

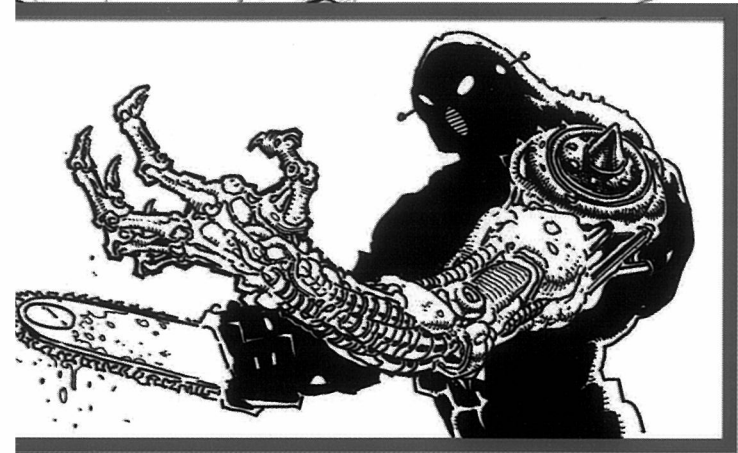
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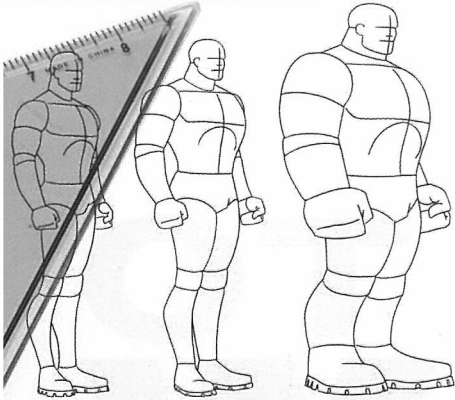
CHARACTER CREATION

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CONTENTS



3 | INTRODUCTION by John Romita Jr.

4 | CHAPTER ONE: CHARACTERS

5 | CREATING CHARACTERS by Joe Kubert

10 | BODY LANGUAGE by Matt Haley

14 | ADVANCED BODY LANGUAGE by Jim Calafiore

19 | MOVEMENT & MOTION by Bart Sears

23 | MAKING CHARACTERS MOVE by Mike Wieringo

27 | DYNAMIC FORESHORTENING by Matt Haley

31 | ACTION SCENES by Jim Lee

37 | FLIGHT by Phil Jimenez

42 | ENERGY EFFECTS by Phil Jimenez

46 | COSTUMES by Rama Gottumukkala

51 | CHAPTER TWO: CREATE YOUR WORLD

52 | REFERENCE by Joe Kubert

57 | PHOTO REFERENCE by Greg Land

62 | ANIMALS by Sean Chen

70 | MONSTERS by Doug Mahnke

77 | TEXTURE by Art Adams

81 | METALLIC SURFACES by Jim Calafiore

85 | VEHICLES by Sean Chen

89 | MECHA by Pat Lee

94 | CHAPTER THREE: ARCHETYPES

95 | SUPER MEN by Scott Kolins

98 | SUPER WOMEN by Don Kramer

101 | ACROBATS by Adrian Alphona

104 | COSTUMED VIGILANTES by Scott McDaniel

108 | BRUTES by Gene Ha

112 | VIXENS by Frazer Irving

114 | ARMORED VILLAINS by Ethan Van Sciver

117 | SIDEKICKS by Todd Nauck

JOHN ROMITA JR.

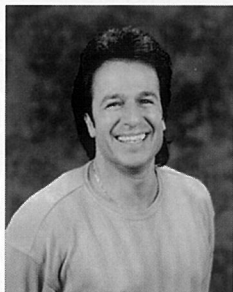
This was to be my introduction on how to create and/or draw characters. I am not the only artist who has attempted this, and I don't think my ideas on creating characters are any better than the next artist's. In fact, my art is, in my mind, average at best in comparison to my esteemed colleagues! Seriously. So I will attempt to discuss "adding character" as opposed to "creating a character."

There have been, and will continue to be, thousands of costumes, characters and visuals created by writers and artists. It is extremely difficult to come up with something original. So I don't concern myself with the creation of costumes, per se, as all I do is pick up the latest fashion magazines;

he's on his way to work while singing an old Temptations tune. That's a story, as George Costanza would say! I walked past that guy one day a million years ago and used him in a Spidey story, with the Human Torch as the guest. I added an extra 30 pounds or so and maybe six inches in height, but it was that guy!

