
Walt Stanchfield 57

Notes from Walt Stanchfield's Disney Drawing Classes

"Getting at the Root of the Problem"

by Walt Stanchfield

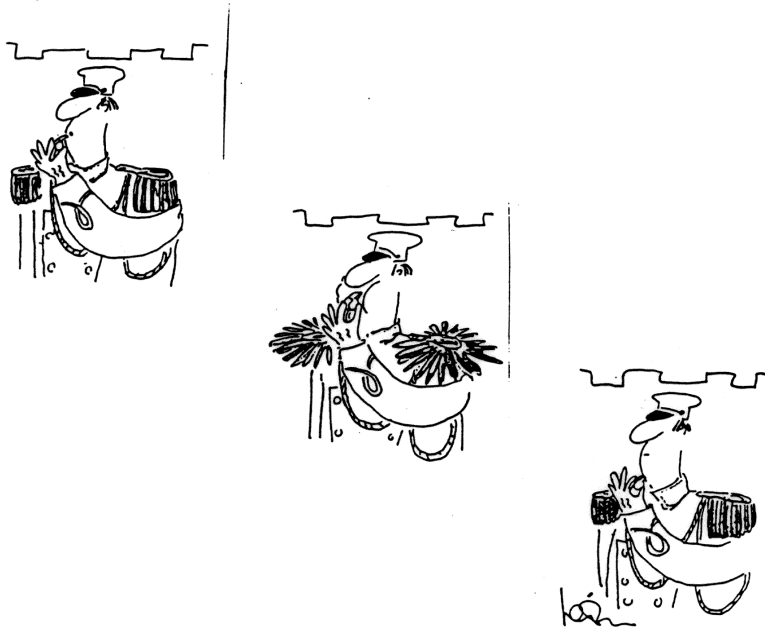
GETTING AT THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

You can have a nicely shaped fruit tree by pruning and trimming it, but if you want that tree to bear fruit abundantly you have to get at the roots--feed them and water them.

So in drawing. By cleverness and superficial arrangement of line and flurries of "action lines", one can very often come up with a nice looking drawing. But to continually draw meaningful drawings that portray a desired effect (tell a story), you have to develop the roots of draftsmanship, that is, the principles of good drawing, fertilized and watered by a good feel for acting, story telling and some plain old fashioned insight. If you try to make a nice looking drawing without including all the above, you are battling against pretty high odds. In tennis we call it a low percentage shot. Any line or shape you put down on the paper should mean something to the pose, if it doesn't the odds get higher. If it helps to reveal the pose or the gesture, good, that helps you to proceed because you have something down for all the rest of the lines and shapes to relate to. For surely, every line and shape you put down should relate to every other line and shape and to the over all gesture itself. Every line and every shape!

In full animation an arm move: will create a reaction in concentric rings of diminishing influence throughout the whole body. Real live people do not move in "limited animation": hold the body--move the arms, hold the head--move the mouth. When a woman winks, she winks with her whole body. When a man points, he points with his whole body. To try to draw a pose by concentrating on the local trimmings alone would miss the essence of the pose for sure. The roots of the body--the structure and the farthestmost parts of the body--the hands and feet must be considered as parts of the gesture and related to it in whatever proportion they deserve.

When you taste a well cooked dish, you get a certain sensation, a oneness of taste, though many ingredients have gone into its creation. So with a gesture drawing. Many parts have gone into its creation (head, neck, arms, legs, etc.), but it takes that oneness of sensation, a blending or marriage of all the parts to make a well drawn gesture. There is a shifting of mental gears wherein you shift from low gear (the parts) into overdrive (the oneness of the overall).



“Getting at the Root of the Problem“

I used to sing in operettas, concerts, weddings and churches. There was a similar problem to overcome--to stop singing notes, words and tones and to concentrate on telling the story. One of my singing teachers kept on me to stop "singing" just "talk" the song on the proper pitch.. tell the story. He taught me to study the "parts" well while learning, but while performing, forget the notes, the dynamics, the key, the beat--all the parts-- and just tell the story.

Walt