

Basic 101: Class 20 Caricature

This class is dedicated to the Late Walt Kelly

Now comes the time to face your drawing abilities. This is the final portion of portrait related classes. We will be moving on to sketching for the next two weeks and the class will be led by CJ.

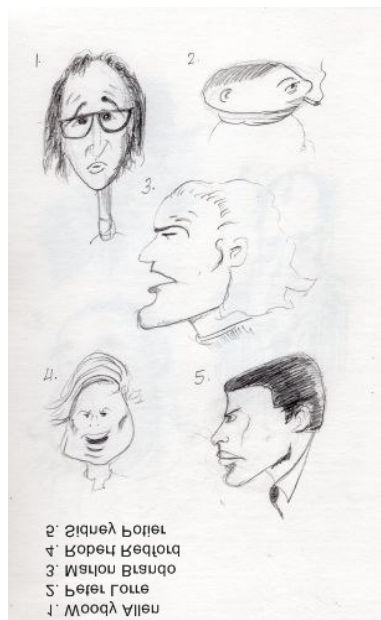
But for now, let's talk Caricature. Caricature, simply put, is a comical distortion of the face based on keen observation of a prominent part of the subject's face. For example, George Bush's ears are a good example—Laura Bush has a helmet head and obscenely large teeth, as does Jimmy Carter. An easy one would be Jay Leno's Jaw or who can forget John Kerry's horse face.

It can be easily said that Caricature is the basis for all cartooning. This subject conjures up street side artists busily whipping out drawing after drawing of housewives playing soccer or wimpy little business types drawn with a huge muscular physique.

Generally, drawings that caricature are meant to gently parody the subject—NEVER harm. Maliciousness is never supposed to be a part of caricature. HOWEVER, don't treat it lightly either—it was caricature that broke the infamous Teapot Dome Scandal that led to the downfall of the equally infamous Boss Tweed. The British were very famous for their politically satirical drawings featuring prominent figures of the day and here in America who could forget Gary Trudeau's Doonesbury character, Duke who was an obvious parody of Hunter S. Thompson. THEN there was Walt Kelly, creator of POGO. Many of his animals in his comical swampland were parodies of many of the political figures of the 60's. Prominent among those represented was George McGovern and Hubert Humphrey.

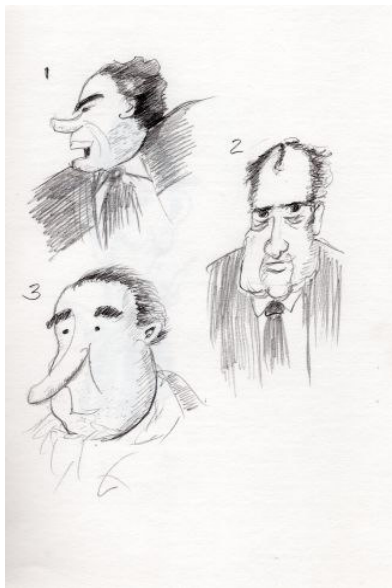
During the course of this write up, I will be introducing you, through links, to several prominent caricaturists for you to check out. For example, Walt Kelly, John Tenniel and the modern caricature master, Jason Seiler. Did you know that Manet was a caricaturist? That is what he did before becoming "Manet". Let's also not forget Leonardo Da Vinci.

Here is a game for you. I have sketched these drawings based on some Richard Adkinson designs for you to see. See if you can guess who these people are. They are movie figures from the 1940's to the 1980's. See if you can guess who they are. The answers are printed upside down on the photo.



Caricatures don't have to be drawn the same way every time. Here are three versions of former president, Richard Nixon. In the first one, we see his "V is for Victory or I am not a crook!" stance. In the second one he is portrayed a sort of mindless dolt and in the third we see the evil "Tricky Dick". Caricatures are excellent for evoking the mood of the moment.

[Attached Images](#)



For our British friends, I simply could NOT leave out Prince Charles. In his case I have elongated his face and exaggerated the ears. The hair is a bit...well a LOT tussled and that has sort of become his signature look—no matter how hard he tries. I placed the crown around his neck because I never felt that he really FIT as a king—he never looks really comfortable with the whole king thing.

[Attached Images](#)



This next caricature is one that I did of Gavin AKA our fearless moderator, Zarathustra. Gavin is a striking young fellow, quite intelligent. He also has a square head. Because he is so smart I elongated his forehead and squared his head up at the top. I think his eyes are his strongest feature and he has a very friendly smile. I added the long neck and the small lobe less ears. By the way, one slip of the eyebrow and I would have produced Julius Erving.

[Attached Images](#)



The final caricature that I did was of Stoy Jones, beloved guide also known as Stoy. He has a rectangular head but the first thing that hit me when I looked at his picture was the small eyes. It is too good to pass up. He has an “I’m thinking look” looking—I think that Stoy is really a clock disguised as a person—there always seems to be something ticking in there. It was hard for me to finish this piece because I am no hair king and Stoy apparently went out and grew himself a big head of hair but it was a prominent point so I exaggerated it a bit.

Attached Images



Well, this is all fine and dandy but can YOU draw a caricature and why would you want to. Well the answer is YES you can and that drawing a caricature is an exercise to help you notice traits that you normally would take for granted. I have included two of our beloved volunteers, Moderator Zarathustra and Guide Stoy. I will comment on each drawing. There are two ways that you can approach to drawing caricature:

1. Drawing using a photograph
2. Drawing live.

You can draw a caricature using any technique that you currently use. Here are some examples:

1. Using a grid: If you draw portraits using a grid draw the portrait EXACTLY as you would draw your normal portrait—DO NOT exaggerate anything at this point. Once you have completed your line drawing go back to your reference photo and examine it closely. Do you see any features that stand out? THOSE are the features that you want to exaggerate.

2. Drawing Freehand: Looking at your photograph, start by examining the SHAPE of the head—for example is the head square? Is the head round? What about the jaw—does it have an interesting shape. Get your outline of the head down first and then gradually build your drawing adding sections piece by piece. Unlike the grid method you HAVE to take serious care to maintain the likeness of the subject. After all, it still has to look like your subject.

3. Tracing: you can certainly trace the outline instead of gridding it. Do the same thing that you would do with gridding.

NOW—you can do these in any medium that you choose. Watercolor, pencil, chalk, pastel, oils, acrylic etc... It is your choice—work at your comfort level.

The assignment:

You have two choices—two weeks to finish of course—you can draw just one drawing or do as many as you can churn out.

1. Draw a caricature of a famous person—make us guess as to who it is.
2. Pick a member of this class and do a caricature. Again, do not reveal who the person is until the end of the class session. Make us guess.

Here are some excellent links for you to check out from the WC!

<http://www.wetcanvas.com/forums/showthread.php?p=15&page=1>

<http://www.wetcanvas.com/forums/showthread.php?p=15&page=1>

<http://www.wetcanvas.com/forums/showthread.php?p=15&page=1>

<http://www.wetcanvas.com/forums/showthread.php?p=15&page=1>

<http://www.wetcanvas.com/forums/showthread.php?p=15&page=1>

<http://www.wetcanvas.com/forums/showthread.php?p=15&page=1>

<http://www.wetcanvas.com/forums/showthread.php?p=15&page=1>

<http://www.wetcanvas.com/forums/showthread.php?p=15&page=1>

Here are some interesting links on the net:

<http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/political1.html>

<http://www.ricmachin.com/>

<http://www.sil.si.edu/ondisplay/caricatures/factoids.htm>

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/exhibitions/caricatures.html>

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/stagestruck/>

<http://www.kirstenulve.com/caricatures.html>

<http://www.jasonseiler.com/>