DRAW!

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

BILL WRAY
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CELIA CALLE
STEPHEN DESTEFANO
MIKE MANLEY
ANDE PARKS

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S. DESTEFANO ©'03 + Bill Wray

THIS ISSUE CONTAINS NUDITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF FIGURE DRAWING & ART INSTRUCTION—INTENDED FOR MATURE READERS

DRAW!

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FEATURES

FROM THE EDITOR

Figurative interpretation by Bret Blevins

It's Spring! And this youngish man's fancy has turned once again to art and the oncoming Con Season. By the time you read this I will have attended the Wizard show here in my home town of Philly. I will also be attending the San Diego Comicon again this year along with fellow *DRAW!* contributor Bret Blevins. Keep up on all the news via our web site: **www.drawmagazine.com**.

I'd like to thank once again the great contributors to this issue Bill Wray, Stephen DeStefano, Celia Calle, Ande Parks (whose beautiful wife Cynthia, just gave birth to their son Henry—congrats!) and of course Mr. Blevins, who by the way has a great sketchbook available via his web site: **optimisticstudios .com**.

I'd also urge you to check out Bill Wray's great site: **www.bigblownbaby.com** and Celia Calle's web site: **www.celiacalle.com** for more great work by these artists. I had to cut the letters page this issue due to space constraints and delay the comic section until our October issue, *DRAW!* #8. I continue to build out the web site and our message board is a great place to stay in touch for news, see sketches and cool art, or get a critique or pointer from me and some of the other *DRAW!* contributors. I have uploaded a continuation of my inking tutorial I started in this issue.

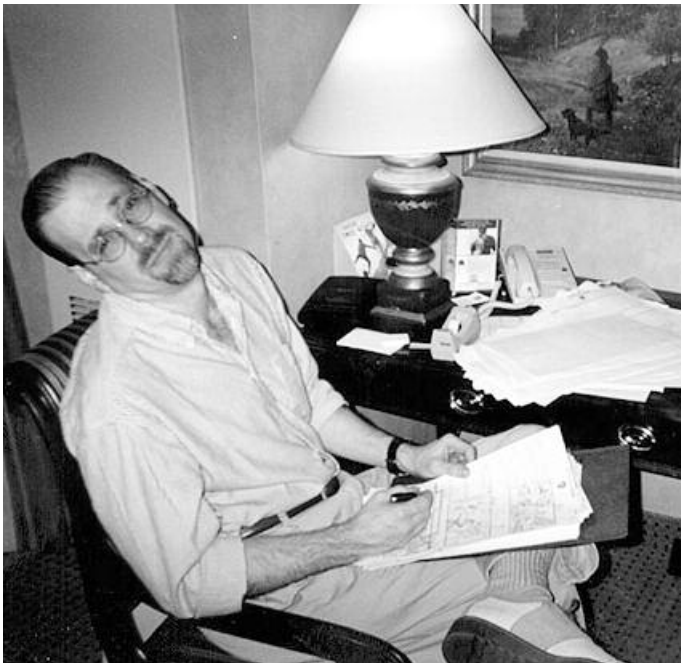
Thanks for the continued support for *DRAW!* and we'll see you this July in San Diego.

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



Here is a shot of a suffering Mr. Blevins from his hotel room last year in San Diego. He's suffering because he had to go back to the room at night to keep working on his ***Justice League*** storyboard, which he begged me to help him with. And what could I do? Those Mai Tais were strong.

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BIG BLOWN BILL WRAY

BILL WRAY IS BIGGER THAN HE'S EVER BEEN. HE'S HUGE. FRESH OFF THE ONE MAN SHOW OF HIS PAINTINGS IN TEXAS, ***DRAW!*** EDITOR MIKE MANLEY CATCHES UP WITH THE ***BOUNDARY PUSHING*** ARTIST. FROM THE GLORY DAYS OF ***REN & STIMPY***, HIS OWN HILARIOUS COMIC TRIBUTE TO JACK "KING" KIRBY, ***BIG BLOWN BABY***, TO ***HELLBOY JR.***, HIS MONTHLY GIG AT ***MAD*** MAGAZINE WITH "MONROE," WRAY REMAINS ONE OF THE BUSIEST AND FUNNIEST ARTISTS WORKING IN BOTH ANIMATION AND COMICS.

THIS INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED VIA THE INTERNET AND COPY-EDITED BY THE ARTIST

DRAW!: Tell us a bit about your background, your childhood. Were comics and animation important to you?

BILL WRAY: Yes, I lived for Carl Barks, died for Bugs Bunny cartoons and learned to masturbate copying *Little Annie Fanny*.

DRAW!: OK, maybe some things should stay private! When did you start drawing or reading comics?

BILL WRAY: I was looking at comics before I could read them.

DRAW!: So you mostly grew up in California? Do you think the proximity to L.A. helped getting into the biz?

BILL WRAY: Oh sure, we had the animation business—the big comic book companies were in New York, but we had cartoons, Western Publishing, Disney, and underground comics up North. Kirby moving out to Sherman Oaks was the real beginning of a West Coast access to New York. When Roy Thomas came out, we had a direct pipeline.

DRAW!: Didn't you live overseas for a while? Vietnam?

BILL WRAY: I was an Army brat so we traveled extensively till

I was about 11. Then we settled in Southern California. We were in Vietnam for about eight months, then we were evacuated during the Tet Offensive. We went to Hong Kong and that was cool, as they had comic book stalls with piles of American comics. I'm still amazed that I was allowed to roam the city alone at the age of nine. Vietnam as well... I could have easily been kidnapped. Maybe that's what my Dad was hoping for.

DRAW!: Obviously this seems like a really powerful memory and time for you. Do you feel it impacted you as an artist in any way? I mean being exposed to this type of situation? War, chaos, new cultures, danger, etc. This really has affected so many important artists throughout history, even in our business. Anytime you met Jack Kirby, you were likely to get some war story. It affected his art strongly. One of the things you are known and popular for, is taking things over the top, pushing the envelope, kicking the sacred cows right in the udder! Do you pull from those childhood experiences and put that in your work in any way?

BILL WRAY: A long deep question that I don't really know the answer for. I was lonely, but never traumatized too badly. I never saw a dead body or had a friend killed. Some quick cut memories: I saw a rabid dog shot in Vietnam. My Dad was a big shot, so we lived in a French villa. A thunderstorm knocked a huge tree down in our back yard. My Dad had it re-planted upside down and had wood planks nailed to the root mass to from a platform. I would climb up and look all over the whole city of Hue. It rained for months on end in Vietnam; the atmosphere was literally like a river. One day it somehow rained tadpoles. I would see little boys my age leading huge oxen calmly down the street. I attacked a pack of dogs that were zeroing in on my little sister. Hong Kong, that was no big deal, but I had to get rabies shots in the stomach, that was no fun. But I did get a pile of comics after each shot.

DRAW!: Wow. Were you getting into comics because of your being away from the American culture? Do you remember being attracted to certain artists or types of art? Did you see any foreign comics at all?

BILL WRAY: I liked the same stuff as when I was in the USA: Barks ducks, war comics, Superman, Harvey Comics. I wasn't into Marvel heroes yet. The comics were sold to G.I.s. I have no memory of any Chinese comics.

DRAW!: Were you drawing by this time? Did you ever draw stories or just pictures?

BILL WRAY: At first just pictures—lots of WWII themes, B-17's blowing up Germans and monsters. Later cars. Serious comic book drawing started in high school. I was introduced to underground comics around that time. They made me realize I could do comics, because they were so crude with stories that shocked me more that EC comics did a year or two earlier. My first major comic was my frog characters mixed with Vaughn Bodé's lizards. The *Witzend* issue with the Bodé's cover where the hooded freak is blowing the girl's brains out blew my mind out, too. Around that time I went to the first San Diego con and found a copy of Rich Corben's *Rowolf*. I still remember looking around the room to see if I was going to be arrested or something. That had me going. I never dreamed of beating off to a

comic book until I saw a Corben girl, but when you're 13....

