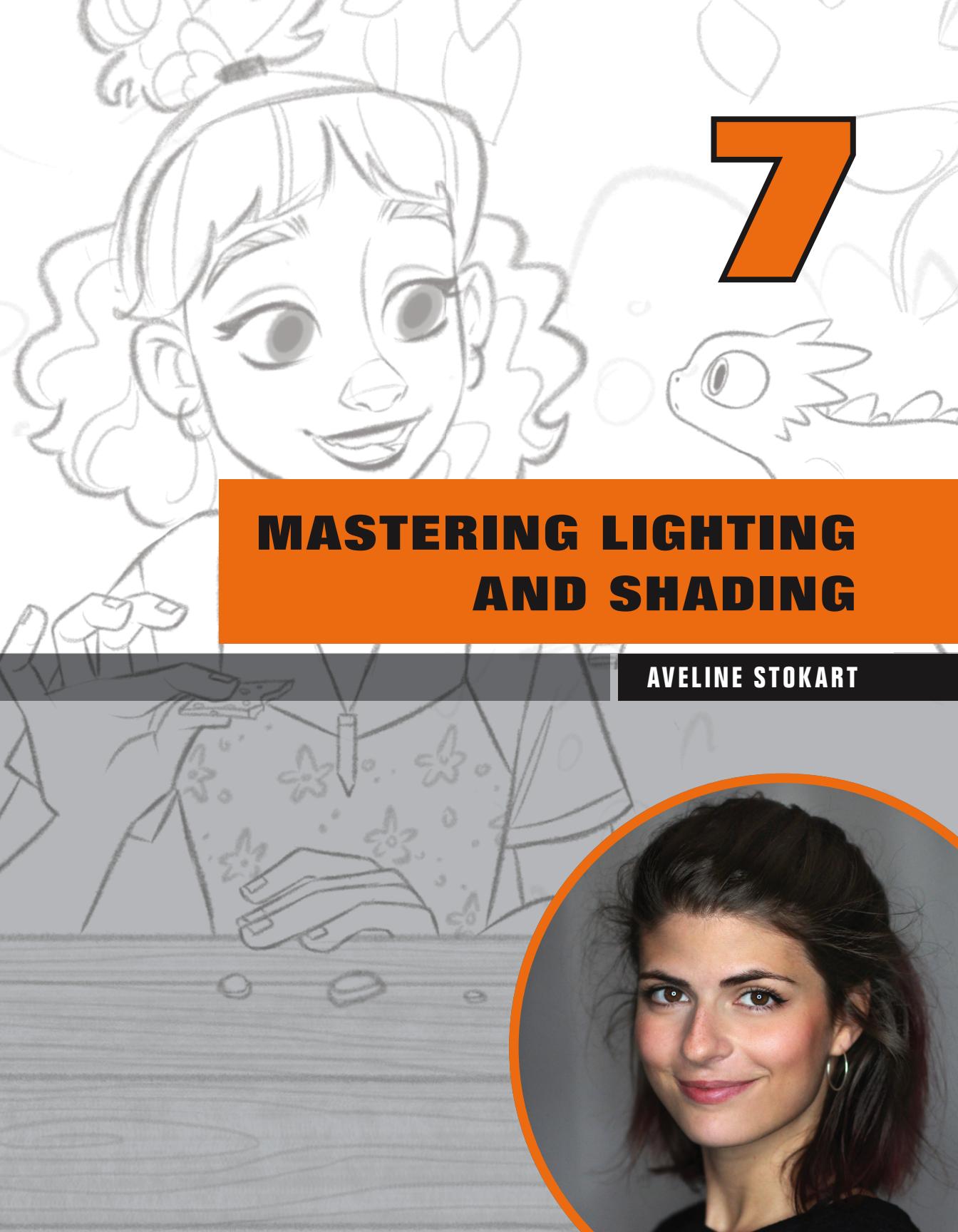


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 SCAN ME



7

MASTERING LIGHTING AND SHADING

AVELINE STOKART



MASTERING LIGHTING AND SHADING

WITH AVELINE STOKART

HOW TO STUDY LIGHT

This chapter is designed for beginners and those at intermediate levels who want to deepen their knowledge of light and hopefully learn some new techniques along the way. I want to help you understand lighting and shading so you can better translate them graphically.

I will be using Procreate tools but all of these techniques translate well into Photoshop or other digital software. I'll guide you step by step as we study how light affects your art in different scenarios.

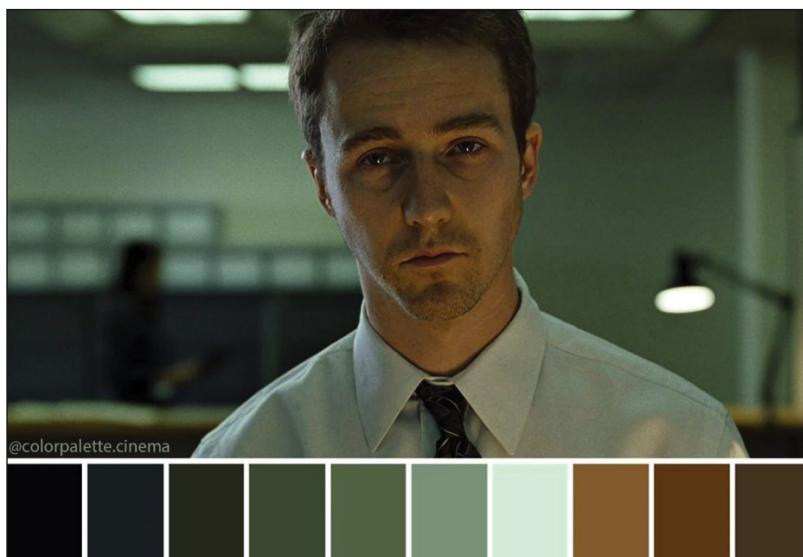
We will also review color and light in order to understand how to use them to create a specific mood in your artwork. I will share

with you my favorite brushes and tools to use for shading. At the end of this chapter, we will create a clean illustration to use for rendering four different lighting scenarios.

OBSERVING LIGHT

To determine the ambient color—what I also call atmospheric color—look at the overall color of an image and choose a single color that best defines the image. This color basically determines the overall mood of your artwork. The following are examples of this process:

FIGHT CLUB COLOR STUDY: In the film clip below we clearly see that the ambient color is green. Even though there are warmer



Fight Club, Actor: Edward Norton.

tones contrasting on his face, the overall color of this image is green. This is due to the color of the lighting in the scene. The office lights influence every element in the room. It's interesting to analyze this because it helps give you direction in terms of the mood emerging in the film. In this scene, a heavy atmosphere is clearly intended to add to the sense of discomfort and exhaustion.

PRIDE & PREJUDICE COLOR STUDY: The dominant color is yellow-orange. This is due to the color of the sunlight but also to the bounce that the light creates on the objects inside the room. It's a sunny day, so the light is naturally warm. This light enters the room and bounces all over the place—on the red curtains, the floor that may be a wood-colored parquet, on the cream-colored walls—all the elements have relatively warm colors that warm up the general atmosphere of the room. This gives an intimate and cozy feeling. If you imagine the walls were blue, for example, with the intense yellow light of the sun, perhaps it would be a greenish dominant color.

