Accuracy

A DRAWING GUIDE



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How to use this guide

WELCOME TO THE GUIDEBOOK

It is designed to help you improve your drawing skills by training your brain to see and capture accurate proportions. Over the next few pages I will share a distillation of the most important tools and techniques that I know about. My goal is to give you information that you can incorporate into your art practice immediately.

THERE ARE TWO PARTS:

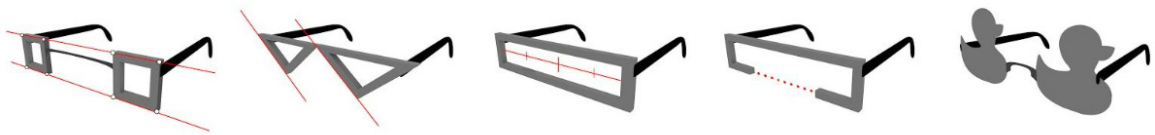
1. The ***Focus Glasses*** section contains methods of seeing and thinking.
2. The ***Good Habits*** section gives a summary of advise I've learned in my classical training that has stood the test of time.

I recommend giving all pages a quick glance and then reading the guide from the beginning. If you encounter something you don't quite understand, take a look at the video lessons that are included with the guide package. Of course, the real test of understanding happens when you touch your pencil to the paper.

May these pages aid you in your journey.
– Dorian

PART ONE

Focus Glasses



We'll begin with the concept of ***Focus Glasses***. Each pair of glasses can be put on and taken off to help you focus on one distinct task at a time. They are like filters that free you from needing to multitask so you can work efficiently. Whenever I encounter a problem with proportions, I put on my Focus Glasses to clarify what the problem is and how I can solve it.

BUILD A SET OF TWO CARDBOARD GLASSES

This is a hands-on drawing manual. Let's build a set of two cardboard glasses! We will use these as physical learning aids. Do not skip this. Students who use these cardboard glasses learn and improve faster. It takes about 10-15 minutes. Let's do it right now.

GET YOUR MATERIALS READY

- Cardboard
- A Pair of Glasses
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Cutting Knife
- Cutting Board

Making Focus Glasses

Note: make two pairs so you can switch from one to the other as you move between Focus Glasses concepts.



