

To draw a face — study it carefully

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(S.F.3E)

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, 23132 Farmington Road, Farmington MI 48024.

By David Messing
special writer

I ended the last Artifacts column with a statement about everyone's face being relatively the same, yet wonderfully different.

Well, my wife Sandy has an identical twin, and this forces me to alter that statement to: wonderfully the same, yet relatively different. In the 17 years that I have known the twins I have only mixed them up about 175 times!

Boy, could I tell you some stories. One day while I was taking a shower, my wife opened the door and said, "Honey, I'm going shopping, I'll be back in an hour." It seemed within seconds after I heard the side door close that Sandy was back again, knocking at the door.

Grumbling and dripping, I wrapped a towel around myself, opened the door and asked, "What's the matter, did you forget something?" Then, after what seemed like an hour, my wife's twin said, "No, but I think you did."

I was in the twilight zone for a second or two and then I began looking close to find that again I had mistaken Sue for Sandy.

When I am looking for the differences, I can easily tell the two apart. But, with just a casual glance, I do have some difficulty distinguishing between them.

A CASUAL glance is how we go through most of our day. After all, if you study the facial features of every person you see during the day you would be viewed as a flirt at best and at worst a "weirdo."

It is, however, the assignment of an artist, when commissioned to draw anything or any person, to look closely and study carefully. If, for example, you are to do a portrait of a person, you should think back to the basic shape in each of the features, then change those features to match the features of your model.

Every "drawing of the head" book ever written has a diagram which shows how the features should relate to

Artifacts



This is how to develop proportions when drawing a face.

each other. That's fine, but these relationships are average, or should I say ideal, relationships of features.

Your model subject will surely vary from the diagrammed face in a learn-to-draw book. When I was about 20 years old I fell in love with anatomy. I studied it to perfection. I even witnessed dissections to better understand the relationships of muscle and bone.

My anatomy teacher was Mr. Zambryski, the all-time most difficult professor at Wayne State University. When he walked into our Anatomy 0100 class, four students stood up and dropped the class immediately! (What a reputation he had!) He made us learn so much about every bone, muscle and tendon that at times we thought we were in pre-med school.

Now, 18 years later, I still remember the basics. I was so wrapped up in anatomy that I forgot that real people varied from the anatomy books and pictures.

ONE DAY I was brought back down to earth when a little woman stepped onto the bus. Ears, according to every anatomy book, are supposed to be located somewhere between the eyebrows and the line of the lips. But this woman had a set of ears that just wouldn't quit. Her ear lobes were well below the line of her lips and the tops of her ears were hidden under a hat.

In amazement I stared at her profile. There, by revelation, I learned that all humans in some way vary from the

ideal faces and bodies provided in my books.

The construction of the human head is first a study in proportion. First, work to locate and position each feature to produce a human face. Then change the features of your subject.

Basically, the relationship of the features of the face and head are simple. First, lightly sketch the outline of the head. Then divide this egg-shaped oval in half to produce the line of the eyes.

Remember, as I mentioned last week, to develop both eyes at the same time. The distance between the eyes is usually the width of one eye.

To locate the length of the nose and line of the mouth, divide the face into three equal parts. Allow this division to start at the hairline, not the top of the head, and end at the chin. So one-third from the hairline is the line of the eyebrows and two-thirds from the hairline is the location of the nose. Have I lost you yet?

THE THIRD PART is where we will locate the mouth. To do so divide this third part into thirds. One-third down from the line of the nose is the line of the lips. Now, re-establish the outline of the head to better fit the features.

To check your creation (or creature) the width of the head at the eyes should be about the same as the distance from the line of the eyes to the chin. Remember, also, the hairline (or in my case where the hairline used to be) is not at the top of the head. The hairline is

down from the top of the head about the same distance as the lip line is from the line of the nose.

One other check is that the width of the nose is usually equal to the distance between the eyes. Somewhere between the line of the eyebrows and the line of the lips locate the ears.

