

# GESTURE

One of the best warm-up exercises for figure drawing is called *gesture drawing*. It is an excellent way to become confident with the figure, and it encourages you to loosen up and work spontaneously.

Gesture drawing is often called scribble drawing. It's almost as easy as scribbling, but there are a few simple and important differences that make gesture drawing one of the best ways to improve your figure drawing.

First, gesture should never lose the loose, almost unrestrained quality of scribbling.

Second, when you do a gesture drawing, you are not only making a loose, scribbly sketch of what the subject looks like, you are also trying to tell more about what your subject is and what it is doing. You are not drawing only what you see, but what you feel is the essential character or action of your subject. It is often hard to describe gesture drawing without resorting to almost mystical terms, because gesture drawing records your impressions, thoughts and feelings about your subject. Gesture is a spontaneous record of what you think best captures the inner vitality of your subject. Draw what your subject is like or what it is doing.

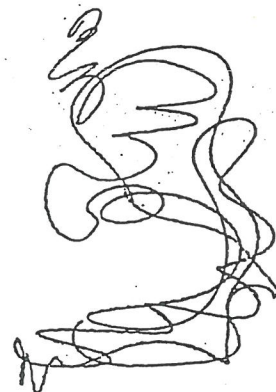
Sometimes gesture drawings are called action drawings. "Action" makes sense when you're drawing the figure. It's pretty obvious what action

the figure is doing, even if the figure is motionless—she or he is standing or sitting, bending, reaching or twisting.

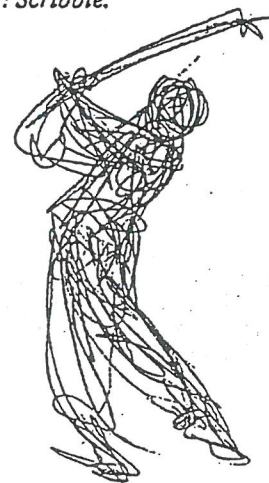
Gesture drawings should only take about a minute or two to complete. You shouldn't work at gesture drawings. Instead, you let them happen. You put the pencil to paper and begin to draw loosely and spontaneously with an uninterrupted movement of the hand and shoulder. Keep your drawing instrument moving, neither stopping it nor lifting it from the paper.

Whatever your subject, make it fit the paper so no part is left off. This is one of the most important parts of gesture drawing. If you need to make a mark on the top of the paper for the topmost part of your subject and then make a mark on the bottom for the lowest part, do it. Get in the habit of "sizing" your drawing to fit the paper. If you start too large, just scribble your subject smaller right on the paper. Never start over—it's only a minute or so of drawing anyway.

If you consciously try to make whatever you draw fit on the paper, you'll get in the habit of seeing how the sizes of the various parts of your subject are related. You'll also develop an instinctive sense of proper proportion and composition. You will develop the habit of thinking about how whatever you are drawing fits whatever size and shape paper you use.



Rule 1: Scribble.



Rule 2: Draw what your subject is doing.



Rule 3: Don't pick up or stop the pencil.



2. Studies of expressions in men, women, children and animals; sketch for a Madonna with the Child St. John. Ca. 1475. Pen. Royal Library, Windsor Castle.