BASIC COLOR

The second observation to pay close attention to are the basic colors or local colors. These are the true colors that make up an object. Colors are not constant; they change depending on the context in which they exist. Colors are influenced by light, shadows, and the surrounding colors. Being aware of all these influences will help you to determine the basic colors of objects in an image. By picturing objects as they would be when not affected by light or shadow you can visualize their true color.

For example, let's review the *Fight Club* film clip again—the shirt is white, his skin is flesh pink, his hair is brown, and his eyes are blue. You want to keep these observations in mind as you create an illustration. It's important to distinguish between the basic color and the color after it has been changed by the lighting. Understanding the basic colors that make up objects allows you to see how colors are influenced by the surroundings in which they exist.



Pride and Prejudice,
Actress: Keira Knightley.

LIGHT SOURCES

Next, we will analyze different sources of light and their color. If there are more than one light source, define the main source and then the secondary sources that have a lower intensity and therefore less influence in the scene. It's important to understand the difference between direct light and diffuse light.

DIRECT LIGHT is light that meets no obstacle from its source to an object. All the light rays go in the same direction and travel in a straight line from their source point to their destination. When direct light hits an object, it casts a shadow that has perfect sharp edges—called a hard shadow. The contrast between the illuminated areas and the shaded areas of an object is very strong—the difference is substantial between light and dark tones.

You can see in the outdoor image below that the sunlight is coming from the left, impacting their bodies on that side and creating very strong shadows on their clothes and the wall. Note that despite the intensity of the direct light, the shadows are not black. It's because this is an outdoor scene which means we have a second light source—the sky. The light from the sky is much less intense than the sun, but it has an impact on the scene as it softens the shadows by slightly tinting them blue.

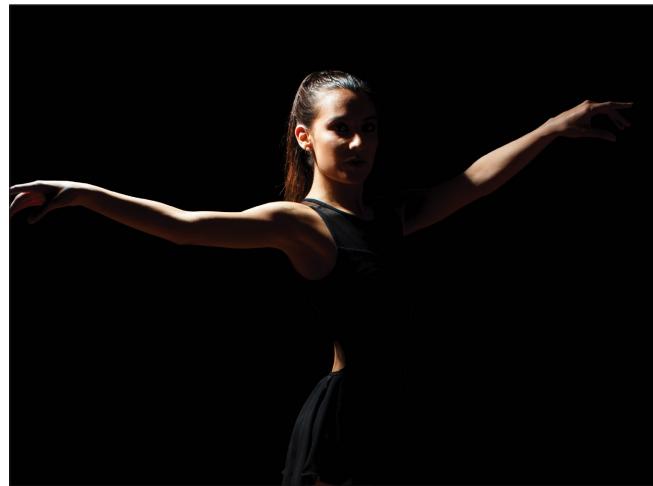
DIRECT LIGHT



WHEN A LIGHT SOURCE IS DIRECT (INTENSE), LIGHT RAYS GO IN ONLY ONE DIRECTION AND SHADOWS WILL HAVE HARD EDGES.



In the image at right, the main light source is artificial, but it is intense and direct. There is no other light to separate the figure from the background of the stage. Direct lighting creates defined shadows, and unlike the previous image that was outdoors, the shadows are darker and black. This is because the environment itself is dark. The stage is black surrounded by dark curtains that absorb a lot of light, and there are no other light sources or bounces of light that affect the shadows to soften them.



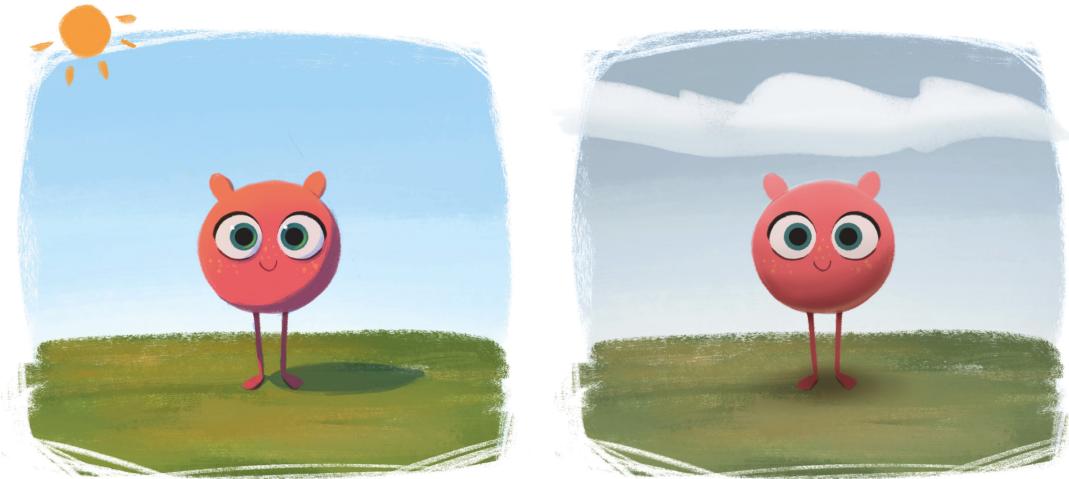
DIFFUSE LIGHT occurs when light rays go in different directions. These light rays have different directions because they encounter obstacles that deflected them to different degrees: a cloud, a white wall, a veil, etc. Diffuse light is observed when the subject's projected shadow has blurred edge—called soft shadow. The contrast is also less pronounced, with more subtle differences between light and dark tones.



DIFFUSE LIGHT



DIFFUSE LIGHT HAPPENS WHEN A LIGHT SOURCE IS SOFTER AND LIGHT RAYS GO IN EVERY DIRECTION; SHADOWS WILL HAVE SOFT EDGES.



OCCLUSION SHADOWS OCCUR WHERE AN OBJECT TOUCHES ANOTHER OBJECT.

There is another type of shadow you need to consider, called *contact* or *occlusion* shadows. They exist in every context. They are the thin dark line that appears when an object touches another object. This gives the feeling that an object is standing on something but isn't floating.

The image below is set on an overcast day so there are no hard shadows, no edges

to the shadows. The light is going in all directions in a relatively homogeneous way because of the diffusion from the cloud cover. The only dark areas are where the sunlight has trouble reaching. Look also at the contact shadows, where objects touch one another or in the folds of clothing, such as under the boy's jacket. The shadows gradually diffuse and fade further away from the contact point.



In this film clip from *Marriage Story*, we see that it's a sunny day (we can assume that because of the warm overall tone). It's an interior scene, so the sunlight meets several obstacles before coming inside the room. Maybe it bounces on the ground outside first, hits the window, and then goes through the curtains, so the light is now completely diffused. There's no hard shadows either. The cast shadow of the character on the wall is subtle, slightly darker and diffused.

Note that light is not only diffused or direct. Sometimes we can observe light that is a bit in between. Situations where we have only direct light are not as common. Unless you have an intense light like the sun or a spotlight, you will have diffuse light most of the time. Diffuse light will cast an obvious shadow but the edges remain relatively soft. This can depend on several factors—the obstacles light encounters and their intensity, and the distance from and the size of the light source.

In this film clip from *Atomic Blonde*, Charlize Theron is holding the flame quite a distance from her face. We can see how this distance affects the diffusion of light. The impact of the light is light and soft, which creates relatively soft shadows.

