

# **DRAWING CARICATURES AND OUTLETS FOR COMMISSIONS**



**Michael Terry**

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## And outlets for commissions

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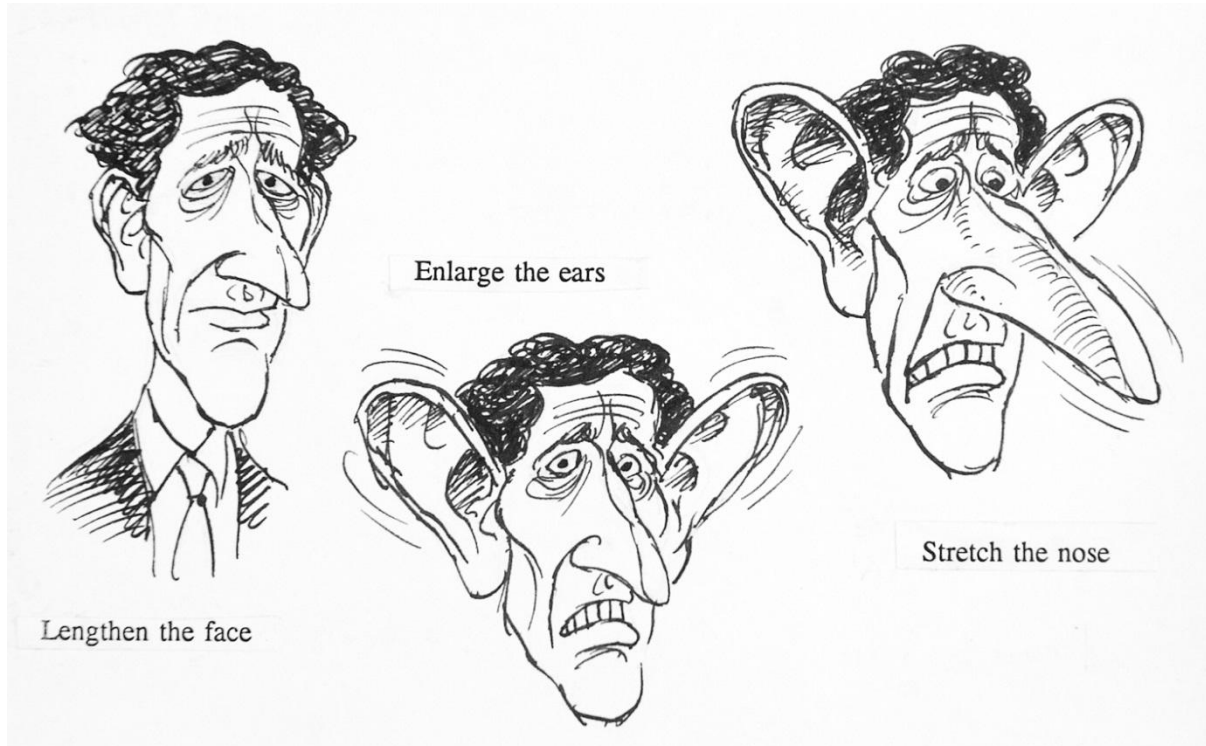
Two important items

Further Help

*There are **Projects** set in the book to help you with your progress.*

## Introduction

Caricature is the art of the distortion, pulling, stretching and probing into a likeness to find the salient features.



And there we are!

This is the visual insult, an insult which is quite often appreciated by the subject. People who have been caricatured look on it as flattering, to be thought noteworthy enough to be depicted as such in a newspaper etc.

I once did a caricature of Janet Street-Porter for The Sunday Times. It basically consisted of enormous glasses, teeth and a very thin body, quite unflattering.

After the appearance in the paper she rang me and asked me if she could have the artwork!

A caricature is not a personal attack on someone, it is purely a humorous expression of their appearance. Although I have seen

some which are hard not to think of as being a rendition based on a dislike of the person by the artist.

Basically caricature falls into two different areas, from the sharp attacking image of the political to the friendlier approach of the illustrative form.

### **Illustrating for publishing, magazines and advertising**

What I mean here is the type of caricature you see on book jackets or featured in magazines and in advertising. Usually these are kinder to the subject, not a personal attack just a benevolent stretching of the features. If it's for a book jacket featuring the author, the caricature has to be benign in appearance, definitely not offensive.