5. Madonna with a fruit dish. Ca. 1480. Silverpoint and pen. 350 x 250 mm. Paris, Louvre.



Boys Fighting  
Pencil drawing

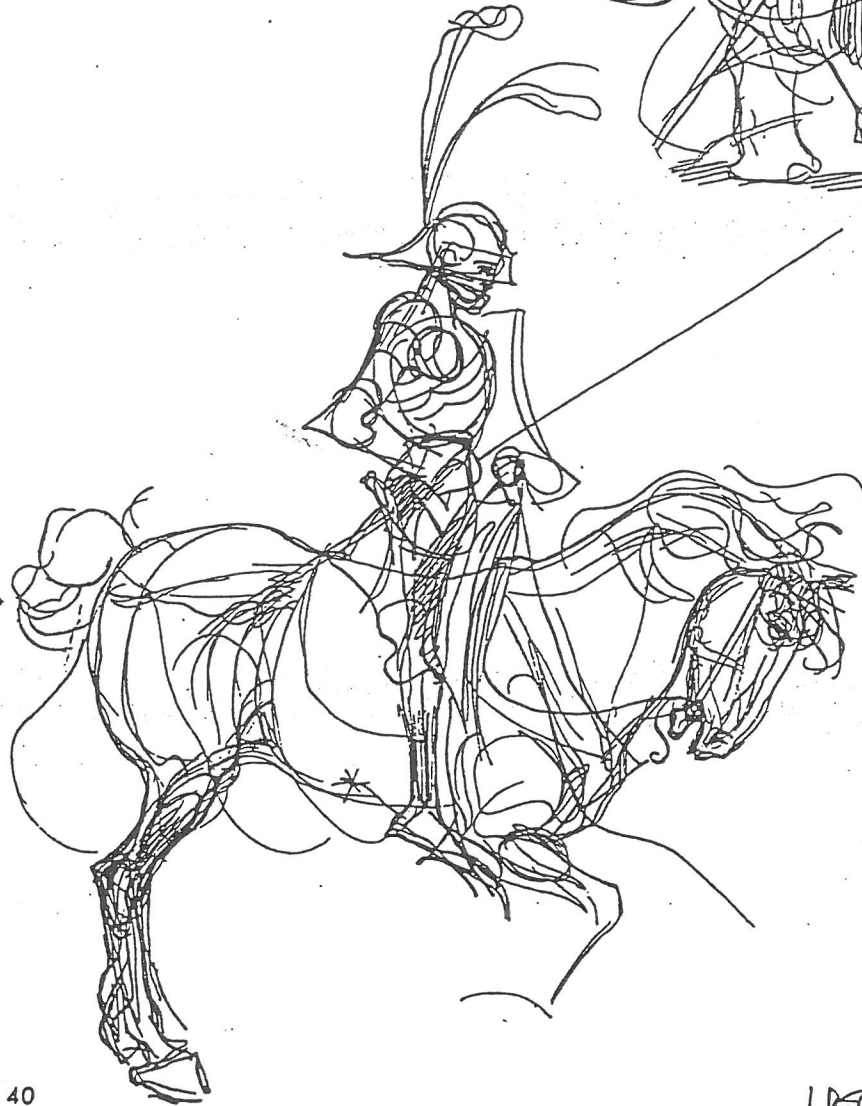
NATIONAL GALERIE, BERLIN, GERMANY

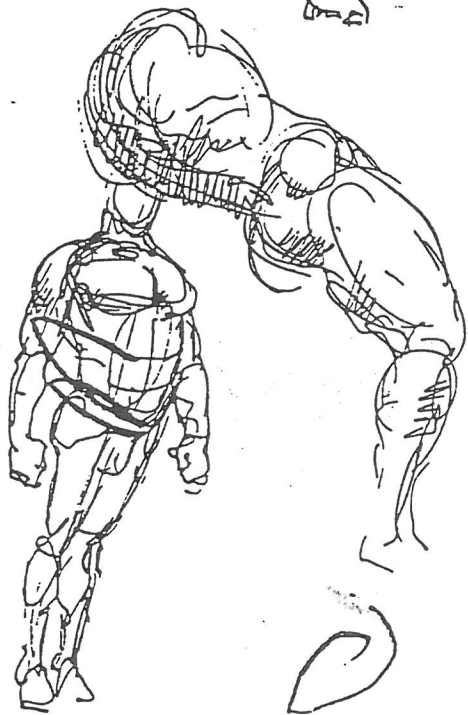
ADOLF VON MENZEL  
1815-1905



HEINRICH KLEY

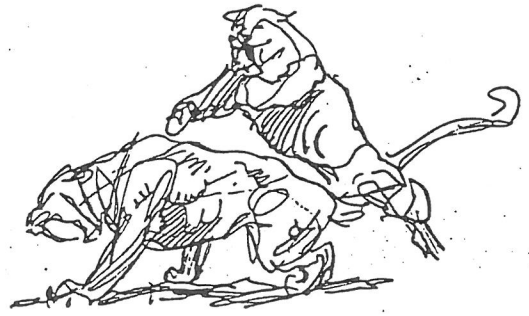
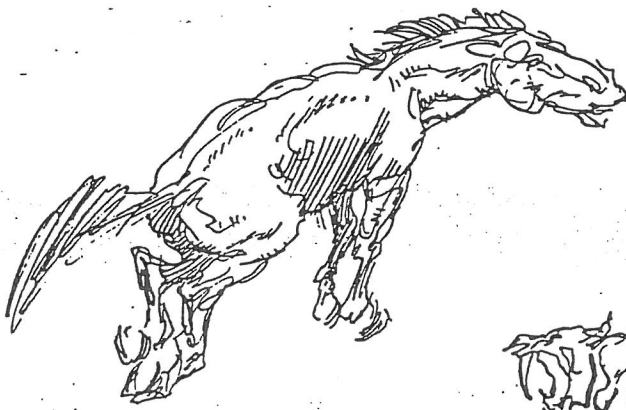




