

PART 1

Artist insight

INTRODUCTION TO LIFE DRAWING

Life drawing is arguably the best way to improve your skills at depicting the human form. **Joel Carlo** guides you through his figure drawing essentials

Artist PROFILE

Joel Carlo

COUNTRY: US

CLIENTS: NASCAR, Dodge, Toyota and Fox Television



Joel Carlo is a freelance artist residing out of Denver, Colorado with

a background in both traditional and digital media. His client list is varied and ranges from commissioned work for small studio projects to larger commissions for big-name clients.

In the first of an essential three-part series for budding artists, this workshop walks you through the basics of sourcing, posing and drawing the human body.

1 SETTING UP YOUR MODEL

CHOOSING A MODEL

Unless you're running a life drawing workshop, choosing a model is typically left up to the instructor. The models made available to you can and should be both male and female, of different age groups and ethnicities. This keeps you from becoming accustomed to drawing the same thing repeatedly and the variation will help you to stay challenged in your figure drawings.

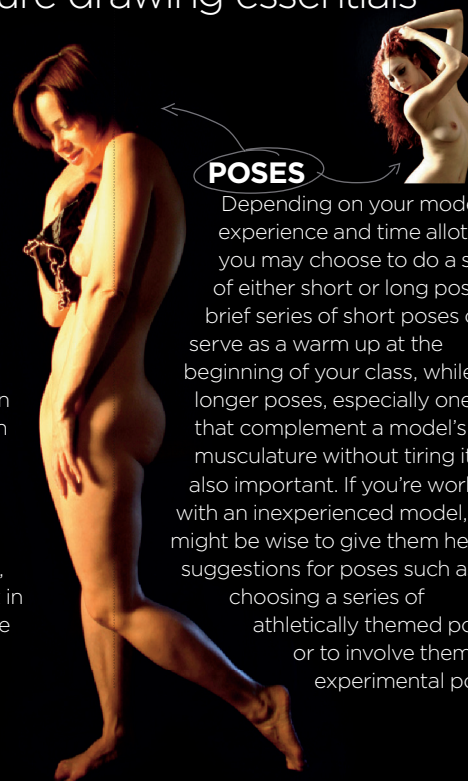
SETTING

When working with a live model, certain conditions should be met so you can create an easy working environment for them. Making sure that your model is comfortable is paramount. Things such as a non-distracting environment, the right room temperature and adequate rest breaks between poses should be considered in order to accommodate your model accordingly.

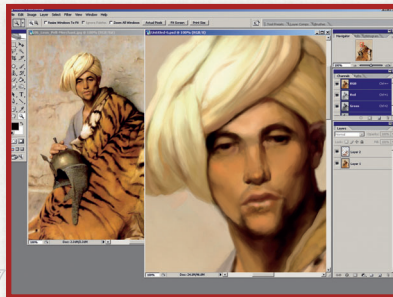
Lighting is also extremely significant. Finding a good facility with adequate lighting, especially one where the light in the room helps accentuate the musculature of your model is especially important.

POSES

Depending on your model's experience and time allotted, you may choose to do a series of either short or long poses. A brief series of short poses can serve as a warm up at the beginning of your class, while longer poses, especially ones that complement a model's musculature without tiring it, are also important. If you're working with an inexperienced model, it might be wise to give them helpful suggestions for poses such as choosing a series of athletically themed poses or to involve them in experimental poses.



2 MODEL ALTERNATIVES



MASTER WORKS

If a model isn't available, the next best thing is for you to draw directly from drawings, paintings and sculptures created by the old masters. A trip to an art gallery will not only be inspiring, but will give a fantastic opportunity to copy these works at close range. If you're unable to do this, copying from an art book will be adequate.

PHOTO REFERENCE

Photography is another alternative when a live model isn't available. Concern about working from photo references (due to distortion created by a camera lens as opposed to how we normally see things) is a common debate. There are limitations to working from photographs, so the key is to choose photos that provide adequate information such as good

lighting that accents a figure's musculature and proportions. Being able to discern and extract this info from a photograph is an important step in creating good drawings.



