

NUMBER 3  
WINTER 2002

THE PROFESSIONAL "HOW-TO" MAGAZINE ON COMICS AND CARTOONING



# DRAW!

\$5.95  
IN THE U.S.A.

**INKING DEMO**  
BY DICK GIORDANO

**FIGURES IN ACTION**  
BY BRET BLEVINS

**DESIGN FOR  
COMICS  
AND ANIMATION**  
BY PAUL RIVOCHÉ

**A HOW-TO  
DEMO ON  
WEB COMICS**  
BY MIKE MANLEY

**PRODUCT  
REVIEWS**  
BY ANDE PARKS

**AN INTERVIEW WITH DISNEY'S CHRIS BAILEY**

RIVOCHÉ

MR. X TM & © 2002 VORTEX COMICS. ART © PAUL RIVOCHÉ.

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THE PROFESSIONAL  
"HOW-TO" MAGAZINE ON  
COMICS & CARTOONING

WINTER 2002 • VOL. 1, NO. 3

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Publisher • John Morrow

Logo Design • John Costanza

Front Cover Illustration • Paul Rivoche

Proofreaders • John Morrow & Eric Nolen-Weathington

## FEATURES

<b>INKING - TECHNIQUES</b> AN INKING DEMONSTRATION BY DICK GIORDANO .....	<b>3</b>
<b>DESIGN</b> DESIGNING FOR COMICS AND ANIMATION PART ONE: OBSERVATION AND MEMORY BY PAUL RIVOCHÉ .....	<b>12</b>
<b>THE CRUSTY CRITIC</b> PRODUCT REVIEWS BY ANDE PARKS .....	<b>22</b>
<b>ANIMATION</b> AN INTERVIEW WITH CHRIS BAILEY .....	<b>26</b>
<b>WEB COMICS</b> A DEMONSTRATION BY DRAW! EDITOR MIKE MANLEY .....	<b>38</b>
<b>SKETCHBOOK</b> DRAWINGS AND SKETCHES BY BRET BLEVINS .....	<b>53</b>
<b>GREAT WEBSITES</b> A FEW RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHAT AND WHERE TO SURF .....	<b>58</b>
<b>FIGURE DRAWING</b> DRAWING THE FIGURE IN ACTION BY BRET BLEVINS .....	<b>59</b>
<b>LETTERS</b> COMMENTS FROM READERS ON OUR SECOND ISSUE .....	<b>74</b>

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ILLUSTRATION BY BRET BLEVINS



Ask a pal for some reference, and this is what you get!

We're back for our third issue and we've come out swinging! *DRAW!* is now available in most Tower Books across the nation and in Tower Records stores that have large magazine sections. Publisher John Morrow and I plan on continuing the expansion of *DRAW!* into other venues, but you can help us out a lot by asking your local comic retailer or art store to keep plenty of copies of *DRAW!* in stock. *DRAW!* isn't a magazine that goes out of date. Every issue stays eternally fresh!

We've added several new regular columns to *DRAW!* starting this issue with a new article on drawing and design by Paul Rivoche. Paul's probably best known in comic circles as one of the artistic forces behind *Mr. X*, but Paul has also been working in advertising, illustration and animation, providing inspiration and designs for the last half decade on the WB cartoons *Batman*, *Superman*, *Batman Beyond* and the current hit *Justice League*. I can't tell you how happy I was when Paul agreed to come on board and do a column for *DRAW!*

We also have an inking demo by industry legend Dick Giordano. Dick helped tutor and give lots of young artists a start in the comics biz, and he con-

tinues to spread and share his knowledge with his article on inking. Animator Chris Bailey has worn many hats and styles in his career. From his days at Don Bluth Studios to his Academy Award-nominated work on *Runaway Brain* for Disney, to the 3-D world of computer animation and now comics. Chris gives us a lowdown on taking his comic book creation *Major Damage* from 2-D pencil drawings to a 3-D animated short.

Our own Crusty Critic Ande Parks kicks off his new regular article as our reviewer of art products by reviewing several brands of markers. Ande really put the pens through their paces and I think you will find his recommendations very useful, including ordering information and availability.

Bret Blevins returns again for more figure drawing and we also get a glimpse into his legendary sketchbooks in the new **Sketchbook** section that we've introduced this issue. I think sketchbooks are the place to see the artist's best work, I think an artist is honest more often in his sketchbook. I plan on running pages from a new guest artist in every issue. We've also added a new page devoted to websites. Every issue I will run a few reviews and links to cool, interesting, informative and instructional cartooning, illustration- and animation-related websites. So if you have some favorite sites send them along to me in an e-mail. There is also an article by your's truly on my work on the *Dr. Direct* web comic and trade show give-away comic book I produced for Brooks Instrument. I also included some great comic strip ads, which used to run in the weekly Sunday funnies section.

Again our message board is up and running so be sure to surf over and give us some feedback, or post a drawing in our Critique section. And this spring we will be launching a website for *DRAW!* magazine. Look for more info on this in our next issue.

Best, **MIKE**

Mike Manley, editor

**The *DRAW!* message board is up and running, so please post feedback and ask questions at: <http://66.36.6.76/cgi-bin/Ultimate.cgi>**

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# DICK GIORDANO ON INKING COMICS



**ABOVE:** Editor Mike Manley’s pencils from *Batman* #509, inked by Giordano.

**AUTHOR’S NOTE:** Unfortunately, the printed page isn’t the best forum for instruction on inking. Since I won’t be able to “show” you much, I’ll have to “tell” you most. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

Inking is an art form. Some people might have a problem with that statement. Heck, some of the uninitiated don’t even know what inking is... and that includes some folk who are into comics as well as those who are not. When I explain to the average person what I do as an inker, a typical response runs along the lines of: “Oh, I see! What you do is trace the pencil drawing in ink!” Well, yes... and no! While “tracing” pencil drawings in ink is a necessary first step in order to reproduce pencil drawings, inking them is not merely tracing them.

Today, the inker makes a valid (often-invaluable) contribution to the finished art... or he probably won’t be inking for long.

Historical Sidebar: Comic book inking at the onset of the industry tended to be somewhat crude. The rudimentary reproduction process didn’t take kindly to artistic fine-linework but handled heavy-handed linework well. As reproduction techniques improved, so did the quality of the inking which evolved into a highly refined art form that put everything needed on the paper (special effects, lighting, etc.) in black and white. The better inkers were trying in this way to reduce the negative effects of poor coloring. Their art was thought to be color-proof.

Today, of course, we live in a high-tech time where computer color separations produce such beautiful results that it is no longer necessary for the inker to put everything on the art board. Computer color art rules!

Having said all that, I feel that before I proceed I must emphasize that the following exploration of inking and inking techniques is not the right approach or the best approach... it is

merely my approach. Many editors in the business today obviously are not smitten with my approach. My last regular DC inking gig (*Power of Shazam!*) ended nearly three years ago and my very brief *Thor* run ended after just four issues (I believe) when John Romita, Jr. stepped down from penciling that title more than a year ago. I think though, that my approach to the process of inking is still primarily valid and with the addition of your personal bells and whistles, may well lead you to a rewarding career... or at least, an improvement in your skill level. Onward!

## GOALS

The primary goal of a comics inker is to ink the work in front of him as well as it can be inked and to complete the work on time. Your definition of quality work must include timely completion. You can't say "do you want it good; or do you want it Thursday?" The obvious response (and I've used it) is "I want it good and I want it Thursday!" If you're not capable of doing that, you have an obligation to make that known to your client. (Aside: I have often found that the client will find a little leeway in "Thursday." That will allow you the extra time you need and allow him to work with the artist he had originally assigned it to. It's a win/win strategy that works if you're honest about your capabilities.) A secondary goal will be to fully understand the needs of a particular job. This sometimes requires reading signs and/or interpreting what your client describes as his needs; your client often isn't an artist and cannot clearly articulate what he is looking for. Often examining the penciled art closely will provide clues to what needs to be done. Take nothing for granted. Be alert.

## PROCESS

Again, may I stress the following is my process. Doesn't work for everyone and very few inkers that I know (the "older" ones) follow all the points on my procedural list. Maybe none of them do. Still at the risk of appearing hide-bound, it is a procedure that I've followed for decades... and still do.

**READ THE JOB:** If it's unlettered, I ask for the plot or the script. I need to know what's happening (good guys, bad guys, time of day, locale, etc.) before I start inking.

