

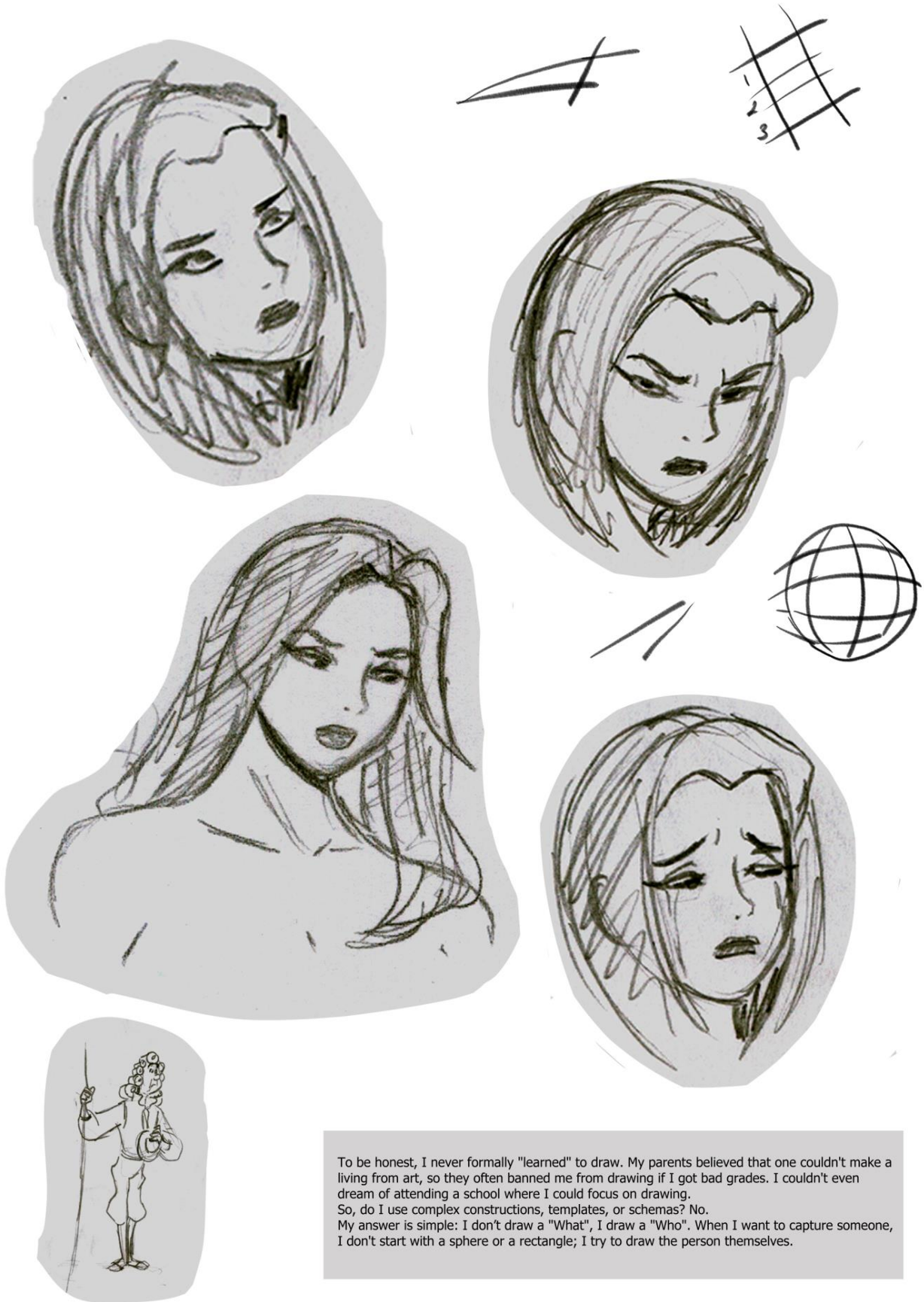
Chapter 1: Fundamentals of a Living Character



In this first chapter, we will look at character drawing in broad strokes, focusing primarily on how to associate personality with your figures. This is an overview of how I give a character life and soul. In the upcoming parts of this series, we will dive much deeper into specific drawing challenges and technical difficulties.

My Secret: "Who", not "What"

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To be honest, I never formally "learned" to draw. My parents believed that one couldn't make a living from art, so they often banned me from drawing if I got bad grades. I couldn't even dream of attending a school where I could focus on drawing. So, do I use complex constructions, templates, or schemas? No. My answer is simple: I don't draw a "What", I draw a "Who". When I want to capture someone, I don't start with a sphere or a rectangle; I try to draw the person themselves.