DRAW!: So reading comics was encouraged in your house? I know you said your dad was an artist.

BILL WRAY: My mother gave me *Peanuts* collections and *Tintin* albums. She had a flare for art, but put it aside to be a housewife. Later she let me buy underground comics—I don't know if she knew how raw they were or not. My Dad lost interest in me once I was past the cute toddler stage. When I was about 3 or 4 years old we did do an oil painting based on my child scribbles of sea life. It's an abstract memory, I think based mostly on a "posed" photo of us doing it together. He helped me one other time when I was twelve; taught me how to draw an engine block when I got into hot rods. A shame he didn't spend more time showing me drawing tips, as he could have helped me excel and lessened my resentment for his lack of attention. The irony was he wanted to be a teacher, and was an incredible artist. He gave it up for the military because of WWII. That Hitler freak ruined my childhood.

DRAW!: So your parents were into comics and were artistic, at least to a fair degree, to be able to pick out some of the best material and expose you to *Tintin*, *Peanuts*, etc. Were they more into strips instead of comics?

BILL WRAY: My mother just liked those collections. Those are the only ones she gave me. She wasn't really into comics, she just would be attracted to anything that was the best of its kind.

DRAW!: Did you go to art school?

ABOVE LEFT: The Wray family in Hue, Vietnam, with servants and father's assistants. You can't tell from this angle, but the tree Bill is leaning on is upside-down.

LEFT: Young Bill in Costa Mesa, California, about age 10. Bill's favorite comic then was *Turok, Son of Stone.*

ABOVE: Unpublished page from about '91, *Lobo's Dog*, a one-shot written by Keith Giffen and penciled by Bill that was killed because it had a concentration camp for dogs in the story and many other tasteless moments.

BILL WRAY: I tried, but the teachers at my JC (Orange Coast Collage in Costa Mesa) were into putting TVs into sandboxes and drawing your feelings with ink and sticks on rough wooden planks with your pants off and the rules out the window. People who wanted to learn to paint and draw formally were to be pitied and then shamed into enlightenment. I would bring in Frazetta and Leyendecker books and be openly ridiculed by my teachers for my ignorant desires to do crap. Color, design and lettering were helpful—they couldn't make up convoluted manifesto for that stuff, but I dropped out and went to work for pro

cartoonists despite the naked models and cute coeds.

DRAW!: This seems to be such a common story amongst us cartoonists and animators. The constant slapdown in high school, and often in college as well, by the art establishment. You'd think they'd be happy to have students who were so into drawing, passionate about it, driven—but I guess not. Did this type of experience harden you or drive you in some way to prove them wrong?

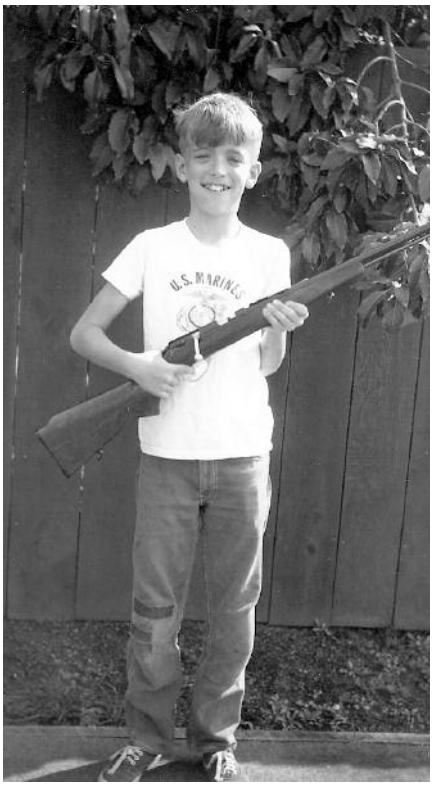
BILL WRAY: Actually I enjoyed high school, as my teachers wanted to be hippies and fornicate with the students. More than one was fired for giving girls rides home that ended in pregnancy. My art classes were totally open to free expression, music, drugs and making out. I kid you not. I didn't learn much, but I was pretty self-motivated so at least I was drawing all the time. My teacher, Mr. Stoia, was a great guy, but into a mid-life crisis flux. He covered for me, but was an enabler for bad behavior because he wanted to "relate" to us. His generation had just missed the free love boat and still wanted to take that ride. So we all did our thing. I won art awards—for what I don't know—and barley passed my real classes. I have no idea where I got my drive to draw, as it was easy to fake your way through life in my little world, but by junior college I wanted more.

DRAW!: I know you mentioned to me once that as a teen living in California you visited some artists and animators, did any of these old timers help you out?

BILL WRAY: Yes, a retired Disney guy was helpful; he taught me some basic animation tricks, but no formal drawing lessons. He used to sculpt maquettes for Disney and Hanna-Barbera merchandising. Sadly I wasn't aggressive enough to get a lot from him. But the encouragement and kindness meant a lot. He also helped me get work at Disney and H-B.

DRAW!: Well that's pretty great, being able to find a sort of mentor to at least put you on the road, point the way. I had the opposite experience when I tried to get into Hanna-Barbera. The old-timer I talked to told me to "Forget it kid, animation is a crap business. It's dead, do something else." I did find a mentor in commercial art though, and in high school he helped me out a lot. Did you have a group of fellow artists you hung around with that were also trying to break in?

BILL WRAY: In high school there were guys who could draw in school, but the party atmosphere derailed them. The guy who was the best artist, a real "natural," ended up driving a bus—art was to easy for him. Maybe that's why I had drive. Good drawing was very hard for me grasp. I'm still hoping to do a good one day. I met guys later via comic book clubs and the San Diego con. Rick Hoberg, Dave Stevens and I were great friends in those days. We broke in about the same time. Stevens was always the one we looked up to, as his art was so accomplished from day one. Rick and I were basically a team, always trying out for jobs together. I assisted L.A. fantasy artist Bill Stout for a while. He taught me how to work hard. I worked for Howard Chaykin and he thought me how to dress. I briefly went to work for Al Williamson on my first visit to New York, but he was so bored with his comic strip he ended up working for me doing all the backgrounds on a comic I was inking.



ABOVE: Bill's gun phase lasted until he turned hippie in high school and he hasn't owned one since.

DRAW!: That must have been fun having Al ink your work?

BILL WRAY: It was a weird double-edged sword. I came there seeking a father figure, mentor type and he was working for me? But my stay there was one of the best times I ever had. I thought I had a friend for life when I left, but I realized later I alienated him with my youthful lack of tact and self-control. Something that I'm still working on.

DRAW!: So you would say that by your mid-teens your were very serious about perusing cartooning and animation as a career? Or did you figure it was a step until you got into illustration? What was your method of self-study? Did you try and buy books or study old strips, painters, and illustrators?

BILL WRAY: Yes. I always had a huge library and copied all the time to learn.

DRAW!: What were you taking with you to each new job?

BILL WRAY: You mean learning?

DRAW!: Yes.

BILL WRAY: A little step with each penciled and inked job. Not much with just inking, a dead-end job really.

DRAW!: What was your first job and how did you break in?

BILL WRAY: Doing comic book inking at Disney for their foreign comics market. I thought I was a golden child, working at Disney at 16. I liked Disney, but hated the work. Not inking comics mind you, but their convoluted methods of doing them. I had to light box everything from the penciled art on tissue. Drove my eyes crazy and the work looked traced, so I quit and went to work for Russ Manning on the Tarzan foreign comics.

DRAW!: How did you meet him? Did he give you any instructions? Was he easy to work for?

ABOVE: A typical page from *Hellboy Jr.* showcasing Bill's great use of dry-brush inking.