If it's unlettered I make my own. If the job has already been lettered, I ask my client for a set of copies made before being lettered. I work better if I know what those lines that go up to the balloons and come out the other side are. Most letterers erase balloons after lettering often leaving a "halo" around the balloon. This missing art is important for me to know.

## GET PHOTOCOPIES OF THE PAGES

**GET SCRAP IF CHARACTERS OR LOCALES IN YOUR STORY HAVE APPEARED IN PREVIOUS ISSUES:**

This helps me maintain the continuity of the story. The pencil art, tone and goal of the story, and your client's input are factors in determining a stylistic approach.

## IN ORDER

**I START ON PANEL 1 PAGE 1 AND INK PANELS IN ORDER:** I like to ink the story in the way that the reader will read it. Helps keep consistency and continuity.

## BASIC TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS. DECIDE ON AN APPROPRIATE INK STYLE TO EMPLOY:

**ALL PEN:** Of course, you fill large black areas with a brush. Filling in blacks with a pen is a sickness! This style works well if your job is to be color separated by a no-holds-barred computer operated by a color artist who knows what he's doing.

**ALL BRUSH:** Proof of my Dinosaurism! When I started working professionally in the early '50s, all or nearly all the cartoonists inked their work primarily with a brush. It was faster and produced linework that was bold enough to be reproduced, while still enhancing and retaining the integrity of the pencil art. Those of us of that bent often claimed "we draw with our brush." Among the popular syndicated cartoonists of that day that used a brush to ink the majority of their work were Milton Caniff, Frank Robbins, Will Eisner, and Alex Raymond, (though Raymond used a fair amount of pen, especially in *X-9* and *Flash Gordon*).

**PEN AND BRUSH:** Obviously allows you to draw on the best stylistic qualities of both tools. I've done several jobs lately using pen to do the basic drawing (heads, hands, outlining foreground elements and inking backgrounds completely, or nearly so). Then I went back in with a brush and inked elements like folds and hair, accented the pen outlines to account for light source and filled in large black areas. This style was more illustrative than modern comic book inking.

\* **Of course, there are infinite variations on how you can utilize these techniques. A Chinese menu approach, (one from Column A, one from Column B) can lead you to a variation that will work for you.**

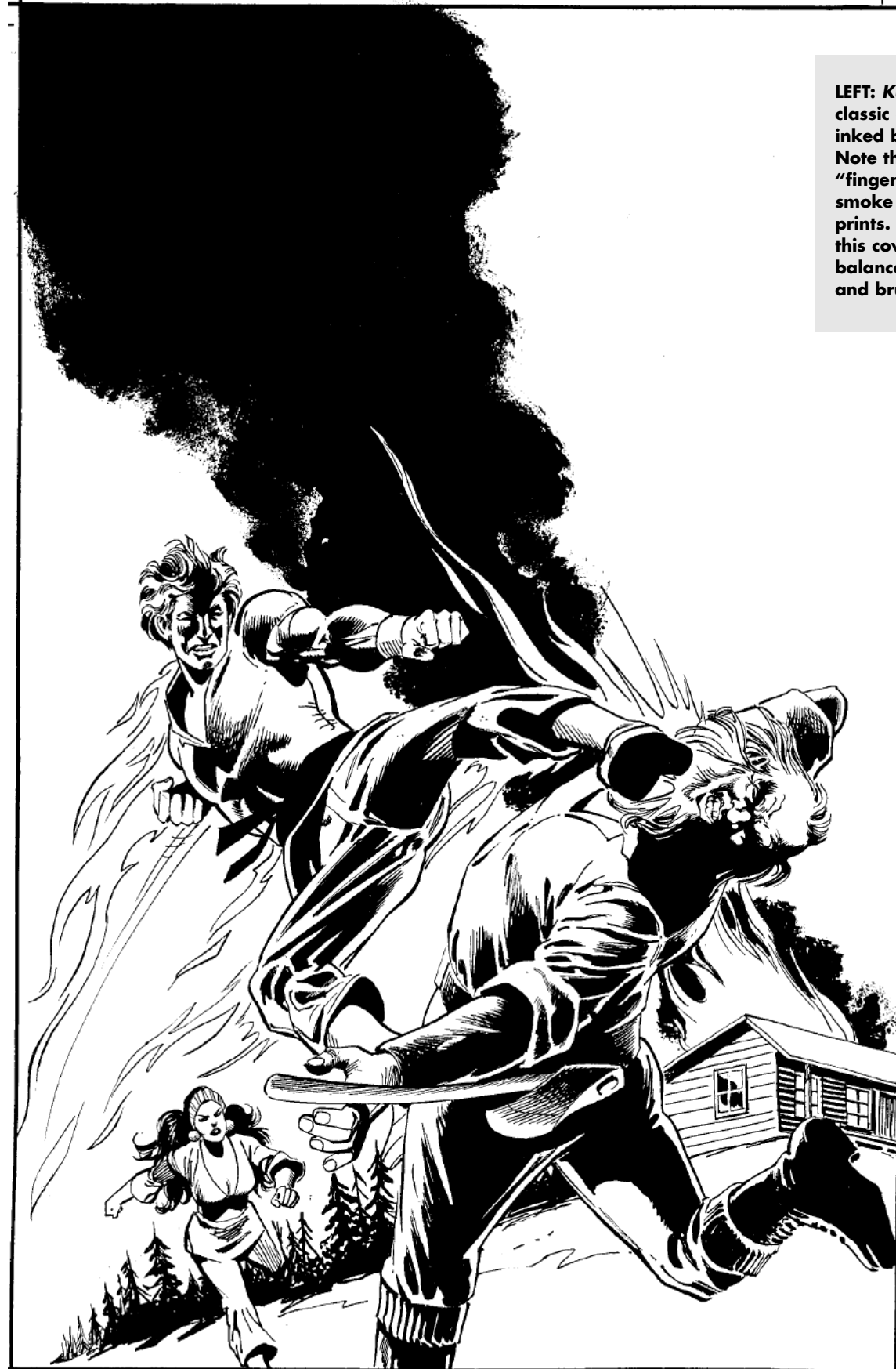
## TOOLS I USE:

**PENS—NON DIP:** I regularly use 2 types of non-dip pens that are reliable and provide fixed-width lines:

**1) Rotring Rapidoliner.** Set of 4 in sizes .25, .35, .50 and .80 mm widths. This pen comes with a metal tip with a valve operation similar to a regular Rapidograph but doesn't clog as easily. Cleaning by shaking the valve in the barrel is much quicker so you can start working seconds after removing the cap. When you run out of ink you merely pop a new ink cartridge in which comes with a brand new point. The regular Rapidograph has a refillable cartridge—same old (clogged) point!

SPARTA

Cover Title KUNG FU FIGHTER Month JULY  
 No. 10 Identification Z-329



**LEFT:** *Kung-Fu Fighter*, a classic cover penciled & inked by Giordano. Note the use of "finger painting" in the smoke using fingerprints. Giordano inked this cover using a balance of both pen and brush.

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**TOOLS—TECHNIQUE**

**ABOVE:** More pencils by *DRAW!* editor Mike Manley from *Batman* #509.

**LEFT:** The same page inked by Giordano showing his masterful skill at texture and drapery. Mostly brush with small details and backgrounds in pen.

**TOP RIGHT:** Pencils and inks by Giordano. Heads, hands, outline all inked in pen. All the rendering was done with a brush.