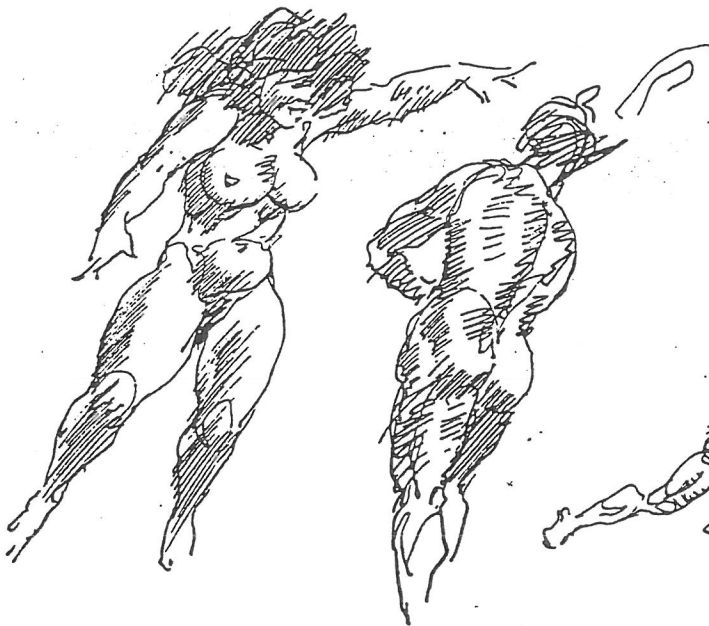


THE RETURN OF JONGAR  
Poster No. 109

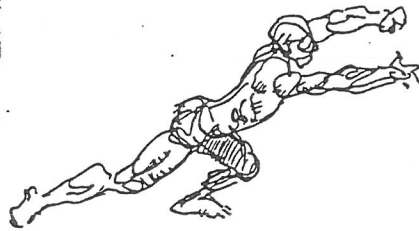




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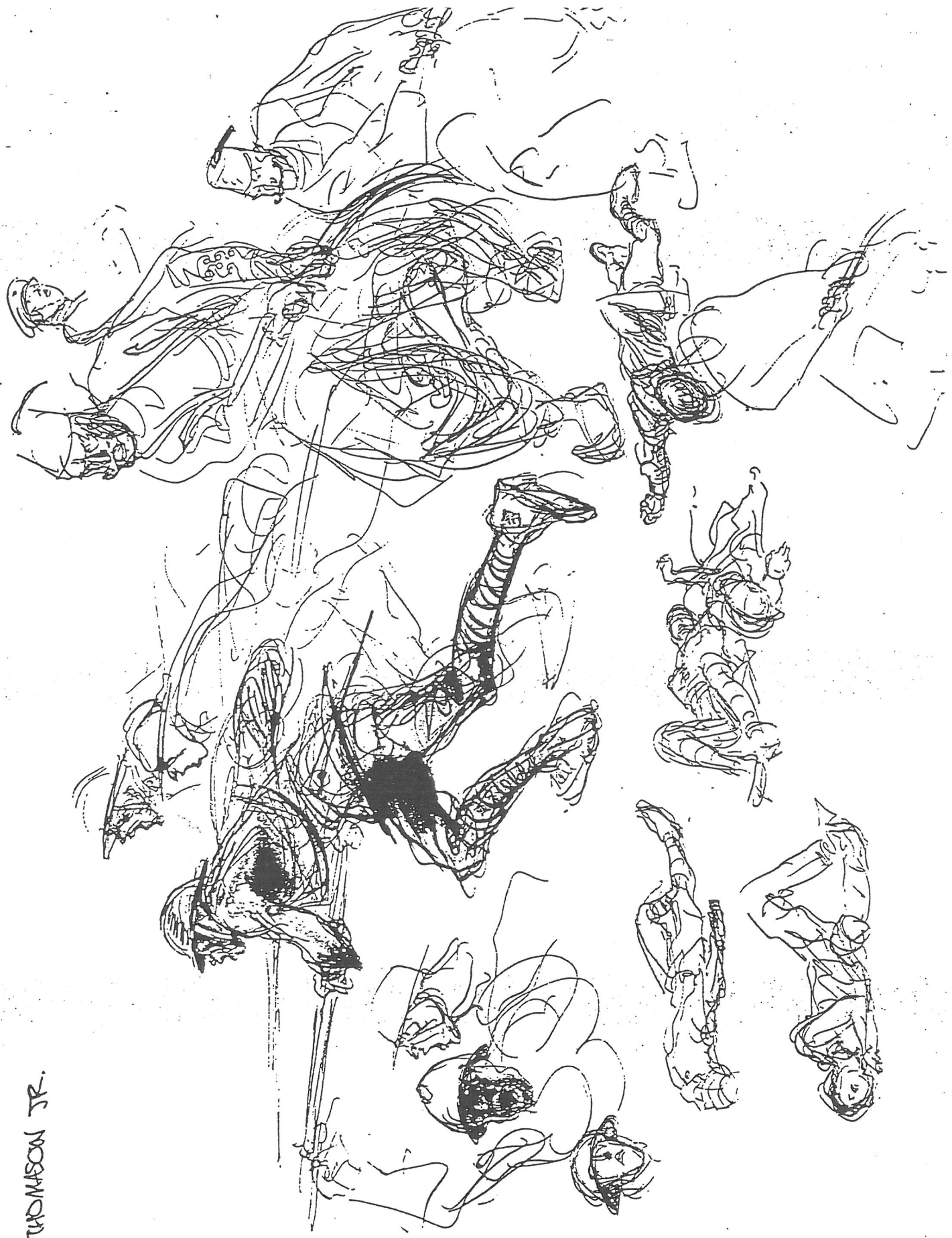