BILL WRAY: Rick and I went to work for him I think via Mark Evanier who knew every cartoonist in L.A. We aped Manning's style for the overseas market that couldn't get enough of Russ's approach. As I said, Russ was the strong, silent type and I worked mostly at home for him. The only time I worked at his studio was to do corrections, so that was a "strictly business" atmosphere. Dave Stevens got to know him better, as he assisted on the *Tarzan* strip.

DRAW! Did Manning give you specific instructions or just try you out and correct you as you went? Were you following layouts?

BILL WRAY: Hoberg penciled, I inked. He just swiped Russ as much as possible. I didn't look at Russ as much as I should have; I was into Frazetta. Russ would sometimes pass a job with no changes, sometimes make me do them, sometimes he would do a major paste up himself. You never knew what would happen.

DRAW!: Did you want to do comics or animation more, was there a preference or was there just a general interest in both?

BILL WRAY: I loved animation, but I think I realized early that the business was dead and I really wanted to be an illustrator anyway. Comics were a fun way to make money from my childhood hobby, but over the years I went through different cycles deciding what my focus was going to be only to change my mind and turn in another direction.

DRAW!: So you really wanted to be an illustrator then. Sort of

THE CRUSTY CRITIC

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN HEEBINK

SYNTHETIC BRUSHES AND WHITEOUT PENS

The critic is back, dear reader, ready once again to steer you towards the best, cheapest, and most readily available art supplies. This issue, I've tested a wide array of synthetic brushes and whiteout pens. You'll also find an updated list of online vendors. As always, keep in mind that The Critic's goal is not to test absolutely every available product, but to sample what's available. If I don't cover a product that you love, please write me in care of *DRAW!,* and I'll check it out.

SYNTHETIC BRUSHES

Even for those who ink their work primarily with pens, a good brush is an invaluable tool. Some jobs call for a brush line, and even on jobs where the pen is used for all linework, a good brush helps speed the process of filling in blacks. Cartoonists ask a lot of their brushes… a good one should meet three key requirements:

1) It should, above all, come to a fine point consistently.
2) It should spring back to its original shape after every use.
3) It should hold a good deal of ink and ink should flow from it evenly and consistently.

Traditionally, the brush preferred by most cartoonists has been a watercolor brush made of red sable. The most famous brand is the legendary Winsor-Newton Series 7. This humble critic happens to prefer the Raphael Series 8404. In my experience, the Raphaels are more consistent, and they're cheaper. The same size Raphael sells for as little as half of what you'll pay for the Winsor-Newton. Both are quality brushes, and will deliver excellent performance. They're also fairly durable, as long as you take some care not to get ink into the metal ferrule and wash them regularly. The issue of durability is key, particularly for cartoonists, who are dipping their brushes in harsh inks instead of the mild watercolors they were intended for.

I've been slinging ink with sable brushes for 15 years, with few complaints. Every now and then, my favorite brand has become unavailable, but I've always been able to find an acceptable replacement. The Raphaels have been serving me well for at nearly 10 years now. Still, as I wander through art supply stores, I occasionally find myself gazing at the displays of synthetic alternatives… wondering if one of them wouldn't give me sable performance for a fraction of the price.

Thus, The Critic once again hit the virtual aisles of the Internet, in search of a quality synthetic brush. Would I find a tool worthy of replacing my beloved Raphaels? Failing that, might I find a tool that I could recommend to brush novices, as a more affordable way to become comfortable with a brush? The answers, dear reader, lie just ahead.

THE ORDERING

As always, I was determined to order my test subjects online, so that every reader could find the exact same products themselves. I hit my favorite online supplier, **misterart.com**. They offer a wide variety of supplies, complete with good information about most products (including customer reviews, in some cases). They also feature a V.I.P program, which enables you to buy at significant discounts by paying an annual $25 fee. I've used them for everything from pen points to oversized pieces of illustration board, and everything has arrived in good shape.

I surfed my way to the brush section of the store, and found the round water color brush category, where I knew I would find brushes of approximately the same shape I was used to. From there, though, things got tricky. I found an overwhelming array of choices. There were 35 types of brushes in the category, and at least half of them appeared to be synthetic. The task became even trickier when I started looking at individual brushes. Sizing in brushes is not universal, so I had to look at the pictures provided by **misterart.com** to figure out what might be appropriate for my testing. My goal was to find brushes equivalent to what I use every day… the Raphael Series 8404 #3.

I ordered a wide variety of synthetics, but once they arrived a quick round of tests revealed that I needed to re-order… some brushes showed promise, but I had guessed incorrectly on sizing. I placed another order, and my second batch of supplies brought more appropriate sizes.

THE TESTING

Some brushes I could dismiss just by looking at them. It was obvious that they wouldn't come to enough of a point, or that they would not be able to hold as much ink as I wanted. That's an important factor for me… I do not want to waste any more time than I have to dipping my brush into the ink. I ended up putting over a dozen brushes through a full test.

Each brush I deemed worth testing was loaded with ink and rinsed several times. I doodled with them on a nice piece of Bristol, getting a feel for how they handled. I'm very familiar with and love the feel of my trusty Raphaels, so these synthetics had a lot to live up to. To demonstrate the differences more clearly, I also performed a standard drill with each one… using the same series of strokes with each one. I gave each brush a rating from one to five in the three categories mentioned above: Point, Spring, and Ink Flow.

BRUSH CARE

I've heard all kinds of stories about how cartoonists care for their brushes. Some clean them religiously, while others value the ink buildup that accumulates on their tools. Milton Caniff, it's said, never cleaned his brushes… simply knocking them against his drawing table a few times before each use to knock the hardened ink loose. That approach may work for some artists, but most of us require a finer line that the great Mr. Caniff.

With a bit of care, your brushes, whether they be sable, synthetic, or a blend, can retain their point and spring for a long while. I generally get several issues of use out of a Raphael, and I do not clean them as regularly as I might.

The first key to making your brush last is to avoid getting ink under the metal ferrule (the metal cylinder you'll find between the brush's hairs and the handle). I try to dip my brush to within about an eighth of an inch of the ferrule, so it will grab a lot of ink. If, however, I accidentally dip too deeply, I immediately rinse it out before the ink can penetrate too deeply under the ferrule.

I keep two small glasses of water on my table, so I can double-rinse. The second glass always remains relatively clean, since brushes have always been rinsed once before they reach it. I rinse whenever I'm done using a brush, and sometimes during use, if I notice the brush is getting stiff or especially dirty.

Ideally, the rinse water should be changed every day, and the brushes cleaned thoroughly every few days with a good brush soap… but I often don't get it done more than once a week. I use Masters brush cleaner and preserver, but there are a number of good choices. I've also heard that any mild dish soap will do an effective job. I simply swirl the brush around in the soap, and then rinse it under running water as I work the bristles around in the palm of my hand. I've heard that hot water can remove some of the sable hair's natural oils (it may be nonsense, but I have heard it), so I generally use cool water.

I gave the Raphael Series 8404 #3 a rating of 5 in each of the three categories (a cumulative score of 15). No other brush scored as well, which was not surprising… sable brushes haven't been considered the gold standard for hundreds of years for no reason. A number of the synthetics scored a cumulative 10 or 11. Of these, only 3 scored at least a 4 for their ability to hold a fine point, which I considered crucial. I will not struggle to get a fine line out of a brush.

Of the brushes that rated a total 10 or 11, Grumbacher's Academy Series 770 #6 deserves special mention. It scored a 3 for point, but I was tempted to give it a 4, and I also rated it as a 4 in the other two categories. It handles well, but it's not an extraordinary value, at about $5. A smaller size might come to a sharper point, but I doubt it would hold as much ink as I like. The one real standout among the synthetics was actually a blend of nylon and natural hairs, the Winsor-Newton Series 239. I tested this brush in sizes 4 and 6, and liked both a great deal. The size 4 tested almost as well as the Raphael. Its point is nearly as sharp… it took a bit more effort on my part, but I could get it to produce an excellent and consistent fine line. It doesn't hold quite as much ink as the sable, though. I graded the Series 239 at a cumulative 13… 4 for point and ink flow, and 5 for spring. The size 6 holds plenty of ink, but lacks the sharp spring of its little brother. The larger brush also takes a little more effort when attempting very fine lines.