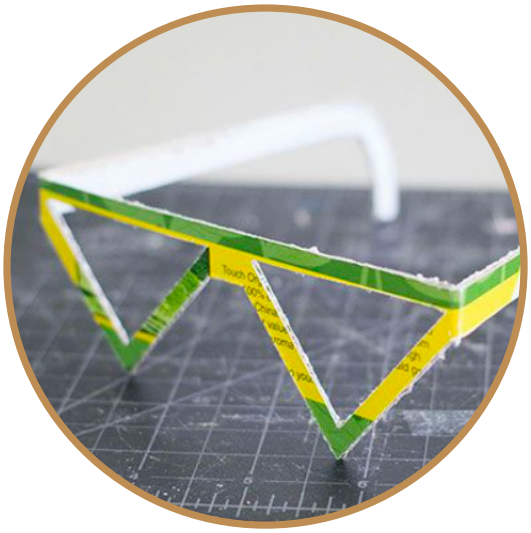
1. *Collect Materials*



2. *Trace Actual Glasses on Cardboard*



3. *Cut out Cardboard Glasses*

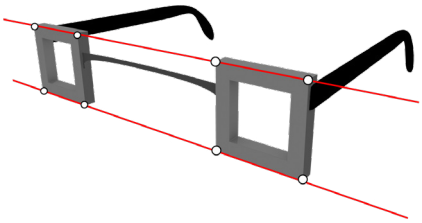


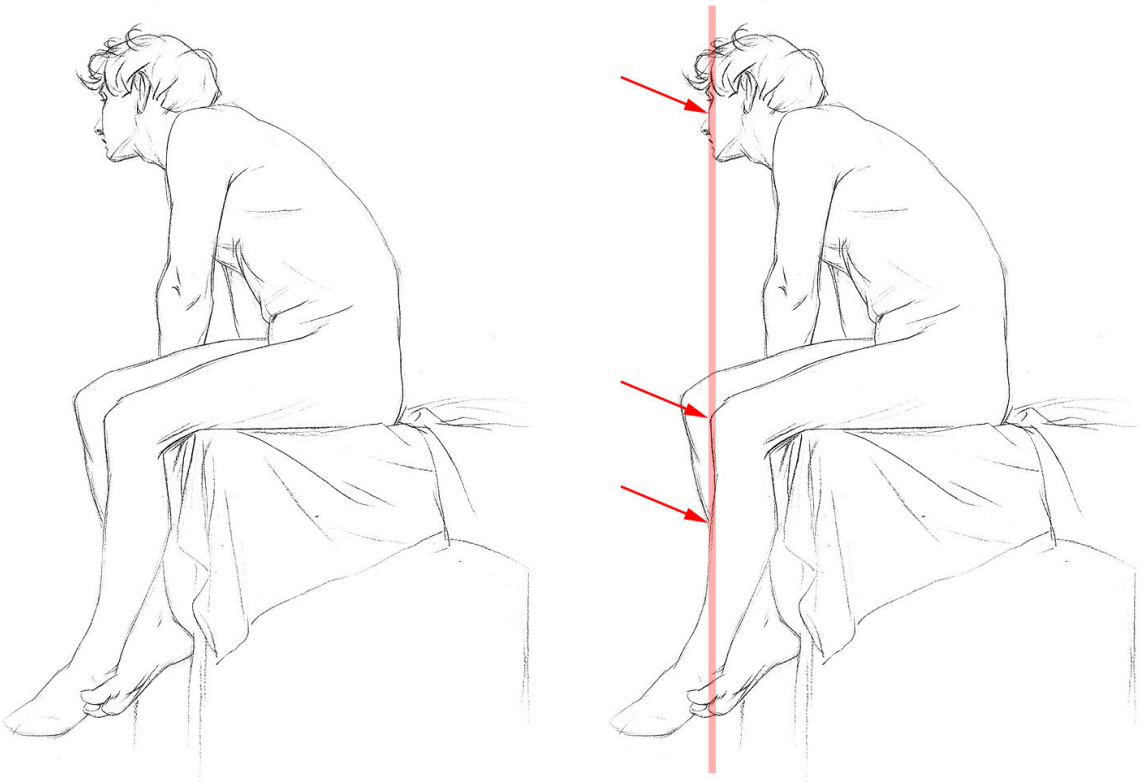
4. *Fold and Done*

Alignment Glasses

LET'S START WITH THE ALIGNMENT GLASSES. THEY ARE THE MOST STRAIGHTFORWARD TO USE.

1. Put on your Alignment Glasses.
2. Scan across your subject and notice any two points that align horizontally.
3. Make a note of the alignment and check if you got it right in your drawing.
4. If it's not right, see if you can resolve the mistake by using alignments.
5. Do the same for vertical alignments.

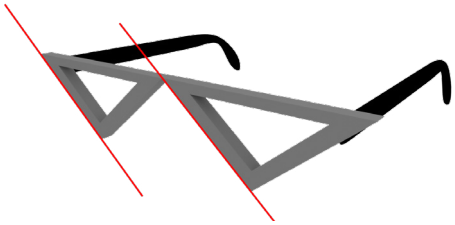




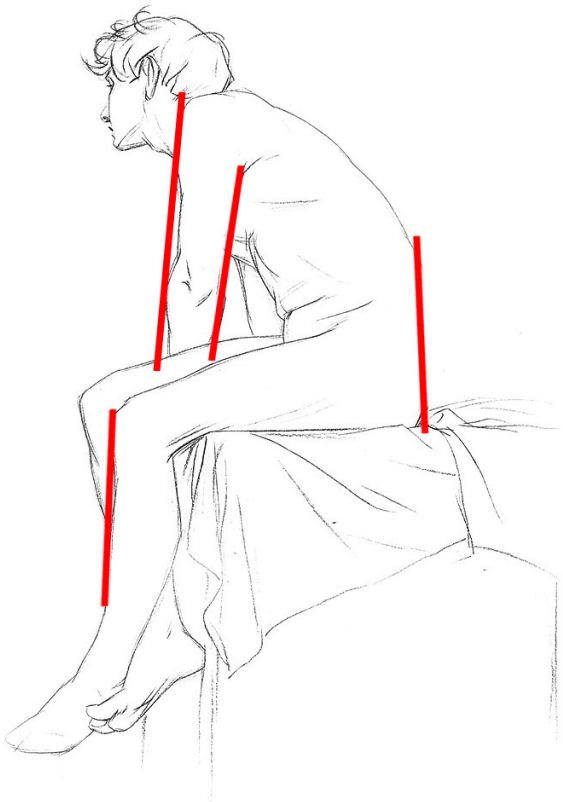
Angle Glasses

HERE WE ARE FOCUSING ON GETTING THE CORRECT INCLINATIONS/ANGLES.

