
Walt Stanchfield 14

Notes from Walt Stanchfield's Disney Drawing Classes

"Copy the Model...Who me?"

by Walt Stanchfield

COPY THE MODEL WHO ME?

When working from a model you must keep in mind the fact that you are not copying what is before you, but that you are searching for a gesture one that will be applicable to any character that you might be called upon draw (animate), say, the mermaid, one of the sailors, or the prince in the “Mermaid”; Mickey or Goofy. Again I use the term “shift gears”, (mental gears), to picture the release from the shackles of any false burden, responsibility or obligation to copy the model.

The poses in our class are purposely kept short so that a quick first impression can be summoned, worked on and developed. Short pose sketching also excites you to a higher pitch of awareness so the creative juices flow more freely, and seeing becomes more acute. Quick sketching promulgates a feeling of spontaneity in the drawings. Short poses thwart any attempts to get you involved in unnecessary details. Most importantly, the short pose condenses the whole process of drawing so the wholeness of the gesture predominates and the gestural qualities of the pose permeates the entire process of drawing.

Any of you who have worked on photostats or have used live action in animation know the devastating effects of copying and tracing. What is acceptable for live action becomes bland, vapid and uninteresting when traced into line. There has to be an appropriate interpretation and restatement into a cartoon style. The term “caricature” pretty well explains the transformation. So in a classroom situation that same transformation has to take place. You should strive for a release from the live-action-ness of the model and extract from it, not what it is, but what it is doing - the same as you would while sitting at an animation desk working on a scene.

Here is a photograph of a chap picking up a box. The drawing next to it is a tracing, while the rest of the sketches were done (albeit, crudely), to demonstrate how slightly caricaturing the action can bring out different nuances of the pose without drastically changing the original pose. A Mickey and a Goofy were added also to show a possible application of such a pose in a scene of animation.

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