The Winsor-Newton Series 239 may not be a true synthetic, but it's a good brush, and a good value… costing about half as much as the Raphaels. With a V.I.P. membership at **misterart.com**, you'll pay only $3.17 for the #4, and $4.06 for the #6. By comparison, you won't likely find the Raphael Series 8404 #3 for less than $12. Will I be switching to the Winsor-Newton blend? Not right away, but I do plan on keeping these brushes at hand, and using them frequently to see how they hold up. I'm skeptical that the synthetic fibers will prove as durable as sable, but they're holding up pretty well after a few weeks of moderate use. Perhaps, after a few months use, I'll be completely comfortable with them. Maybe I'll end up liking them as well as the sables, in which case their cost would make them an easy choice. I doubt it, but I'll keep you posted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

My final recommendation would be to spring for the Raphael brushes if you are comfortable with a brush in your hand and you're serious about getting the best work out of your tools. Well taken care of, they will serve you exceptionally well. If you're a beginner, or if you don't require super fine work of your brushes, the Winsor-Newton will do a fine job for you. They are an excellent choice for those trying to get used to using a brush. I would recommend that you start with a small size… either a 2 or 3, working your way up to whatever size you can handle. A larger size is preferable, simply because it offers greater versatility and you won't have to dip it as often.

WHITEOUT PENS

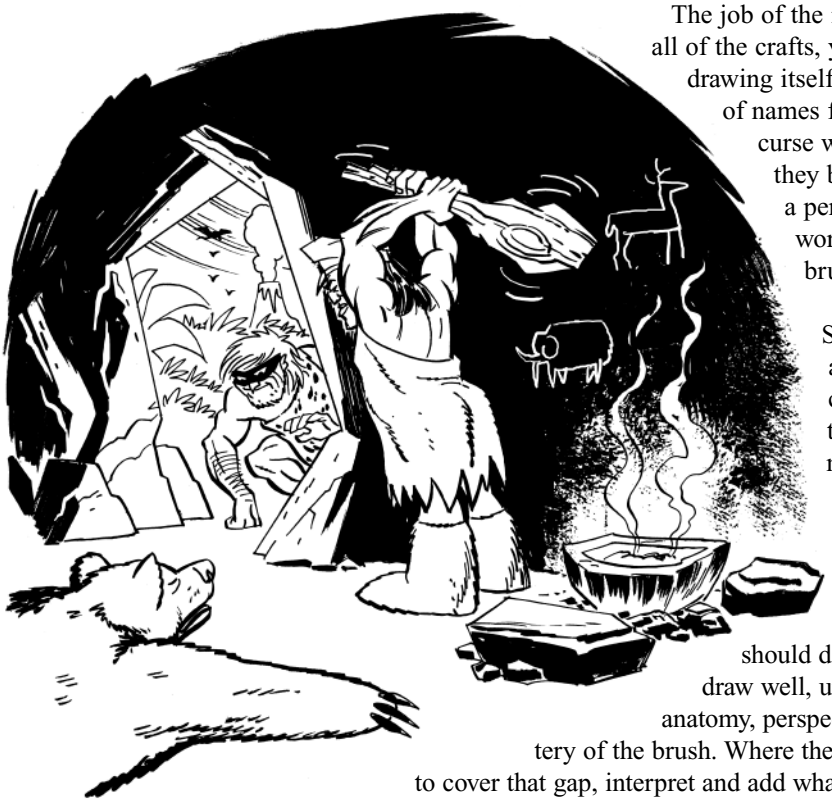
While the Crusty Critic himself rarely makes an errant mark upon his glorious pages, I do occasionally need whiteout… for effect, at least. Traditionally, opaque white paint or correction fluid has been applied with a brush. Today, though, there are a number of more convenient alternatives. I ordered and tested a number of whiteout pens… both broad-tipped pens for large corrections, and ballpoint-type pens for drawing white lines over black ink.

I'm sure you're all familiar with those silver and gold paint pens… you know, the ones that inevitably send fat globs of metallic pigment flying as you shake them in a vain attempt to get them to produce a decent line. I quickly discovered, upon studying the plethora of whiteout pens I had ordered, that a number of them were capable of the same, frustrating results. Life is too short, dear reader, to live it with bright white spots covering one's face and clothing. Thus, I eliminated from consideration any pen that required shaking and was prone to leakage.

I ended up buying some of these whiteout pens from online art supply vendors, but I also purchased several at an Office Depot store. I think all of the pens I like can be found easily at any such office supply store.

THE PEN & BRUSH ARE MIGHTIER THAN THE PENCIL

By DRAW! Editor Mike Manley



The job of the inker in comics is probably the most misunderstood of all of the crafts, yet the inkers skill can have the biggest effect on the drawing itself, second only to the penciler. They are called a variety of names from embellisher to finisher—and often very inventive curse words under their breath by many a comic penciler if they botch a job inking a precious bit of drawing. Being both a penciler and sometimes an inker myself of other artists' work, simply put, inking is drawing in ink with a pen or a brush.

It's not tracing, despite that funny scene in the Kevin Smith movie. After all, once the pencils are erased, the art that's left is what the inker interpreted from the pencils, good, bad and ugly. I liken the inker to the conductor of an orchestra. The conductor studies a piece of music intensely, and interprets the arrangement of the composer of the original work or musical score. He should have a thorough knowledge of music principles, the original composer's work, and the various instruments. He knows where the strings come in and how loud they should be. Well that's what a good inker should do. He or she should be a good artist in their own right, draw well, understand the fundamentals of drawing, composition, anatomy, perspective, line, and have a great skill with the pen and mastery of the brush. Where the penciler fails or there is a question, the inker will have to cover that gap, interpret and add what needs to be finished—be it a black to balance the composition, or to fix an eye, hand (sometimes whole figures) or a bit of off drawing—like a plastic surgeon. Many times I've had to fix eyes, add fingers, redraw entire figures (upon request by the editor) and arrange features properly on the face, etc.

One of the things I advise younger students or beginners is to draw directly in ink with a pen or a brush. Fill lots of sketch paper with drawings and doodles so you loose any fear of the pen or brush. As you become used to drawing in ink as opposed to just making a slick line, you will begin to draw in ink with an authority and truth. A slick line that does not describe the form in space is just a mark on paper, not a head, or hand, a figure, etc. Diligent practice will quickly build up your skill and confidence. Most young artists feel more confident with a pen as opposed to a brush because a brush takes more skill to master. But once you do, the brush is the most incredible of drawing tools. The variety of line you can make with a brush is endless, much more varied than the pen because of it's organic flexibility.

Every inker or artist drawing in ink has a unique line, like handwriting. I suggest grabbing a selection of pen nibs and brushes and then experiment. Play around with them and see how they react. Like a test drive of a fine sports car, grab some scrap paper and go for a ride in line. You'll naturally come to find a nib or brush that fits your way of working best. The standard nib that most comic inkers seem to prefer is the Hunt 102. Many inkers are now also using Pigma and Zig markers, as markers have gotten really, really good. But no marker can beat the snap of a good pen or brush, at least not to me yet.

ABOVE: The final inked illustration and the penciled sketch, for a door alarm instruction manual. I loved being able to use the rag to add texture on the cave wall and keep the pencils loose so I can keep the inking fresh.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

PENS After nearly 20 years as a working professional cartoonist, I have experimented and tried many, many different pens and brushes. Through trial and error I have narrowed down my arsenal of tool to a handful.

A) The Hunt 108. It's probably my overall favorite pen nib. I can get the widest variety of line widths and flexibility. It's flexible quill gives me a nice thin-thick stroke that's great for lush pen inking. The nibs are not as good today as they were 10 years ago. It seems the metal they are made of isn't as heavy a gauge. Every once in a while I get a nib that will last for 10 pages before it snaps, but sometimes they snap after 3-4 pages of heavy comic inking.

