

## Books

This month I want to tell you about some drawing books that I have found very helpful while doing my research for my own book on Fundamental Drawing. The proposal and two chapters are finished, and have been passed on to an agent, cannot say 'my agent' yet as we have not signed a contract. She has to read it over and decide whether the book interests her enough to make the committed effort it will need to 'sell' it to a publisher. I was progressing just fine, until I got to the part in her outlines where she was requiring me to list 5 - 10 books that I saw as possible competition, say why and then state how many they had sold, that was the part I had trouble with, is it not the job of a publisher to do their own demographics? I have no idea how to find that information, and I have other things I would MUCH rather be doing! So right now the proposal has gone out without that information!

The interesting part of all this was to spend time with books I already owned and go to book stores and libraries to see what else was out there. In truth I did not find many REALLY complete 'how to' drawing books that did not make assumption that the reader already had basic talent. I found few books with old time fundamental techniques laid out in easy to read, clear diagrams, and a step-by-step progression from the beginning. What did this show me? It made me even more aware of making an extreme effort to not leave out information, no skipped steps because of assumptions, to make the books clear to all who read it. If I actually get there it will be nothing short of a miracle, but I must try. The analogy I have in mind are the instruction manuals that come with computer programs. In order to learn from them, to fully understand what they mean you need to know so much you actually do not need the instruction book in the first place. These manuals usually end up getting tossed across the room and I figure it out my self thru trial and error. This is exactly what I want to avoid. So I have three people I depend on for complete honesty, without them this book would not have progressed to where it is. It would not have even got started if I did not have my students, so this will be a combined effort.

Books that I think will really help:

1. Drawing Lessons from the Great Masters by Robert Beverly Hale. Publisher: Watson-Guption Publications 1964, paperback 1989

This man is brilliant. It is one of my books that seems to have more yellow highlighting than plain text. He is clear and definite in his descriptions. It is a primer for figurative drawing, but those who are not necessarily interested in drawing the human figure will still benefit. It will be a book that those of you who like to learn from text will find VERY helpful. He begins with fundamental that need to be mastered before moving on: line, basic shapes, light and planes, anatomy.

"So the process of learning to draw demands that we acquaint the subconscious mind with a certain amount of material, so that the subconscious can largely take over the control of our hand.

Actually, I am inclined to think that no artist can be called an accomplished craftsman until all matters of technique are so well learnt that they are part of his subconscious equipment."

His is old time technique of teaching is refreshing. Get the techniques down pat then move to rendering the actual subject, not before.

2. Drawing Realistic Textures in Pencil by J.D. Hillberry. Publisher: North Light Books 1999

This is a very well written book with great diagrams. He begins with the tools, clear explanations of pencils, paper etc. and how to use them. If you are a complete beginner, put this one on the shelf for a bit, until you are really comfortable with using a pencil, but then it will be very useful.

3. Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain by Betty Edwards. Publisher: Tarcher/Putnam Newest edition 1999

This has become one of the best-known contemporary 'How to' drawing books. I have to admit I have never gone thru it from beginning to end, but I have seen results of those who have. I visit this book often. I would not call it a book that I could not live without. It is not dog-eared, like my copy of Drawing Lessons from the Great Masters, but it is worthwhile reading. It falls into my rule of owning a book that can teach me at least two really good lessons. Borrow it from a library then make your decision.

I would love to hear from you if you have other favorites and I will pass on the information.