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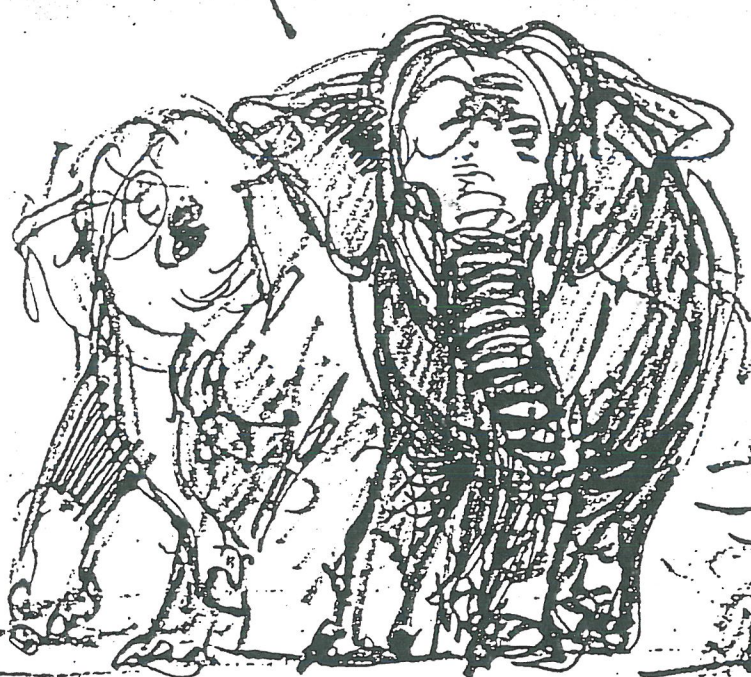
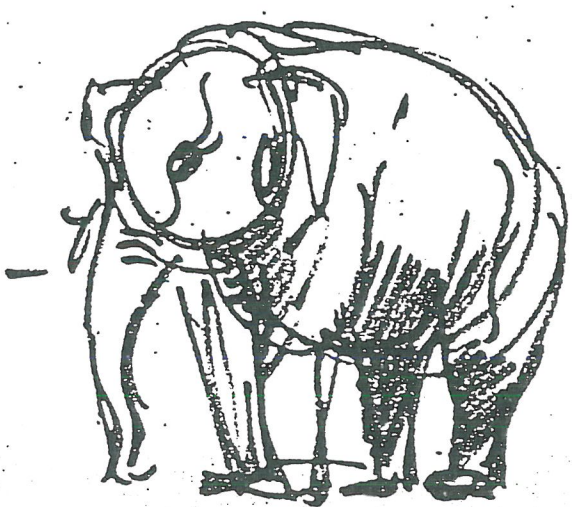
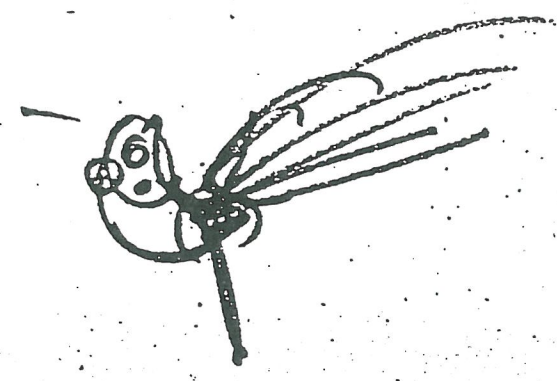


JOHN W. THOMASON JR.  
1893-1944



JOHN W. THOMPSON JR.





