Walt Stanchfield 18 <small>Notes from Walt Stanchfield's Disney Drawing Classes</small>

"Double Vision" **by Walt Stanchfield**

DOUBLE VISION

We are going to try an experiment in the Tues. & Wed. evening classes. There will be a model in a costume that is only close to the production model that we are going to transfer him into. This will give you an opportunity to break away altogether from copying the details of the live model. The production model's costume is so simple it won't require any special attention. Try to capture the pose the live model is offering you but just "throw in" the shapes and costume of the production model. The poses will still be relatively short, so you won't have time to get involved in detail or "cleanup". At first you may think this is a waste of a perfectly good live model, but as you get with it, I think you'll find it to be a revelation. It might even become addictive.

There will be a model drawing and a large paper clip supplied which will hold the copy erect on top of the drawing board where it will be visible at all times. This can be a real fun session - and a learning one. Do not attempt to copy anything on the live model except the gesture, and do not try to copy anything specific off the model sheet - just sketch in the most general terms. Think of it like this: rather than throwing a tiny dart at a small target, throw a handful of pebbles. If you get even one pebble on the target - you're a winner.

Occasionally a bit of live action film is used as source material for animation. Since it is impossible to find actors who are constructed like the cartoon characters, the animator has to extract the essence of the action from the film or photostat and transfer that to the drawings. It takes a kind of "double vision" - you are looking at the live action but you are seeing the cartoon character. You may be looking at a person 7 heads tall but drawing a cartoon character 3 or 4 heads tall. It requires a special knack - but it is a learnable knack.

In the early '30s when the use of live action was first tried, it was a period of discovery, a period of great excitement. That discovery is history, and now each artist has to discover for themselves the merits and even the necessity of using live action, whether in the form of live models, film clips or photostats. After all, all cartoon characters, no matter how cartoony, are built on human traits or attributes.

Learning to see in this "double vision" can be fun. In their book "The Illusion Of Life", Ollie and Frank state, "And the spirit of fun and discovery was probably the most important element of that period." Don't let the statement, "that period" squelch your spirit of discovery, pursuit and involvement.
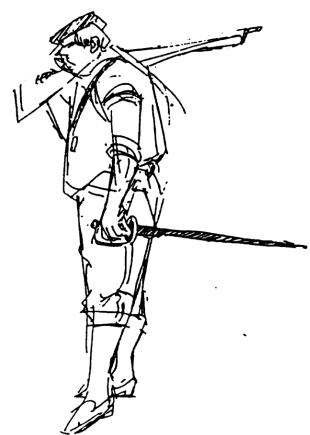
Again I quote from the "Illusion Of Life", "But whenever we stayed too close to the photostats, or directly copied even a tiny piece of human action, the results looked very strange. The moves appeared real enough, but the figure lost the illusion of life .... Not until we realized that photographs must be redrawn in animatable shapes, (our proven tools of communication) were we able to transfer this knowledge to cartoon animation. It was not the photographed action of an actor's swelling cheek that mattered, it was the animated cheek in our drawings that had to communicate. Our job was to make the cartoon figure go through the same movements as the live actor, with the same timing and the same staging, but, because animatable shapes called for a difference in proportions, the figure and its model could not do things in exactly the same way. The actor's movements had to be reinterpreted in the world of our designs and shapes and forms."

So come to the class and do some discovery of your own. It will be a cartoony character we will be working with, which means you can sort of, as the saying goes, hang loose. And to show you how loose you may be I have taken some class drawings of Craig, our model, in other costumes and turned him into Louis. I even used a female dancer and a little girl to demonstrate that it is not so much the model as it is your ability to adapt the human figure to the cartoon figure. These are my first tries at the character, so to the trained eye may be disgustingly off model, but for our purposes anything faintly resembling the character will do.

Come in the spirit of fun and discovery.

Walt