This next clip is from *True Grit* and shows Matt Damon holding a flame much closer to his face. You can see how big the impact is on his face. The shadows under his collar or near his nose are much sharper and fade further from the light source. Like on his cheeks, it becomes soft. Note also that the top of his hat allows a reflection of the light which projects downward.



Marriage Story, Scarlett Johansson



Atomic Blonde, Charlize Theron



True Grit, Matt Damon

REFLECTION

Reflection is how light looks when it bounces off the surface of an object. Reflection differs depending on the material the light hits. If an object is made of sleek material like plastic or glass, it will be very reflective, and light and color will be more intense. If an object has a softer surface like fabric, light is absorbed and therefore less affected by light and color.



In the film clip below from *A Rainy Day in New York*, the main light source comes from the right. It hits Elle Fanning's face on the right and also hits her hair. One of the most obvious ways to see a reflection is in the eyes. It is this luminous white point of reflected light that gives life to the eyes. It's very visible and well defined because of the cornea of the eye, which is a smooth and shiny surface. It's also due to the moisture of the eyes, so the surface is very reflective, like a mirror. This is called the specular reflection. Another more subtle reflection is the one on the skin—at her nose, chin, and slightly on her forehead. The skin is not a sleek material like glass, but it's shiny enough to reflect light in a diffused way. Finally, an even more subtle reflection is the one on the cheek. It's slightly illuminated because the light reflects and bounces off the hair, toward the cheek, gently warming and unblocking this area of her face.



A Rainy Day in New York,
Elle Fanning

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

MY MAIN BRUSHES:

Ink bleed is found in the ink menu and is a default brush in Procreate. I use it for sketching, line work, and sometimes for smudging. I also use a customized version of this brush to add harder edges. I named it: **Hard ink bleed**.

Big air brush is a default brush in Procreate under the airbrushing menu. I use it for larger areas of light that need to be diffused. I also use it to create halo effects.

Star noise is a Procreate brush that I bought on the creativemarket.com site from Eliza Moreno. I like using it to add some texture in light gradients or colors. I also occasionally use it for smudging.

MaxU Gouache clean is another Procreate brush by Max Ulichney from the Gouache MaxPack (gumroad.com/maxulichney). I like to use this one to sketch quickly and rough in color.

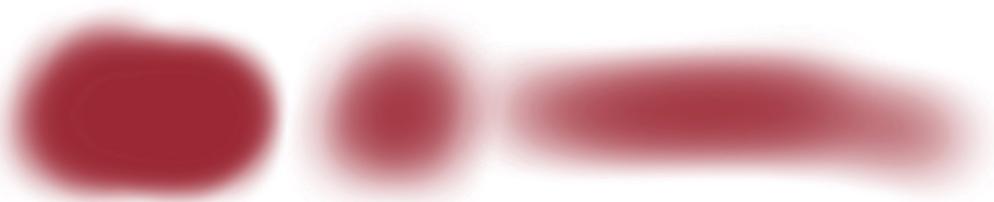
INK
BLEED



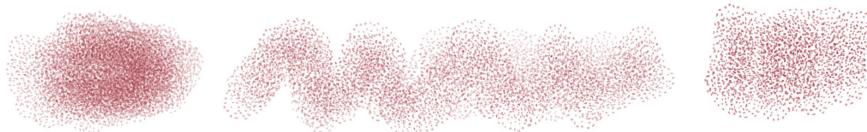
HARD
INK
BLEED



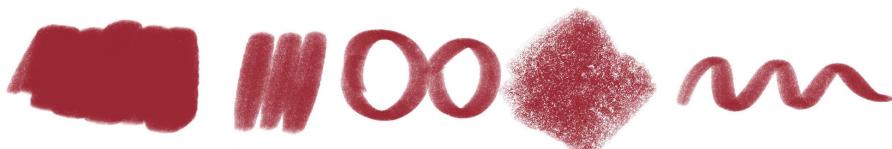
BIG
AIR
BRUSH



STAR
NOISE



MAXU
GOUACHE
CLEAN



SHADING TECHNIQUES

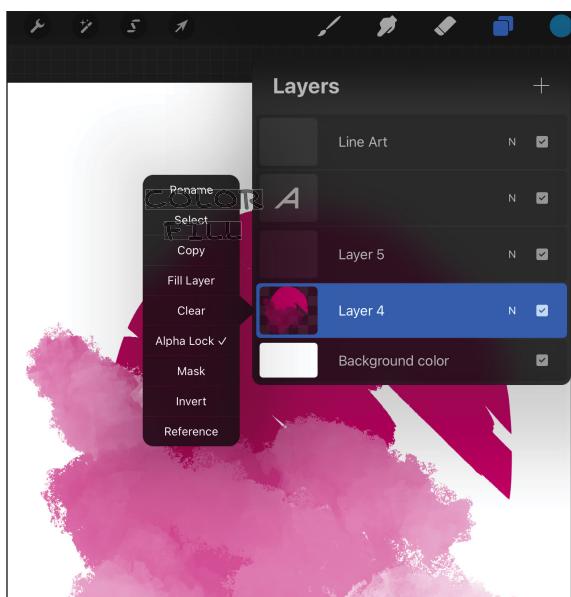
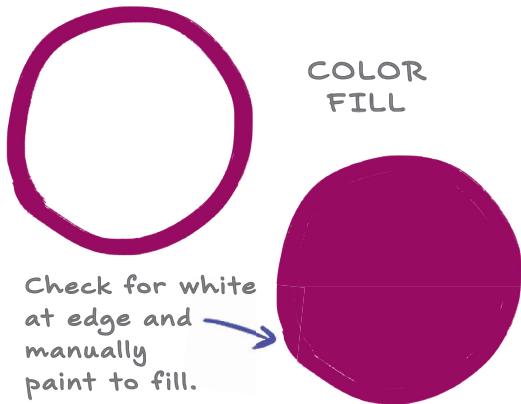
COLOR FILL: Start by drawing the outline of a shape with a sharp brush. Make sure to close your shape well—no holes must appear in the line or the color will spill out and fill the entire canvas. Once the shape is properly closed, fill it by dragging and dropping the color. While keeping the stylus on the image, play with the threshold so that the color fills up the shape as much as possible. If you use a textured brush with a lot of pixel variation in the stroke, when you fill your shape, a small white line near the contour line can appear. Unfortunately you have to go over it manually.

LASSO: Use it to create and define areas of light and shadow. Create a freehand selection, then paint inside your selection. This allows you to have a sharp edge to clearly see the area where the color needs to be applied and then fade the rest progressively. It is a good tool for sculpting volumes and adding color in defined areas.

MASK: It is a useful tool to work in a non-destructive mode. The mask is linked to a layer to hide some areas by using the eraser on it. They are hidden, which means no pixels are deleted. You can remove or recover color as you wish, without altering the original layer. To recover color, use the brush with a white color. It's often used when we want to erase shadows in certain areas to give an impression of light.

CLIPPING MASK: This tool allows you to paint only the layer directly underneath and you don't need to worry about drawing outside the shape. This keeps the layer underneath the new layer safe from any brush strokes.

SMUDGE: Use it to blur an edge that you find too sharp. It allows you to smooth some transitions. It is also a tool to sculpt shapes and volumes.



