

Draw outside the box

Website can help you draw better

One of the nice things about my job is that I get paid to do something I would be doing anyway. I have been drawing for as long as I can remember and I can't imagine doing anything else for a living.

Making a career out of art has always been a tricky proposition.



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InSites

There are a lot of talented people who can't support themselves with their art. There are also a lot of people making a lot of money from art that leaves many people scratching their

heads. Like any profession, it takes not only talent, but a lot of work and a lot of luck to succeed.

Drawabox.com is a website that can help you develop your talent and your work habits, but you're on your own for luck. The site consists of a series of free lessons on the fundamentals of drawing. Each lesson builds on the previous ones to progressively strengthen skills.

Irshad Karim, the author of the site, is a digital illustrator who works in Canada. His lessons are based on constructional drawing. Subjects are initially broken down into basic shapes. Each pass over the drawing adds more refinement until the finished work is a convincing visual representation.

The lessons start with lines and simple shapes. They prog-

ress into more involved subjects, such as plants, animals, vehicles and people. Principles of perspective, composition and drawing complex scenes are covered in the later lessons.

Each lesson starts with a written description of the topic. Step-by-step directions are given along with exercises and homework to practice what you've learned. Some lessons include YouTube videos as well. You can

submit your work to be critiqued by the site's user community for free, or by the author for a small donation.

Good for novices, pros

The lessons are designed for beginners, but seasoned artists might pick up some tips or reminders on the basics. Mr. Karim is adamant that drawing is not a magical talent that one is born with. He stresses that

with practice and dedication anyone can learn to draw well.

Drawabox contains a lot of good information for people who want to learn to draw better, but it's not a complete art education. It's methods are not the only way to draw and it can't replace formal training for those who want to become professional artists. While the concepts covered can be complex, some of the explanations

get a little long winded. The site's design is functional and easy to navigate, but the typography should be organized in narrower columns for easier reading.

If you use this site and do the exercises your drawing skills should get better:

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