HERB DICKENS RYMAN  
1910-1989

WATCHING THE SHOW



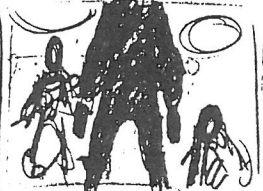
HARPER DICKENS BYMAN



LEON DAVIA DAVIA



FRANK CHO

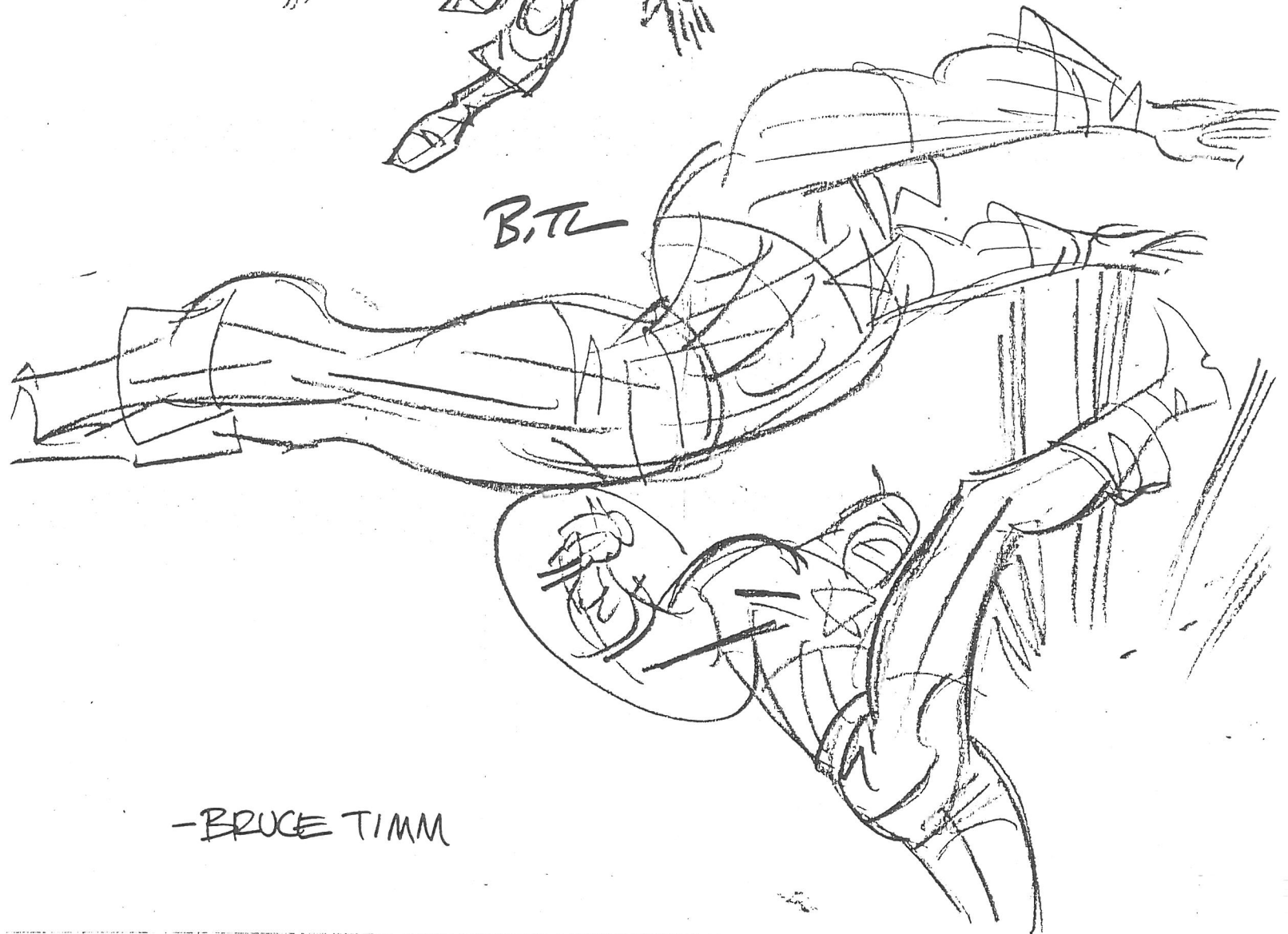


-PIERRE ALARY



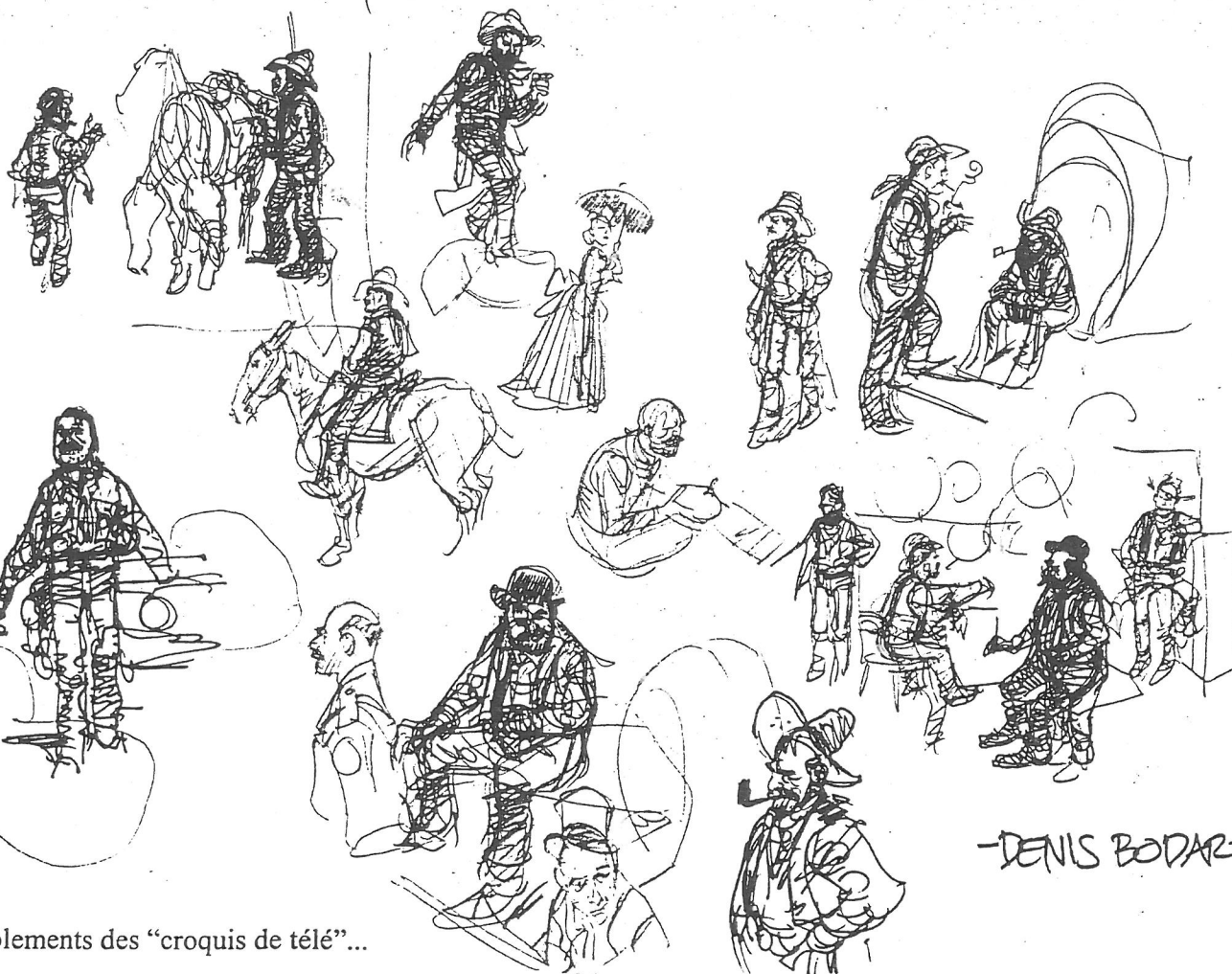
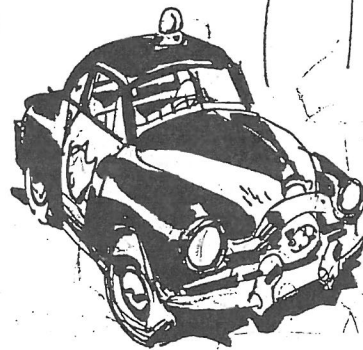
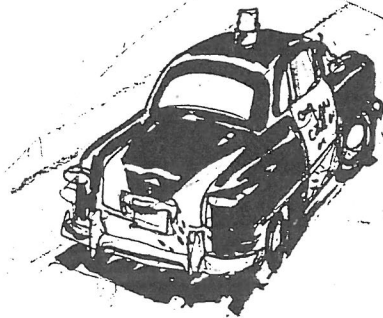