ALPHA LOCK: Activate it by swiping two fingers to the right on a layer. When there's a little checkerboard, it means that it's active. It's a convenient tool when you need to paint inside a shape on the same layer without worrying about exceeding the shape too.

BLENDING MODES

MULTIPLY

What it does: The resulting image is darkened depending on the blend color. It's like a transparent tinted sheet that you put on top of your design. If you put a blue color on top of a yellow color, you will get green.

What it is used for: This is the key blend mode for darkening elements and for creating shadows, whether diffuse or cast shadows. It also allows you to influence the overall mood of a scene by tinting it with a specific color.

OVERLAY

What it does: It superimposes or multiplies the colors according to the base color.

What it is used for: Mainly used to bring light and influence the shade of light.

HARD LIGHT

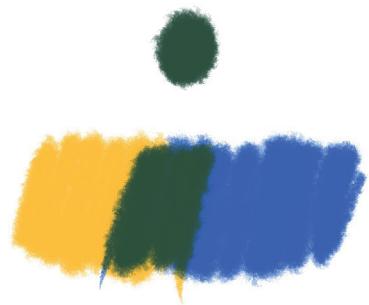
What it does: It multiplies or overlays colors, depending on the blend color.

What it is used for: This effect is useful for adding highlights, as long as you use colors with more than 50% gray (below 50% it has a darkening effect). Sometimes used to lighten some areas in the shadows, while bringing more intense color. Also used for a reflection effect.

ADDITION

What it does: It brightens the base color depending on the blend color and increases the brightness.

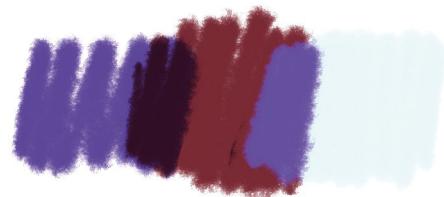
What it is used for: Mainly used to create a halo light effect.



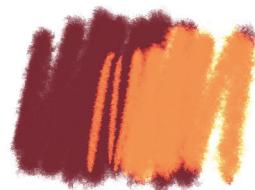
MULTIPLY



OVERLAY



HARD LIGHT



ADDITION

USING BLENDING MODES

There are four modes, which means you will use a number of layers. I like to distinguish the effects and keep my layers separated, so I can go back to my layers and change the color as I see fit independently, without affecting the rest of the layers. It's convenient, too, because it gives the opportunity to explore different possibilities as I work.

If you need to merge layers at any point, you can do so, but be careful to merge only the layers with the same blending mode. Or you could affect and alter the mode of other layers that you don't intend to change.

Also note that the most suitable blending mode to use can change depending on the specifics of your drawing. Depending on the context, one effect may work better than another. I suggest you play with different modes to see the potential effects so you can better choose what will suit your painting the best.



ARTISTIC STYLE

It's important to understand how your unique artistic style can influence the way you graphically translate light in your artwork.

For example, these images by different artists express light and shadow in distinct ways. At top right the artist kept light and shadow as simple and efficient as possible. All of the shadows and

light are clearly delineated, even if the light source is diffused, and yet it doesn't disturb a viewer from understanding the atmosphere and emotion in the painting.

Compare that image with the other examples that have more complex lighting. There are more strokes and levels of light and shadow—contact shadows, diffused shadows—and the light bounces. All these elements give a more realistic impression to the volumes in the space.

There really isn't a good or bad way to stylize lighting design—it's literally all about experimenting and then making your own choices and developing your artistic style.



USING COLOR AND LIGHT TO TELL A STORY

Light and color are inseparable—they're a big part of the identity of a project and have a large influence on how the viewer will respond to an image. Both can enhance a story and the message of your artwork. The color choices you make for your character will depend on the character's personality, but it will also be affected by the color you add to the light to create a specific mood. Color and light can contain many shades and messages.

THE BASICS:

These are the main colors you will find on the color wheel: the primary colors (blue, red, yellow), the secondary colors (purple, green, orange), and the complementary colors.

EACH COLOR HAS THREE ATTRIBUTES:

- **Hue:** the color you choose
- **Saturation:** intensity of your color
- **Value:** how light or dark a color is



HUE



SATURATION



VALUE (BRIGHTNESS)



COLOR CHOICES

I tend to work intuitively while making color choices, because I think color is mostly about feeling. Color theory has many harmony possibilities, but I don't use a formula to create great combinations. I prefer to choose colors that convey meaning to me.

Colors can communicate a great deal about a character. While painting, try to keep in mind the story narrative and a sense of your character.

Bright and vivid colors will express an optimistic, dynamic, joyous, and fun feeling, while desaturated colors appear calmer, serious, and evoke a dull and sad feeling.



Unique by Aveline Stokart

In the above image, the character with the flower wears vivid and bright colors, while the others wear dark, desaturated tones, and have pale skin. The character wearing the vivid and bright colors is showing his outgoing and vibrant personality. The other men wearing the desaturated tones seem to have a bored and gloomy temperament. Since they are seated next to one another, the contrast in their personalities is highlighted.

The temperature of colors also conveys different feelings. The warm colors in the images at right give an energetic and vigorous feeling and are linked to the idea of optimism, motivation, spontaneity, power, rage, anger, passion.

Cool colors tend to be soothing and more calculating and are linked to the idea of balance, spirituality, wisdom, serenity, mystery, melancholy, sadness.



