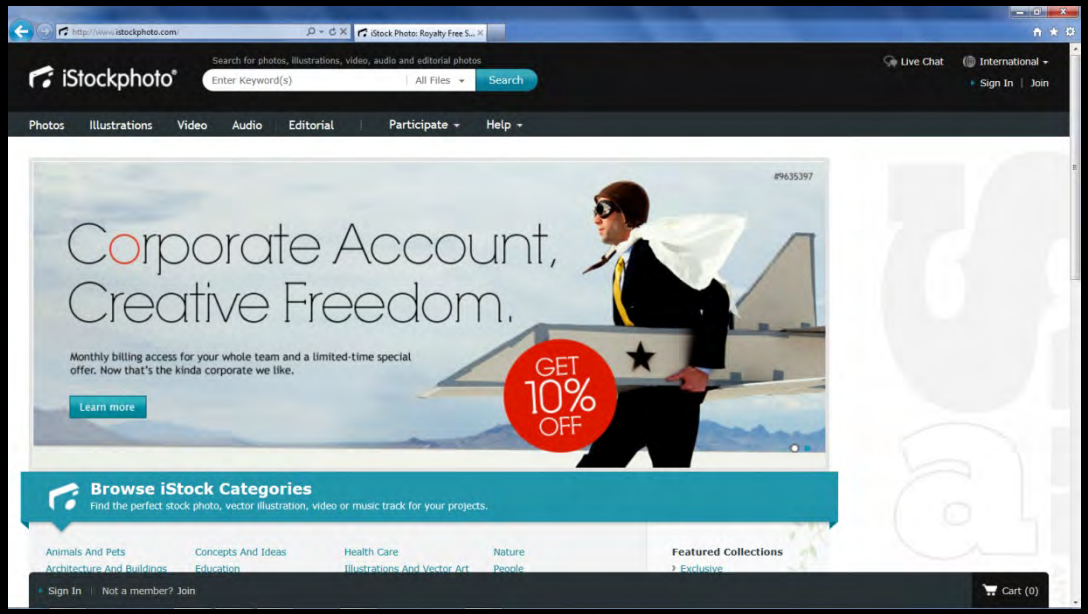
WE WILL BE TALKING IN
DEPTH ABOUT
COPYRIGHT
LATER IN THE SEMESTER.

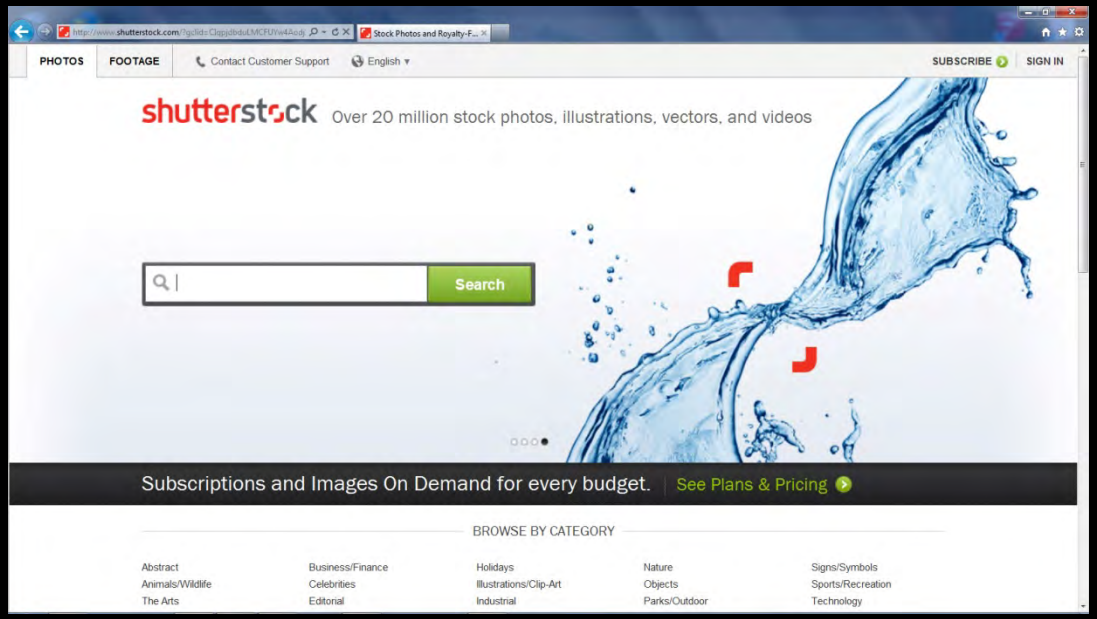
Stock Images

There are some sites that are set up specifically to be used as figure drawing references like fantasystockphoto.com.