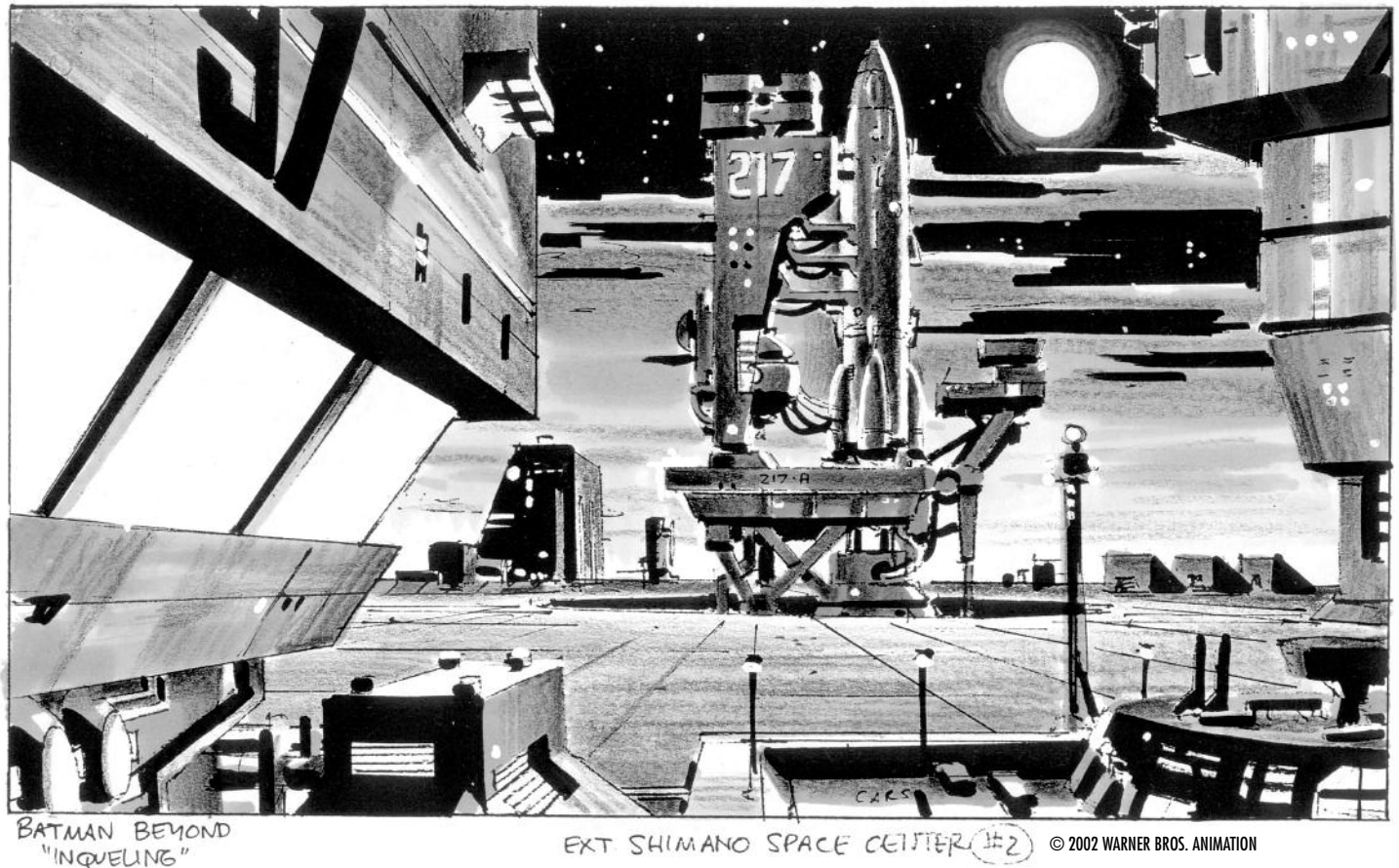
**BOTTOM RIGHT:** *Last Kiss* #2. Pencils and inks by Giordano.

**GIORDANO:** "This is a neo-stylized version of the style I used on Mike Sekowsky's *Wonder Woman*. The major difference is mostly the pen backgrounds with brush-work accents."

# DREAMING DESIGN:

## DESIGNING FOR COMICS AND ANIMATION

### PART ONE: OBSERVATION AND MEMORY



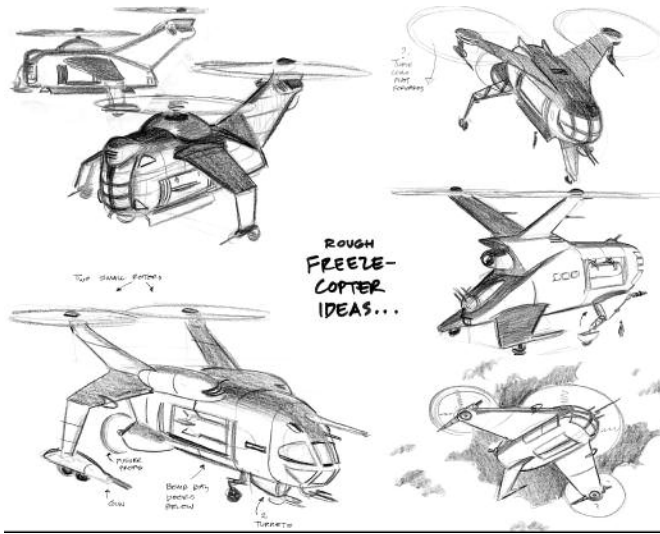
I recently received this e-mail question from someone who was interested in learning about background design:

"I guess what I'm asking is where do you begin?... where do you go from?... what speaks to you and says 'put this here... put this sunken living room here in relation to this... this kind of track lighting is a good choice... etc... I'm sorry if I'm not making much sense..."

My answer went: don't worry, you're making sense. It can seem overwhelming at first. There are many things to consider, and it can be difficult to sort out which to tackle first. So in the interest of "beginning at the beginning," and instead of writing a typical by-the-numbers article about design filled with strict prescriptive formulas, I thought I'd start by discussing something that underpins any creative drawing: visualization. My aim is to provoke thought about and examination into this often-overlooked area; by no means can I cover all its aspects, but I will instead try to outline a few key points. After this, in subsequent articles, I'll get into more specifics about various aspects of the process of actually creating a design.

In the haste to get something down on paper as proof of improvement, it's all too easy to concentrate solely on learning more about drawing and all its various ramifications, but forget to learn more about visualizing, which comes before drawing. "Visualizing" is a very important step in the process which results in a final drawing on paper. After all, everything man-made which we see around us started as an idea or image in someone's head; then it became a drawing of some kind, and then finally was produced in the physical world. There is a chain of events there. But whether the final result is an object, or a drawing, everything starts in the mental world, in those "dream-images" in our mind's eye. So it stands to reason that if we can improve our visualization, our "dream-images," then our drawings should also improve.

Loosely speaking, you could say that there are two kinds of drawing: the first sort is when we draw something right in front of us, and attempt to represent it literally; the second type is when we "draw from our imagination," inventing freely without a guide in front of us. These two kinds of



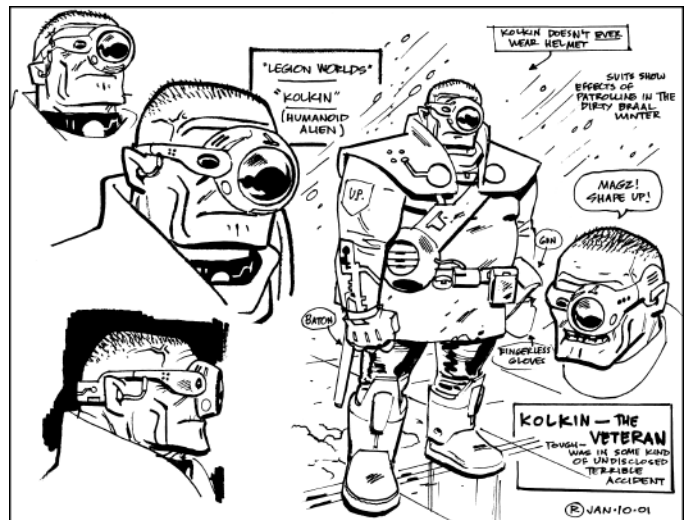
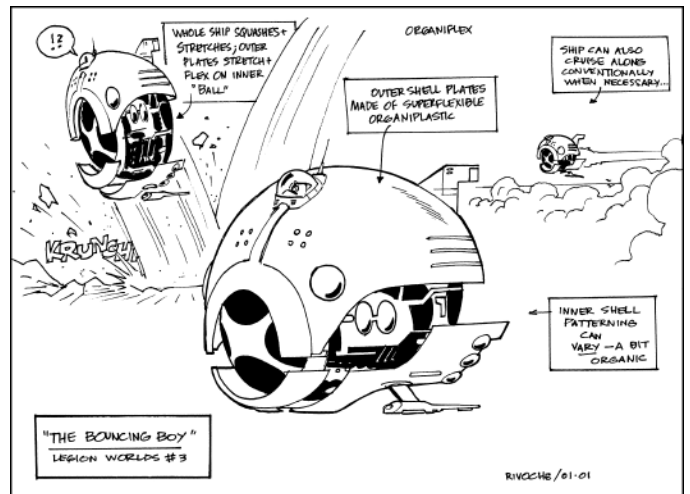
**ABOVE: Experimentation is a lot of the fun of designing. Don't lock yourself in too soon—feel free to play around and explore the boundaries of your design, the more extreme the better. You can never know what better idea lies just beyond the next drawing... These were rough ideas for a bomb-carrying helicopter piloted by Batman's nemesis, Mr. Freeze.**

