

Making Everything Easier!™

Figure Drawing

FOR
DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Master one of the hardest skills that artists face
- Develop your proportional sketch of the human figure
- Capture form, movement, bone structure, and musculature
- Understand each step of the process with hundreds of drawings



Kensuke Okabayashi

Author and illustrator, *Manga For Dummies*

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Figure Drawing For Dummies®

Visit www.dummies.com/how-to/content/figure-drawing-for-dummies-cheat-sheet.html to view this book's cheat sheet.

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Figure Drawing For Dummies[®]

by Kensuke Okabayashi



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About the Author

Kensuke Okabayashi is a professional freelance illustrator/sequential artist. Born and raised in Princeton, New Jersey, Kensuke has been inspired by classic illustrators such as Harvey Dunn, Dean Cornwell, J.C. Leyendecker, and Charles Dana Gibson.

After studying music and psychology at Wheaton College in Illinois, Kensuke shifted his focus from playing the piano to honing his art skills. He earned his BFA in Illustration at the School of Visual Arts in New York City after studying traditional painting and further developing his drawing skills. Upon graduating, he began picking up illustration and storyboard clients, including LG Electronics Worldwide, Wendy's, Diet Coke,

Nestlé, Camel, Canon Digital, Saatchi & Saatchi, Absolut Vodka, Marvel Comics, and Anheuser-Busch.

Kensuke also actively illustrates for mainstream entertainment industry clients, such as Wizards of the Coast, Takara Toys U.S.A., Nickelodeon, Kensington Books, Skyzone Entertainment, Loew-Cornell, Wiley Publishing, Inc., and Jossey-Bass.

Inspired by his experience of working long hours at a well-known coffee shop corporation, Kensuke developed and illustrated his creator-owned graphic novel *JAVA!*, which attracted attention and was picked up by Committed Comics. His main character, Java (a high-powered caffeine girl who fights crime), received positive reviews from major book review sites as well as from readers and distributors. Kensuke's first written and illustrated title in the *For Dummies* series, *Manga For Dummies*, is currently translated into French and German and marketed internationally. His most recent illustrated graphic novel, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Manga Edition)*, is based on the New York Times Best-Seller by Patrick M. Lencioni and is currently being released internationally through Jossey-Bass. His upcoming publication projects include Arcana Publishing and Archaia Studio Press.

Kensuke's illustrated juried works have also been exhibited in the Society of Illustrators in New York City as well as Mercer's Artist Showcase in New Jersey.

On the side, Kensuke continues to draw from life and teach art. He taught illustration courses at Mercer College of New Jersey for several years. When he's not drawing or painting at his studio loft in Kearny, New Jersey, Kensuke still enjoys playing the piano from time to time and socializing at coffee shops during late nights in the city. He still draws from live models on weekends in Soho and Brooklyn and gives live demonstration events at the Brooklyn Museum in New York. You can see

Kensuke's online portfolios at his Web sites,
www.piggybackstudios.com and www.javacomics.com.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my brothers, Yusuke and Saichan, for their love and support. We all have such different talents and personalities, yet we complement each other nicely.

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Introduction

In today's fast-paced society, where days and weeks seem to rush by more quickly than ever, it seems the only time we stop to appreciate our amazingly constructed figures is at 6 a.m. when we look in the mirror to brush our teeth or apply makeup. Most people aren't even in touch with what their bodies look like (especially the backside). Our bodies, which come in all shapes and sizes, are complex and wonderfully crafted works of art that deserve more attention.

Figure-drawing students approach me on the first day of class claiming they can draw only stick figures, but most gain two things by the end of the first session. One: they realize how beautiful yet complex the body is. Two: they realize not only how talented they are, but also how fun it is to apply their skills to drawing the human figure. Whether you're an art student, a professional illustrator wanting to brush up on your figure-drawing skills, or just someone who likes to doodle and wants some guidance on drawing the figure, *Figure Drawing For Dummies* is a great place to start.

About This Book

Because so many figure drawing books are out there, it's important that I distinguish this book by declaring what it's *not*. *Figure Drawing For Dummies* is *not* an anatomy book crammed with detailed drawings of each and every muscle fiber in the human body. In my opinion, basic anatomy is important for understanding the overall surface structure of the figure, but completing a fulfilling drawing of the figure doesn't require the knowledge of a surgeon (nor should it). The purpose of this book is to present the art of drawing the human figure to

beginning art students in a way that hones your knowledge of theories and techniques, and also encourages the development of your observational skills. As a beloved instructor at art school mentioned to me one day, “The drawing is not up there [pointing to the posing model] but down here [pointing to my drawing pad].” Throughout this book, my focus is to provide just enough basic knowledge and theory on the figure so you become excited about recording your reaction to what’s happening up on the model stand.

All tips, advice, and drawings that I provide are based on my own experience, both as a professional illustrator/sequential artist and as a former art student. I designed this book to take you through various techniques on figure drawing. As you become familiar with anatomy and your drawing medium, you may want to combine different elements to come up with your own individual style.