CD/DVD MEDIA AND SOFTWARE

In recent years specialised media and software have been made available to artists that act as virtual drawing studios. CloudStars' Virtual Figure Drawing Studio is a virtual studio that enables you to pose a 3D model in a variety of ways with different visualisation options and adjustable camera preferences. Another alternative is the Virtual Pose CD-ROM set which provides full figure, high resolution Quicktime VR poses that can be rotated a full 360 degrees with zoom and print capabilities. Both of these are affordable and convenient alternatives when working with a real model is not possible.



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3 EQUIPMENT

SKETCHBOOK, PEN AND PENCILS

A simple sketchbook is a really cheap solution to more expensive equipment alternatives. They are extremely portable and do not require the type of effort to carry or maintain that larger sketch pads do. Using a pen or pencil with a sketchbook is the typical standard. Pencils come in various lead grades that can provide different types of lines and make it easier to erase mistakes. Mechanical pencils are an alternative to standard pencils and their replaceable leads are great if you don't want to be bothered with pencil sharpeners. Working with pen can be a bit more challenging and require more concentration, which leaves less room for error.



NEWSPRINT, CONTE CRAYONS AND CHARCOAL

Conte crayons are square, wax and oil based sticks used for drawing and sketching. They are thinner and harder than traditional pastels and can be found in an assortment of colours. Conte crayons should be used lightly when sketching before making darker and more deliberate strokes. Charcoal, however, adheres loosely to paper, making it easy to erase and can be found in either square sticks or in pencil form. Both can be used on a variety of textured or smooth paper surfaces such as newsprint or paper suited for pastels.

GRAPHICS TABLETS

Graphics tablets are flat-surfaced peripheral devices that attach to your computer and can be used to draw using graphics software such as Adobe Photoshop or Corel Painter. Graphic tablets enable you to draw or paint digitally in an intuitive manner due to the similarities they share in the way you would draw or paint with a pencil or brush. There's a wide variety of tablets available on the market to suit most users' needs. Although they generally provide the same features, some are more feature rich than others (such as pressure detection or tilt) and can provide a larger working area. They can be expensive but can also be a sound investment for someone interested in creating work digitally.

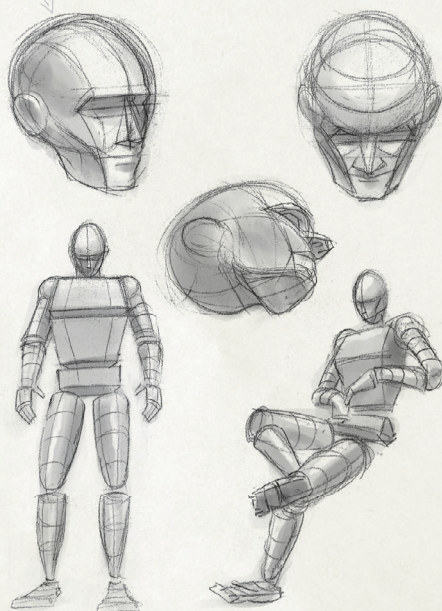


Workshops

➔ 4 BASICS OF DRAWING HUMAN FORM

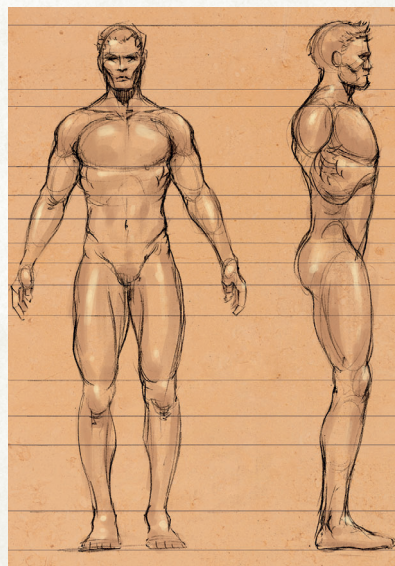
SHAPE

Understanding shape and form is one of the quickest ways of achieving good control and depth in figure drawing. Training yourself to think in three dimensions helps give your drawings weight and thickness. Most objects can be reduced to simple geometric shapes. A torso can be seen as a group of cubes or boxes. Arms and legs can be seen as cylindrical in shape while the human head can be reduced to a simple sphere. Visualising the figure as a combination of basic shapes enables you to draw form that contains bulk, weight and depth.



