CHICKEN SCRATCH

AKA

HOW I THINK WHEN I DRAW

HES.
ART

This guide is a little strange. It's not really about how to draw.

It was hard to produce! It sounded like a good idea on paper, but when it came to figuring out where to begin... I was stumped.

And that's the real trouble with drawing too, isn't it? Where on earth do we begin?

More often than not, I start by considering a specific question.

WHAT AM I
TRYING TO SHOW?

I'm an artist, I suppose. If I were to pick a more specific word, I would choose "illustrator."

Illustrating is creating imagery. The sneaky little second meaning is the one that resonates with me the most.

illustrate *verb*

to show the meaning or truth of something more clearly, especially by giving examples.

When I sit down to draw, I'm trying to show something to someone.

Even if it's something as small as an imaginary character I made up for fun. This is how I put thought and meaning into my art.

98% of my time is spent trying to show people a character.

My aim is to portray their appearance, yes, but all the things that make them who they are as well.

Their expression, their posture, an outfit they would wear or an snapshot of an emotion.

I could try to illustrate a moment in their story or show they relationship to another character, too.

It could be as simple as a smile.

Once I've decided *WHAT* to show someone, there is the inevitable next step.

(And this is where the art part comes in, but it doesn't need to be pen on paper. It could be painting, writing, a piece of music. It could be collage or a movie. An animation or poem. Whatever your medium,)

HOW am I going to show it?

For me, the answer is drawing. I open up my drawing program and I draw until I can look at a piece of art and say, "yes, they will get the point".

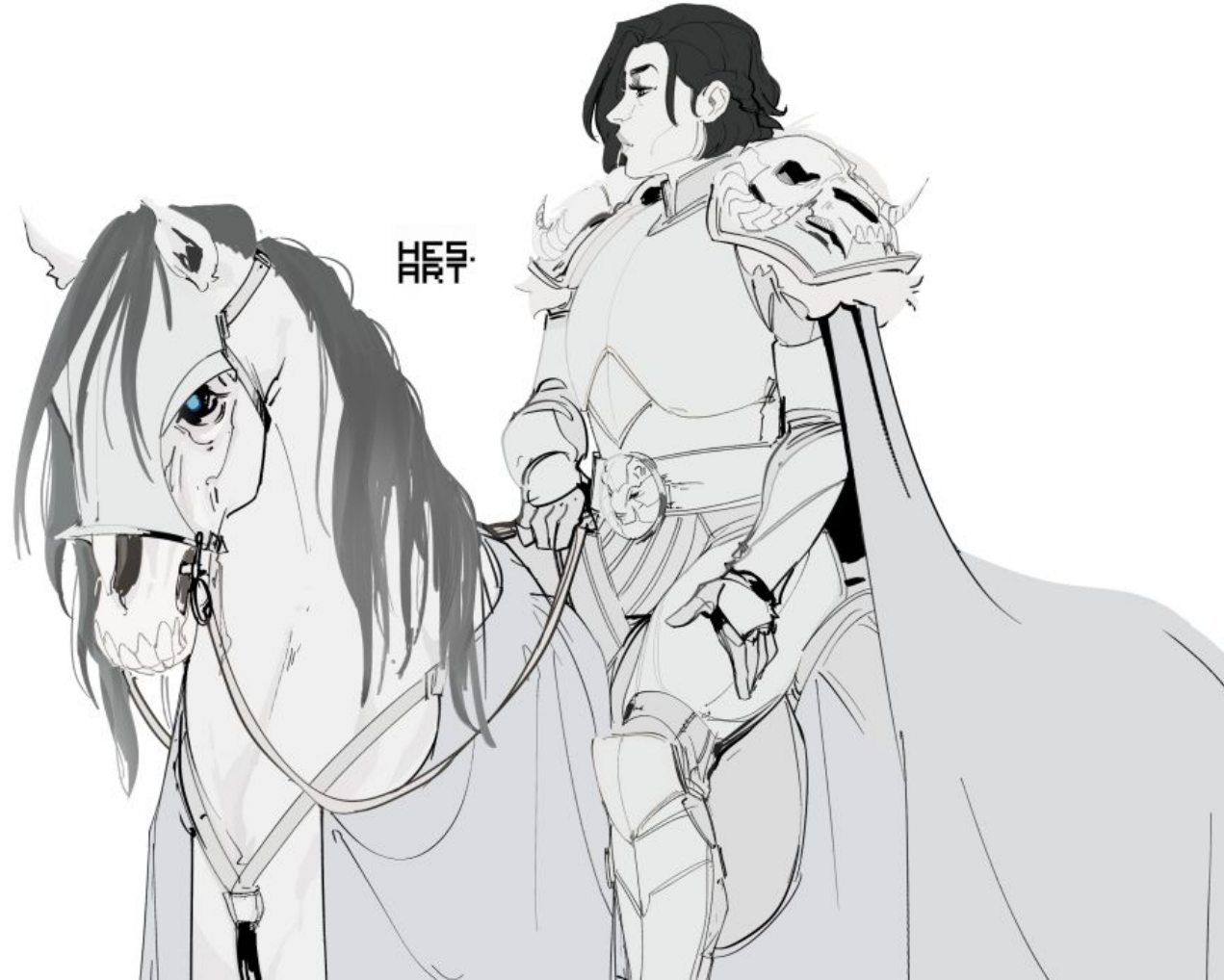This is a little man and the point is that he's smiling!

Here's an example.

This is my character, Julia. She's an undead knight and she lives in the game "World of Warcraft".

In this picture, I wanted to show her cool undead horse. His name is Trustworthy.

I have shown you a horse. You get the point.

But we can go further, we have the technology.....

Now I've shown colour, shape, the texture and dents on Julia's battle-worn armour.

I've shown that Trustyworthy is a pale horse with a glowing eye that exudes a little magic.

I've given him features inspired by the Pale Horse of folk legends, the mount of Death in biblical myth.

Even with these basic features, I am showing more and more visual information about the character and her steed.

I stopped adding to this picture after a little more. I'd already shown the horse, the colours, the character and magic.

Backgrounds are a character artist's best friend. They help to give a character context. A setting can do a much to convey information as the subtle extra line to make a pair of eyebrows frown.

This setting is desolate and almost colourless. There is no foliage or growth on the dead branch behind her. Julia and Trustworthy are alone in the scene.

The point is made.

This process of thought- adding elements and information that drive home what I am trying to portay- isn't unique to me.

Any time we look at a picture, we try and understand it's meaning. I might not be be painting portraits of grand monarchs and peppering in symbols of their power and history (except sometimes, I am →) but there's no reason I can't think about my art in the same way.

Striving to SHOW something, express a feeling, or explain a character is what drives me to keep improving.

The more I improve my art, the easier it will be to show people the things I imagine.