1. Put on your Angle Glasses.
2. Scan across your subject, noticing parts that you can simplify into straight lines.
3. Compare the angles of these lines in your subject to the angles you have drawn.
4. Are they the same? If not, adjust.





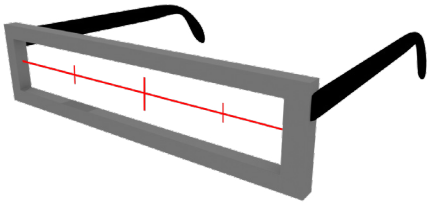


Measurement Glasses

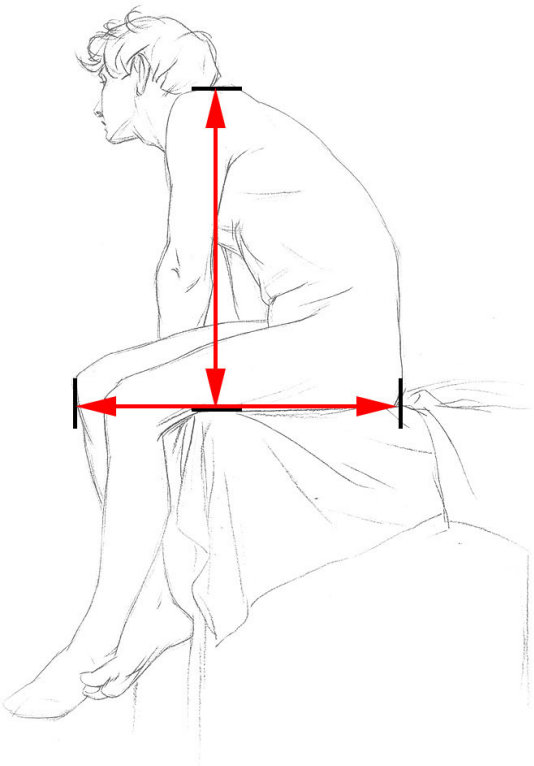
RECURRING DISTANCE

1. Put on your Measurement Glasses.
2. Find a measurement that repeats at least 3 times in your subject.
3. Check if this repeating relationship also works in your drawing.
4. Did you find mistakes? Use the measurements to resolve them.

Note: make sure to find a repeating measurement both horizontally and vertically. If all your recurring distances are on the same axis, you might distort your drawing.