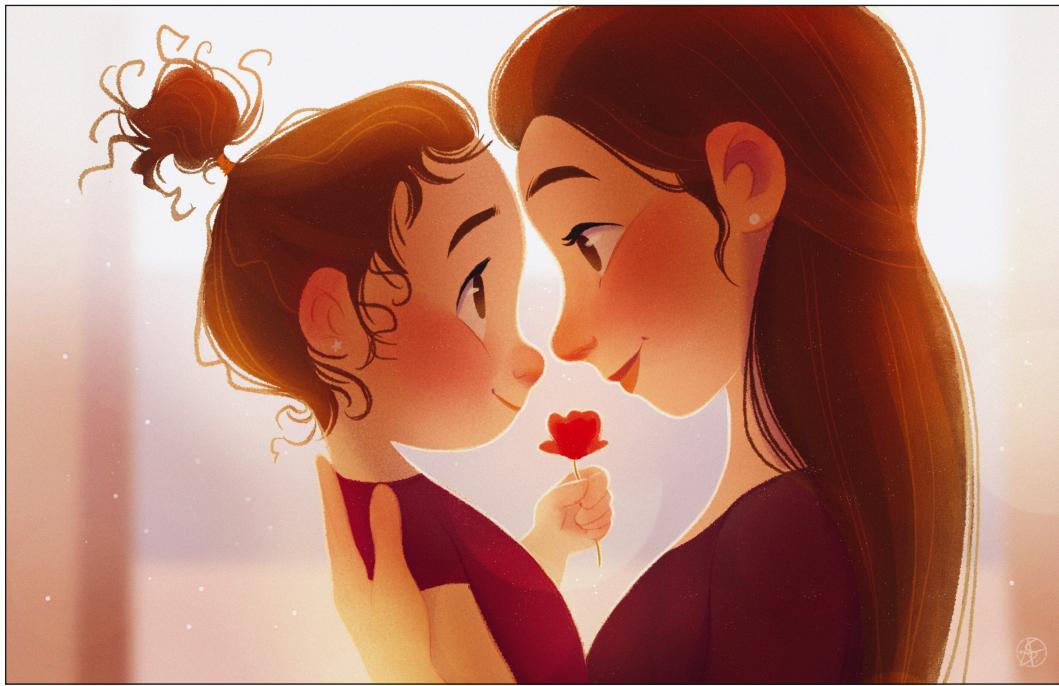
Monkey by Aveline Stokart



Flash by Aveline Stokart



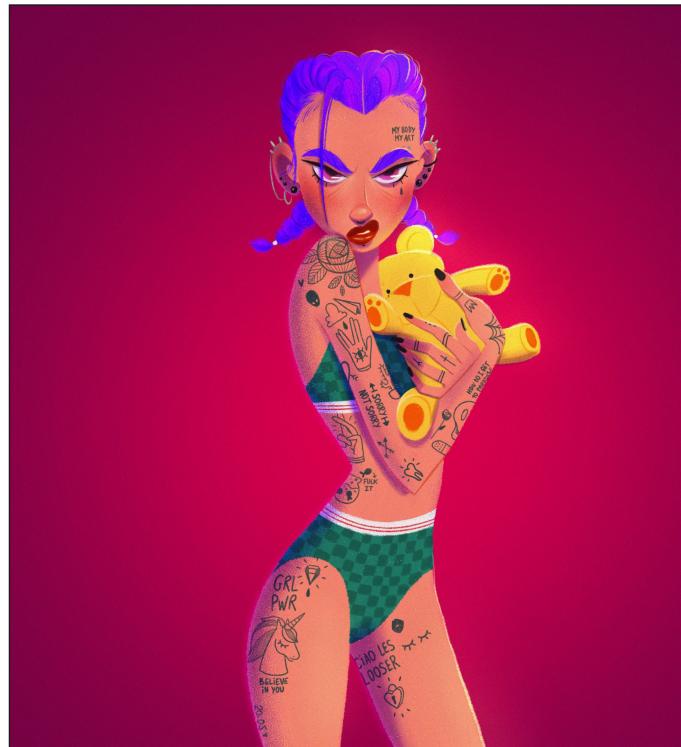
Rain by Aveline Stokart



Red Poppy by Aveline Stokart

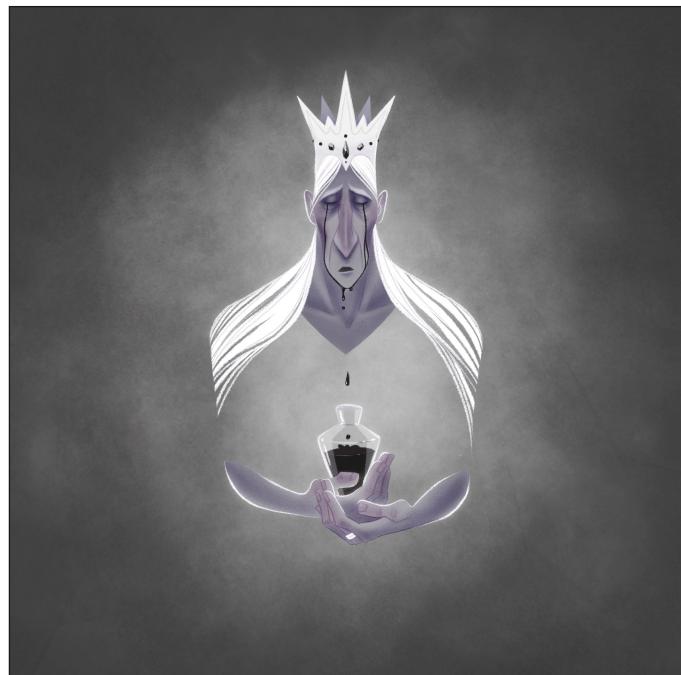
The images above are great examples of using color temperature, value, and saturation to create mood and story in the illustrations.

This girl is like “don’t even dare to touch my teddy bear!” She’s kind of tough looking but also clearly has a childish personality. The color choices help to highlight this part of her personality. The bright and ultra vivid colors give her the childish mood but also convey an audacious and bold personality. The use of atypical hair color also adds to her edgy vibe.



Edgy Girl by Aveline Stokart

In this image the colors are clearly desaturated. This character mourns, so I want to convey his deep sadness and loneliness. You can see that nothing about this character is joyful and the lack of color in this case helps to tell his story.

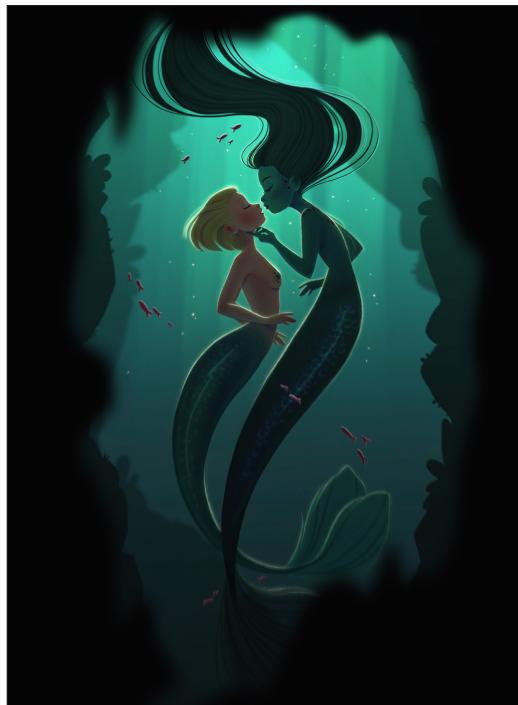


King Goran by Aveline Stokart

In the image on the right, there is a contrast between the light and darkness of these two characters. You can see which one is poisonous and which one is innocent. This is due to the value and the temperature of the colors. One is warm, clear, and she feels pure, while the other is cold and dark and feels powerful and intriguing.

Positive or negative connotations for color can vary from one culture to another, and depend on the context. For example, a red color can be as much positive as negative. It can evoke love and passion as well as anger or danger.

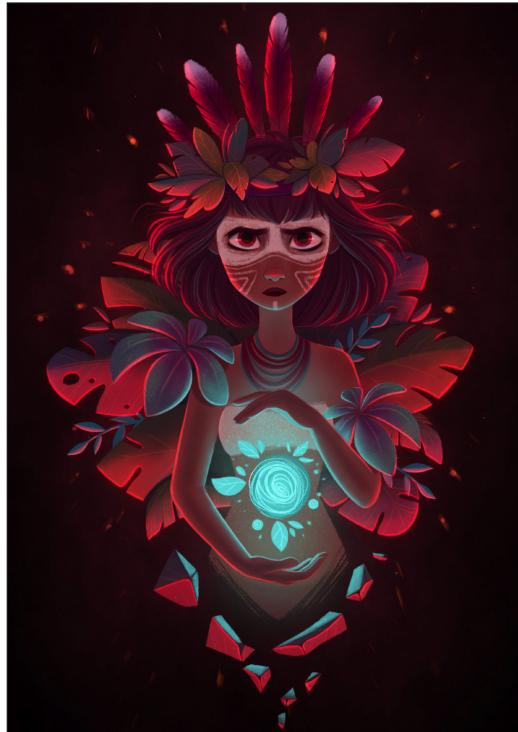
Try not to stress too much about your color choices. Keep in mind what you want to express in your drawing and try different color combinations to see what works best for your idea.



