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Book 1

- Developing your own style
- Improving your drawing skills
- How to use a sketchbook
- Finding inspiration
- Drawing studies
- Boost your creativity
- Character colours

DEVELOPING YOUR OWN STYLE

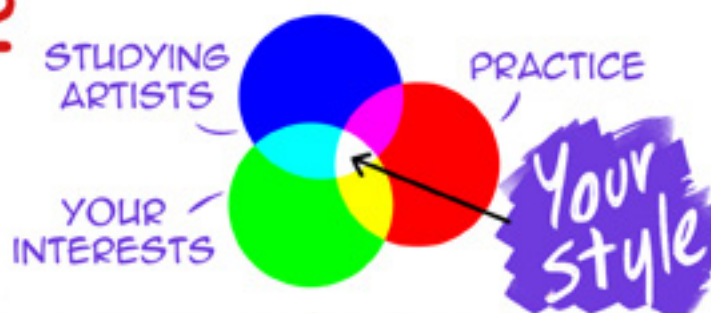


An art style is the most notable part of any Artist's work, making it recognizable among many other pieces. But how do new Artists develop their own style?



Think about what you want to improve and what you like from other artists; or even characteristics you want to focus on.

Studying other's way to work outlines, colours, shapes, etc. could help you improve various aspects of your style. Studying doesn't mean copying them, but mimicking and **adding your own touch**. Mix that knowledge with what you want to achieve to create your own style!



And remember, **styles evolve**; there is **no such thing** as a perfect style.



And finally, it's ok to not sticking to just one style, you can adopt two or three to diversify your work and adapt it to many more situations than having just one style.

**KEEP PRACTICING,
STUDYING,
EXPERIMENTING
AND EVOLVING!**



Finding your art style

Part of the process includes copying pieces you like, with characteristics you're interested in. This is a very important initial stage, because it helps with muscle memory. You can either copy directly above the piece you want to study or drawing it on the side. The former should be used only for very specific parts you want to train and should not be used everytime. Just a few exercises should be enough. For the most part, drawing and comparing side by side your studies and the pieces you're studying is the most beneficial for both your muscle memory and for training your eyes to detect some details you want to emphasize or simplify in your style. You can study things like proportions, line thickness, sharpness or roundness; textures, object details and so on. When studying other's styles you will find out what things you liked to draw, what

you didn't like and what you want to draw in a different way.

While you don't need to copy from someone else all the time, for example, when you want to experiment new things all by yourself, copying helps you with knowing (and seeing) exactly how things should look like at some degree. Remember there are no rules for art styles, except the ones you make yourself. Feel free to modify them whenever you feel like it. Always keep in mind what your goals and interests are.

Recommended videos:

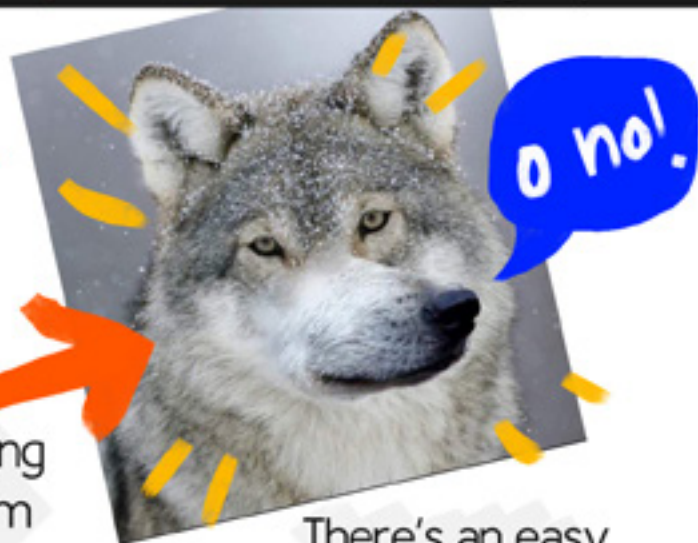
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gH2NaWZJMX8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w3nXOoHWEw>

IMPROVING YOUR DRAWING SKILLS



Sometimes when we draw, specially when we're beginners, everything we draw may seem off, or not exactly in proportion. Don't lose all hopes yet!