drawing, although different, are much more closely related than it may seem at first glance, and practicing both yields much greater results than choosing only one or the other. They have a lot in common: both involve a sort of “copying and comparing,” and both involve visualization and memory. When you draw a real object in front of you, you “copy” down onto the paper what you see, constantly comparing the real object and your drawing in order to get them as close as possible. And when you draw from imagination, you also “copy and compare”—except in this case you do it from a subject seen only in your “mind’s eye.” But look more closely: in both cases, you first visualize, then try to hold a clear memory of that visualization as you copy it down on the paper. Even when you draw a subject right in front of you, your visualization and memory skills are at work: for the moment that you look away from the subject and glance at your paper, you are then drawing a memory-image of the subject, not the subject itself! You are drawing your own personal form-conception of the subject (its masses, structures, details, etc.)—be it a truck, a knee, a flower, or whatever. It’s here where the link between the two kinds of drawing exists: if you use “drawing from real objects” to expose, examine, and refine your own personal form-conceptions, memorizing the realities of the forms as they truly are, those improved form-conceptions will be there later when you draw from imagination. The more accurately you learn to “see” real forms in front of you, by drawing from life, the more accurately you’ll be able to “see” those elusive forms floating through your mind’s eye.

The process of creative design really all starts with the flexibility of your imagination. You need to develop the ability to dream-in-daylight: to dream with your eyes open, while sitting at the drawing board, and then “catch” those dreams and put them

on paper so others can see them. If that sounds like a strange description, perhaps it is, but it’s the best way I can describe what we do. I’m sure you know what I mean. You see something “inside” (in your mind’s eye)—and try and simultaneously trace it down “outside” (in the real world, on the paper in front of you). It’s a tricky juggling act, no doubt about it, because you have to simultaneously split your attention between inside and outside. It’s not easy to accurately capture that elusive image floating around in your imagination!

“Inside,” you need to form a mental image that’s as clear as possible, and also be able to visualize variations on it, to play with it until it’s as close to “right” as possible. “Outside,” you have to deal with the drawing on your paper, and all the attendant technical challenges of line, volume, pattern, perspective, and so on.



**ABOVE: These were rough model sheets done to sort out design possibilities for a comic book project. I would do drawings like this to sort out the exact look of key elements, and also to get “warmed up.” I like to have all the information I need organized on one handy piece of paper. From Legion Worlds #3, from DC Comics.**

# THE CRUSTY CRITIC



ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN HEBBINK

## COLUMN #1: PERMANENT DRAWING MARKERS

© 2002 Ande Parks

**W**e live in a glorious, modern age. Science has given us just about every gadget, toy and comfort we could have ever dreamed of. Unfortunately, the commercial artist's tools of the trade have been largely neglected. The search for the perfect brush, pen or even paper, is an ever-increasingly difficult chore. Many artists are adapting, using computers more and more rather than struggling with inferior traditional supplies. For most of us, though, there is still some value in knowing which supplies are well-made and where to get them.

Thus, the Crusty Critic vows to scour the globe (or at least the Internet) to find the finest and most affordable art supplies available to the modern-day cartoonist. I shall examine every sable brush hair, drag every pencil across every sheet of Bristol board, and smudge every ink... so that you don't have to!

First, though, I should make it clear that the opinions you'll find in this column are just that. I will make every effort to be as objective as I can. Whenever possible, the tools here will be judged impartially and using uniform standards. It is inevitable, though, for some subjectivity to find its way into the equation. The pen that fits my hand most comfortably may cause blisters for others. The ink which pleases my eye may be offensive to some. This humble critic can only present the options and offer his honest appraisal. It's up to you to find out if you agree.

This issue's column will be dedicated to markers. Once reserved for sketching and drawing on the road, it seems that markers are now being used more and more in the studio. The quality and diversity of markers has vastly improved over the last decade. The inks are more permanent, and there are a wide array of sizes and points. There are also a number of good brush-markers available, giving cartoonists the flexibility of a

brush in a clean, portable package. The Crusty Critic hit the virtual market of the Internet to find as many brands as possible, and found a lot of good markers... and a few great ones.

### THE MARKERS

There are so many markers available today, that I had to limit myself somehow. I decided to test only disposable markers. I did not include any product that had a replaceable ink cartridge. That excluded a few nice brush-pens, and some technical pens that use cartridges. For the most part, I ended up with disposable technical pen-style markers. These pens are sized like Rapidographs, generally from about 0.1 mm to 0.8 mm in thickness. I also found a few nice brush-markers, which feature a synthetic, flexible brush head. Finally, I found one marker which I love, but which doesn't fit into either of those categories.



CAPTAIN AMERICA, BUCKY AND THE HUMAN TORCH ARE TM AND © 2002 MARVEL CHARACTERS INC.

### Image #1: Ordway Pencils

I scanned the pencils as a bitmap at 600 dpi. After saving, I converted the image to grayscale, and then RGB. I then used the magic wand and the "select similar" command to select all of the black pixels, which were then filled with a light blue. I printed the image on a good sheet of Bristol, which I had cut down to fit my inkjet printer. I selected a paper with just a bit of tooth. The smoother the paper, the longer the drying time.

# MAJOR DAMAGE™



MAJOR DAMAGE™ & © 2002 CHRIS BAILEY

## FROM 2-D to 3-D

### An interview with Director and animator **Chris Bailey**

**ACADEMY AWARD** NOMINATED DIRECTOR (*RUNAWAY BRAIN*) AND ANIMATOR, CHRIS BAILEY HAS FINALLY FOUND A PROJECT TO WEB HIS TWO LOVES, **COMIC** AND **ANIMATION** TOGETHER—**MAJOR DAMAGE**. BAILEY'S COMPUTER ANIMATED SHORT ABOUT A YOUNG BOY WHO BECOMES HIS FAVORITE COMIC BOOK SUPER HERO.

**DRAW!** EDITOR MIKE MANLEY INTERVIEWED BAILEY FROM HIS CALIFORNIA HOME, IN-BETWEEN MIXING EPISODES OF BAILEY'S CURRENT PROJECT, DIRECTING AND CO-PRODUCING THE NEW ANIMATED SERIES **KIM POSSIBLE**. FOR THE DISNEY CHANNEL.

**DRAW!:** Chris, tell us a bit about your childhood and what hooked you into comics and animation? I understand you grew up in Portland, Oregon. Was there any one comic or artist that inspired you?

**CB:** I grew up in northeast Portland and went to Reynold's High School. I had a pretty average suburban life; played some sports in school and drew for the school paper. For as long as I can remember, I liked comics, cartoons and action adventure. I devoured shows like *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Sea Hunt*, *Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *Star Trek*, *Lost in Space*, etc... and watched all kinds of cartoons, from *Bugs Bunny* to *Space Ghost*. I enjoyed the few Disney films I saw growing up, but I didn't become a fan. I would just check out during the musical numbers. And no matter how dire the situation in a Disney film, I never believed a character was actually in danger. Just when the situation would get really grim and I was into it, they'd throw in some dopey gag to reassure the kids that everything would be okay. I hated that! I was much more interested stories where the characters could die.

My older brother read comics and I started picking them up from him before I could read. I would follow the stories just by looking at the pictures. Later, I recall staying with some friends out of town who were really into Marvel comics. They had stacks and stacks and they introduced me to those animated shows in the '60s. I thought they were great! They even had the bubble gum cards that when put together, formed a picture of a Marvel Comics cover. I couldn't have been any older than 6 or 7 at the time. When I first started to put artist names to the

comics, it was Gil Kane, John Buscema, John Romita, and Herb Trimpe that I responded to the most. In retrospect, it was because of their clear, simple staging and broad posing of the characters. If there were too many crowded panels on a page or not enough pages with the main hero on them, I'd pass. I would copy panels from all their books as I was teaching myself how to draw. I loved Gil's work because it was like looking at a cadaver. He knew where all the muscles were and how they connected to the bones. His poses were strong and graceful, too. John Buscema's *Thor* and *FF* sucked me in with the broad acting of the characters and clear staging, John Romita practically defines appeal and Herb Trimpe because he drew the Hulk smashing the hell out of jets and everything! The raw aggression in his work and the Hulk's problem with authority were irresistible to me. By the time I was 12 or so, I was convinced that I'd be a comics artist.