Throughout this book, I cover a variety of popular topics, and you can pick and choose what you want to read at any time. You don’t have to read this book from cover to cover if you don’t want to (but I won’t mind if you do!). I introduce basic drawing materials (including some of my personal favorites) and drawing techniques to get you started. In addition to describing the body’s basic proportion and anatomy from head to toe, I give you helpful visual and sketching exercises. I wrap up by showing you how to sharpen your skills with advanced techniques, composition, and perspective.

Conventions Used in This Book

I use a few conventions to help you navigate this book more easily:

- ✓ Numbered steps and keywords appear in **boldface**.
- ✓ Whenever I introduce a new term, I *italicize* it and define it.
- ✓ Web sites and e-mail addresses appear in monofont to help them stand out.
- ✓ When this book was printed, some Web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that I haven't put in any extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. So, when using one of these Web addresses, just type in exactly what you see in this book, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist.

What You're Not to Read

I didn't spend hours upon hours writing this book and drawing all the illustrations because I want you to skip over them. However, to be honest, you can skip over certain elements in this book and still get the gist of what's being covered. The sidebars (the gray boxes) contain information that's interesting yet nonessential, so if you're pressed for time or just not into anything that isn't essential, feel free to skip them. You won't hurt my feelings (much).

Foolish Assumptions

When I sat down to write this book, I made a few assumptions about you, dear reader. This book is for you if

- ✔ You enjoy spending time looking at figure drawings and paintings at art museums.
- ✔ You're curious about the figure and how it moves.
- ✔ You like doodling on your own (hopefully not caricatures of your professor during class like I once did).
- ✔ You want to learn how to draw faces so you can do portraits.
- ✔ You're a beginning art student looking to develop your figure-drawing skills outside of class.
- ✔ You're a graphic artist who wants to hone your drawing skills away from the computer.
- ✔ You've always wanted to learn to draw the figure but were put off by those thick anatomy drawing books!

How This Book Is Organized

This book is broken up into five different parts. Following is a summary of each of these parts so that you can decide what appeals to you.

Part I: Figure Drawing 101

Think of this part as your first day in a class for your favorite subject. This part tells you what tools you need to start drawing

the figure and includes some basic drawing exercises to get your brain and your hand moving.

Part II: Off to a Head Start

Here I show you how to draw the essential components of the head and its facial features (eyes, ears, nose, and mouth). I devote the entire part to the muscle structure behind the facial features and how to form various types of facial expressions. In addition, I go over basic hairstyles (I wouldn't want to leave you stranded over that issue!).

Part III: Building the Body

This part covers the basic proportion and anatomy of the human figure. I introduce you to drawing stick figures and mannequins, and I break down the figure's muscle structure. In addition, I go over various action poses.

Part IV: Sharpening Your Figure-Drawing Skills

Ready to take your figure drawing to a higher level? In this part, I cover various types of clothing and shoes. I also provide advanced shading techniques, fun drawing exercises, and basic perspective tips and tricks that give a more realistic, three-dimensional look to your figure drawings. In addition, I share composition templates that add narrative to your figures' poses.

Part V: The Part of Tens

In this part, I share various tips based on personal experiences. Here I list ten places to study and draw the figure. In addition, I present ten ways to organize, store, and present your figure drawings. You can use the tips in this part as a starting list, which you can modify or build upon to suit your needs.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, you see various icons in the left margins. These icons serve as flags to draw your attention to important or helpful information. Each specific icon carries its own meaning, as listed here:



As you may have guessed, this icon points out concepts or other information that you don't want to forget.



When you see this icon, get out your pencil, open your sketchbook, and get ready to spend some quality time drawing. These exercises will help you improve your drawing skills.



Look for this icon to provide you with helpful tricks and shortcuts to make your figure-drawing life easier.



If you need some help getting the creative juices flowing, seek out this icon.



This icon alerts you to various mistakes and pitfalls that you want to avoid.

Where to Go from Here

Based on your interests, you can visit chapters in any order, and you'll find that each section takes you step by step through accomplishing an objective. If you have drawing experience, the beauty of this format is that you can select whichever topic you want to know more about and dive into it. However, if you're new to figure drawing or don't have any prior drawing experience, I recommend starting with Part I and working your way through this book in order. Even if you're an experienced artist but new to figure drawing, brushing up on the basics by starting with Part I isn't a bad idea; then you can choose the section you're interested in.

Regardless of where you start, I recommend reading all the way through the chapter you choose before sitting down at the drawing table and working through its steps. Give yourself time to first digest the basic proportions and basic muscle shapes (as I show you, these shapes are deceptively sophisticated, but you don't need to learn every single anatomical detail).

Finally, I can't stress enough the importance of attending live figure-drawing sessions where you can apply these chapters to a live model. Even with a busy schedule, I do my best to attend a figure-drawing session every Saturday morning. To find a live drawing session in your area, check your+ local academic institution's art department, a local art council organization, or search online.

Part I

Figure Drawing 101



In this part . . .

Welcome to Figure Drawing 101! Whether you're drawing the human form for the first time or you're a serious artist looking to hone your figure-drawing skills, this part is designed to get you started off on the right foot. No matter your background, you're in for an awesome ride.

In this part, you get up to speed on rounding up the necessary drawing materials so you can get started on basic drawing principles and techniques. Throughout this part, you try some basic drawing exercises that are designed not only to loosen