Character conveyed artistically is very difficult to achieve, but when done properly can help both the writer and one's career. I love to add some wild and weird backgrounders to a panel. I've done this numerous times in bar scenes and other mundane locations. I sometimes have used friends and family (especially in the Punisher stories). Add a busted nose, a

The greatest thing an artist can do is 'people-watch.' That's what I do, so long as my wife knows it's not 'women-watching.'



I can find some of the wildest ideas and go from there. It really gives one a sense of fantasy in the real world, which is right up a comic artist's alley.

But let me address what I referred to as "character" and not "a character." Firstly, as an artist...*observe!* The greatest thing an artist can do is observe. Next is *absorb*. "People-watch." That's what I do, whenever I can and so long as my wife knows it's not "women-watching." Check out the faces, bodies, movements and actions of every person that comes into your peripheral vision!

The world, and specifically New York City, has an abundance of "characters." Walk through Penn Station on any given day and an artist can come up with a million characters for a story. I don't mean just visually; I mean emotionally. Look into some of the faces of any one of these wonderful people and an artist can create a character.

Imagine a guy, six feet, 200 pounds, with a handlebar moustache, balding, tattoos galore, walking through Manhattan. In the bitter cold, he wears a short sleeve shirt, impervious to the temperature, and

squint, an eye that's larger than the other and a large facial feature (not just facial hair) to make your characters distinct.

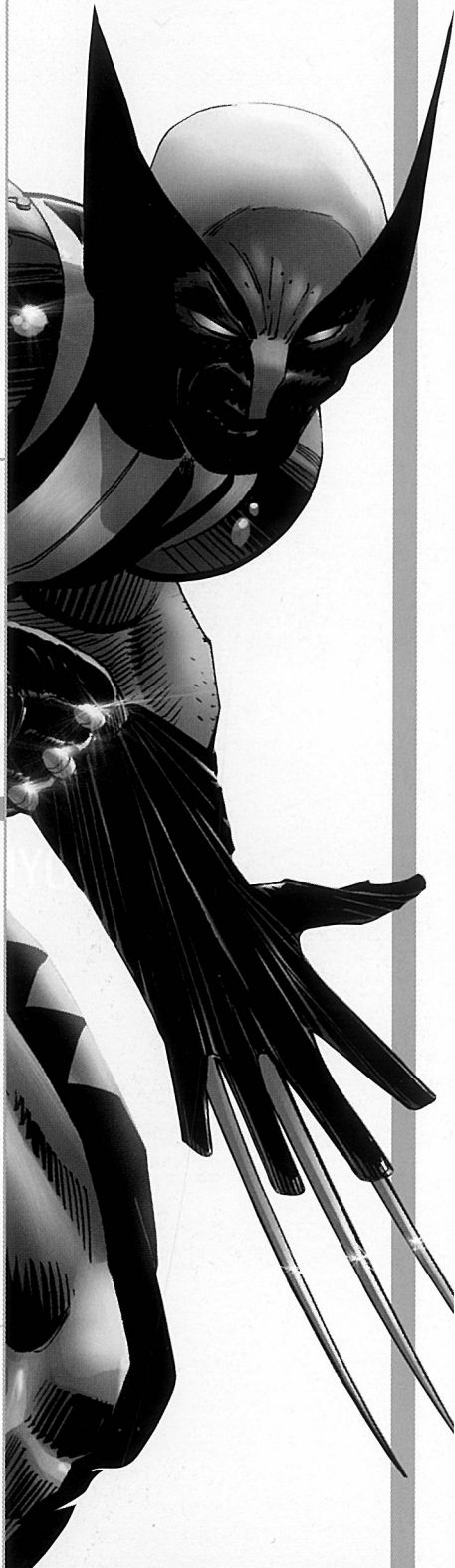
This includes women, also, in that not all female characters in comics must be Pamela Anderson. They can be as individual as the males can.

That's the trick. Don't use a stock visual on *any* character, *anywhere!* Even in the background, throw in people that you know, so you can convey the character of that, er, character. If a person is a wise-ass, they don't carry themselves like all others—they smile a "wise-ass" smile—and so on and so on!

Just remember, character, once found, can be conveyed by the simplest strokes of a pen or pencil.

**John Romita Jr.
December 2005**

John Romita Jr. follows in the legendary tradition of his father with exceptional work on Marvel classics such as Amazing Spider-Man, Thor, The Sentry, Wolverine and Uncanny X-Men.





CHAPTER ONE: CHARACTERS

- CREATING CHARACTERS
 - BODY LANGUAGE
- ADVANCED BODY LANGUAGE
 - MOVEMENT & MOTION
- MAKING CHARACTERS MOVE
- DYNAMIC FORESHORTENING
 - ACTION SCENES
 - FLIGHT
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