Tuesday and Thursday were comics days at the local 7-11. I would take a different bus home from school on those days that let out closer to the store. I was such a regular customer that the clerk would keep the bundle of comics unbroken behind the counter until I showed up so that nothing would sell out before I got there. I could cherry pick the comics in the best condition. Comics and large cola Slurpees were a staple in my life for years. In Jr. High School, a friend told me about a comic book store called Old Weird Harold's that sold back issues. Life was good.

**DRAW!:** You attended the California Institute of the Arts right out of high school. Was it an intimidating place to go? Was it hard to get into?

**CB:** I decided to apply to Cal Arts' character animation program during my junior year in high school. None of my teachers had even heard of it. I had just rediscovered cartoons after watching a Chuck Jones "Pepe Le Pew" cartoon on TV. Literally that same day, I read in *The Comics Journal* about an animation school sponsored by Disney that gave college credit. The key was the college credit as I felt my parents expected me to go to regular college, not a cartoon school. If Joe Kubert's school gave college credit at the time, I probably would have moved back east and gone there.

Becoming an animator had never occurred to me before that day. While I liked cartoons, I knew that Warner's didn't make those great *Bugs Bunnys* anymore and Disney was just chugging out one clunker after another every four years. But I figured that if the animation biz didn't work out then whatever I learned there could be applied to comics. I spent the next six months working on a portfolio which included a 30-second animation test and I was accepted in the Spring of my senior year. It's funny, it never occurred to me that I wouldn't get in, so I never bothered to apply to other schools. That was pretty stupid in retrospect. Many of my classmates at Cal Arts had been rejected once or twice before finally getting accepted.

My animation test was of a super-hero sitting in a Captain Kirk-like chair on the bridge of a spaceship. Another spaceship appeared on the view screen and he jumped up to a console, pushed a button and destroyed the ship. Then raised his fist in triumph. It was terrible. I painted the cels with Testers model paint. I knew nothing about timing so I would clock myself with a stop watch running down my hallway over and over. My brother Jeff built an animation stand and we shot it on 8mm film.

I didn't have an animation desk or a light table to animate or in-between with, so I used my portable TV as a substitute. I turned it on its back and flipped the channel to static and used tape to register the drawings. The curved surface was a pain to draw on. Later, I decided to "borrow" the light table from the school newspaper room overnight and on weekends. After a while, it was spending more time at my house than at the school and they reminded me whose it was. My art teacher and journalism advisor were very supportive. All my teachers were, as a matter of fact. For short reports, I would occasionally ask if I could do them as three-page comics stories and I don't recall anyone ever saying no.

The thing about the other students at Cal Arts was that most of them were Disney geeks to the same degree that I was a comics geek. It had never dawned on me that Disney geeks existed. They knew all the animators names and what they had drawn in which movies and I had only seen a few of the films while growing up. I didn't know who or what they were talking about half of the time. There were some former animators and directors from Disney on the faculty who would tell Walt stories and people would hang on their every word. It wasn't intimidating, it was new and cool.

**DRAW!:** Were you following comics all along the way, or did you stop buying them as you got more into animation?

**CB:** I've always bought comics. The more money I had, the more comics I bought. Sometimes I would follow artists and sometimes writers. Rarely would I buy a book based solely on character unless something new visually was being done with it. The more I was drawn into animation, the more it shaped my tastes in comics art. I became less a fan of the illustrators like Neal Adams and more a fan of people like Will Eisner; those artists who brought an exaggerated sense of acting and drama to their work as opposed to straight realism.

**DRAW!:** Who were your favorite artists, who inspired you along the way? I see you are a big John Buscema and Jack Kirby fan.



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**TOP:** Melvin story sketch. The expression was inspired by the dialogue track which was voiced by Chris's son, Kevin Bailey.

**BOTTOM:** Finished render of animation. Fielding was adjusted to accommodate the Major Damage poster in the background.

**CB:** I love the broader, simpler Marvel artists from the '60s and '70s. Marie Severin is a favorite of mine as well as the other artists I mentioned. I liked her silly super-heroes from *Not Brand Echh!* and own a Subby page of hers. I didn't get Kirby as a kid and thought all of his characters looked like they were made of metal. I actually liked Colletta's inks on *Thor* because it softened him up. Talk about being young and dumb! Now I love Kirby's comics except for the ones with Colletta's inks. I have a page from the *Silver Surfer* graphic novel that he and Stan did that I never get tired of looking at. Joe Sinnott's inking is gorgeous.

John Buscema is amazing. The man can't make a bad drawing. He brought a level of illustration and acting to the Kirby dynamics that defined Marvel for me. I was regularly reading the *FF* during his first run on the book and loved it. I think it's funny that he now talks about how silly those characters are and how he doesn't get super-heroes. To me, he was co-creating some of the best fiction of my life.

One thing that both John Buscema and Gene Colan have in common that I like was the sense of weight their characters had. Buscema's characters were always so well-planted on the ground and Gene's Iron Man felt like he weighed 1000 pounds! That was always something that I've tried to get into my animation. For *Major Damage*, we experimented with several different types of walks on the Tiki Terrors to communicate their weight. If you look closely, you can see the difference from shot to shot.

One trick that always caught my eye was when comics artists would "animate" a character moving through a panel. I think John Byrne did it a lot. I liked it when I could "feel" the forces at work. Usually there was a drawing that didn't work in the sequence and it would stick out like a sore thumb to me. I tried the effect myself once in high school on a personal comic page and in-betweened the hell out of it. I think it was Shang Chi leaping into the air and kicking some guy in the face. I drew about a dozen poses between the extremes. Total overkill! Even though I wasn't consciously thinking about becoming an animator, animation was clearly an influence in my life.

**DRAW!:** Did your influences change as you developed as an artist?

**CB:** Sure. When I was young, complicated detail in drawing impressed me and I thought simple cartooning was for people who couldn't do illustration. Eventually, I realized that the people who drew the Disney films and the great Warner cartoons could draw circles around most comics artists. I started to appreciate the Hirschfield, Chuck Jones, Vip Parch, Kley, Harvey Kurtzman and others. Caricature overtook my interest in realism. Not the big head kind of caricature you find at the local carnival, but genuine caricature. I saw that believability is not the same as realism. To me, the "real" characters in a Disney film were never as real as the cartoon characters, even though I could tell the realistic characters were traced over actors.

One of the best things about being an animator at Disney was to draw in different styles. Working on *Hercules*, I animated Nessus, the River god, who was designed by Gerald Scarfe. He would do this thing where one side of the character would be smooth and elegant, but the other would be contrasted with lots

of detail. An elegant arm would be punctuated with a violent, gnarled hand with arthritic joints. His drawings were like Hirschfield characters on crack.

**DRAW!:** Were you into any video games or computer animation at all at that time? Things like *Tron*, etc.?

**CB:** Sure, but no more than the average kid. There wasn't a whole lot of computer animation or animation period to be inspired by in the late '70s/early '80s. I wanted to do comics. Films like *Star Wars* were inspiring for all its monsters and comic book trappings, but getting into the movies didn't seem as accessible as a career in comics and I never gave it much thought. Pretty ironic considering where I wound up.

**DRAW!:** Did you ever try and get into comics during this time? You know, do samples, make the convention rounds?

**CB:** I never did the convention rounds, but while working at Don Bluth Animation in the mid-'80s, Bruce Timm and I collab-



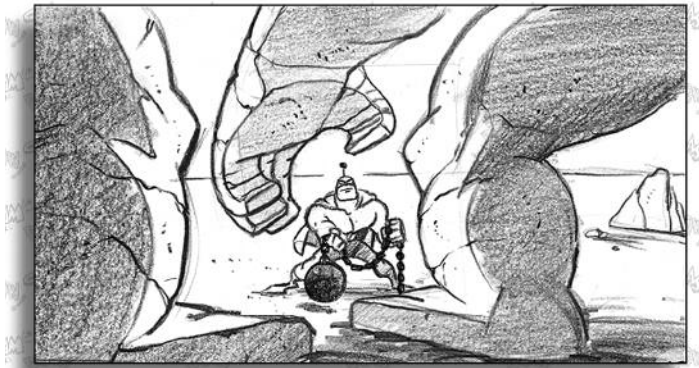
**ABOVE:** The cover for the upcoming *Major Damage* comic was inspired by Marie Severin and John Buscema's cover for *Fantastic Four* #107, one of Chris' favorite comics as a kid.

orated on a Dirk the Daring comics page. I penciled and he inked. We heard there was some interest on the part of a comics publisher for a *Dragon's Lair* comic and we wanted to throw our hats into the ring as the creative team. Nothing ever came from it. Later, after the studio closed down, I submitted some Daredevil pages to Marvel. Tom Defalco sent me a nice rejection letter, but encouraged me to send in more samples. By the time the letter came, I had another job in animation so I never pursued it.