There's an easy way to figure out how things should be and improve your drawings.



To visualize how you can break down complex shapes into simpler shapes, take real life references (or any other image) and draw over them.



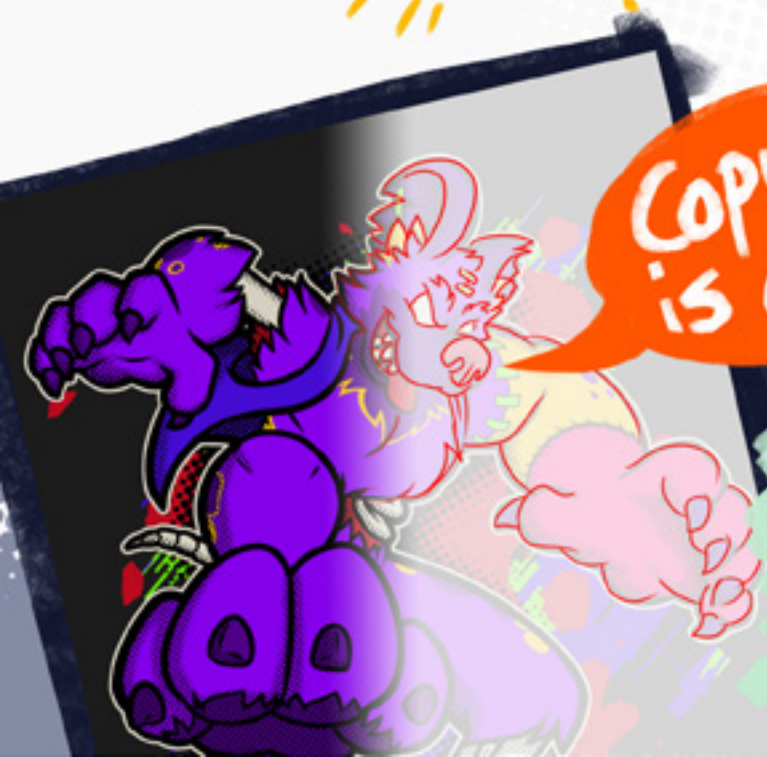
You can deconstruct these images in other forms too, like contour only, shadows only, geometric shapes, etc.



Copying is OK!

To achieve specific results, like improving textures or other similar details, you

can study your references by copying or tracing. Remember you can only do this to study shapes and anatomy, **never as actual work.**



Improving drawing skills

This is tied to the previous topic. To improve your drawing skills, you need to do the same activity over and over again for a long time. The more you draw, the more experienced you're going to be. Yes it's a long way to go, but no one becomes good at anything overnight. Patience is the key. Ask yourself what you're good at and how you became good at it. The same principles apply to drawing: practicing constantly, feedback, learning the basics and so on. Once I heard something that really stuck to my head. Spending 10000 hours in an activity is what it takes to become an expert. Everytime you practice drawing, anything entirely original or studying others' work (the previous topic) adds up to those 10000 hours. Now, don't be afraid! I highly recommend Jake's Parker opinion about this method, it can be found in the suggested

videos list for this topic.

Following his method could be the first milestone towards the 10000 hours goal. Doing daily challenges (like daily sketches or Inktober, for example) are good habits to practice both your drawing skills and your creativity (which is a skill too!). There are other themed days, weeks and months too, or you can just make your own challenge. Remember to keep in mind what your goals are.

Now for the most controvertal part, how to deal with those terrible, infamous, dreadful art blocks. Read the next topic!

Suggested videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ej7E1U8Vdw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TXEZ4tP06c>

HOW TO USE A SKETCHBOOK



Sketchbooks are very popular among artists, but why? Do you have one? How do you use it?



