



How to Draw What You See

Rudy De Reyna

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When it was originally published in 1970, *How to Draw What You See* zoomed to the top of Watson-Guptill's best-seller list—and it has remained there ever since. “I believe that you must be able to draw things as you see them—realistically,” wrote Rudy de Reyna in his introduction. Today, generations of artists have learned to draw what they see, to truly capture the world around them, using de Reyna's methods. *How to Draw What You See* shows artists how to recognize the basic shape of an object—cube, cylinder, cone, or sphere—and use that shape to draw the object, no matter how much detail it contains.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

How to Draw What You See Details

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M says

Nadia says

Great reference book. Just read through didn't follow the excercises. Will come back and work with the book

Debbie says

"How To Draw What You See" is a basic-level drawing book. I don't draw, but a girl that I mentor spends a lot of time drawing. I thought it'd be fun to take drawing lessons together, but the instructor isn't very good at explaining WHY we are doing the various exercises that he gives to us. I noticed that he was basically following the lesson plan in this book, so I bought a copy. The book does a much better job of explaining the concepts than my art lessons instructor, and I have the feeling that I could have learned just as much by using this book instead of taking lessons. (Hopefully you have access to a better instructor.)

Part One of this book covers 19 lessons which are progressive projects that build skill and confidence. He covered drawing basic shapes, perspective, shading, tones, drawing still life (indoors), drawing outdoors (which covered the differences from still life more than how to draw trees, etc.), and drawing people and faces. I wasn't as impressed with the instruction in the drawing people section, but it certainly gave some basics to start from.

Part Two gave the basics on how to use watercolor, opaque watercolor, acrylic, and ink. He gives projects using black, greys, and white paints. This section had less instruction, but I think it's mainly intended to introduce the idea of "drawing" using other media.

Overall, I felt that this book was very helpful and developed my skill at creating realistic-looking drawings. I'd recommend it to beginners who wish to learn this skill.

Dominika says

I'm not done with this book, mostly because it's a manual with exercises. However, it's been a good guide for someone like me who has been guideless my entire life. The exercises and explanations do really help

Ravi Sinha says

My Christmas present this year :)

A good starter for drawing/ painting. I used to draw/ paint a lot as a kid. Now wanting to pick it up again and to learn it properly. I intend to exclusively use sketching apps on tablet computers now, but that shouldn't make a difference as far as learning from this book goes.

Tripleguess says

I didn't learn a great deal more from this book than I already knew. No doubt it would be more useful to a beginner, and it was nice to have some of my basic principles reinforced, but -- not to be arrogant or anything -- I do know how to draw a cube. Not to say I don't need practice...

I wish I could play with all the different mediums the author mentions, but even if I could afford them all, I don't think I could mess with ink wash in my current living situation. (I'm reluctant to even use charcoal because it's so easy to ruin my clothes and carpet with it. Yeah, it comes off, but not ALL of it -- certainly not all of the compressed stuff.) I hope to attend an "Intro to Different Mediums" class at a nearby art center to make up for this.

I had to laugh during the composition sections, because the compositions I liked best were the ones he pointed out as "bad." Well, we'll hope there's some flex in composition, or I'm doomed as an artist. ^^

Overall not a bad book; a little longwinded in the text, but certainly better than the awful "How to Draw Cartoons" type of book you'll find at your local library.

Susan says

This book is great for a beginning artist and useful to all as our skills develop.

I bought this book because I was struggling with perspective, especially for built forms. The book starts with exercises on how to breakdown a scene or object into its underlying shapes, and even the horizontal, vertical, and curved lines that make up those shapes. The book then moves on to capturing various textures (wood, brick, paper, etc.), then sketching landscapes, capturing the human form, then details of various 'difficult' body parts (hands, faces, etc.). The book also discusses drawing/painting outdoors (which I really enjoying) and working with different media. Each stage builds on and draws from the work done at previous stages so you flow nicely to more difficult forms without feeling like it is too difficult.

Reyna encourages practising, suggesting different exercises to try to reinforce the lessons learned. He also shows how to use your pencil to check line directions, and how to use a viewfinder to frame out scenes. Before reading this book I thought those techniques were 'cheating'; I have since discovered that if it is your work, you can use any techniques you like and that even seasoned artists use these tricks, but it was from Reyna that both are good practice.

Overall, a wonderful book to have on the shelf (and to be used) by any artist.

Eric Miller says

Once someone wants to draw on a higher level than scribbles, doodles, and badly done 2-d characters, they begin to look for instruction books - and learn many of them are useless. They kinda go "step 1, add these 3 lines. Step 2, add these 3 lines and look at the edges. Step 3, finish shading the complete picture - TADA, masterpiece!". This book forces you to do exercises on shapes, perspective, and all the classic exercises that a college classroom would give you (various still life, landscapes, portraits, etc). The information at first is very much read-then-draw, and it's a lot of cubes, cones, etc. Each chapter builds on the prior chapters. This is one of the best drawing instruction books out there, and if there was one book I would suggest everyone to start with before picking up the others, pick this up first. Once you've gone through this, both reading the pages AND doing the exercises, you will have the foundational knowledge of information (shape rules, perspective, light/shadow, etc) and workmanship (you will learn your strengths and areas you need to improve, which means you will be able to get the best use out of instruction - instead of "mister artist, help me draw" you can say "fellow artist, can you help me improve my use of sfumato to produce more realistic drawings? I can't get the technique quite right...").

Jellie Dawn says

If you're a beginner in the arts and drawing figures, this a very good entry level guide. But I'm more of an intermediate so I really didn't get muchbf from this book. And most of the examples and shapes are EXTREMELY DULL.

James says

Excellent book. I might try and buy it if I can it. Everything comes down to cubes, spheres, cones and cylinders in the end.

Jessica Welch says

I found the "lessons" incredibly hard to follow and while I understand that the author wanted you to draw everyday objects, presumably because that's what you see, the actual objects were extremely boring.

One thing that I did take away from the book was regarding drawing straight lines which I had never really thought about before. That was an interesting lesson. But I never could get past the third or fourth because I didn't understand what I was "supposed" to do.

Vickie L Searan says

Accurate lessons

I like how this helps me understand techniques in drawing make it realistic. This shows me where to improve my art from where I am to where I need to go.

? says

A must read (and do) to all beginners interested in art.

Julia says

I could never draw anything that looked real until I read this book. At the ripe old age of...well, long past my high school days, now I can draw a chair that looks like a chair, a tree that looks like a tree. I didn't instantly turn into an expert artist, but no more misshapen mutant drawings! For me this is kind of miraculous, as I had always believed I lacked the skill. I highly recommend this book for people who have tried to learn how to draw with other methods that didn't work for them.

Eric says

This is a must read for a beginner in drawing.