My Daredevil had these big Dirk the Daring feet. I thought it looked "real" at the time, but I had been drawing Dirk for so long it has skewed my sense of normalcy. DD's feet were huge.

**DRAW!:** What would you say that was the most important thing you got out of going to art school?

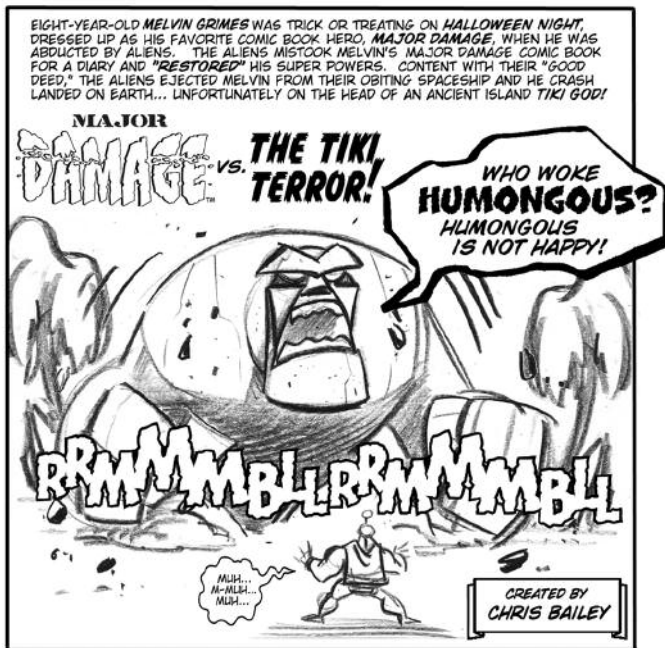
**CB:** The culture. I don't mean the culture from the book learning, but from the artists and faculty. My sense of what was good drawing, acting and design was focused by my relationships there. My design instructor, Bill Moore, often said that everything he taught was to be found in nature. He didn't draw, at least in class, but I learned more about drawing, animation and timing from him than any of my other instructors. He had this funny quote about people and art... that when people said that they didn't know much about art, but they knew what they liked, he said what they meant was that they liked what they knew... which wasn't very much. He made you want to keep searching and learning.



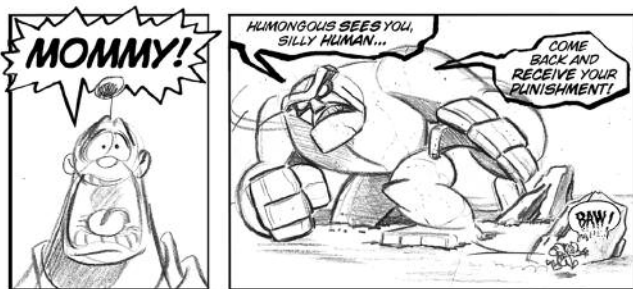
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**DRAW!:** After you graduated from college, what were some of your first jobs? You mentioned you worked with Don Bluth for a while.

**CB:** I started as an assistant animator at a small studio doing short cartoons for about 6 months before it closed down. The owner went to jail on some kind of fraud charge or something and the studio was some kind of front. From there, I went to Bluth to animate on *Space Ace*. A bunch of my Cal Arts friends had found work over there and were actually animating, not just assisting. That was unheard of back then. Everyone knew you had to assist before you got to animate. *Space Ace* was a fun project to work on even if the atmosphere at Bluth's wasn't. The studio atmosphere felt cult-like to me and I had to work in a dark little annex that leaked in the rain. I worked on *Space Ace*, *Dragon's Lair II* and was starting work on a forth game when Bluth went out of business. I was there all of eight months.

For what it's worth, I think *Space Ace* was the best thing Bluth ever did. It was a great learning experience and a dream come true to be animating cartoony super-heroes and monsters right out of school. For the first time, animated super-heroes moved like super-heroes. Up until then, animated super-heroes might have resembled the characters from the comics, but they moved like cardboard cutouts. *Space Ace* moved how I thought

**TOP:** A Major Damage story sketch.  
**BOTTOM:** Pre-viz painting by Alan Battino to establish the look of the cartoon.  
**LEFT:** Pencil page from *Major Damage* comic.

# THE DOCTOR IS IN

## DRAW! EDITOR MIKE MANLEY GIVES A STEP-BY-STEP ON PRODUCING THE ADVENTURES OF DR. DIRECT WEB COMIC STRIP

**O**n the face of it you wouldn't think precision mass flow or liquid processes sound like they would be very interesting subjects, unless you were an engineer or a scientist of some sort. Well this was the problem a local ad agency Praxis Communications wanted solved when they approached me early last year, and inquired about me producing an Internet comic strip for their client Brooks Instruments. Brooks makes a device called Quantim, which they wanted to try and push in a different and unique way. They felt that a comic strip would be the way to go. Maybe make it a bit more fun, and make their product stand out in the crowd. So after a bit of back and forth with the agency, they settled on the idea of doing a weekly web-based comic strip featuring Dr. Direct, a sort of goofy scientist type. Each week the Doctor, aided by his faithful dog Kepler and his bird Gaspard, would ride to the rescue of some scientist in distress on his motorcycle.

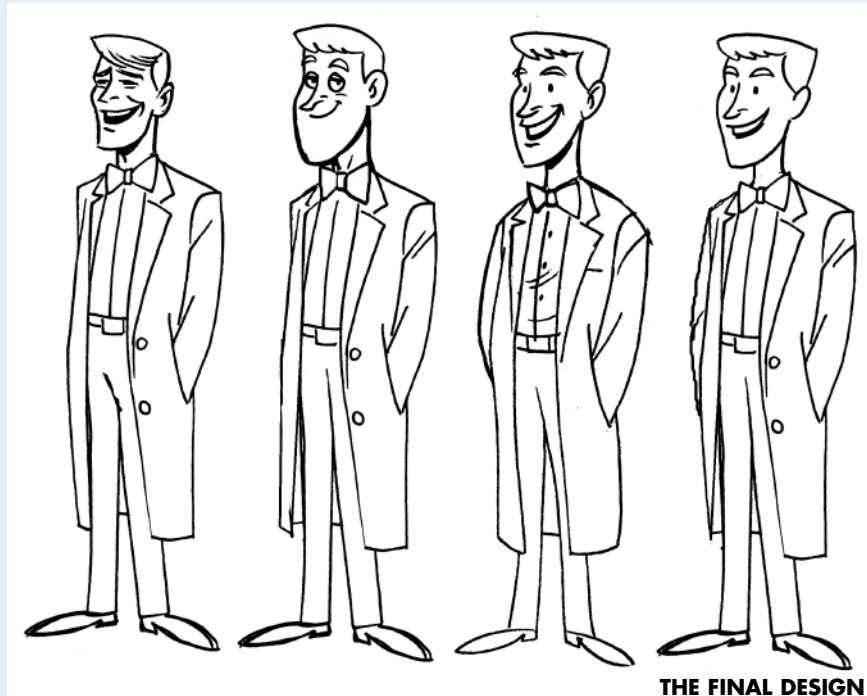
Praxis had been producing short promo films and video bits using a live action Dr. Direct (sans dog and bird) helping technicians and scientists in trouble by introducing them to Brooks' Quantim device.

Advertising agencies have been using comics and comic strips to sell products for decades. We all remember the Hostess Fruit Pie ads in Marvel and DC comics featuring our favorite heroes defeating the nefarious villains with the irresistible golden flaky crusts and delicious fruit fillings. The newspaper Sunday Funnies section had long been full of very similar ads hawking dish soap, tooth polish, candy and even cigarettes! Yes, while Jack and Jill read the Sunday comic section, they also got to read comic strips drawn by agency artists depicting the Smooth of Phillip Morris cigarettes.

Oh, how times have changed. Many famous cartoonists and comic strip characters also lent their four-color salesmanship to help Madison Avenue sell products to the millions of comic readers every week.