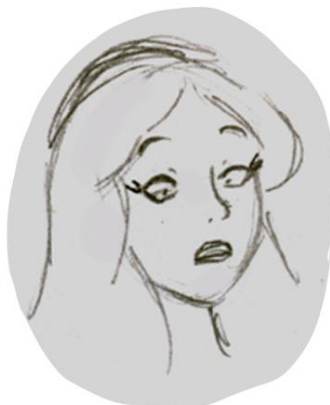
Facial Expressions

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In the first stage of design, draw a figure whose personality you want to develop, then think about their reactions and expressions. This character is deeply skeptical and rather weary of the world's affairs than able to laugh light-heartedly. Let's look at the expressions: the head shape and the eyes all point to this.





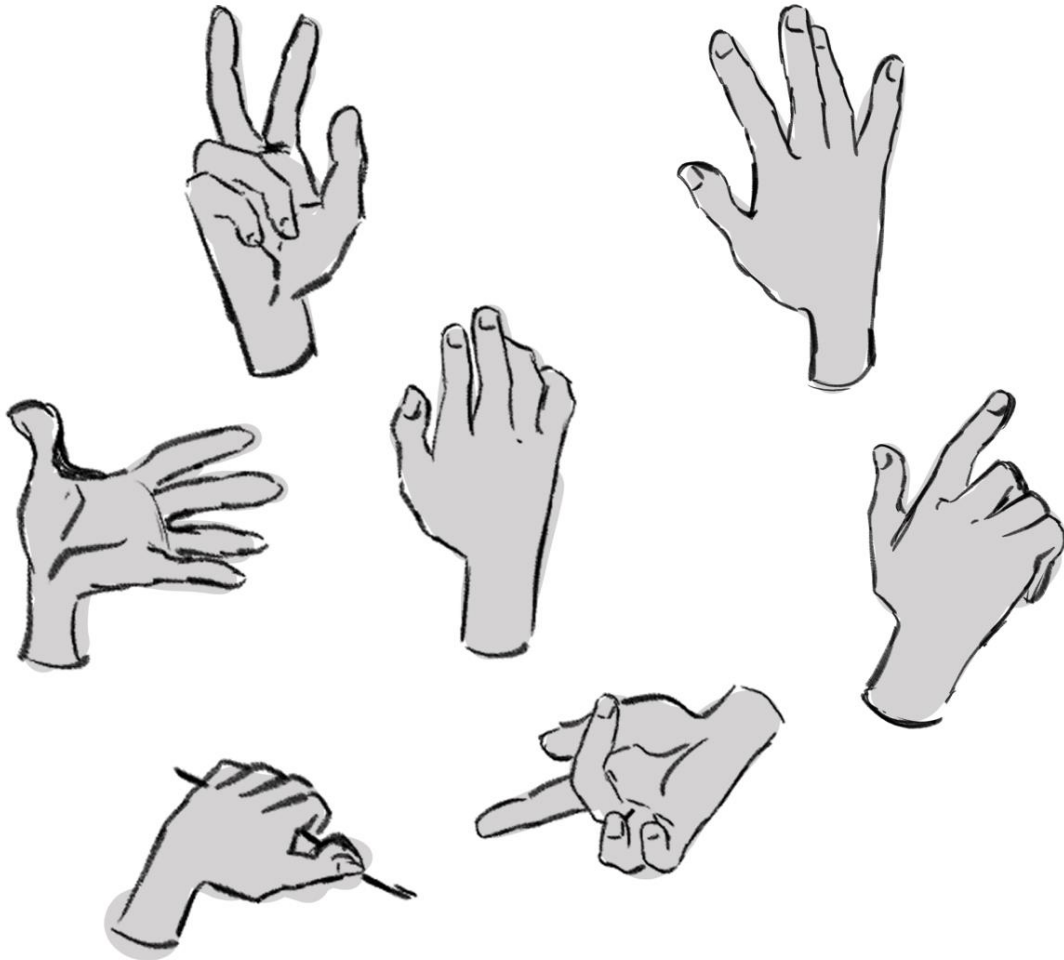
A single person carries so many different personality traits.
On the following pages, I will show you character designs from my own sketchbook.



Sketch out extreme expressions first, then select the ones that truly fit the character. Once you have a clear understanding of the personality, it will all come together.