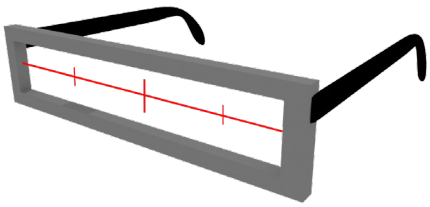


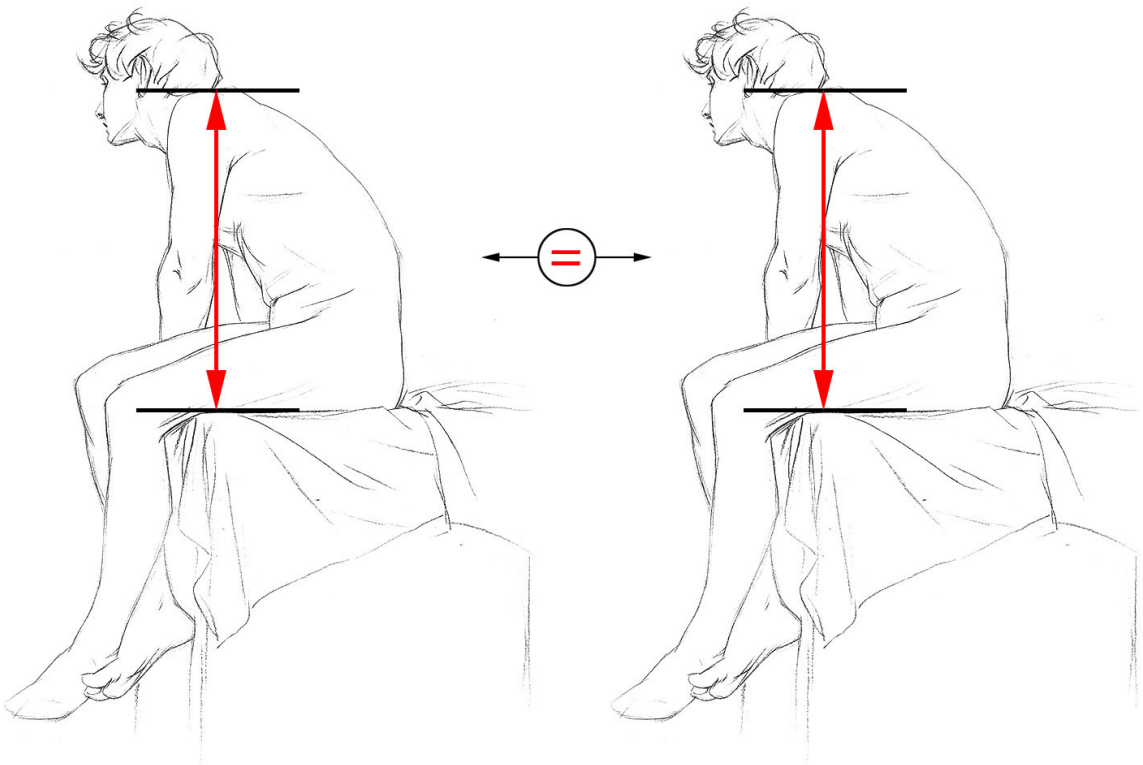
Measurement Glasses

SIGHT SIZE MEASURING

When your drawing is the same size as your subject

1. Put on your Measurement Glasses.
2. Find a large measurement that is easy to take.
3. Compare this measurement between your subject and your drawing.
4. Use the measurements to correct mistakes.



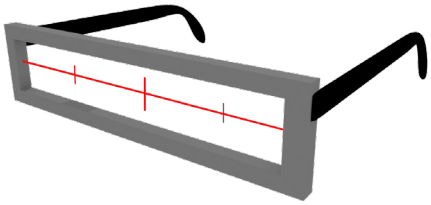


Measurement Glasses

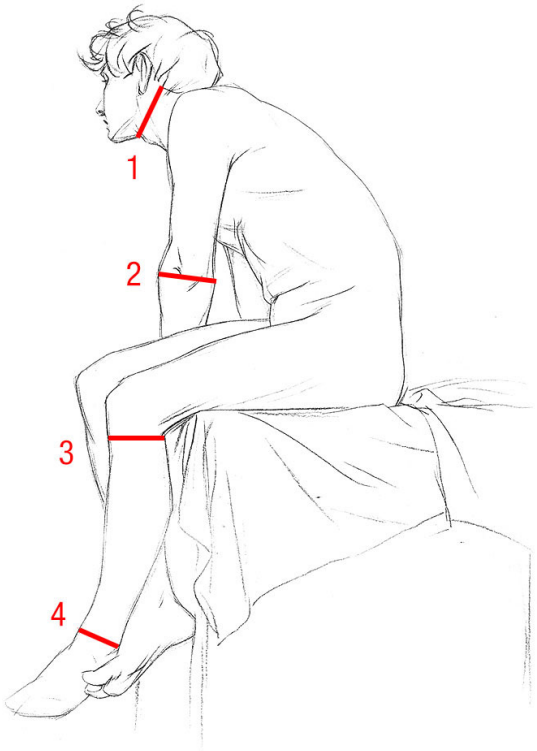
HIERARCHY OF SIMILAR MEASUREMENTS

Comparing similar elements

1. Put on your Measurement Glasses.
2. Find 3-4 elements that share a similar measurement.
   (For example: width of the neck, width of the arm at the elbow, width of the leg at the knee, width of the leg at the ankle.)
3. Create a hierarchy. Which is the largest measurement? Second? Third?
4. This comparison can help you find mistakes.







Notes on Measuring

ONLY MEASURE BIG STUFF

After much experimentation, this is my conclusion: *most measurements taken with an aid are off by at least several millimeters - even with extreme concentration and body control.* The strategy I am using now is to measure only BIG proportions with a measuring aid. The rest I do by eye. The eye will get more sensitive, accurate and efficient than any mechanical aid. We don't want to end up relying on a crutch. We want to be free! Measure early. Measure the big stuff. Expect a margin of error.