The first stage was to get the designs for the characters down and develop the for-

### THE EVOLUTION OF A CHARACTER



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**Working from the visual reference of the actor who portrayed Dr. Direct in the videos, I proceeded to do a series of rough designs of the characters. There were certain requests made by the client. They wanted the dog to be similar to the dog Grommet from the Nick Park, *Wallace and Grommet* films. They also wanted the Doc to have a sort of smart-aleck bird.**

**I started out just doodling rough and fast. The Doctor was easy since I already had a visual reference to work from. I referred the client to my website and they asked for a style similar to the more cartoonish or animated look of some of the work I had featured there. One of the technical concerns I wanted to lick right away was the web-based format.**

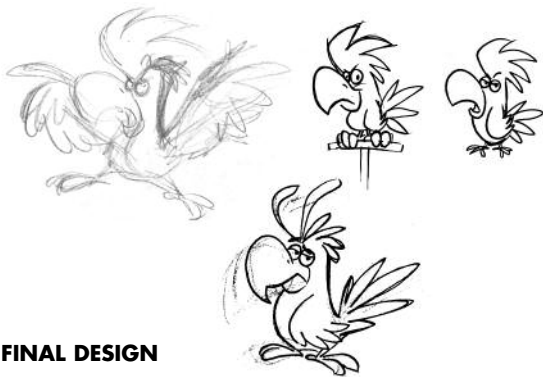
**I did a series of designs of the Doctor, and really pushed for the version with the "dot" eyes which luckily the agency and client both liked. I wanted the Doctor to have a slightly childlike appearance and I feel that doing things like "dot" eyes is a lot of fun. I was also drawing inspiration from cartoons like the Jay Ward style (*Rocky and Bullwinkle* as well as the old *Captain Crunch* ads) and cartoonists like Hank Ketcham (*Dennis the Menace*) and his clear and elegant line style. I felt that type of approach would work well and be fun to do.**



THE FINAL DESIGN

**ABOVE:** After the Doctor was done I worked next on his canine cohort, who is actually the brains of the outfit, Kepler. I started sketching, doodling. I initially wanted to keep him looking like anything but Grommet and went for a sheepdog type look. But I ended up coming around to a smother look.

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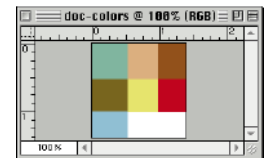
THE FINAL DESIGN

mat. The agency had a writer already lined up that they had worked with before. The writer was an old Marvel Comics fan and looked forward to working on something probably a little more outside of his usual milieu. His writing was pretty sharp, witty and more to the point he did a very good job of conveying the technical aspects and “the pitch” of the Quantim device, something that is frankly pretty hard to do and make funny.

One of the first things I had to do was get everyone on the same page as to style and format. What worked best for the clients needs vs. artistic considerations and format. I gave the agency a little crash-course in comics and web comics. Though most people have read the comics and funnies, even very talented people often don’t have any clue how comics are made. So once we were all on the same page we came up with a format that would solve a few big criteria, readability, and easy download/file size. At 72 dpi and with the amount of copy that would be required I realized that at times the visuals were certainly going to be taking second place to the copy. Thus a simple clear easy to read style was a must. Also the simpler the style, the easier (in theory) the strip would be able to produce every week. I already had experience in doing web comics from my own web strip *G.I.R.L. Patrol* ([www.actionplanet.com](http://www.actionplanet.com)). I had learned through trial and error the differences between regular print comics and the web. You just don’t have the resolution to do detail at the small file size that the strip would need to be to load into the viewers web browser without a long download time. One of the things I enjoy the most about working on web comics is the color and color combinations you can get in RGB as opposed to print CMYK. You can get really intense colors; color combinations right next to each other that would be impossible in print.

The client also wanted the strip available to print out so a version of the strip was converted and prepared by the agency to be downloaded via PDF in Adobe Acrobat. This way fans who like the strip could print it out and pin it up at work. You could have your cake and eat it too.

After settling on a color scheme for each character, I made a small color palette for each character in Photoshop, which sped up the coloring process. I kept the palettes open when coloring the characters, holding down the option key to quickly sample the desired color and using the paint bucket to fill in selected areas.



**ABOVE MIDDLE:** The bird Gaspard was the easiest, since He was a parrot. I can’t help but hear comedian Gilbert Godfried’s voice in my head when reading his dialogue. I wonder why? The goal was always to make the silhouettes of the characters read very cleanly since they would at times have to be quite small in the panels to accommodate the copy.

**RIGHT:** This is the final design of the Doc and gang that was approved by the client.

**ABOVE:** The palette I made for each character to speed up the coloring process.



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The bodies writhing, twisting, leaping and flying across the following pages are dancing with gravity. This creates a sense of heaving weight in motion—the essential characteristic of convincing figure action. Without an awareness of gravity a drawn figure seems to lack mass and substance—it “floats” on the paper. Believable action conveys a sense of friction against a resisting atmosphere.

To achieve this it's best to start with an accurate conception of the body's true physical nature—as heavy, fluid flesh turning and twisting on a rigid skeletal framework. This sense of muscle sliding over bone is the crucial guiding motif of powerful images of figures in action. (In drawings or photography.) Often a figure drawing is weak and disappointing because it was conceived as a poseable arrangement of fixed anatomy, resulting in a stiff, doll-like appearance.

Always begin with a free and loose gesture drawing—find the largest sweep of movement running through the pose.

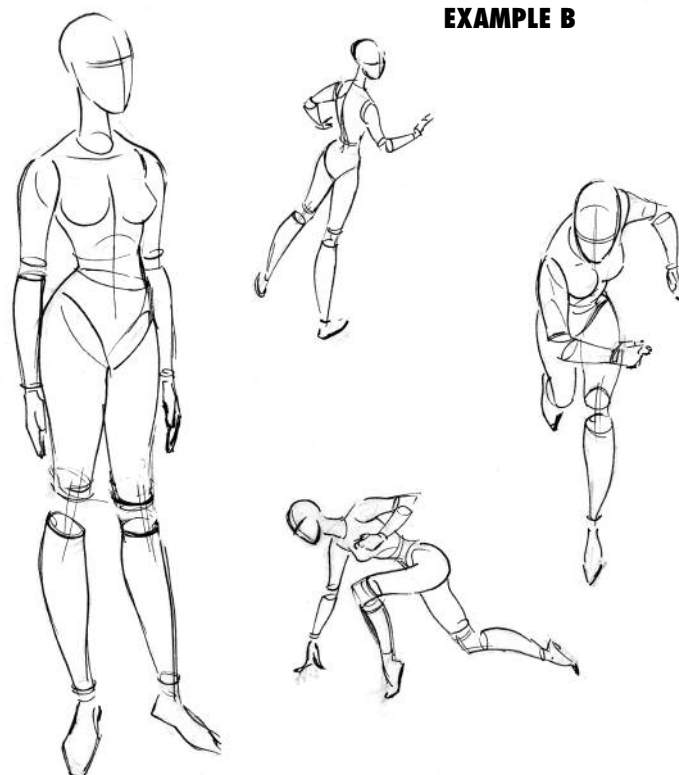
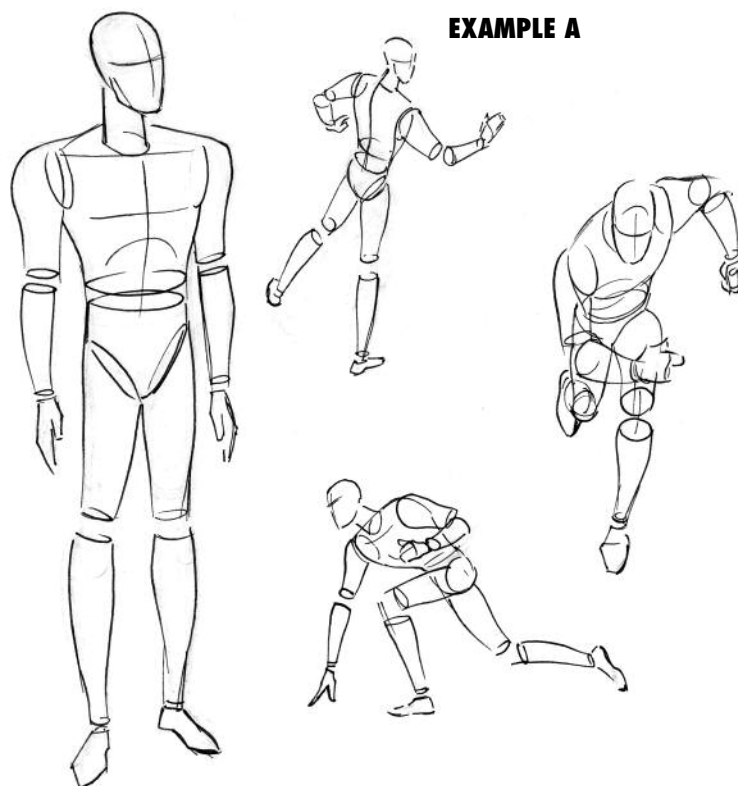
(Animators refer to this as the “line of action.”) I find it best to work with an armature first—each artist will tailor his or her armature to their own preferences in proportion and body type, and degree of initial solidity. Below are the two general directions one can favor in designing an armature: **Example A** and **B**.

