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Cartoon Cool: How To Draw New Retro-Style Characters



Synopsis

Love that Sponge Bob? Always lurking in Dexter's lab? Wishing for Fairly Odd Parents? Millions of fans watch these shows avidly, often solely for their zingy, stylized look and hip visual jokes. Now there's a drawing book just right for everyone who admires that quirky style: Cartoon Cool.

Top-selling author Christopher Hart shows beginning cartoonists, retro fans, and all other hipsters how to get that almost-1950s look in their drawings. His trademark step-by-step drawings and crystal-clear text are sure to make Saturday mornings more creative!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hart breaks down the basics of modern character design in ways anyone could easily assimilate and recreate. This book came in handy when I taught animation to college students: being able to draw is only the first step to creating characters one can move about with ease and appeal. Hart's approach, and the examples he uses, are perfectly suited to the more modern techniques of Flash, but are also adaptable to classical animation. This book is a great find, offering practical, useful advice to those who intend to take animation seriously. I'd advise serious animation students to have it as part of their library, along with "The Illusion of Life", "Your career in Animation" by David Levy, and "The animator's Survival Kit" by Richard Williams.

I have purchased a good number of Chris Hart books. I have been through regular style, happy-go-lucky cartooning to comic book style to manga. I just wasn't getting the hang of them. Then I saw this book. I figured since I was a Dexter's Lab fan, I would give it a try. It was so easy for

me to do! It just clicked with me. I had found Christopher Hart books to range from well-explained to poorly-explained. This one falls deeply into the well-explained category! It explains differences in representing genders, how different types of eyes and other features can change a school girl into a sexy seductress. There are just so many tips that take the regular lessons and sort of glue them together or reinforce them. It goes without saying that everyone is going to have one style they can do better than any other. If you have tried the others like I had, give this one a shot and don't be surprised if it is the one for you.

As most people reading this review probably know, Hart's books are a mixed bag. But some of them are surprisingly good if you're willing to take them as they are, and *Cartoon Cool* is one of those. Basically, Hart outlines a cartooning style that isn't profound, but is a lot of fun. I don't know if I'd really call it the most retro thing you could ever imagine; it's sort of *Flintstones* meets *Oddparents*. I'd rather see something like simplified Dick Giordano/Vince Colletti. (Giordano does have a book, but I haven't heard the best reviews, and there are only so many things I'm going to spend money on!) But there are so few books really dealing with the subject of how to draw truly retro cartoon-style comics that it's nice to see anything at all. As other reviewers have noticed, this is NOT a book about the fundamentals of drawing. This style isn't really as easy as it looks, and if you haven't already covered the basics, you'll be much more lost than you think when you pick it up. That having been said, it's a good addition to knowledge you already had. It covers the basics of how to get figures to look like this style, as well as specific groups (family, teenagers, pets, boys, girls, etc.) I could really have lived without the commentary, but there's enough in here to make it worthwhile if you skim over any irrelevant statements that annoy you (the "ADHD family" being a good example.) Overall, I'd recommend this, keeping its limitations in mind.

This was a special request from a 5th grade student who loves to draw. I purchased it to use at a center in the school media center. I love the step-by-step directions and the detailed explanations in each section.

If you are interested in learning to draw the new retro-style cartoons, you can't go wrong with this book. Christopher Hart begins "*Cartoon Cool*" by explaining what makes cartoons retro as opposed to more traditional style of cartooning. He then moves on to specifics such as standard characters often found in retro cartoons. Characters such as kids, the shopaholic mother, the clueless dad, mad scientists and family pets are described in great detail. Mr. Hart makes this a fun read by

adding humor to the text. He also includes tips that, while specific to the particular project, will be useful in any style of drawing. But what I really loved about this book is how it's written so a young teen or bright tween will understand it, but adults who use it don't feel like they're using a children's book, and that's important to an adult beginner like myself. As I wrote in the first sentence, anyone who's interested in this style of cartooning will love this book. I'd go as far as to say it's the only book you'll need.

I had to order an extra copy of "Cartoon Cool" so the students in my elementary school art class could share Chris' amazing book! While all my K-5 students enjoy "Cartoon Cool", I find that my 3rd thru 5th grade kids learn the most about drawing based on Chris' style and instructions. Simple lines and curves, uncomplicated anatomy and basic shapes for hair and faces, all contribute to successful creations from my budding artists. The retro style is so popular now, and is a refreshing change from all the manga characters of recent years. Thanks for another great book, Chris!

This is my second Christopher Hart book, after the 'Humongous Book of Cartooning', and it's great. I love retro-style cartoons (aka anything by Genndy Tartakovsky, Kim Possible, etc) and Chris does a wonderful job of breaking down the specifics of how to draw the style, from faces to figures. It's easy to follow too - my kids have been watching me draw and picking up details like how to draw lips or eyes. Just to be clear, this is not for beginners (though my kids are getting some great ideas from it). This is about a specific style for those who are already decent artists. I don't have a problem following the instructions but if you're picking up a pencil for the first time, this is not the book you want to start off with. If there's one thing that I don't care for, it's the commentary, which tries too hard to be hip and funny. But I didn't buy the book for that - it simply excels in teaching the retro style.

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