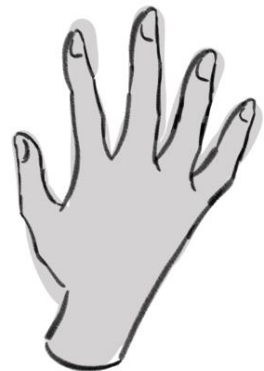


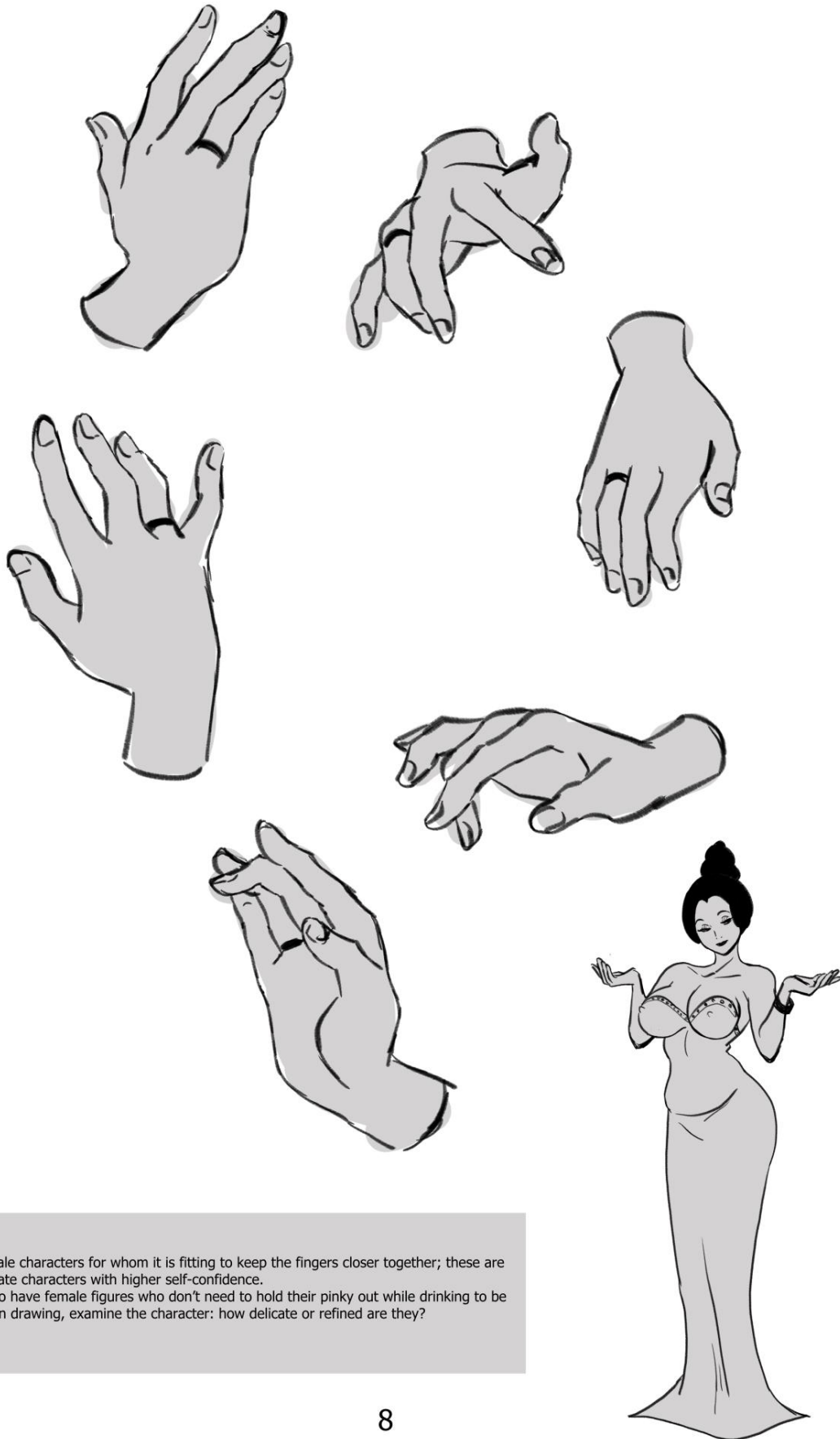
Once you have settled on the core personality and feel, it's time to test various head angles. I've noticed that front-facing views usually look fine, but the real challenge begins with head rotations. That is where you need to pay closer attention.