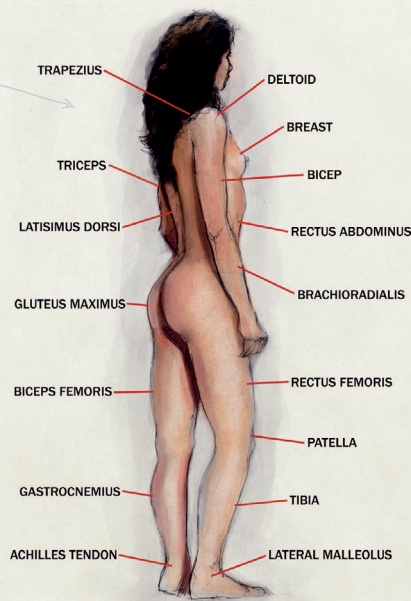
ANATOMY

A good understanding of human anatomy is vital in creating figure drawings. When you have a thorough understanding of how the skeletal and muscular systems work in relationship to themselves, it makes it easier to understand the architecture behind human physique. If you're a beginner or intermediate, there are dozens of books available which can help introduce you to the vast world of human anatomy. I particularly suggest Atlas of Human Anatomy for the Artist by Stephen Rogers Peck, which is a concisely written book containing hundreds of helpful illustrations making it an excellent resource for study and reference.



PROPORTION

Being able to create and recognise proportion in order to achieve balance and symmetry between all parts of a figure takes considerable practice. This important aspect of drawing the human body is further complicated when you consider how a figure's proportions are affected due to sex, race, age, and physical appearance. There are no set rules for anatomical proportions but general guidelines do exist. However, I recommended that you exercise some caution and make adjustments as you draw your figure so that the proper relationships between your figure's anatomy and physique are achieved.

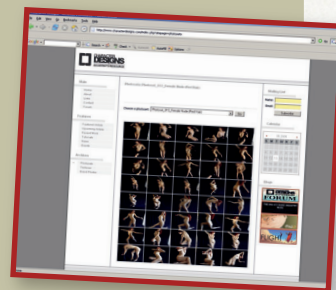


“Drawing the human body properly is one of the most challenging things for an artist to master”

5 PROBLEM SOLVING

FINDING RESOURCES

Ideally, it's best to draw from a live studio model. You can contact local art schools or do a search online for local workshops in your area. If this is not an option, sometimes asking friends or family to pose for you can help. Museums and art galleries are obvious sources for finding master works. Master copies and photographs are also made readily available online. Places such as www.artrenewal.org provide fairly high resolution master copies suitable for use, while excellent resources for photographs can be found at sites such as www.characterdesigns.com.



FEEDBACK & SUPPORT

Constructive feedback is not only important but also essential in guiding your development as an artist. Drawing in groups is a good way of ensuring you get practical critiques and support. If an established drawing group is not available in your area, you can also seek support online. There are numerous places on the web in art related forums that contain well established groups of artists working in both traditional and digital media. I highly recommend Rebecca Kimmel's Open Figure Drawing Workshop located at www.cgstalk.com. The workshop provides an endless source of feedback and participation geared toward pushing your desire to improve as an artist.



MOTIVATION

Finding enthusiasm to push yourself to learn figure drawing, especially for a beginner can be difficult at times. Drawing the human body properly is one of the most challenging things for an artist to master (just see what Linda Bergkvist has to say on the matter - page 68). It's a subject that takes time and dedication to understand and one that should be approached in a both observant and careful manner. If you find yourself feeling frustrated and unhappy with your progress, remember to exercise patience and seek guidance when possible. Practice is the key. ●

Thanks to Hong Ly @ characterdesigns.com

PART 2:
FIGURE
DRAWING
ON SALE
03 AUG

