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Creating Characters With Personality: For Film, TV, Animation, Video Games, And Graphic Novels



Synopsis

From Snow White to Shrek, from Fred Flintstone to SpongeBob SquarePants, the design of a character conveys personality before a single word of dialogue is spoken. *Designing Characters with Personality* shows artists how to create a distinctive character, then place that character in context within a script, establish hierarchy, and maximize the impact of pose and expression. Practical exercises help readers put everything together to make their new characters sparkle. Lessons from the author, who designed the dragon Mushu (voiced by Eddie Murphy) in Disney's *Mulan*—plus big-name experts in film, TV, video games, and graphic novels—make a complex subject accessible to every artist.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"I'm stumped, all my characters come out looking the same! What am I missing?" "I'm drawing the same character as Seth, but his pictures are coming out better than mine. Why?" "Ok, there's been a change of plans and our target audience is no longer going to be for kids in kindergarten but now 11 to 14 year old boys." "Ok, the client is for a Honda dealership that primarily serves the Mexican market and we need a superhero mascot that appeals to these customers but doesn't turn off the other people who would be buying cars from them." If you're researching this book chances are that you've already got some experience reading art and animation how-to books or know somebody who has. There are many books on cartooning and animation but there has been a frustrating lack of material that really digs into the meat of the creative process behind character design. Most books fall into categories that either narrowly focus on concept art from specific productions, or they

discuss all facets of animation and cartooning and relegate character design to a single chapter and / or style. This book recognizes that educational void and happily is helmed by a man who not only can draw, but can explain the REASONS behind the stylistic choices employed by the best designers out there. The REASONING is an important point that cannot be stressed highly enough and is what pushes this book beyond just another how-to-draw endeavor and becomes something that should be mandatory study material for anyone involved in the character creation process, from cartoonists, animators, sculptors, and 3D modelers, to storytellers, marketers, and producers.

Bancroft is very good at rendering a classic cartoony style, but doesn't seem to like to practice when he deviates from it, encouraging bad habits. In the "Trying it Out" section in Chapter Four: Drawing (Beautiful) Women (p.74-77) the author gives an example design for some manga style pop idols which he claims he did research for. What he comes up with is a trio of hideous, flat girl characters that look like they came from someone with very little artistic training, like out of one of those terrible "how to draw manga" books that the market was flooded with around ten to fifteen years ago. When I first read this section, I was so shocked that I didn't believe Bancroft had drawn them until I reread the entire chapter just to be sure it wasn't someone else's work. I'm not picking on him because the manga style isn't my thing, but because there are plenty of great examples out there that actually fit with his instruction. In the "Style" section in Chapter Nine: Putting It All Together (p.154-157) his apparent distaste for practicing styles that aren't really his thing is even more apparent. The anatomy of the Comic Book example is extremely poor, has very little depth overall and it is right next to the Feature Animation example that turns in space very well, so even if these two pages were all you saw of the book, we know he should be able to do better. His text in the Video Game category shows how out of touch he must be with what he calls the "core market" for video games if we take his example to show what he thought would be a good fit. Remember, this book was published in 2006. Information on what styles work well and what falls flat in the video game industry have been readily available for some time. And I've already touched on his lack of control over the Manga style.

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