This also applies to its use in advertising, just an amusing image of the person concerned. Work of this kind can be frustrating, you have to hold back not being able to let yourself go and make the most of the features.

Magazine work is more fulfilling, you are usually given a freer hand. Caricatures for say the Radio Times couldn't be vicious because of the accompanying articles or programme details and again are to be somewhat benevolent. There is some very talented caricaturists work to be seen within the pages of magazines.

Some styles are very finished like my own work or can have a fluid pen and ink style of the talented Chris Burke.



## The Political Caricature

This is the style which shows caricature at its most satirical and extreme. The names that spring to mind whose styles reflect this are Gerald Scarfe and Ralph Steadman. Their work has venom in the line, striking down the self-important and the deceivers. Caricature used here is cutting and probing, revealing the motives of politicians.



## A Brief History

Caricaturising has been around for a long time. Leonardo da Vinci produced drawings which could be considered caricatures. People have probably drawn satirical portraits of others well before Leonardo.

The art form did not take off to any serious extent until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. William Hogarth was probably the main proponent of the time. Caricature in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century held a more amateur status, a social accomplishment. The caricaturist of this time was mainly engaged in lampooning his peers. There developed a good market for colourful prints, depicting scandal and gossip of the high society. James Gillray and Isaac Cruickshank put caricature firmly in place at this time.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of George Cruickshank, the son of Isaac Cruickshank, the French sculptor caricaturist Jean-Pierre Edouard Danton, Wilhelm Busch, Gustave Dore, Andre Gill and many more excellent artists in the field.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century caricature exploded, the two world wars providing ample fodder. George Grosz satirised war profiteers, showing them in brothels and restaurants, his line was sparse and savage. Edmund Dulac's work in contrast was mild and decorative. For a simple economical line there is the American Albert Hirschfield who portrayed mainly actors and performers. His work was humorous rather than satirical.

Other notable caricaturists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are David Low, Vicky, Osbert Lancaster, David Levine, Trog, Michael Cummings, Gerald Scarfe, Ralph Steadman and many more.

The three dimensional hasn't been ignored. Peter Fluck and Roger Law have produced many fine caricatures in latex rubber for Spitting



Image. Combining voices and movement with caricature has made a memorable and innovative contribution to this field of art.

## Looking at and analysing faces

Here we shall look at and analyse the face and it's features. You need to look at someone's face and, in your head, turn their likeness into a caricature. This will come in time, you just need to practice.

Take a look at the people you come into contact with, see on television or in magazines and newspapers. There is such a variety of faces out there. Long thin faces, round ones, square ones, triangular ones, hour glass ones and many more. Features come in a good variety as well. Noses have all manner of shapes and sizes, some as big as a Toucan's beak and some round and small. The same goes for mouths, eyes, chins etc.

Carry a small sketch book around with you and discreetly sketch a likeness and then turn it into a caricature later. Really look at them and work out what the main features are. Once you begin to be able to see faces in a caricaturised way, your drawings will inevitably improve.