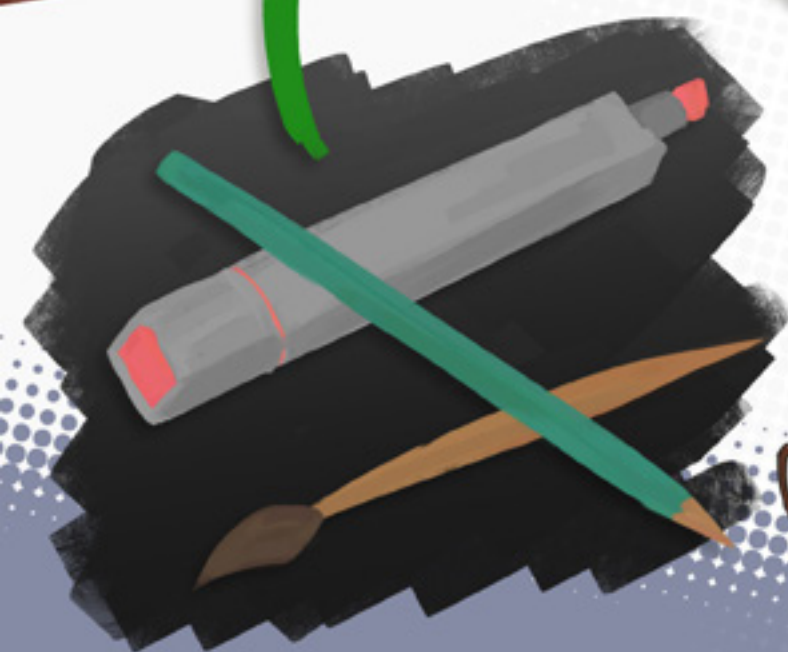
Sketchbooks are not only for "good" sketches. Draw in there for whatever reason. It helps to boost your creativity, use it freely! Don't be afraid of bad sketches!



Drawing in sketchbooks boosts your creativity, You can also use it for practicing and studies. Carry it everywhere, we never know when creativity will come.



You can use it to try new drawing methods, mixing colours, practising and so on. Even for warm up drawings. Just draw anything!



How to use a sketchbook

Sketchbooks are the absolute opposite of a perfect art collection. They aren't meant to be that (although they can be that, but that's a different topic). A sketchbook is a tool where you can draw anything you want for whatever reason, with whatever pencil, brush, pen you want. It doesn't have to contain drawings everyone will love. Think about it as the backstage of all of your work, no one except you gets access to what happens behind the main stage. Back in the day I learnt a silly concept but something that became very useful late in my life called the 3Bs of creativity. That means, creativity usually comes in these three places: when you're in the **bus**, the **bathroom** or your **bed**. This is why it's important to have a sketchbook always with you, to draw and write whatever you think about immediately, before it disappears in the

big maze of memories in your head. No one wants to waste a potentially good idea like that!

In the infographic I'm showing some examples of what you can do in your sketchbooks: doodling some ideas that popped in your mind, writing some concepts you want to try, mixing a few ideas together, testing new tools and colours, and so on.

About dealing with art blocks, the reason why this topic was referenced in the previous one is sketchbooks are very powerful to get rid of art blocks because they're your "zen space". Draw or write whatever you feel like drawing, even if it's something that won't make it to a finished art piece, like experimenting some ideas you wanted to try for the past few days, drawing anything you see on your table, even venting sketches work for this. You can also see what you have drawn before to trigger some new ideas in your mind. Maybe you noticed something

you need to improve in your past drawings and this is your chance to give it a try one more time. Maybe you find notes of an idea you were thinking about a month ago and you finally decided to work on it. Sometimes, looking through the pages of your sketchbooks help you override art blocks better than just scrolling through your Tumblr or Twitter timelines, mainly because you're reviewing incomplete ideas that you were authentically interested into, and not someone else's ideas presented in a finished work that barely needs any improvements.

Lastly, don't be afraid of what you put in sketchbooks. They're for you, not for your audience. It's up to you if you want to show it to the world.