B) The Deleter Free Penholder and the **200** or **250** pen point. They are larger dowel type points that give you a stiffer pen line, which is good for a steady line thickness. It's good for doing a lot of heavy classic "hatching" with the pen. They are available from: **http://www.omochabox.com**

BRUSHES Nothing beats a good Kolinsky sable, but they are getting very expensive and I have a batch I bought in the Eighties I'm saving for more personal work. I dole them out like Scrooge giving a raise. But synthetic brushes have also been getting better, and I've found a very inexpensive one which works pretty well. **The Loew Cornell 795 Round:** I use the #2 and #3. It's not as flexible as a Kolinsky, and the point will wear down fairly fast, in 10 pages or so, but for an inexpensive brush, I recommend it.

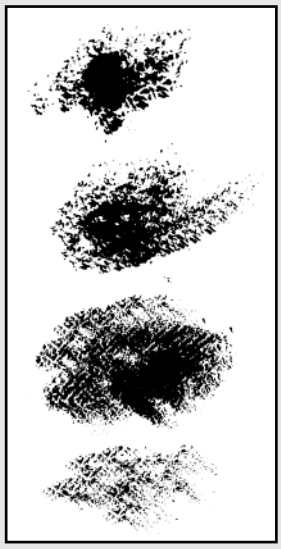
DON'T THROW AWAY THAT OLD BRUSH! It happens to every brush eventually. It splits, and no amount of brush soap or cleaning can save it. It gets stray crazy hairs which ruins the point and makes it unusable for fine inking. But instead of tossing that old brush into the trash, keep it! Old brushes are great for a variety of things. If they are not split too badly, they are great for filling in large areas of black, which can save a better brush from the hair-splitting punishment. Or you can use them to get some really cool textures, lines and dry brush. Take an razor or utility blade to that old brush and cut it at an angle. You can get all kinds of great textures by doing this.

RAGS I learned to ink or apply texture with a rag or sponge by seeing some art by my friend Ricardo Villagran. He had this page of comic art with this great texture on it. I asked him how he achieved this and he held up this ink soaked dish rag. So grab any old rag, or mom's old dish towel. You can cut them into smaller pieces for easier handling. The rougher the texture the better., then dab on a bit of ink (I use a dropper or a brush) and then dab the rag with your finger on the paper. Use a few scraps of extra paper and experiment till you find a texture you like. You can also use a sponge to get a similar effect.

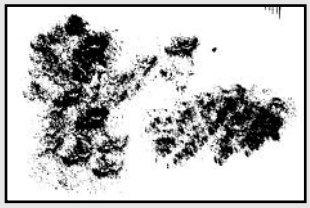
HUNT 108

DELETER

TOWEL OR RAG



COTTON BALL



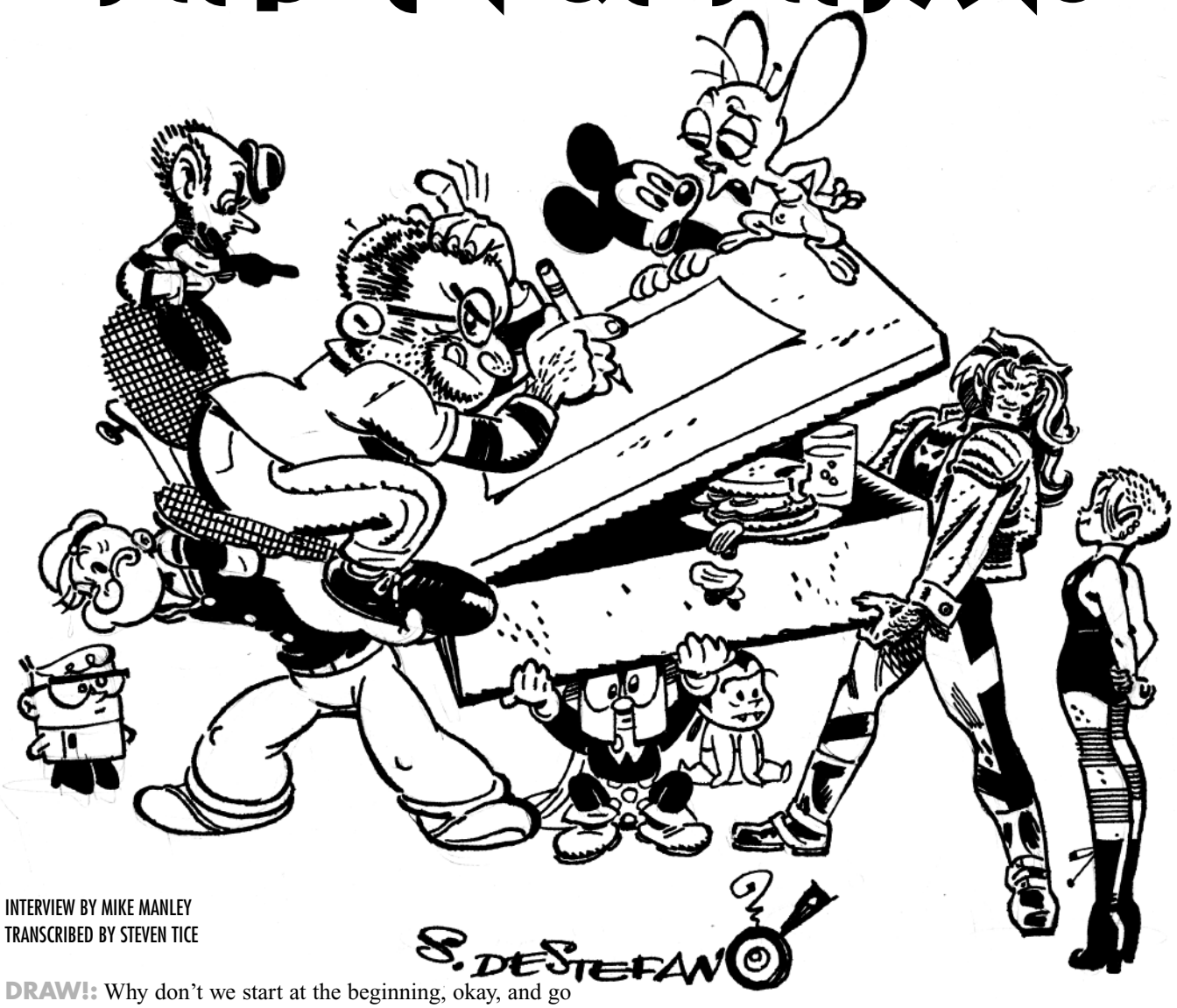
DRY BRUSH

BRUSH CLEANING TIPS

My tips on brush cleaning are simple:
1) Keep cleaning the water. I have a big jar next to my desk where I rinse my brush often. I change the water two times or so a day when working. If the phone rings, I take a second and clean out my brush. If you allow the ink to harden in the brush it will ruin the point quicker.

2) If the brush is really dirty, I will take a cap full of rubbing alcohol and roll the brush in it. The alcohol dissolves the shellac in the ink and breaks it up. Then using either brush soap or even hair shampoo (after all, it is made of hair) I wash the brush well and bring it to a point and let it dry. Consistent brush care will help keep a brush for a long time.

instant cartoonist
stephen de stefano



INTERVIEW BY MIKE MANLEY
TRANSCRIBED BY STEVEN TICE

DRAW!: Why don't we start at the beginning, okay, and go over your career a little bit. How did you get interested in comics? Did you read comics as a kid? What about animation? Is it something you've always wanted to do?

STEPHEN DESTEFANO: Okay! Well, I always wanted to be a cartoonist, because I've been drawing for as long as I can remember.

DRAW!: So you wanted to do comics and cartooning right from the beginning, as a kid?

