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# Walt Stanchfield 36

Notes from Walt Stanchfield's Disney Drawing Classes

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More on "*Essence*" Drawing

by Walt Stanchfield

## MORE ON "ESSENCE" DRAWING

You might think of drawing as composed of 2 elements of life - mental and physical. The physical being the knowledge of anatomy, and the mechanics of how that anatomy works. The other part is the mental, which involves the whole gamut of moods and emotions. Our job as artists is to somehow tie those 2 elements together into a readable expression of whatever it is we want to illustrate. In our sessions we have been emphasizing the mood and emotional part of the gestures. Needless to say both areas are necessary for a maximum of expression. But whereas the mechanical part of anatomy is traditionally taught in anatomy classes, the mental and emotional side has been left for the artist to develop according to the artists needs or preference. Ultimately in animation one must face up to the emotional gesture when called upon by the director to interject it into his scenes.

As an example of the marriage of the physical and mental - take the breaking of a vase. The physical act of breaking a vase can be accomplished by simply dropping the vase on a hard surface. But to show the emotional reason for breaking the vase would require the artist to imagine himself in such an angry state that would cause him to break it, and get that feeling into the drawings. Each artist would have his own subtle manner of doing it but basically there is a sort of universal body language that says "anger".

There is no doubt that there is a physical universe but we deal with it in a mental and emotional way. A physical being without emotions would make a lousy room-mate. Nor would a scene of one of our characters perfectly drawn but without some mental motivation be of help to the picture. A roughly drawn scene, off model but containing the essence of the storyline would be much more desirable. Then let the one who draws so well clean the scene up - but retaining all the emotional gesture so vital to the making of a good Disney film.

Hours and hours should be spent with anatomy books, old Disney films, and scenes of the old masters like Milt Kahl and Ollie Johnston. Also much time must be spent flexing one's emotional muscles with "essence" sketching, reading a great variety of authors - novels, biographies, psychology, metaphysics, and of course ... humor. Don't be like a friend who used to say he was waiting for the "Light to Come On". Well, he was a real charming guy but he retired before the light came on. Moral: Don't wait - immerse yourself in the search now.

I have xeroxed some drawings that Frederick Banbery did for the book, " The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club" by Dickens, that I think are an excellent example of "Essence Drawings". There is a minimum of line and rendering, but a maximum of gesture and feeling. And they radiate the type of humor the story calls for.

Walt

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