Recommended videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KflV1CeCj4o>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MO4S_n2p40

<https://www.youtube.com/>
(Playlist)

FINDING INSPIRATION



Every artist struggles with inspiration, either because it comes at the most random times or because it's nonexistent when we really need it.



Many **Artists*** have different techniques to find some inspiration, these are some of the most common ones:

See others' work. Books, movies, games, paintings, etc. Ask yourself what parts of their work you can improve, and do it (Even your own old works too).

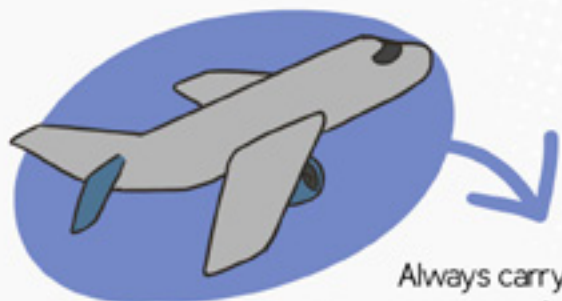
Do something new. Our comfort zone feels good, but it isn't enough, try to do something you haven't tried before.

Do what you like to do. You're the Artist, you set the rules.

Don't force inspiration. Sometimes it comes, sometimes it doesn't. Take a short break and try again.

Always carry a notebook and a pen. When you're inspired, write (or doodle) your ideas right away.

And by **"Artists"** we aren't talking only about those who draw, it's **for all creative minds!**



Finding inspiration

The main reason why we feel like we're lost and we need some inspiration is following a strict routine for a long time. That even includes activities that aren't related to work. This is because you can easily tell what's going to happen next, your days look boring to you due to that schedule repeating over and over again. Inspiration is a very important part of our lives as creative people. And frequently it's also hard to find. In the infographic, you can find a short list of activities that most creatives do in order to find some inspiration. If you look closely, none of those activities involve working, and the most important part of these activities is not forcing inspiration. That would result in (more) frustration and you won't feel comfortable with the result. The most important part of finding inspiration is knowing exactly where to start, and for that, you need to know what makes you feel

passionate, what activities, hobbies and moments make you feel happy and full of energy. In our daily routines we usually spend our free time doing other activities like fixing what is broken or working overtime. That means not having time for ourselves. How many times have you told someone you "don't have time" to do something? Let's turn this around, let's spend some time in activities you know you will enjoy!, at least once every other week. It's important to spend time on yourself, and not only working and doing something you don't feel passionate about. While there isn't a perfect recipe to find inspiration, the following videos could give you an idea of what other people do to feel inspired again.

Suggested videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2kxr-NAb4c>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCYGLhPgcZQ>

DRAWING STUDIES



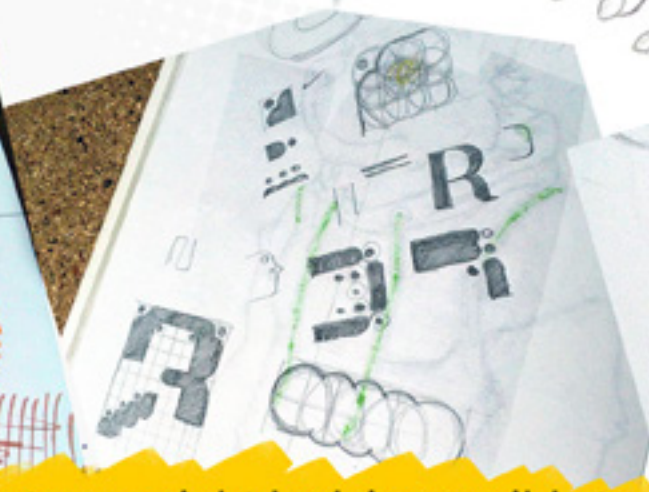
There's always something we struggle with as Illustrators. When we need to draw new stuff and it usually looks bad at first. This method will help you improve not just drawing certain object, but everything you can think about.

