
Walt Stanchfield 66

Notes from Walt Stanchfield's Disney Drawing Classes

"A First Impression - Your Intended Goal"

By Walt Stanchfield

A FIRST IMPRESSION - YOUR INTENDED GOAL

Last week I touched briefly on my theory of the use of angles for getting movement in still drawings. I also have a theory about establishing the pose solidly in your mind before starting to draw. It's called "first impression." It allows you (actually forces you) to first of all decide what the pose represents to you story-wise. In doing so you get the juices flowing. Energy is gathered to carry off your goal. If you don't have anything to "tell" in -your drawing - your energy isn't aroused or is dissipated on a non-goal.

In "Unlimited Power," by Anthony Robbins, he puts it this way, "When the mind has a defined target, it can focus and direct and refocus and redirect until it reaches its intended goal. If it doesn't have a defined target, its energy is squandered." Establishing the goal of a drawing puts you in a position where you are committed to success, thus helping you to be more resourceful - it emboldens you to achieve - it calls forth and inspires the means to pull it off. Whatever the opposite of a vicious circle is, is what happens to you. "An important point worth adding is that there's an incredible dynamism inherent in this process. The more resources you develop, the more power you have; the more strength you feel, the more you can tap into even greater resources and ever more powerful states." That rousing quote from Unlimited Power was meant to be applied to anyone wishing to achieve some goal - well, drawing is a goal, and it takes energy to draw. So if it seems enticing, why not try its refreshing and energizing promise. Don't squander your energy on a poorly conceived first impression. Get the ball rolling with a pre-programmed story-telling drawing. (backed by all the above promises.)

You may be thinking of figure drawing as a still life - the model takes a pose and you struggle to capture it as it is. But for the purposes of studying for animation, think of each pose as one that has just come from another pose and will soon move into a new one. The model is an active person and has merely slowed down long enough for you to sketch just one tiny part of his or her daily actions. But it is not a still life. It is one action isolated from a whole series of actions.

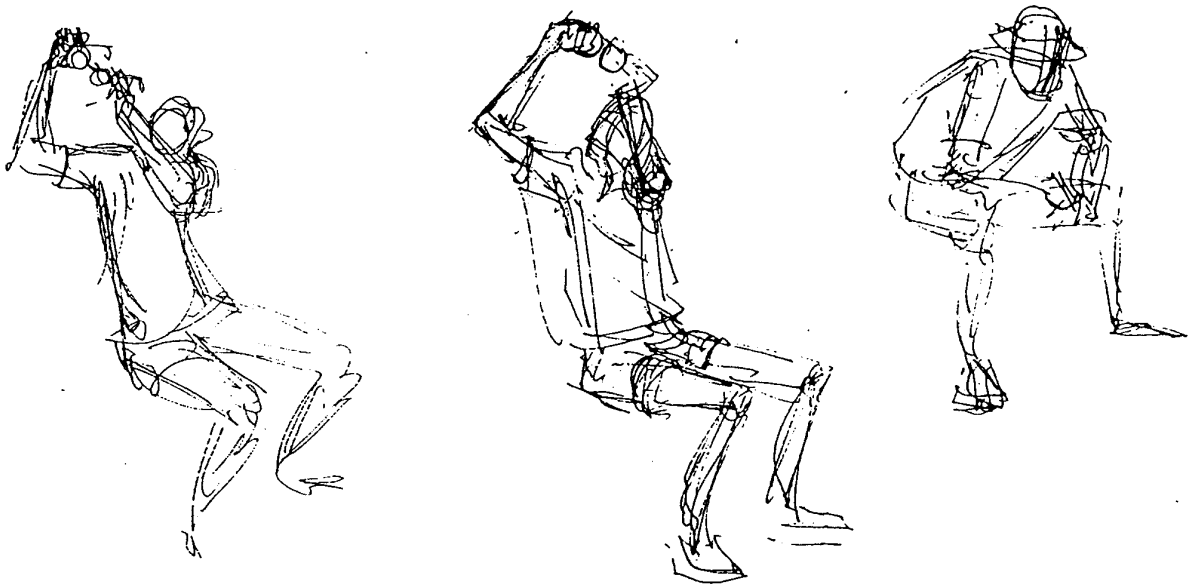
Don't study the model for the pose - study yourself, as if it were your body posing. When you have to make an animation drawing, you're not going to have a model handy. You'll have to do it in your head, and with your sense of kinetics. So if the model is pointing or stretching - do that yourself - Feel the muscles that pull, feel where the weight has to be in order to do that action. Notice where the stretches are and the squashes. Actually get up from time to time and assume the pose yourself. Then when you look back to the model for reference to make your sketch you will know what you are drawing - you will know it personally. And when you have to draw a similar pose sometime when there is no model handy, you can concoct all those feelings of a pose physically and mentally - and go right to it. It's not out there on the model, it's right there in yourself.

Of course you're mainly interested in 3 phases of an action - listed variously as preparation, anticipation, and action; or preparation, action, and follow through. It's a good practice when sketching to consider the pose as being one of those phases. Ask yourself, would this make a good anticipation drawing or would it serve as a main action? Imagine an anticipation drawing in front of it and a follow-through drawing after it. If it seems like it might be a good main action drawing yet is not quite extreme enough, take it upon yourself to push it to the extreme you desire. Go beyond what the model is offering you.

As you study the model for a first impression be careful not to think of it as a still life. Think of it as an action that might occur in a scene of animation. The model doesn't know your problems. You have a special problem. And your problem can be solved, not by copying the model, but by observing how the figure arrives at certain gestures so you can apply that process to whatever character you happen to be working on, whether it be a human character like Eric or Ariel, or a cartoon character like Roger Rabbit or Mickey.

Walt

GALLERY OF CLASS DRAWINGS



Ashley Brannon did this nice loose, expressive sketch. Right next to it is Pete Docter's version using different tensions in the body. And another simple but solid sketch by Pete.

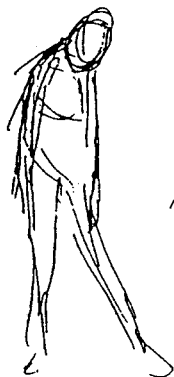
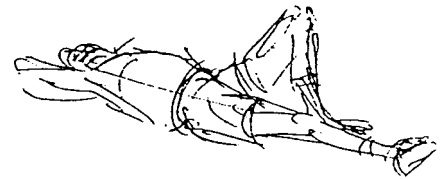


James Fuji's drawings are slightly more finished but nonetheless loose and expressive.

"A First Impression - Your Intended Goal"



Dan Boulos whips in his drawings with gusto, so are usually crisp and simple.



Brenda Chapman - Lima likes to experiment with the poses as shown here. The chap upper right is scratching his back, not being hung.



"A First Impression - Your Intended Goal"



ON THE TABLE
TO EATON STOP
SEP 1, 69