

Vive la difference! Faces separate the sexes

This is another in a series of lessons on art and drawing by special columnist David Messing. He has taught for eight years and operates an art store, Art Store and More, 18774 Middlebelt, Livonia. Messing encourages questions and comments from readers. You may write him at his store or c/o Observer Newspapers, 23355 Farmington Road, Farmington MI 48034.



Artifacts

TO PROVE I'm cool, I brought in a radio for the student area and tuned it to a station that I thought the students would enjoy (it sounded like rock and roll to me). Everybody just sat there looking at each other as if to say "aw... isn't that cute, he's trying to relate to us, he really thinks that is rock music."

Nancy, and Joelle are two "awesome" teen-agers who know what is really "decent rock" (so they say). Why, they even took the "mojo" rock for life pledge or something like that. Whenever I want to say anything to Joelle I have to lift one side of the Walkman away from her ear. Joelle and Nancy tell me that according to all rock music standards my so-called rock and roll station is a "real bummer... for sure."

Since I can't relate to a certain few students by playing their music, I compromise by letting them draw pictures from their album covers, which I might add, look like home slides from "The Addams Family."

I was looking over one of the albums a student brought in and I mentioned how pretty the girl on the cover was. Immediately there was a great silence followed by snickers and giggles. So I looked a little closer at the cover and

realized my mistake. The "pretty girl" was a guy with makeup on. But he was kind of pretty. That mistake made me realize that we artists need to know the structural differences between male and female. Of course, you can be fooled by surface makeup and hair but just in the head and neck, there are definite structural differences that all artists should be aware of.

Let us first talk about the obvious features, like the eyes, nose and lips. The eyes on a female are usually more rounded and relatively large compared to males. The roundness of the eyes make them appear to be more open, which is definitely a beautiful characteristic of the female face. There is a greater distance between the upper eye lid and the eyebrow, which also gives the female eye a largeness or roundness. Since the female eye is already round, it is no surprise that as of several thousand years ago women began adding makeup to the outside of the eye. This makes the eye appear larger and is considered a trait of beauty.

The eyes are usually the most attractive facial feature on a female. When it comes to eyes on the male head "what you see is what you get." Male eyes are usually flatter and longer, their eyebrows are rugged and often run across the nose to meet in the middle. The fact that the eyebrows appear closer to the upper lid causes the male eyes to look deep set. For this reason also you see less of the white of the eye on a man.

THE FEMALE nose is usually more smooth and rounded. By rounded I mean that you see less of the structure of the nose. The female nose is just a little neglected. By reason of the natural beauty of the eyes and lips, usually enhanced by makeup, the nose is often unnoticed. Now the male nose is a real piece of art (or maybe even abstract art). Male noses come in all sizes, textures and shapes, but as a general rule they more rightly show the cartilage and planes that make up the basic structure of the nose.

The female lips are like the eyes, more rounded and relatively large. The play of light across them is at least interesting, at best beautiful. I guess you can tell this article is being written by a man. But if being an artist has done anything for me it has helped me to appreciate the beauty of the beautiful, the strength of the strong and the miracle of God's hands work in all creation. Even though the basic structure of the lips of the male and female are the same, the male lips are flatter and thinner. Because of this, the male lips often are smooth and the full female lips tend to have more wrinkles.

NOW HERE is something I bet you didn't know, the female forehead is rounded or bulging and smooth. The male forehead is flat and has what is called a brow ridge. The brow ridges are two prominences or bumps under the eyebrow just over the nose. Most men have them and most women don't.

Once you know what to look for, this brow ridge on most men is very obvious. The purpose of the brow ridge is to better protect the eye. If you take a long flat object and hold it up to your eye you will see that it touches your eyebrow and your cheekbone, but hardly touches your eyeball. Some women because of the largeness of their eyes and the absence of a prominent brow ridge find the flat object does indeed touch the eyeball. This difference of flat or round forehead and brow ridge prominence or absence is very important since it is so characteristic, and must not be overlooked in your drawing.

The female chin is more rounded and delicate. The male chin is often square and padded so much so that it often forms a cleft or at least a depression. In all of the features mentioned so far the male features are bold and can be drawn quick and linear, the female features, however, are delicate and should be drawn soft and shaded. I have often pictured that if you could take the classic male head and sand down all the features, brow ridge, forehead and chin you would produce the classic female head.

One big characteristic difference between males and females is in the part that supports the head which is the neck. The female neck is long and graceful where the male neck is short and thick. Probably every college football team has several men on their

squad nicknamed "no-neck." To explain this difference without all the Latin names for muscles and cartilage will perhaps make it a little easier.

In the male neck the Adam's apple is very prominent. Then below is another bump called the cricoid cartilage. Below this is the thyroid body and all these structures are surrounded by supporting muscles. In the male neck however, the thyroid body is deep set into the neck. In the female neck the thyroid body is full and rounded which produces an uninterrupted line from the thyroid body to the collar bone. The female collar bones tend to be slightly angled up toward the neck whereas the male they are more horizontal. Likewise the female shoulders are less square which also emphasizes the length and gracefulness of the neck. The male shoulders are square and when combined with the horizontal collar bones and supporting muscles creates the appearance of a shorter neck.

Skin is skin, but how different it is on male and female. I am sure that most men neglect their facial skin as compared to women and perhaps this causes the coarse appearance and large pores which seem to be more obvious on the male head. Female skin is fair, smooth and should be rendered delicately. Male facial skin can, however, be rendered rather boldly and fine cross hatching seem to add a delightful realism to even a pencil sketch.

By David Messing
special writer

There are enough things in everyday life to keep you uptight and nervous, so when I listen to music I like something slow and relaxing. My students say that the music I play at the store is elevator music! Nothing could be further from the truth... I play dentist office music.

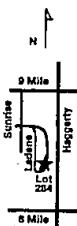
Occasionally I am forced to defend my music, which causes me to say things like "hey... I'm cool," really, I like rock music in five minute spurts, here and there, mostly there. Also, my mother-in-law, June, is my partner in the Art Store and I really can't imagine her working with "get down funky" music in the background.

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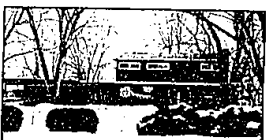
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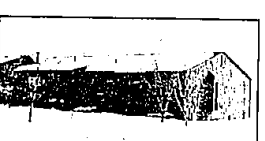
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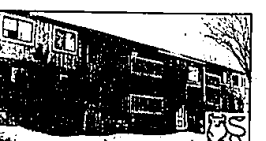
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