SDS: Yeah, I just loved cartoons. And the good thing was that my oldest brother loved cartoons. My whole family liked cartoons.

DRAW!: So this interest was genuinely supported by everybody in your family, it wasn't looked down on...?

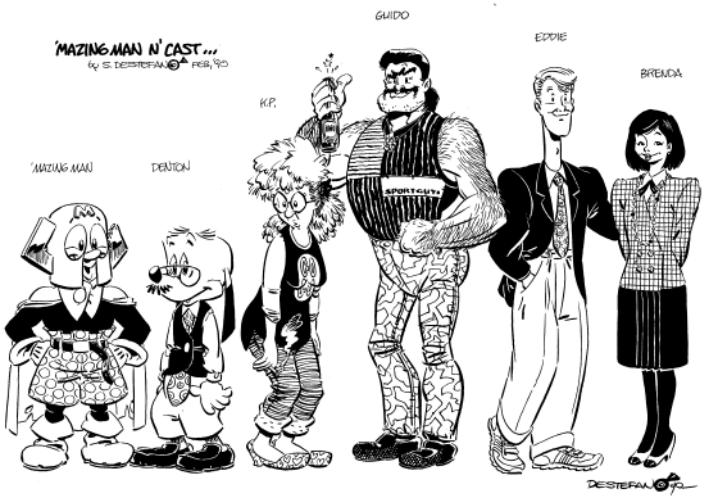
SDS: I think they didn't understand it very much, but they knew that it had some notoriety to it and that it was a big business, so nobody said, "I forbid you to be an artist," or anything like that. They were fairly supportive, yeah.

DRAW!: So when did you start drawing? When would you say you really started drawing your own comics or animation or whatever?

SDS: Well, gee. I guess my first character was, like, Herbie the Pig or something like that when I was five. [*Mike laughs*] Or maybe earlier. And then my first super-hero was a character named Fastman, which I was really proud of. That was probably when I was six or seven. And he looked just like the Flash except that he had a cape, which I thought was really spiffy.

DRAW!: It made him cooler because he had a cape.

SDS: Yeah, yeah! Capes made everybody cooler. But, yeah, I was drawing since I was really little. They tell me that when I was three or something that a neighbor would come by and ask me to draw Mickey Mouse and I would do it.



ABOVE: Probably the only "official" *'Mazing Man* size relation chart drawn by the artist.

BELOW: An un-inked page from the first *'Mazing Man Special.* A good example of where the artist's head was at in '86, and how much his art would change.

DRAW!: Wow!

SDS: Well, I dunno. It was just something that I always liked to do. My dad would bring home paper. He used to work at a Ford dealership, and I don't know what these pads were for, but they were huge pads of paper. And he'd just bring home reams of them and I'd fill them up.

DRAW!: That's similar to my growing up, because my grandmother used to work for Chrysler. She was a secretary there, and she would do the same thing. She would bring me home just tons of old papers and markers, pencils and such, because a big corporation like that is always tossing stuff out.

SDS: Yeah. My dad worked at a Ford dealership as a mechanic, and like I said, I don't know what these pads were for, but on one side they had a grid that the mechanic would write in, and on the other side they were blank. And by the time I got through with them, they weren't blank anymore. [*Mike laughs*]

DRAW!: Now, did you have favorite cartoons or favorite characters as a kid?

SDS: Oh, yeah, absolutely. My favorite characters then are probably still my favorite characters today. Popeye is probably my favorite character, except possibly for Bugs Bunny. And Batman is my favorite super-hero, I loved Adam West and stuff like that when I was a kid. I just thought that was amazing.

DRAW!: Well, I think for everybody who's in our generation—I assume you're probably somewhere around forty?

SDS: Nearly, yes.

DRAW!: That was like the coolest thing ever when you were a kid, watching that TV show.

SDS: Yeah, yeah! And then you grow up a little and then there's that whole backlash against it, against the camp thing. And I guess I sort of fell in for it, Batman should be serious and it should be really dark and angry and stuff like that. I guess I fell for that for a while, but in my heart I always loved that so much. And now that's Batman to me.

DRAW!: [*laughs*] And they're rerunning the *Batman* show on TV Land. It's fun to watch them now, as an adult.

SDS: They're amazing! For me, they're the best representation of super-heroes on film, ever! [*laughter*] Except for maybe the Fleischer cartoons, the *Superman* cartoons.

DRAW!: Did you seriously start trying to pursue cartooning in any real way in high school?

SDS: Yeah! From the time I was thirteen, I was in correspondence with Bob Rozakis at DC Comics, who was the production manager at the time. And I just wrote to him because who wrote comics that I knew? I don't know why. He wrote the column in

'MAZING MAN ALL CHARACTERS AND ARTWORK TM AND © 2003 DC COMICS

the back of DC Comics called "The Answer Man" back when I was a kid, so I figured he was the guy to write in to. So I had been writing to him since I was thirteen, and by the time I was 15 they needed a gofer at the DC offices. So I went up and I worked there for a summer, and then I worked there the next summer as well. And when I graduated high school, I just didn't want to go to college, because I knew what I wanted to do, I wanted to be a cartoonist. So somehow I actually made that swing. Which is astounding to me today, as an adult, thinking, "That can't work! That's ridiculous! Go to college, do the smart thing!" But I just....

DRAW!: You had your backup plan!

SDS: Yeah. But I just decided I wanted to go into comic books, and that's what I did. By that time, animation just had gone by the wayside. I never really thought I would go into animation.

DRAW!: So this was, I take it, late Seventies, early Eighties?

SDS: It was probably about '83 when I graduated high school.

DRAW!: And that was a pretty bleak time in animation.

SDS: Yeah, that's true. There was nothing to look at. I remember the first time *Duck Tale*s came on, and that was probably near that time, and I was thinking, "Y'know, these are famous characters, but they look so *stiff* and they look so *dull* and they don't look anywhere near as interesting or expressive as they did in the older cartoons.

DRAW!: There's no squash or stretch or exaggeration.

SDS: Yes! There was absolutely no life to the whole thing. But, yeah, cartoons and animation had gone way off the radar by that point.

DRAW!: Had you thought about trying to go out to California or anything and get into animation before that?

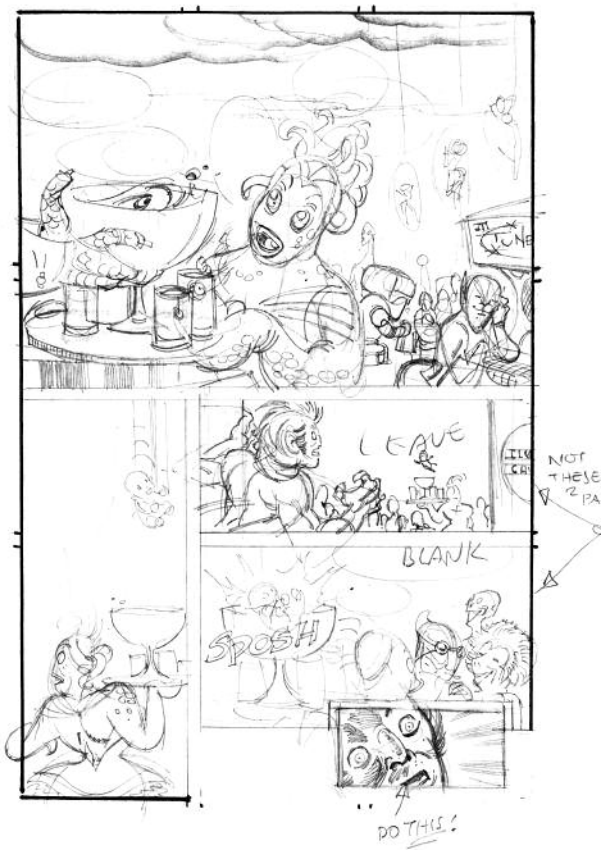
SDS: No. Not in the least. Never. I mean, animation was sort of a pie-in-the-sky sort of thing that I'd had when I was five. My family would tell me that one day I'll work for Walt Disney or one day I'll draw Road Runner for the cartoons or something like that. That just sort of went away. It seemed like a childhood thing, and I became much more interested in comic books as a way of expressing myself.