Forbidden Kiss by Aveline Stokart



Shy Fluffy by Aveline Stokart



Earth by Aveline Stokart

ASSIGNMENT 1: OBSERVATION

1 Gather a bunch of images so you can observe and study the lighting using the process you learned in this chapter. On the right is one of the clips from ColorPalette.Cinema on Instagram.

2 Identify the main ambient light color.



@colorpalette.cinema

3 Note the different local colors in the image.

4 Identify the different light sources and try to figure out if the light is diffuse or direct. Define the intensity, size, and color of the light.

5 Look at how the light impacts and interacts with objects, how strong are the impacts, how does the light bounce or reflect off objects? Take notes on your observations.

AMBIENT COLOR



LOCAL COLOR



LIGHT COLOR



SHADOW COLOR



ASSIGNMENT 2: SCENE LIGHTING

1 Find some images that have lighting that inspire you to create your own scene based on the lighting in the images.



ASSIGNMENT 2: SCENE LIGHTING

2 If working with backgrounds is intimidating for you, try finding an image of a background that you like in terms of lighting, then draw a character into it. Use the light from the scene so it looks like the character belongs in the scene. This practice will train your brain to understand how the lighting influences your characters.

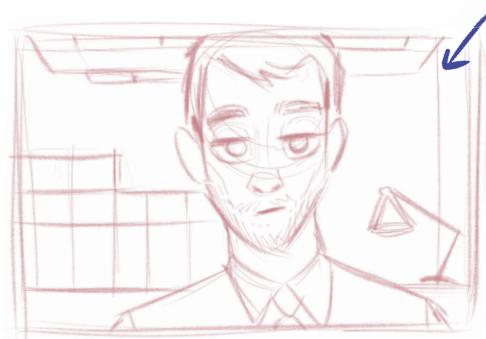


ASSIGNMENT 3: ROUGH STUDY

1 Find a source image with lighting that inspires you and take time to observe the lighting and color. Then sketch the drawing quickly and set the sketch layer to multiply.

2 Under your sketch layer, add layers to paint in the basic colors (top of next page). Try using the different shading techniques you've learned in this chapter: color fill, lasso, clipping masks, etc.

3 Identify the ambient color in the original image, then add a layer of this tone set to multiply (see next page). You can adjust using hue, saturation, and brightness.



4 Identify the different light sources and play with the different blending modes (overlay, addition, hard light) to create the impacts.

5 Adjust the shadows if needed, use a separate layer set to multiply. (Never use black for the shadow to avoid adding a muddy effect to the image.)

OPTIONAL: Save a copy of your image and flatten the layers, then play with the curves tool to adjust the mood of the image.

OPTIONAL: Play with adding Gaussian blur to the background or foreground to create depth of field and bring the focus in on your character.



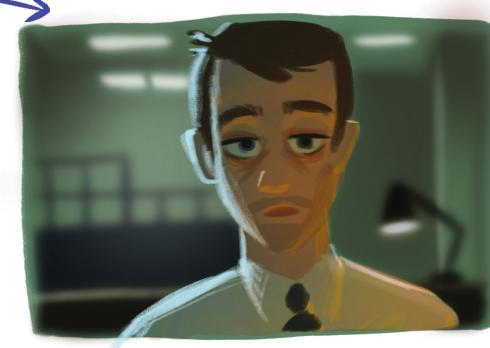
2



3



4



5



ASSIGNMENT 4: LIGHT SCENARIOS

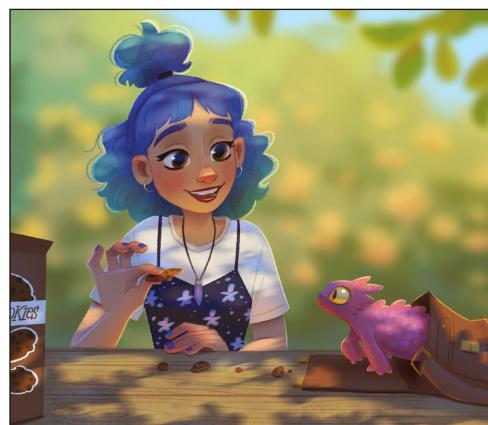
- 1 Sketch a new drawing that will provide options for different lighting scenarios.
- 2 Under your sketch layer, add layers and paint in basic colors. Try using the different shading techniques learned in this chapter: color fill, lasso, clipping masks, etc.
- 3 Apply an ambient color layer above the character and foreground, and set it to multiply.
- 4 Add light with the help of layer masks. Intensify light by adding bounce light and reflections using different blending modes (overlay, addition, hard light).
- 5 Add occlusion shadows for more definition on a new layer set to multiply.

OPTIONAL: Save a copy of your image and flatten the layers, then play with the curves tool to adjust the mood of the image.

OPTIONAL: Play with adding Gaussian blur to the background or foreground to create depth of field and bring the focus in on your character.