B.T.L



-BRUCE TIMM

BODART

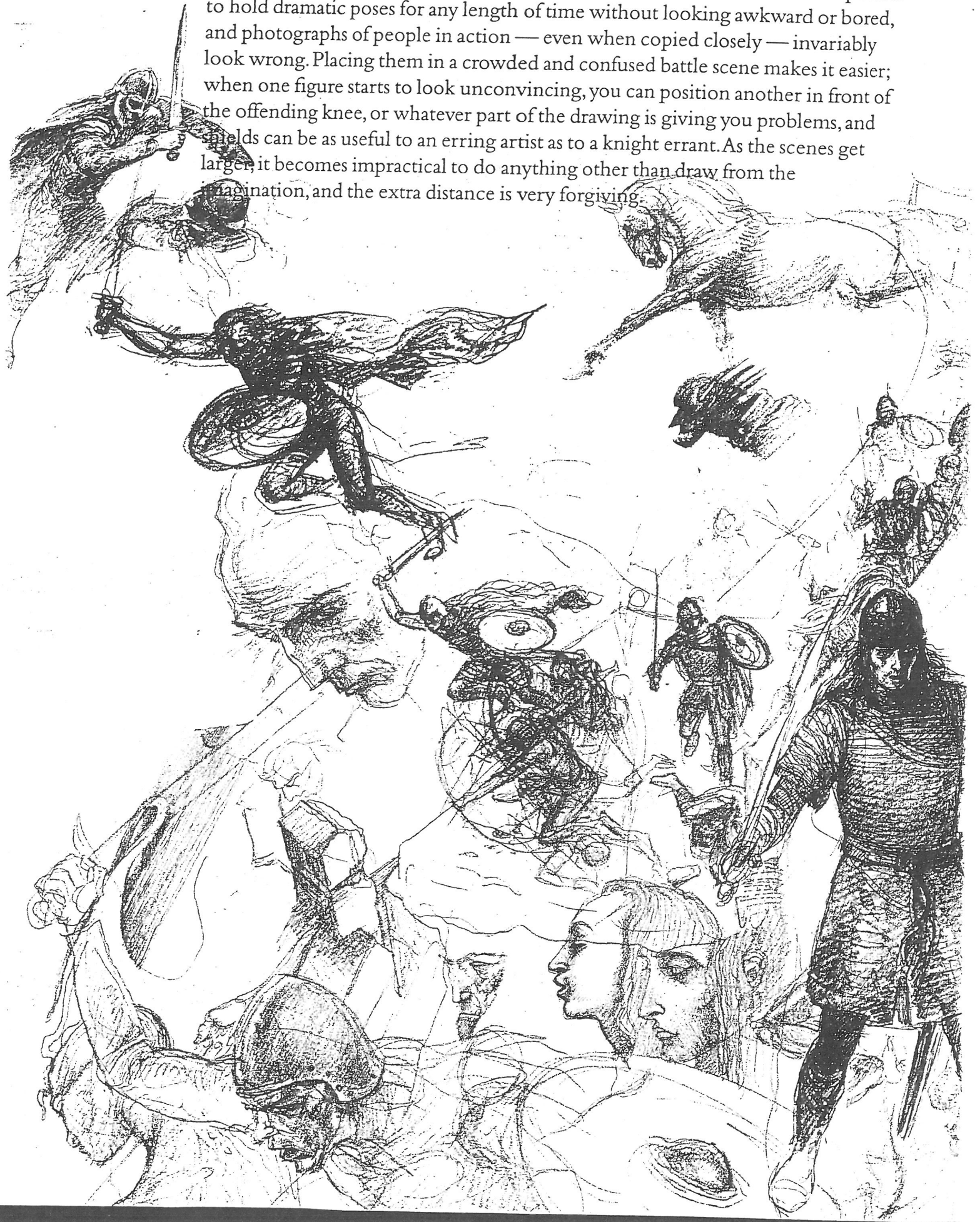


-DENIS BODART

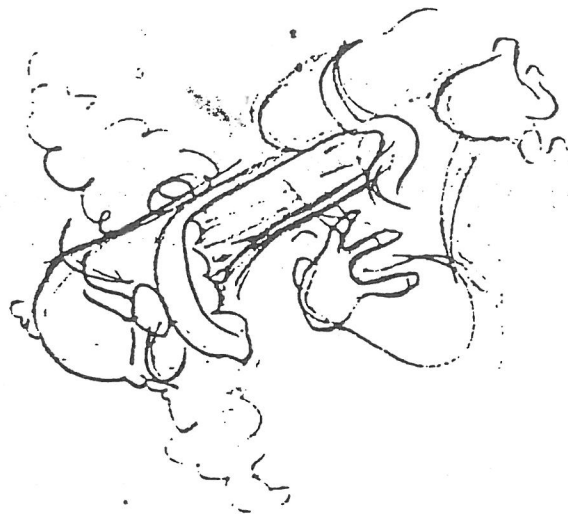
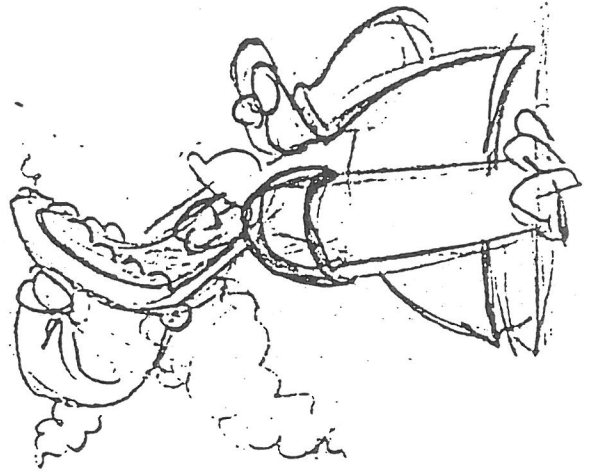
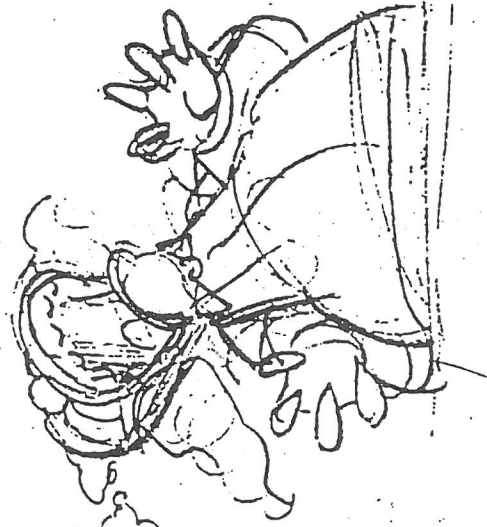
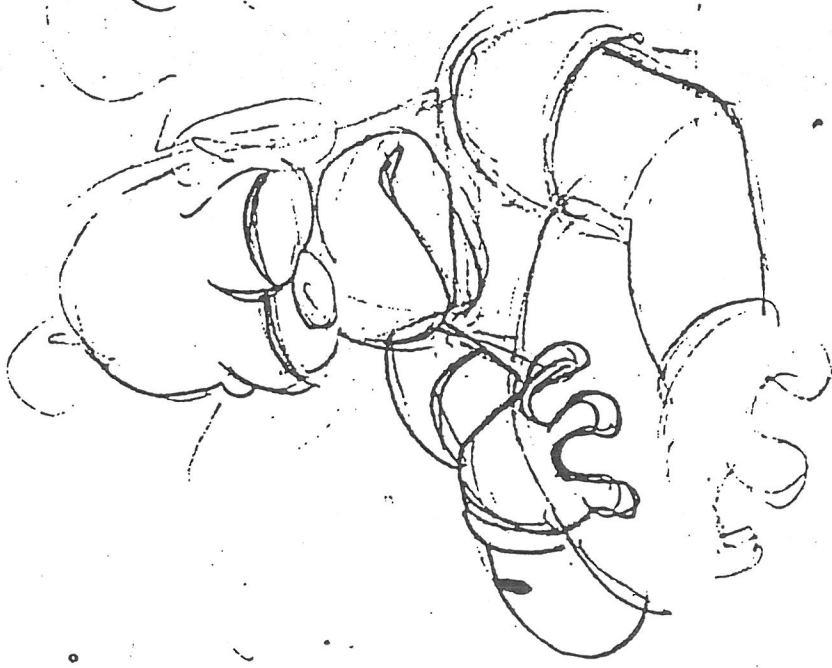


Probablement des "croquis de télé"...

Drawing figures in action had some inherent difficulties: models can't be expected to hold dramatic poses for any length of time without looking awkward or bored, and photographs of people in action — even when copied closely — invariably look wrong. Placing them in a crowded and confused battle scene makes it easier; when one figure starts to look unconvincing, you can position another in front of the offending knee, or whatever part of the drawing is giving you problems, and shields can be as useful to an erring artist as to a knight errant. As the scenes get larger, it becomes impractical to do anything other than draw from the imagination, and the extra distance is very forgiving.







—DAVID SILVERMAN