DRAW!: So comic books became more of a real thing for you, then, at that point?

SDS: Yes.

DRAW!: And that could be a real occupation, you could see you could actually support yourself making a living doing that.

SDS: Yes. It was also an obsession, too, because I collected them. I was buying them all the time, and that's pretty much all



in fashion

digital illustrator celia calle shares her unique insights into creating iconic covers for comics

BLUE TRASH © 2003 CELIA CALLE.

This interview was conducted by **DRAW!** *Editor Mike Manley via the internet and telephone and transcribed by Steven Tice*

DRAW!: You graduated from Parsons School of Design with a BFA, and you've won awards in fashion design. Some of your clients include Jean-Paul Gaultier Jeans, Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger. Big clients. How did you go about building this list? Do you advertise in the various advertising annuals or journals?

CELIA CALLE: Not during the time when I worked in fashion, these were mainly based from my own portfolio after graduation and meeting with the designers themselves, e.g., from working with them (or with their respectives).

DRAW!: Did you grow up wanting to do fashion illustration and comics?

CC: Actually, neither. I wanted to be a fashion designer and do animation in-between my fashion career. Yes, I had pretty unrealistic goals. But when I worked in the "Fashion Industry" (especially as a designer), I no longer sketched or painted as much. Instead, I was sent out to chase after the perfect buttons and re-naming color palettes that sounded exactly the same to my ear. Fussing over a stupid hem line, that required little talent. It was a nightmare... and complete boredom for me. I got assigned to "Illustration," mainly because during job interviews, most of the designers awed over my presentation (portfolio) and drawing skills and usually over-looked my designs.

DRAW!: You live in the center for illustration—New York City. Were you born there?

CC: I was born in Boston, raised in Texas, and have probably spent most of my life in New York City.

DRAW!: You were working professionally while in school and getting paid for it?

CC: Yes, I did work outside of school. And yes, I got paid for my work, but very little at the time.

DRAW!: Was your first work traditional methods or did you start right away with working with the computer?

CC: Pencils and paper. All traditional.

DRAW!: How did you get introduced to working on a computer? Did you start out on a PC or a Mac?

CC: Mac. After college, like all good children, I was searching for full-time work. After a year or two of being a full-time assistants to 'up-coming' fashion designers (at the time) Amy Chan and Jeffery Costello, I landed a full-time job as an illustrator with a small company that worked on "Fashion Trends" (1995-96). The art director/supervisor, Ben Veronis, he and I shared the same office. Sometimes, he would ask me to help him scan a few things, and every day he would show me something new.

Soon, he helped me set up my own station at home. Since then, I am forever grateful to him. I call him my computer-Jedi-master "O Ben."

DRAW!: Did it take a while to learn to approximate your techniques in the virtual world of the computer versus the real world of traditional media.

CC: I suppose I'm still learning no matter which medium we are discussing. There's never an end to these things. But for what I do know now, it was all pretty much by accident and having the basics placed on my plate. The rest just fell naturally into place as I continued.

DRAW!: Did you start out trying to reproduce in Photoshop what you were doing in traditional media? How did you do this? Was it trial by error?

CC: To be very honest with you? I really don't remember. I definitely did not try to reproduce what I did in traditional media in Photoshop. With the tools that it supplied then, it wasn't possible. I started off using lots of airbrushing, and stuck to the only tools I was familiar with (and sometimes still do). A lot of "trial by error."

DRAW!: How has the computer effected the way you work, your process?

BATGIRL ILLUSTRATION © 2000 CELIA CALLE

ABOVE: Calle's take on Batgirl.

CC: Take "speed" for instance, I can barely remember how I got by without one. I no longer have to re-draw everything if there's a correction needed or demanded by the client. If a client wants specific colors added/revised, it's just a simple adjustment. The downside of all this (virtually), is that I rarely have originals in my portfolio anymore, most of my work today just sits in discs and files that no longer apply.

DRAW!: How do you feel about that? Do you feel uncomfortable not having original works to hang on your wall or show later?

CC: Yes, I am very sad of not having many originals to show anymore, and the physical aspects of feeling/touching actual paint. It's sometimes not by choice. Having to do "actual" paintings for fun and for myself is very time consuming. Being able to have all this requires a pretty calm and secure lifestyle.

DRAW!: Does the "virtual" aspect of the piece change your relationship with the piece?

CC: Not really. My work will always be my work, regardless of what medium. Especially now, we have the technology of getting life-size paintings printed on canvas. The options are always available when we need it.

DRAW!: So most of your work interfaces with the computer now?

CC: Yeah, it's kind of like my uniform. It's my best friend (next to my dog, of course). I'd feel unattached without one. Like with most of us, it's a pretty big part of my life now....

DRAW!: So then I take it most of your clients don't want the hassle of having originals scanned, etc.?

CC: Most of my clients are commercial/editorial. Supplying "ready to print" artwork plays a big role in their favor.

DRAW!: When you get a new assignment, do you immediately start thinking of how you will approach it via the computer, Photoshop?

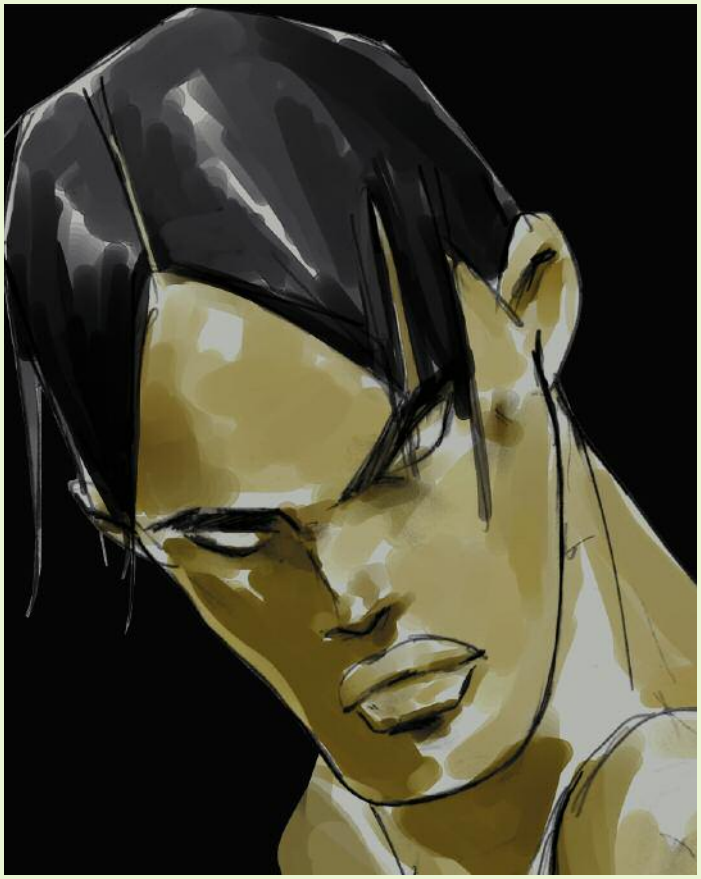
the process—celia calle

STEP 1:

PENCIL CLEAN-UP IN PHOTOSHOP I scan my pencil sketch into Photoshop and clean up areas as needed, using LEVELS.

STEP 2:

QUICK BRUSH IN PHOTOSHOP Using the BRUSH tool and variations of OPACITY, I block in covering areas.



STEP 3: BLACKTINT OVERLAY I overlay a black tint on the entire image. I select **FILL** in the **MENU,** and fill the layer at 15-30% **MULTIPLY.**

STEP 4: TOUCH-UP Using the LASSO tool and the BRUSH tool I select areas of dark and light. Using the GRADIENT tool or SMUDGE tool I soften breaking edges. I add pupils to the eyes and scars to the face with the SELECTION tool and BRUSH.