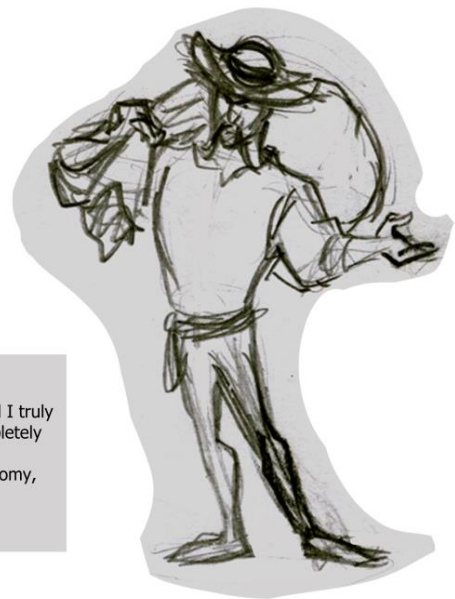
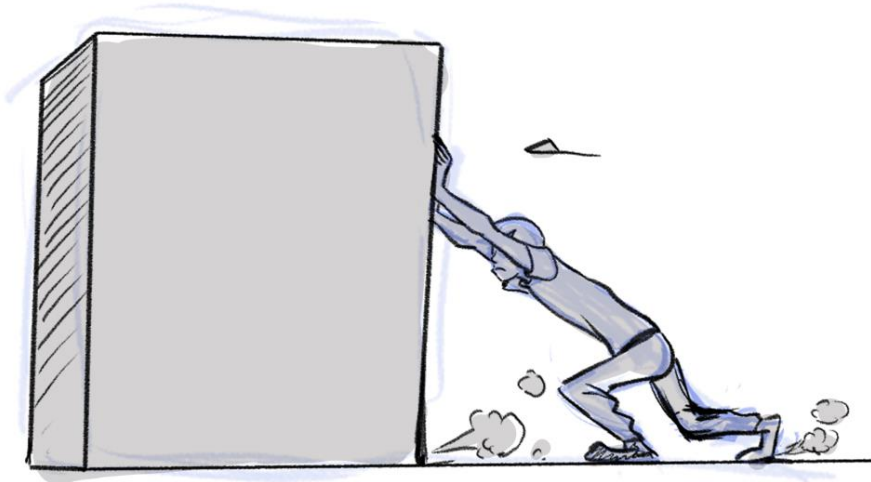
Pay attention to the fact that every character has unique hands; the hand itself possesses a personality. For example, if you are drawing a down-to-earth boy, do not make the hand shape or the finger grouping like this!
Look! It is the same hand, but the posture of the fingers is different. This is the hand of a delicate, spoiled boy who lives in a pink dreamworld, far from reality.

Meanwhile, in the other drawing, the posture is good and average, but it is a woman's delicate hand.
I often see that when drawing a character of a different gender, artists tend to copy their own hands, which looks strange on the figure. Don't do this—unless the personality specifically requires it!





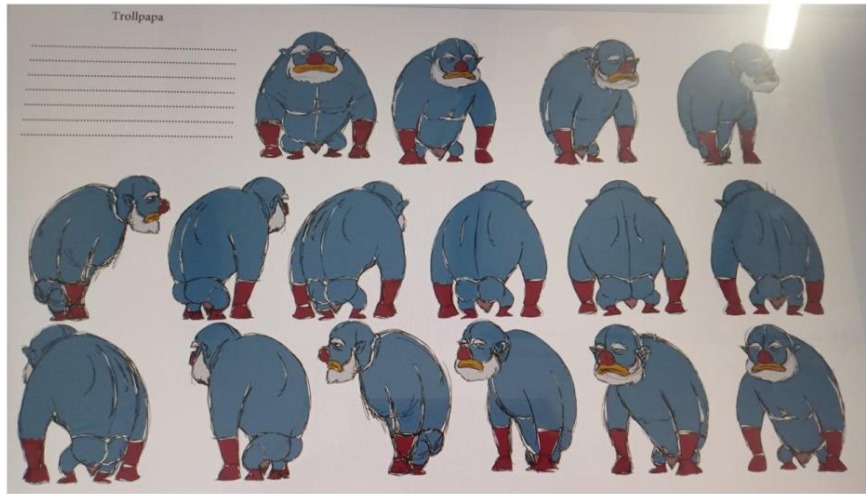
There are female characters for whom it is fitting to keep the fingers closer together; these are the more delicate characters with higher self-confidence. However, I also have female figures who don't need to hold their pinky out while drinking to be feminine. When drawing, examine the character: how delicate or refined are they?



To be honest, I spend a long time on character posing. This is because I keep trying until I truly believe it is him posing on the paper. I start with an idea, but I often end up with a completely different pose. The final result must reflect the character's personality. This is the essence—not the anatomy, not the shapes, but the feeling.

Summary

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In summary, while using references is important, do not expect a model or an actor to perfectly embody the character you want to draw. For the figure to truly come to life, you must believe that they exist. You have to get to know them and, if necessary, draw them over and over again until you achieve that feeling: that the character is truly real.