
Walt Stanchfield 58

Notes from Walt Stanchfield's Disney Drawing Classes

"Go for the Truth!"

by Walt Stanchfield

GO FOR THE TRUTH!

Actually we create nothing of our ourselves, we merely use the creative force that activates us. And when we draw we are not using the left brain to record facts - we have shifted gears and are now using the right brain to create a little one picture story. With, of course, the facts that the left brain collected and named and itemized in former study periods. This is not a study period, this is a show and tell period (j time we are not studying).

We are not the car parts in the design room or where they mold the parts or on the assembly line - we are the car full of gas, traveling along the Pacific Coast Highway, heading for a nice Sea Food restaurant in Carmel.

Do you feel that you are too limited in knowledge? Robert Henri, that great teacher of art said that anyone could paint a masterpiece with what limited knowledge they have. It would be a matter of using that limited knowledge in the right (creative) way. Have you ever seen the "knowledge" or drawing ability of that great painter Albert Ryder? Probably not. But when you look at his nebulous paintings of ships at sea or skeletons riding around with nothing on, you sense the drama and have a feeling a story in being told. If its facts you want - pick up a Sears mail order catalogue.

I'm not advocating abandoning the study of the figure. Anatomy is a vital tool in drawing.- but don't mesmerize yourself into thinking that knowing the figure is going to make an artist of you.

What is going to make an artist out of you is a combination of a few basic facts about the body, a few basic principles of drawing and an extensive, obsessive desire and urge to express your feelings and impressions.

Yehudi Menuin, the violinist started out at the "top" of his profession. He played in concerts at a very young age and in his late teens was world famous. Suddenly (if late teens is sudden) he realized he'd never taken a lesson - he didn't know how he was playing the violin (the right brain hadn't been discovered then).

He worried that if that inspired way of playing ever left him - he'd not be able to play. So he took lessons and learned music (finally getting the left brain into the art).

It didn't alter his playing ability but it bought him some insurance.

I'm suggesting that somehow he had early on tapped the creative force and by passed the ponderous study period, like all genius seem to do. I have a Mozart piano piece that he wrote when he was around 9 years old. I've been working on it for years and still can't play it. Who does he think he is anyway? I've been studying piano for umpteen years and I still don't know the key signatures. The left side of the brain is absolutely numb. But when I set down, to play the piano sometimes that creative force takes my hands and extracts a hint of emotional sound out of the music. That's all I really care about. My sketching is the same way. I don't know a scapula from a sternum but when I venture out into the world with my sketch book, I am able to distill my impressions into a one frame story that totally tells my version of what I saw. When my wife Dee and I go on a vacation, she takes the photos and I sketch. She records the facts - I record the truth.

Shift gears! With the few facts you have - go for the truth!