ILLUSTRATION 1

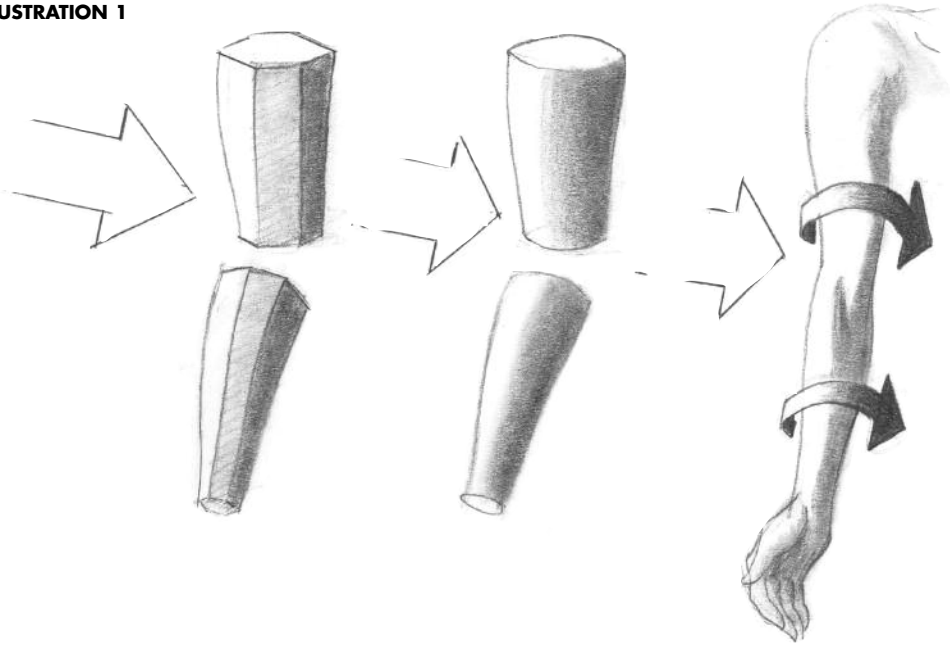
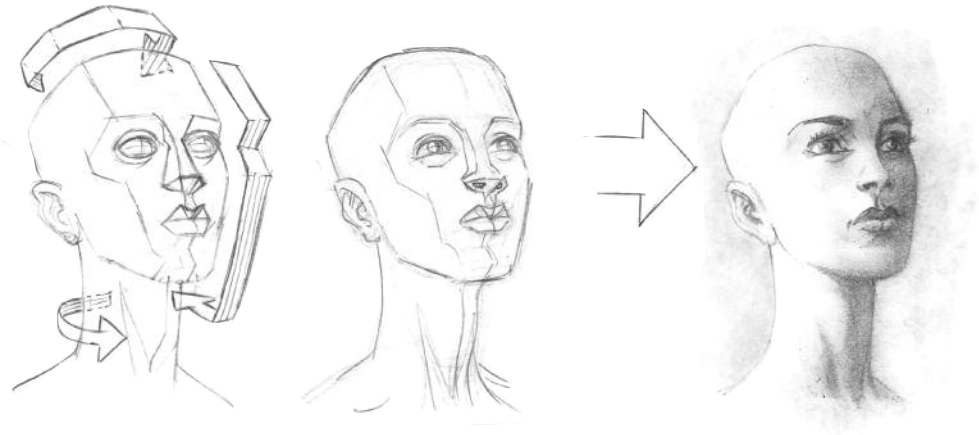


ILLUSTRATION 2



In this three-stage demonstration, the first image has simplified the forms receiving light (from the direction indicated by the arrow) into clean angular planes—the plane that most directly faces the light source will be defined by the lightest tone in your drawing (usually the white paper). As the plane turns at an oblique angle to the light, receiving less illumination, we drop the tone to a middle gray—as the third plane turns away from the light we fill it with shadow. This simple illustration explains an invaluable technique for clarifying what you see and restating your perception into a form that aids drawing. Of course you wouldn't render every form into this chiseled block structure (though it's good training to do so), but learning to mentally break the planes apart as you look at an object helps you understand what you see in terms of drawing light and shadow.

The second image has softened and melded the planes into a smooth cylinder—but because we've noted the changing angles of the surfaces receiving light in the blunt manner shown in the first image, we're able to blend the tones together and achieve a convincing illusion of roundness.

In the final image the cylinders have become the anatomy of an arm and simple shadow shapes convince our eyes we are looking at a human limb. The explanatory floating curved arrows following the form are wonderful tools to help work out the gradations of light on turning surface. I often use these on a piece of overlaid tracing paper to work out a tricky bit of lighting. In the portrait demonstration I've constructed a head by building up a structure of planes—the form-following arrows indicate how I was thinking about each change of direction—this allowed me to fabricate reasonably accurate skull, face and neck forms out of my imagination using prior knowledge gained through study and experience.

In the second image I was free to focus on refining the details of interior edges and more subtle turns of form (such as the nostrils and eyes) because the big planes were safely in place. Now indicating a direct but soft light toward the left side of the head is a much simpler problem, because I know where the planes are, having made several mental and physical (drawn) excursions over the territory. Although this head is imaginary, having this process behind you is a useful aid in drawing from life, because it helps you understand what you are seeing when you observe actual light on actual forms. The important lesson described in these demo illustrations is more a tool for thinking about what you are seeing (or inventing) than a technique for making a drawing. The only difference between any non-drawing person with normal eyesight and an artist is the special way an artist sorts, interprets and translates seen information into the language of drawing. Learning to make marks on paper is physical and easy—learning to think and see like an artist takes a bit more time and concentration. I can't stress enough the importance of using your mind more than you use your pencil. It eliminates so much frustration and stress from the drawing process.

Anything that reduces frustration is welcome, because our subject is full of other complications; light and shadow can also be arbitrarily distorted to create an endless variety of visual effects and connotations. For the purposes of this article, we'll divide our topic into two broad areas—light and shadow derived from actual optical mechanics as they function in nature, and invented light and shadow intentionally distorted toward a particular esthetic effect. These two applications can share many rules or none, depending on the image desired—needless to say, this short article can only hint at the endless possibilities.

BATMAN TM AND © 2003 DC COMICS.

Batman explain this basic contrast in approach—the first is rendered as if the actual three-dimensional form was being struck by light from the upper left...

The second is simplified into the more familiar cartoon language of an exaggerated, symbolic, flat, stylized caricature of light and shadow. This image is iconic and blatant, simplified for impact—but the distribution of light and shadow areas are extrapolated from the optics of the natural world and distorted for clarity, drama and dynamic compositional effect.

As you can see, aside from the actual schematic shapes, they have little in common. Yet both are shaped by observation and the optical facts of visible light.

Regardless of rendering style—using light and shadow to create an illusion of three-dimensional form on a flat two-dimensional surface requires careful observation of the behavior of light in nature, and good judgment in translating what you see into the limitations of drawing. These limitations are severe—your paper is flat and two-dimensional, an actual figure in space contains planes of depth not available to your drawing, so you are not duplicating nature—you are symbolizing it by "fooling" the human eye with the tones and edges you indicate, chosen for their ability to create a convincing illusion. As I mentioned above, this requires a special kind of multilayered seeing. (Which any sighted person can learn.)

To draw well, a "double awareness" must be developed that enables your mind to observe all the available information and simultaneously select, shape, edit or embellish this input to suit the needs of your drawing. One of the challenges of making representational figurative art is sorting out the overpowering wealth of information nature provides. Many drawings get into trouble because the artist is so conscious of the personality or physical reality of the subject that he/she loses the detachment to be aesthetically selective and the image becomes a directionless mess of observed but unharmonized details. A good drawing is not a complete depiction of what is seen—that's what a camera is for. In representa-