BASIC COLOR



OUTSIDE SUNNY DAY



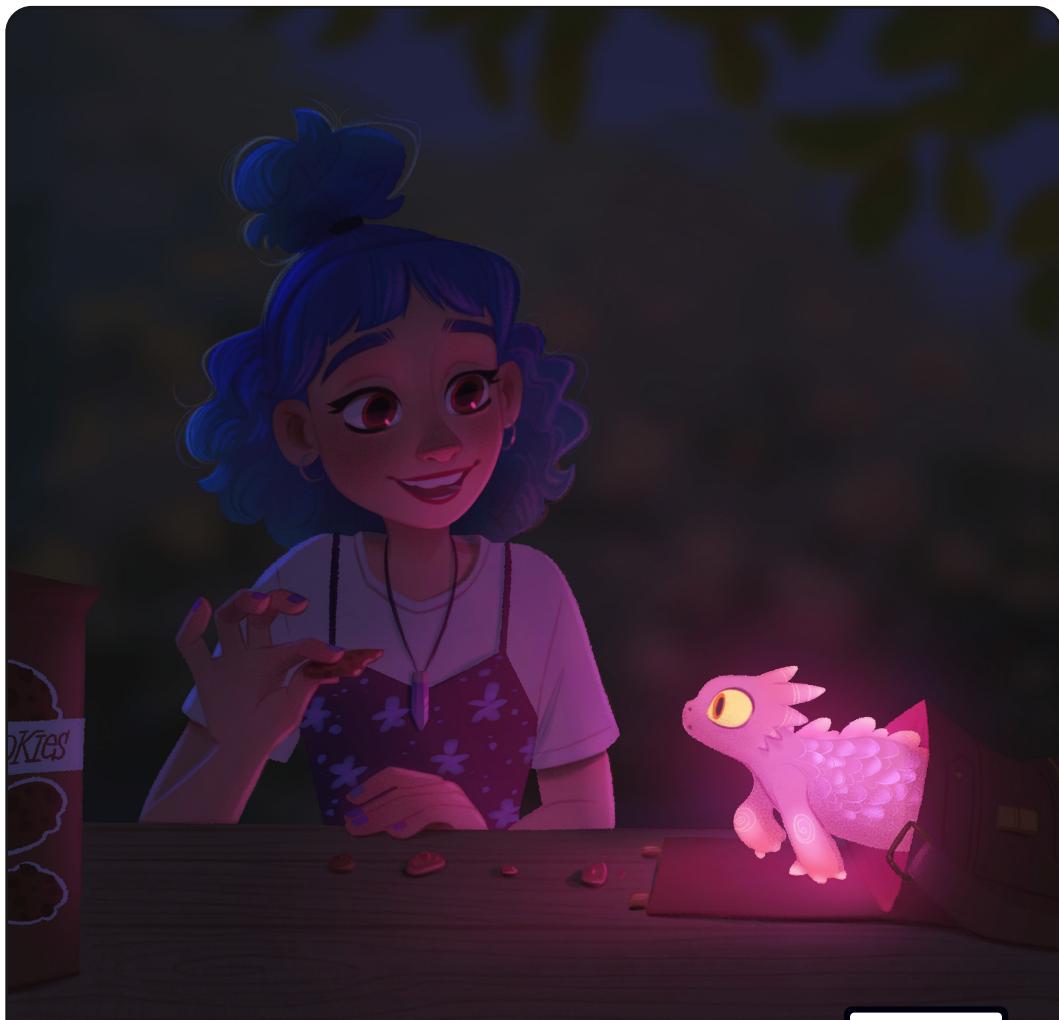
INSIDE SUNSET



INSIDE OVERCAST DAY

CONCLUSION

I hope you've learned some new techniques from this chapter and it has helped you feel more confident when illustrating light in your artwork. I've shared my personal way to design lighting but there are many different ways to successfully illustrate light. I encourage you to explore the possibilities and find what fits your style and artwork best. **Now grab your tablet, pencil, and start painting!**

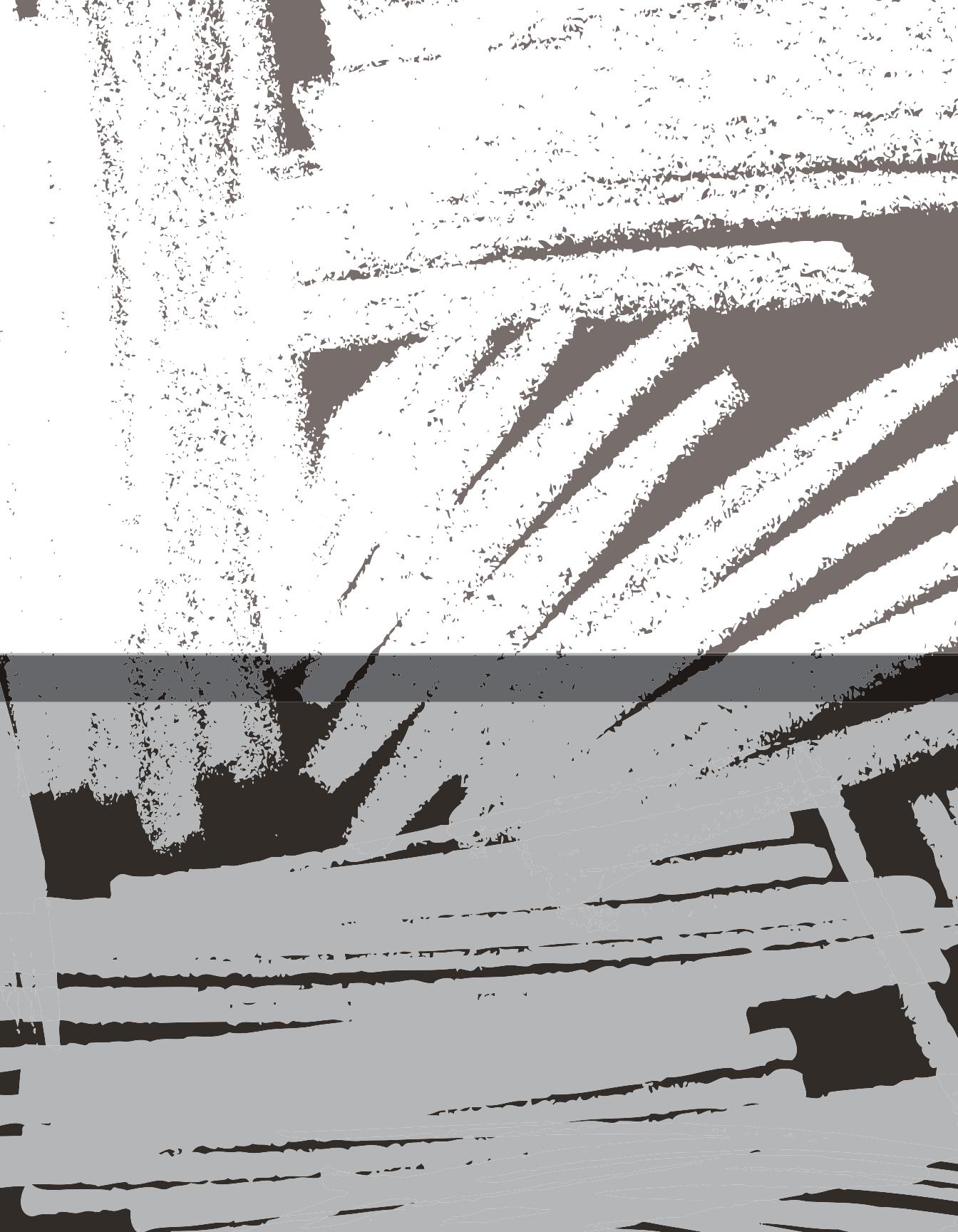


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 SCAN ME





8

**MEET THE
ARTISTS**



KENNETH ANDERSON
CHARACTER DESIGNER
ILLUSTRATOR

CharacterCube.com
Facebook.com/KennethAndersonArt
Instagram.com/charactercube
Behance.net/charactercube



Kenneth has done a variety of work from inbetweening on Sylvain Chomet's *The Illusionist* to illustrating for board games and magazines. For the past few years, he has predominantly been designing props, environments, and characters for children's television productions for a variety of networks at home and abroad.

Currently he continues to freelance in games, animation, and illustration, while working on personal projects—developing his TV show ideas for kids, illustrating a graphic novel, and producing short films and online tutorials.

Kenneth Anderson is a freelance character designer and illustrator currently working out of Glasgow, Scotland, where the rain keeps him indoors and drawing most of the time.

After studying 2D animation, he started his career in 2005 working in the local Scottish games scene. Soon after, Kenneth began working in animation production. Then in 2009, he opened his freelance business, Character Cube, to focus on designing characters and illustrating full time.





Randy Bishop has been working as a character designer and illustrator for several years from his home in Eastern Idaho, where he lives with his beautiful wife and four children. He has worked for numerous clients in the animated film and television industry, games, and the publishing world.

Randy loves the opportunity that his work gives him to infuse characters with life and story. Audiences experience stories through their characters and so the opportunity to be a part of shaping

that experience is something Randy cherishes. Being part of the storytelling process to such an extent is something profoundly interesting and exciting to him.

In addition to the work he does for clients, Randy has several personal projects he's pursuing and looks forward to the opportunity to share them with the world. He has a passion for storytelling and believes in the power it has to affect the way we think and act as human beings. He looks forward to a long and exciting career as an artist and storyteller.