HOW TO HOLD YOUR ARM FOR MEASURING IN SIGHT SIZE

Take your measuring aid in your hand. Extend your arm fully, and lock your elbow. Pull the shoulder of your extended arm back into alignment with your other shoulder. As you compare a measurement, moving from subject to drawing, avoid rotating your shoulder. Instead, rotate your entire torso at the pelvis. Rotating at the shoulder changes the distance from your hand to your eye. This distorts measurements.

WHAT TO MEASURE

- As much as possible, only measure distances *horizontally* or *vertically*. Measurements taken at an angle are prone to be off.
- Measure from points that are clearly visible, that give your eye something to hold on to. Horizontal and vertical lines are helpful, as well as areas of high value contrast and sharp edges/transitions.
- In life drawing, measure from points that are stable. Don't take measurements from points which are going to move, such as hair, folds in clothing, etc.

Notes on Measuring

MEASURING AIDS

The most useful tool for me is a knitting needle. Not so thick that it is heavy, not so thin that it bends from the pressure of my fingers. A US size 6 / metric size 4 should work. You can also use a paintbrush, a pencil, or anything thin and stable. The ideal measuring tool is pointy at the tip.

TRACING

Tracing has a terrible reputation among "real artists". Tracing instead of training your eye, weakens you. Tracing to check accuracy is useful to train your eye for proportions.

EYE FIRST

This is arguably one of the most important principles. If you want to get better at judging proportions and drawing with accuracy, you need to train. Therefore, every single time you take a measurement, *make your best guess by eye first.* Take another look, and refine your guess. When you have done the best you can by "eyeballing", you can use a measuring aid. The opposite would be to "blindly" measure, and stop actually looking altogether. I've done this and it ends in disaster. Try it.

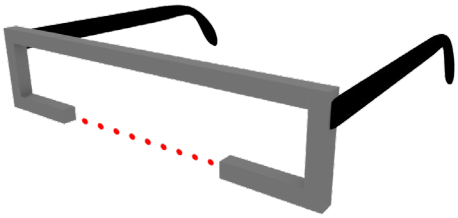
GREAT ART IS MORE THAN ACCURACY

This is obvious, but I want to make this point firmly. The purpose of this guide is to explore the development of sensitivity and control about proportions in drawing. Artistic accuracy includes far more than that. It requires that the artist is aware of all sensations produced in him by a subject. Purposeful distortion is the soul of drawing. Accidental distortion is poor craftsmanship.

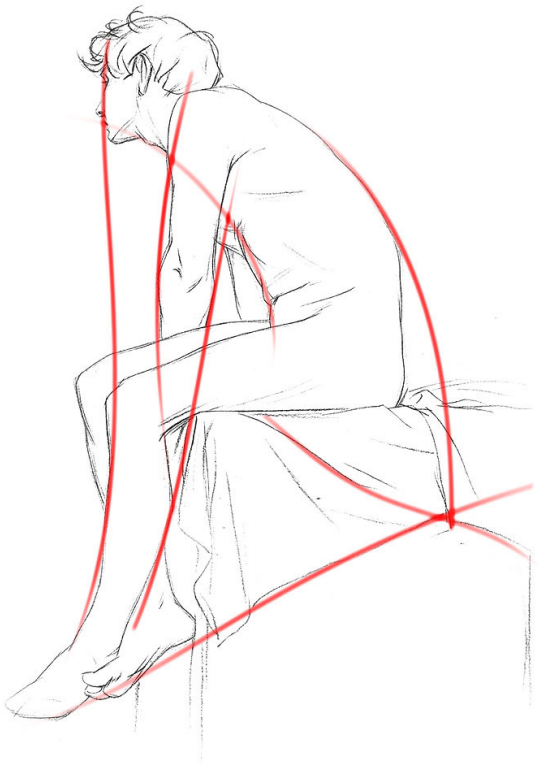
Implied Line Glasses

1. Put on your Implied Line Glasses.
2. Look for hidden lines in your subject.
3. Compare if they flow the same way in your drawing.
4. If they don't, use this information to find mistakes.

Note: implied lines are great for gesture drawing.