Studies help you understand how they're supposed to look like.

Collect reference images, this could be a collection of photos or paintings from other artists.

When studying, it's meant to be a replica (or as identical as possible), even from different angles.

A great source for body references is Posemaniacs!



Imaginary creatures might look impossible to study, but they are a mix of things that already exist. Just study everything separately and combine them in an unique character!

Drawing studies

This topic was briefly covered in the previous pages, and now this section is about what you can do and what to avoid when studying your references. The first thing is, don't be afraid of using a ton of references. Some artists think it's cheating, but it's the absolute opposite of that. Even if what you want to draw is something that doesn't exist in reality, that idea contains a lot of small parts of something that actually exists. There are never enough references, but I personally suggest not using more than 6 references for every idea you want to draw. This in order to focus on what is important for that particular piece. The main idea of working on drawing studies is knowing how things are in reality, that can later be modified into whatever you want for another piece of art. Unlike what it's mentioned in the "finding your art style" topic, studies help you detect

small details and the general aspect of real objects and you can transform this knowledge into your art style by adding, modifying or removing certain parts. Don't worry if you can't draw realistic stuff, always do your best when doing your studies, you're still going to learn from that. A good starting point for beginners could be "how to draw" style videos. They generally help you with breaking down complex shapes into basic ones and then move into more specific and smaller details; and most of these videos are studies of real life objects, not (very) affected by the author's style. After a few studies you will notice there's a significant change between the first time you drew that object you wanted to draw and the final result.

Suggested videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zF003DnMpog>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zF003DnMpog>

BOOST YOUR CREATIVITY

Creativity is often a concept related to arts (painting, music, photography, etc). In reality it's a skill that can be used **anywhere**.



You can improve this skill in many different ways, these are some of the **easiest** ones.

Combining concepts together: two (or more) apparently conflicting ideas form a solid new one. Make connections between two ideas that are usually not related in any way.

We've heard of "thinking out of the box" but what about using a different box instead? A different perspective could open new doors for ideas to come in. This works better when perspectives are compared too.



As stated before, creativity is a skill that can be used anywhere! No matter what your field of expertise is, there's always room for creativity! The secret is not doing what everyone else does!

And again, taking real notes on notebooks or sketchbooks and making connections in them is useful for visualizing these new concepts you're looking for!



Boost your creativity

When talking about creativity, I like mentioning this thing first: creativity is a skill, not a gift reserved to those individuals chosen by god (or artists only). Everyone can be creative, it's just a matter of training that skill. Now, keep this in mind too: our creativity heavily depends on what we know and what experiences we have had in our lives, there's no such thing as "more creative" or "less creative". The secret relies on what answers you want to give to the questions you're facing. Have you heard of the box? Do you know what "thinking out of the box" means? Do you know how to think out of the box? There's no definite answer for this, but there's something you can do about these boxes everyone mentions. What if you use a different box instead? You'd normally put your socks in the clothes drawer, right? What if it's in the toy's drawer, what does

it mean? Or the decorations drawer? Or the tools drawer? This is what boxes mean. You're using categories to define objects, and using a different boxes means changing the categories you want to apply to certain ideas. And not just that, you can also make new connections between ideas that belong to the same box (even if they aren't originally from that box). Now after giving you this example, this is what creativity is in a nutshell: combining different ideas that apparently can't be combined. The box method is just one of various ways to be creative, but there are many more out there. I highly recommend reading Edward de Bono's books about creativity. He has many books about this topic, just pick your favourite.

Suggested videos

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_Y-T_guM1I

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEusrD8g-dM>

CHARACTER COLOURS



Sometimes it's very difficult to make up our minds when picking colours for characters.