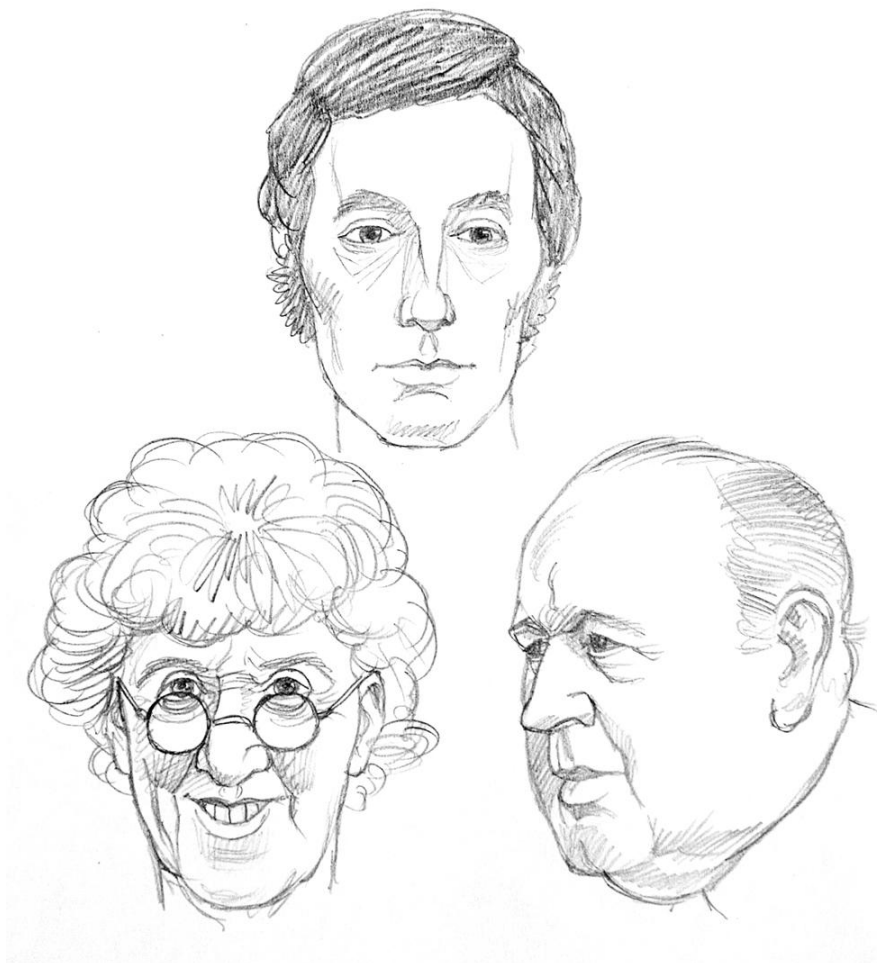


## Face Shape

First look at the overall shape of the face. This is important because many times caricatures fail because the artist has concentrated only on the features of the face but have got the shape of the face wrong.

### Project

Below I have drawn some faces for you. Look at these and before you turn to the next page to see what I have done with them, just sketch what you think the overall shape of the head makes and caricaturise that shape.



## Well, how did you do?

Some of you will find that more difficult than others but don't be disheartened, you will get there. Practice this, keep looking and analysing faces whenever you get the opportunity.

Here are my interpretations of the shapes of the three faces. The elderly lady's face is quite chicken like. The man in the centre has a narrow face and the overweight man has a square heavy face.



## Project

For this project I want you to find three or four faces that appeal to you, and then produce drawings in pencil as I have above.

This will help you to understand and get to grips with features.

I don't want you to get involved with a style, just work in pencil. Remember we are concentrating on getting a good caricature likeness.

## **Working from photographs**

Photographs will be your main source of reference. Clients will usually supply you with photographic reference of the person they want caricatured. Magazines are usually good at this and newspapers are particularly good because they have their own photo libraries.

Some clients resort to using picture libraries. You could use this yourself but it is an added expense on your part and you have to return the pictures.

But of course we now have the internet! You can find any celebrity on 'Images' and the images are right up to date.

I collected photos from magazines and newspapers for years, filing them under different categories, hundreds of them!

When you do caricatures for members of the public try and get them to supply as many photos as possible showing different angles. What you will probably get will be shots showing the subject very small and looking straight out at you. If the reference is really bad it is best to refuse the commission. You will not be able to do a good job of it and they will just say that it doesn't look anything like them, so always insist that you get good reference.

## **Getting started**

When you have the photos, spread them out in front of you so you can have a good look at them and compare them. Some will obviously have caught the likeness better than others.

Study them carefully, check features comparing them in each picture. Doing this will help you to familiarise yourself with the face.

You will probably find that one has the best likeness but the others will help in understanding how the face works.

If you are asked to give a particular expression to the caricature and it is not depicted in your photo reference, then you have a problem. Everybody has their own type of smile, laugh or scowl. The only thing you can do is to find reference of someone showing the right expression. Alternatively, get hold of a mirror, stand it up in front of yourself and make the required expression. I usually find that I pull expressions when drawing them anyway. If people could see me they would probably think I was mad! It is a good idea to practice various expressions in the mirror, this will help you to understand how they work. Putting an expression on a face without actual reference of such is rarely successful. If any client asks you to do this and they do not have any reference, try and persuade them out of it.

One last thing with photos. If you are going to caricaturise someone you are familiar with, then as you go through the photos you will spot the ones that are typical of that person. If you are not familiar with them then ask the client which ones he or she thinks are typical.