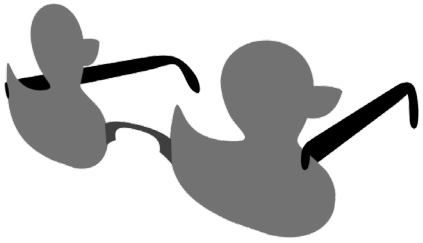




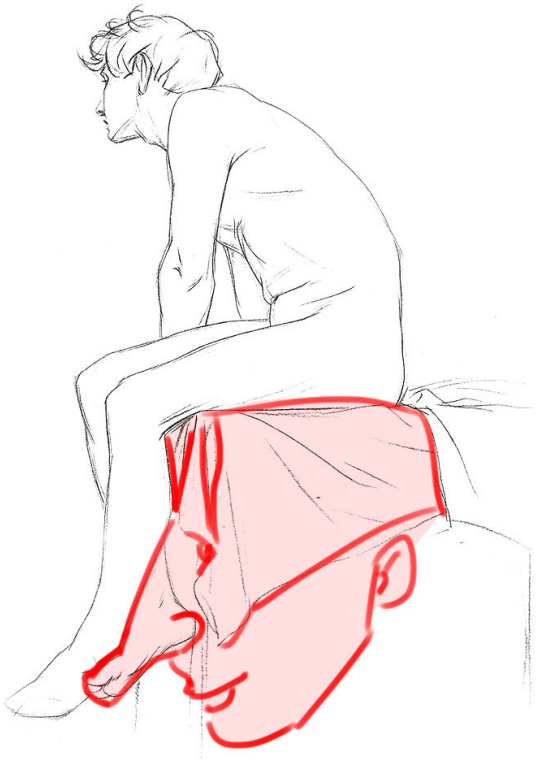
Creaturizing Glasses

1. Put on your Creaturizing Glasses
2. Look for a shape that resembles an object you can name. It can be an animal, a letter of the alphabet, a geometric shape, etc. It's like looking at the clouds and finding fantastical creatures.
3. Compare this "creature" shape in your subject with the shape in your drawing.

Note: don't draw your subject. Draw the "creatures" you find within your subject, and it will draw itself.

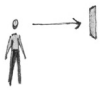






PART TWO

Good Habits



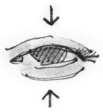
STEP BACK

When you step back from your work, you see "the big picture". Your focus moves from the details to the larger effect, the big proportions of one area relative to another. This makes it easier to catch mistakes.



MIRROR

Use a mirror to see the image reversed. You can flip either horizontally or vertically. As far as your brain is concerned, you are looking at a new image and you are seeing it "with fresh eyes". A smartphone screen (turned off) also works well. If you are you working on a drawing board with both the reference and your work next to each other, simply turn the drawing board upside down. You can keep working on it upside down. Continue to flip it every 20-30 minutes to keep your eyes fresh.



SQUINT

When you squint, the image you perceive is simplified. This has several useful effects in both drawing and painting. For our purposes here, squinting unifies small shapes into big shapes. This makes it easier to see what the essence of the image looks like.



PHOTOGRAPH

When your work is large or your studio small, you may not be able to step back far enough. In this case, you can also take a photo and look at your work on the small screen of your device.



TAKE BREAKS

Taking a break can be all that's needed to refresh your eyes and see old mistakes. Make your breaks a conscious part of your process.

Conclusion

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Thank you for reading the guide. I hope you gained new insights.

If you haven't already done so, take these two action steps now:

1. Print the Cheat-Sheet and pin it up in your studio.
2. Create two pairs of cardboard "Focus Glasses".

As you draw, keep referring to the Cheat-Sheet. When you encounter a challenge with proportions – as one does in drawing – put on the first pair of cardboard glasses. Make a conscious choice about which pair of Focus Glasses you are engaging. Scan and apply the concept for about 5 minutes. Then switch to the second pair of cardboard glasses and a new corresponding set of Focus Glasses. Of course, you can make five pairs of cardboard glasses as well. Have fun with this!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you want to learn more about realistic shading, see my other guides and course:

- The Values Guide
- The Light Guide
- The Shading Course

THANK YOU

Thank you for reading this guide. If you've found it helpful, please encourage your peers to get this guide and support my work.

Happy drawing!

– Dorian Iten
Surava, May 2021

About the Author



Dorian Iten draws, paints, sculpts and teaches. He completed a classical painting education at Angel Academy of Art in Florence, Italy and studied Entertainment Art at The Art Department in the USA. Dorian has served as the director of the Digital Art & Design program at Barcelona Academy of Art and currently lives joyfully and creatively in a small village in the Swiss mountains.

You can find his work and learn more about his projects at

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