RENÉ CÓRDOVA

CHARACTER DESIGNER
COMIC BOOK ARTIST

[Instagram.com/renecordovart](https://www.instagram.com/renecordovart)

[Facebook.com/elrenecordova](https://www.facebook.com/elrenecordova)



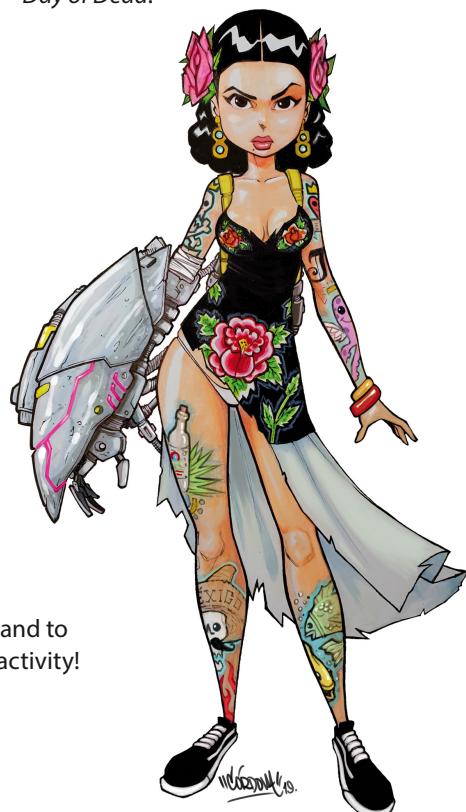
Outside of Mexico, René's work includes collaborations on magazine covers and the creation of character designs for use in sculptures, video games, and animated feature films.

René is currently an art director at Amber Studios while also working on children's books with his daughter, Renata, as a freelance artist for Scholastic on *Lego Batman* comics, and as a character designer on Marvel's *Spidey and His Amazing Friends*.

René plans to continue publishing his own personal stories as well as children's books with his daughter and to never stop creating character designs—his favorite activity!

René Córdova has 13 years' worth of experience in the illustration industry. He started out as a cartoonist, which he really enjoys.

In Mexico, he has published his own comic, art, and sketch books. René has worked for both comic and children's book publishers and was the art director and creator of characters for the film *Day of Dead*.



RODGON.com
Instagram.com/RodgonTheArtist
YouTube.com/c/RodgonTheArtist

RODGON
CARTOONIST
ILLUSTRATOR
TEACHER



Even with a new comic series called *ZOOKS* in the works, and many other wonderful things happening to him, Rodgon still welcomes anyone to reach out and say, "Hi." He has countless stories and lessons to teach—you can always see something new on his social media, where he welcomes everyone to pick his brain and get to that next level!

Rodgon (aka Rodrigo Gonzalez) is a San Diego-based cartoonist and illustrator. A late bloomer into art, he began his journey at 18 and has never looked back. Having worked in comics, animation, and apparel, as well as a freelance illustrator for more than 15 years, he is proudest of his daily drawings and YouTube channel. There he reaches thousands of people sharing his perspective on the daily struggles we all go through. He aims to inspire as many up-and-coming artists as possible with his videos and lessons, so that they can achieve their dreams.





MEIKE SCHNEIDER

3D ARTIST
ILLUSTRATOR

MeikeArts.com

Instagram.com/meikearts

Facebook.com/meikearts



Meike Schneider is a 3D artist and illustrator with a strong focus on characters, based in Cologne, Germany. She is probably best known through Instagram and Tom Bancroft's MerMay. Her work includes children's book illustration, character design, visual development, 3D character, and environment modeling as well as look development. Meike currently works as a freelancer for various animation studios and companies and as an instructor at the School of Games in Cologne.

Meike was highly influenced by Walt Disney's feature classics such as *Aladdin* and *Pocahontas*. CG Movies such as *Tangled*, *Frozen*, or *Wreck It Ralph* were some of the reasons she was inspired to pursue a career in animation.

After winning the Artist of the Month May 2016 by RebusFarm, her 3D character Little Mary was published in the *3D World* magazine, Issue 211, the world's best-selling magazine for CG artists.

After graduating from PIXL VISN media arts academy, Meike was a finalist in the Rookie Awards 2014, which led to a job at Dooblex, a studio for product visualization. While working full time, she started taking commissions and slowly building her own brand as an artist.

In 2019, Meike quit her job to freelance full time on projects such as children's book illustrations for *Finni & Fredo* and *My Best Book*, artwork for Adobe, visual development and character designs for the upcoming TV show *Coral Kins*, as well as character designs for Paris Hilton's mobile game.



AvelineStokart.com
Instagram.com/aveline_stokart
Facebook.com/avelinestokart

AVELINE STOKART
COMIC ARTIST
CHARACTER DESIGNER



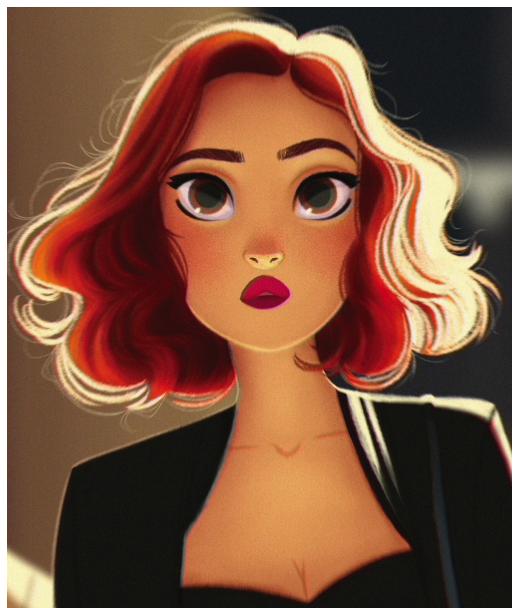
Fascinated by character design and creating universes, she developed a unique dimension to her creations by studying 3D animation at the Haute École Albert Jacquard in Belgium, where she graduated in 2011.

When she's not drawing, Aveline likes to discover and explore other techniques of artistic expression, such as pottery, woodworking, and music.

"I am always trying to evolve and discover new things and challenges," Aveline says. "My goal is to create beautiful images and atmospheres that release many different emotions."

Aveline Stokart is a visual development artist and comic book artist living in Belgium. She currently works on her own comic book and as a freelance character designer for various clients in the field of publishing and animation. Her clients include Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, DreamWorks TV, and Skydance Animation.

From an early age, she showed a particular interest in drawing—a natural fit, as she is highly curious and observant but also quite sensitive. She marvels at the beauty held within the simplest of things.





ERIKA WISEMAN

DIGITAL ARTIST
ILLUSTRATOR

ErikatheGoober.com
Instagram.com/erikathegoober
YouTube.com/c/erikathegoober
Behance.net/erikathegoober



Erika Wiseman (aka erikathegoober) is a freelance illustrator and character designer living in the United States. She loves drawing cute, colorful things and experimenting with new drawing techniques.

Erika began teaching herself to draw digitally in 2008. Since then, she has been working with a graphics tablet and Photoshop as well as Procreate to create her digital illustrations.

In 2017, she graduated from the University of Louisville with a bachelor in fine arts (with a concentration in drawing).

Erika made a name for herself on Instagram, which is the best place to find her art! One of her goals is to help and inspire others along their creative journey to be the best artists they can be.



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