The hair on the head should be drawn so that it is larger than the beginning shape of the head. On beginning students plaster the hair down so that it's exactly the line of the head.

The eyes and mouth are the shapes they are because of the underlying muscles. Both eyes and mouth have an orbiting or circular group of muscles. The skin wrinkles at perpendiculars to the direction of the muscles. This is why we develop radiating wrinkles around the mouth and those (awful on women, distinguished on men) crows feet outside the eyes.

THE CONSTRUCTION of the nose and ears is mostly cartilage. For this reason, the nose stays pretty smooth most of our lives. So if you are upset about your crows feet, maybe you'll feel better if you just brag about how smooth your nose is!

Since I have a beard, I am expert on facial hair. I grew a beard to hide a facial defect — a double chin. The double chin is gone, but I can't even think about shaving off my "natural beauty," as I call it.

One day my family talked me into shaving off my beard. I bounded, bare-faced, into the living room singing. There, in silence, I stood waiting for a comment. Finally, someone said, "Maybe you ought to grow it back."

Anyway, drawing facial hair is sometimes difficult. For example, you don't want the eyebrows or mustache of a man to look painted on fake. The trick to drawing realistic hairlines and facial hair is to slowly graduate into dense hair with soft, fuzzy edges where the skin is gradually covered by hair or whiskers.

Always construct the head and locate all the features before you begin adding on the hair of the head or the beard on the face. Nothing looks more amateurish than a sketch of some old, bearded man that is all out of proportion. This same rule applies for drawing clowns. First draw the face structurally correct, then add the clownlike colors and features.

NEXT TIME you look at a painting of clowns, imagine what those faces would look like without the makeup. Often artists are so eager to draw the beard of an old man or the facial patterns of the clown that they fail to support them with accurate and proportioned features.

Because of the proportionate accuracy of the human body anyone that can count, can construct a decent drawing of a head on paper.



Prodigious Picasso

Among the 253 prints by Pablo Picasso at Detroit Institute of Arts through March 25 is "The Weeping Woman," pictured above. Done in 1937, it is drypoint, sugar-lift aquatint and scraper. Included in "Picasso: the Printmaker" are lithographs, serigraphs, etchings, woodcuts, linocut cuts and monotypes. Open, free of charge, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.

Master gardener classes start Feb. 3

Although winter covers Michigan and only seed catalogs remind us of the gardening season, now is the time to sharpen your horticultural skills.

Starting on Feb. 3, the Master Gardener training program starts in Oakland County. The in-depth sessions will be held on Tuesdays for 10 weeks. Sessions will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the North Office Building located in the Oakland County Government Complex near Pontiac.

The total cost for participating in the Master Gardener Program is \$30. Unlike other classes on gardening, Master Gardener is designed for people who at least a moderate level of horticultural experience. However,

previous formal training isn't required.

Master Gardener candidates are also expected to volunteer at least 30 hours of time during the upcoming gardening season. Master Gardener

volunteers fulfill an active educational role by staffing plant clinics, telephone hotlines and giving gardening talks. Of course, other educational services can be acceptable.

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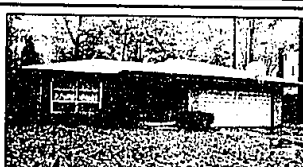
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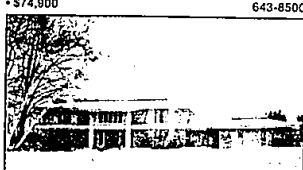
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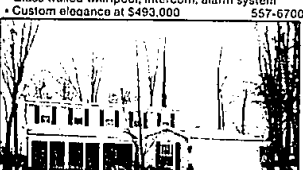
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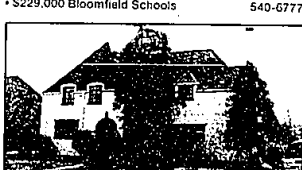
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