Today we're reviewing two basic steps to start **testing** colours on your characters.*

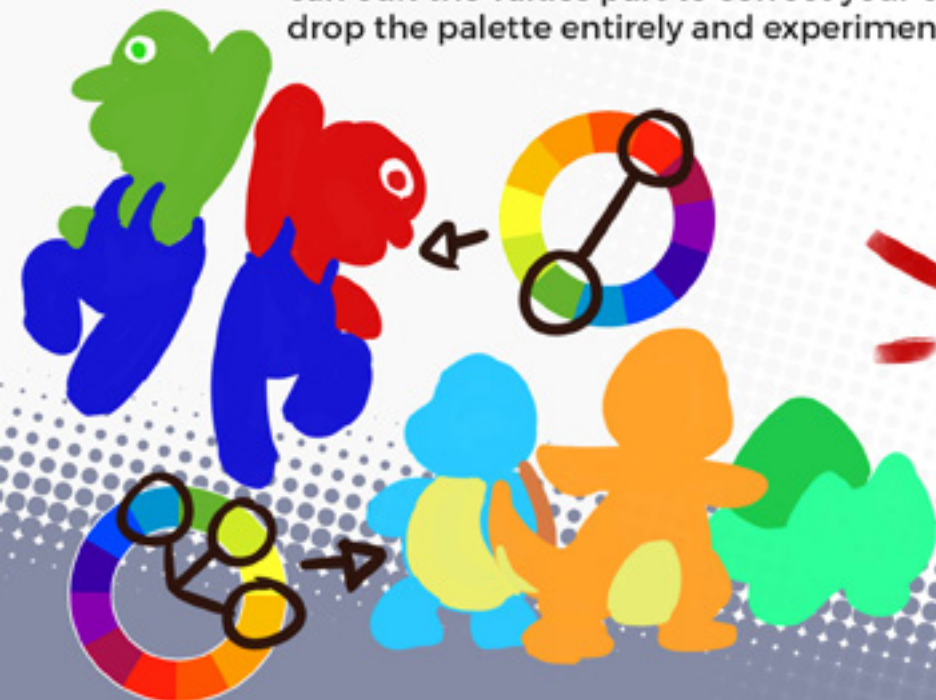
*These are just suggestions, there are countless methods to decide on colours for characters and other designs.

Values: draw considering only light intensity (grayscale), this means, how bright or dark some areas should be. This helps with contrast.



Colour palettes: pick a single accent colour, and for the rest you can take 3-4 different colours from the opposite side of the colour wheel, and these **MUST** be less saturated and have different values (previous step).

Finally, apply these colours on your character for testing. You can edit the values part to correct your colours' brightness or drop the palette entirely and experiment with a new one.



When you want to pick colours for a duo or trio, going back to complementary or triad selections for accent colours for each character makes the job easier! And these colours are harmonic among your characters too!

Character colours

The infographic in the previous page suggests only two actions to decide and fix your character's colours. These methods help with ballancing the colour palettes you're testing, but they aren't definitely the ultimate solution to colour selection. In the end, colour selection is entirely a subjective decision, it depends on what we want, but tools like colour palette generators or the colour wheel are excellent to help you with deciding (and visualizing) more colours together. There are countless sites online to do this, just pick your personal favourite; and don't be afraid to try your own combinations! I personally follow the complementary and analog colour palettes, the former is good if you want certain colours to stand out, and the latter is great to make the entire palette look subtle and harmonic. I strongly recommend having one or two main colours (preferably one).

Another useful thing to know before picking colours is colour psychology. Generally speaking, each colour has its own subconscious meaning. You can take advantage of these meanings if your character has a story to go with it (like powers, personality, hierarchy, etc). Picking a main colour matching your character's most evident feature will help others quickly recognize what that character is like.

The last part about ballancing the main colour with the rest of the colours in your palette is knowing what proportions work well. Some main colours can take anywhere between 70 to 80% of the entire composition, but in other cases it barely exceeds 60%, for example, web design where white is preferred as a background, but it isn't necessarily the main colour.

After trying some of these methods, feel free to change anything you want and test as much as you need to make your characters look amazing! Using software to change any colour easily will make your life easier too.

Suggested videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EL-ySIQIZY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2LJAP-Srhk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sKGVQK-sOU>