Freehand Figure Drawing for Illustrators: Mastering the Art of Drawing from Memory

By David H. Ross

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Draw the Human Figure Anywhere, Anytime

For today's in-demand comic creators, animators, video game artists, concept designers, and more, being able to quickly draw the human figure in a variety of action-packed poses is a requirement. But what do you do if you don't have models or photographic reference readily available? In *Freehand Figure Drawing for Illustrators*, artist and instructor David H. Ross provides an alternative solution, showing you how to master freehand figure drawing without visual reference by using a modern twist on the classic technique of blocking out the human figure in mannequin form. Step-by-step lessons guide illustrators from basic poses (standing, running, jumping) to extreme motions (throwing punches, high kicking). For on-the-go artists, *Freehand Figure Drawing for Illustrators* allows you complete freedom to bring your figures to life at any time.

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Editorial Review

Review
Dave Ross has created an invaluable tool for both students and professionals. While photos and models are useful, artists shouldn't be limited by the reference available to them. Dave gives the artist the means to build a figure from the imagination based on gesture, construction, and anatomy.

--June Brigman, comics artist, co-creator of *Power Pack* from Marvel Comics, and professor of sequential art at the Savannah College of Art and Design

About the Author
DAVID H. ROSS is an illustrator who has worked with all of the major North American comic book publishers including Marvel Comics, DC Comics, and Dark Horse Comics. He has produced storyboards for feature films, and prepared artwork and advised on special projects for television. For the past ten years, he has held workshops on drawing for comic books and has acted as co-coordinator and instructor of a successful three-year Sequential Arts diploma program at Max the Mutt College of Animation, Art, and Design in Toronto, Canada.

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Introduction

The term *freehand drawing* describes the practice of drawing from the imagination without the aid of a live model or photographic reference.

Freeing the artist from any dependency on such sources allows for maximum versatility—the artist is restricted only by his or her imagination or skill level. As it applies specifically to the human figure, it is the drawing of the body in any pose imaginable and from any angle—without the need for a reference.

Freehand Figure Drawing for Illustrators offers up a constructive approach to drawing the human form that can be traced back to the early 1900s. Illustrators of that era developed a system for blocking out the human figure using a *drawn mannequin*.

This book focuses on that drawn mannequin, putting it through its paces in ways that those early illustrators could not have foreseen. There are studies of standing, walking, and running figures, of course, but also leaping, dodging, and flying ones. Mannequins throwing punches and high kicking demonstrate the mechanics of motion and will help you to examine the limitations of the body's movement. The drawn mannequin is nothing more or less than a visualization tool—a simplified representation of the human body that enables the artist to block figures into place with proper proportions and posing.

It is particularly useful when dealing with more complex camera angles (for example, the bird's-eye and worm's-eye views). With a drawn mannequin, the artist doesn't have to deal with the details of specific anatomy, folds in clothing, or lighting and can focus on achieving a solid, well-constructed underdrawing (or mannequin), first.

The mannequin is transparent (which is why it's also known as a *glass mannequin*) to help the artists using it

think of what they are drawing as three-dimensional or *in the round*. This is a crucial mind-set for artists to attain. They must think of everything they draw as having *volume*—of occupying space—if they wish that sense to be conveyed to their audience. On an even more practical note: the mannequin's transparency allows the artist to locate the sometimes obscured connection of that far arm or leg to the trunk of the body.

Mannequins used in this book range from basic to intermediate to advanced. Each successive category introduces more human anatomy into the mannequin figures, enabling you to progress in stages. I have varied the mannequins throughout the book on a need-to-see basis. Earlier chapters contain a higher percentage of basic mannequins, while later ones such as those in chapter 10 are weighted toward the advanced model.

The first chapter of this book offers a primer in technical perspective. This is a necessary first step for those considering freehand drawing of any sort. The ability to visualize in three dimensions on the flat page or screen is indispensable to the process. The fundamentals outlined in chapter 1 will help instill in you a heightened sense of depth, which you can then apply directly to drawing the human figure.

Your ability to draw convincing poses—both in form and in gesture—will increase in direct proportion to your understanding of anatomy. The study of human anatomy is included in this book, both as sub sections in the chapters covering the head, hands,
and feet, as well as in whole chapters devoted to the human skeleton (chapter 8) and
the muscles (chapter 9). The skeleton is the foundation that shapes the body; however,
it is the muscles that make the body "move." Ingrained anatomical knowledge is espe-cially important for the freehand artist, since there is no actual model or other reference immediately at hand to guide you. If you can include muscle tone and bone-related landmarks in your freehand sketching, it will greatly add to your speed and versatility.

Freehand Figure Drawing for Illustrators is for anyone who has ever dreamed of picking up a pencil and drawing spontaneously from the imagination. That being said, it certainly does represent a valuable skillset for the professional artist whether working in the field of animation, cinematic storyboarding, concept art, or book and comic book illustration.

Beyond all other considerations, however, there is the simple satisfaction that can come from adopting the freehand approach. This is what drawing should be about, straight from the mind to the page with no stops or detours along the way!

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Neil Williams:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or read a book eligible Freehand Figure Drawing for Illustrators: Mastering the Art of Drawing from Memory? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have some other opinion?

Angel Gardner:

Exactly why? Because this Freehand Figure Drawing for Illustrators: Mastering the Art of Drawing from Memory is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap this but latter it will surprise you with the secret it inside. Reading this book adjacent to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such incredible way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book get such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking method. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I were you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

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