## **Project**

Find a photo of someone you want to do a caricature of and with the aid of a mirror as mentioned above put a smile or some other expression on it.

## **How to work from DVD/TV**

Working from DVD is the next best thing to working from life and has one big advantage- you are not getting involved with your subject.

If the person is a film star then you will probably manage to get a DVD from one of the video libraries. If they are a TV celebrity, and they are on something showing at the time, then you can record it for reference.

Once you have your chosen subject on a DVD you have a reference source that is infinitely superior to the photo. Whereas a photo is a flat fixed image the DVD offers a moving image showing a multitude of angles.

To start with, set up your DVD and sit down in front of it with the handset at the ready. Have your drawing pad on your lap and a good sharp pencil to hand. Play the DVD, keep freezing the image when you get a good clear view. Study the face carefully noting how the features work together, pick out the prominent aspects. Just run through the whole tape looking at the different angles of the face. Look at the way the person uses his or her face and body. Note mannerisms and the type of personality they have.

Once you have decided on a pose, which you think epitomizes the person, freeze the image and commence trying to get a caricature likeness. If you get stuck then replay other good angles. This will help you to understand the face.

If you have not got a video you can hopefully get a glimpse of them on TV. You will have to work fast producing short quick sketches. Together with photographic references these sketches will help you to get a good likeness. Viewing someone on TV will give you a good idea of the type of person they are.



### **Working from life**

This is obviously the best way to work except for the fact that you might feel inhibited by having them sitting in front of you. Don't let this stop you. If the person is willing to sit for you then they should be prepared to accept whatever you make of them.

Having them there in the flesh is ideal. You can ask them to move their pose to suit your preferred angle, you can see exactly what their features look like in three dimensions. Relax with them. You are not making a personal criticism of them. This is just an objective observation and exaggeration of their features.

If you are not confident with getting a caricature of them, start by sketching their likeness. This will familiarise you with their face. Keep doing this until you really know how it works. If you are doing street caricatures, drawing people for cash, then you will probably have to be economical with the truth. You don't want to upset the customers and not get paid and put off other customers in the process.

## **The Project**

For this project I want you to work from a DVD or TV as well as from a live subject. If you cannot find a willing subject you could always draw yourself!

You may find this quite a difficult project to handle because you have been used to working from photos. Don't be put off though, it is just something new and you will get used to it.

*Have fun.*

## **Developing a style in black and white**

Black and white line work is probably the most commonly used medium for caricatures.

There is something about the black line of a pen that eminently suits the caricature. It is like a sword stroke, cutting into the victim.

Slashing at pomposity, arrogance, foolishness and misdoings but can also be used compassionately. A skilful pen drawing of a caricature can be a delight.

For this part I want to concentrate on the pen and ink work covering line, solid blacks and crosshatching. In order to develop a style you first have to master the technique. You will need to study the work of the best examples of line work. The artists you should look up are:



**Aubrey Beardsley.** This artist was a master of line. When you look at his work, study the way he uses solid black, how they balance with each other within the composition.

**Albrecht Durer.** Durer produced some of the finest engravings to be seen. This is an artist to look at for his crosshatching and line work.

**Rembrandt.** A master in drawing, his work looks ageless. Now here is someone's etching to study, his use of crosshatching is phenomenal.

### **Now for some guide lines on pen and ink work.**

The directions given here are concerning the use of a nib pen with Indian ink, there are obviously new pens on the market but I still prefer what the nib pen can provide. The variation of line from fine to a wide stroke you get as you draw is very satisfying.

Have a look at the nibs available in your local art shop, buy a few and try them out until you find one you like.

Same with paper and board, try various surfaces from very smooth hot press to a rough water colour. I tend to use a NOT surface which is in between the two, the reason for this is that it provides enough of a smooth surface for the nib but with a surface capable of taking a water colour wash.

Using a pen is like using a pencil but you can't rub your marks out! This is why it's best to lightly draw your image in pencil first and when you are satisfied with the results then draw over in ink. You can white over black line with a paint called process white which covers very well and comes in a small jar like another called bleed proof white which is used to cover over paint without the colour bleeding through.

Please try and get hold of the work of the artists mentioned earlier and many other examples of line work, it will pay off. Of course look

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