Both approaches work well, and often an artist will lean toward the one more appropriate to the task at hand. Usually the solid-sectioned armature is more suitable for sedentary or quiet poses, the “wire frame” for extreme movement.

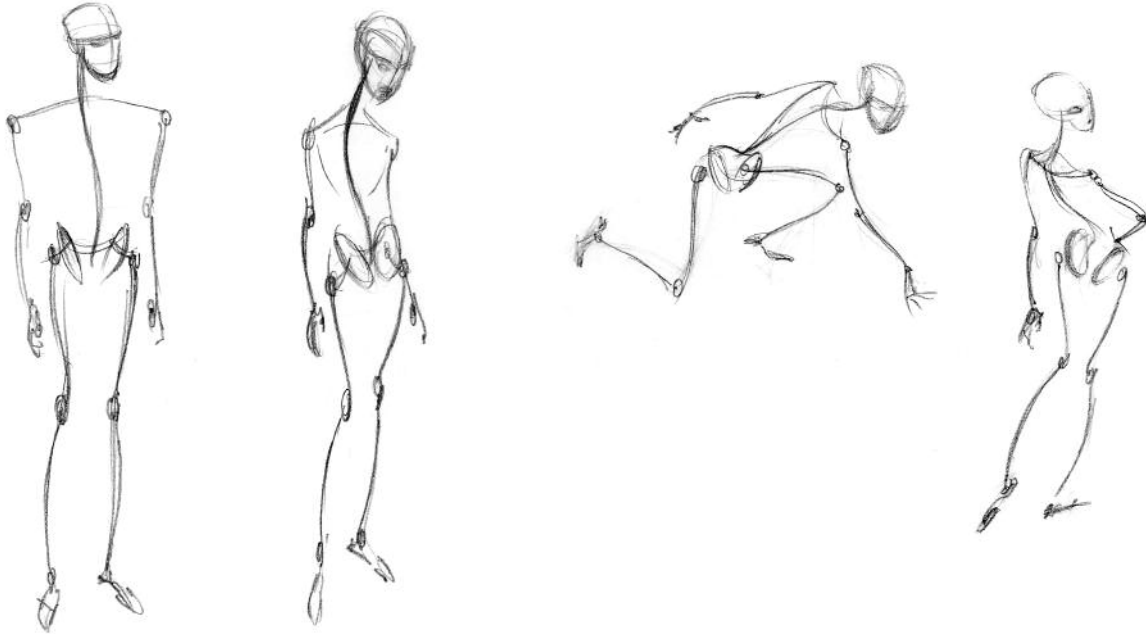
I prefer the thinner, looser armature because it encourages “pushing” the figure to its limits. I also enjoy stretching and “sculpting” the muscles and flesh over the thin framework as the drawing progresses, making discoveries about the elasticity of flesh and how far the anatomy can be convincingly manipulated. After designing an armature you feel is a comfortable sketching tool, get in the habit of beginning your searching doodles with a narrative purpose—have some idea of what the character emerging from your pencil tip is feeling or thinking. As I've stressed in previous *DRAW!* articles, a figure drawing containing no evidence of a mind or emotions is just a figure-shaped arrangement of dead lines on a surface—no more alive than a roadside STOP sign. Decide what your figure is intending by its action, and positions expressive of those intentions will occur to you as you draw. Attentive study and observation of people will broaden your vocabulary of possible poses, but everyone, by the act of being alive, has an enormous store of innate figure-action knowledge. “Reading” the body language of other people is an essential human skill, though when faced with the confusing complexity of making a figure drawing many artists lose touch with this instinctual resource and timidly construct mannequins in awkward, unnatural, puppet-like poses.

So again it's important to empathize with the character, know its intentions, feel the movements within your own body and attempt to translate the sense of wedging and twisting of fleshy mass against bone to the lines and marks you are making on the paper. Sometimes it helps to actually go through the action yourself—in front of a mirror, if possible—try to follow the movement with your “inner artist's eye” and connect it to your physical awareness of shifting, thrusting weight against the resistance of gravity.

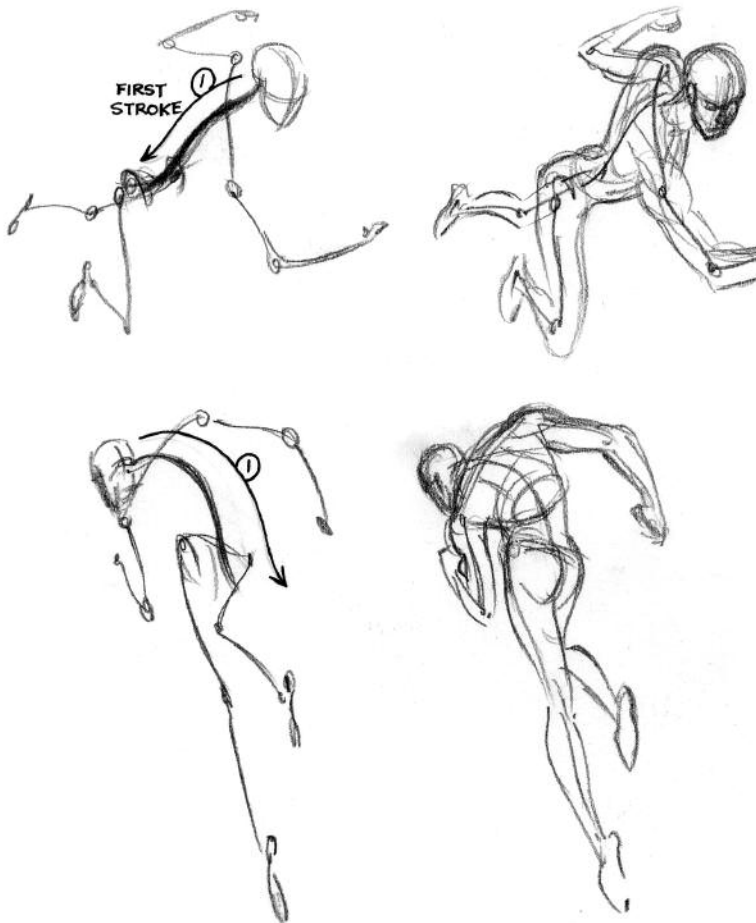
### A flexible jointed figure of solid anatomical shapes—



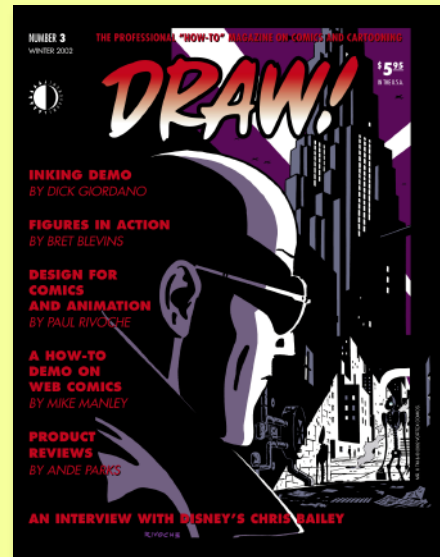
**Or a spindly “wire frame” that allows wilder initial posing.**



It’s usually wise to start with the spine—typically the longest section of a line of action, and (except occasionally in a drawing of extreme foreshortening) invariably the center of the movement, because it is the central support of the body—the head, arms, hips and legs radiate out from it. **Example C.**



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**DRAW! #3**

Inking demo by **DICK GIORDANO**, **CHRIS BAILEY** interview, Web Comics demo by **MIKE MANLEY**, “Drawing The Figure In Action” by **BRET BLEVINS**, “Designing For Comics & Animation” by **PAUL RIVOCHÉ**, reviews of art supplies by **ANDE PARKS**, and more! Includes a color section!

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