Some of these even offer the ability to rotate the figure to find the best angle for you to draw from. Usually there's also a fee associated with these, as well.

There are some free stock photo sites out there as well. Morgue file is one, but the database is somewhat limited, especially when it comes to figure references.





Stock Images

By far the most extensive free figure stock is at deviantArt.com.

There are literally hundreds of stock-photo artists who put their images up for artists to use for photo manipulating or for drawing reference.

A word of warning: READ THE RULES. A vast majority of the stock images available are only for use only **ON** deviantArt.

Easy access to legal images

If you have a project that would benefit from photos, illustrations, or other visual media, avoid the temptation to simply download or capture the first photo that catches your eye.

You must also ensure you can use them without breaching someone's copyright.

To avoid copyright infringement, images that are considered to be in the "public domain" or that carry Creative Commons (CC) licensing are your best options.

Public domain and Creative Commons CC

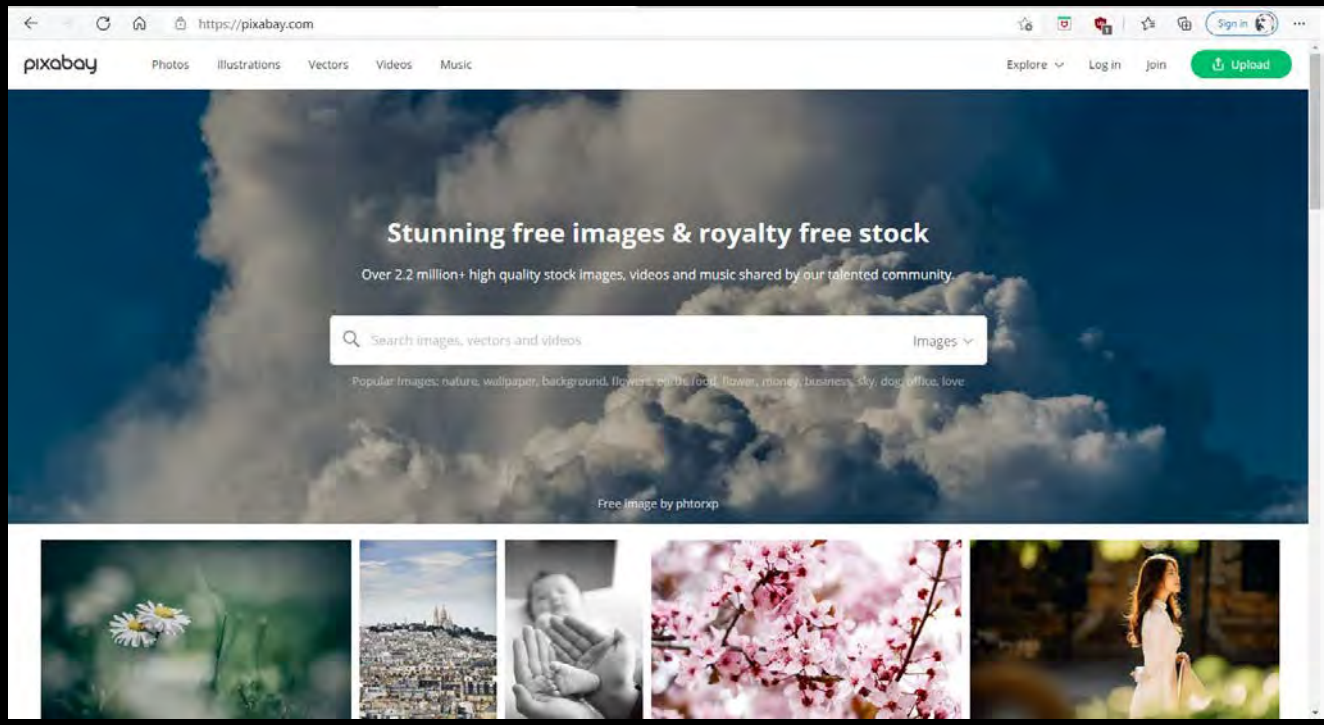
Some sites provide images that allow for unrestricted use without attribution (that is, without attributing ownership to the creator).

This may be because the image is no longer under copyright, or because the creator has waived all interests in their work.

Pixabay.com and **Flickr.com/commons** are good sources, and the latter provides links to collections from art galleries, libraries, and agencies like NASA that are increasingly making public domain images available.

Pixabay is a vibrant community of creative's, sharing copyright free images, videos and music.

All contents are released under the Pixabay License, which makes them safe to use without asking for permission or giving credit to the artist - even for commercial purposes.

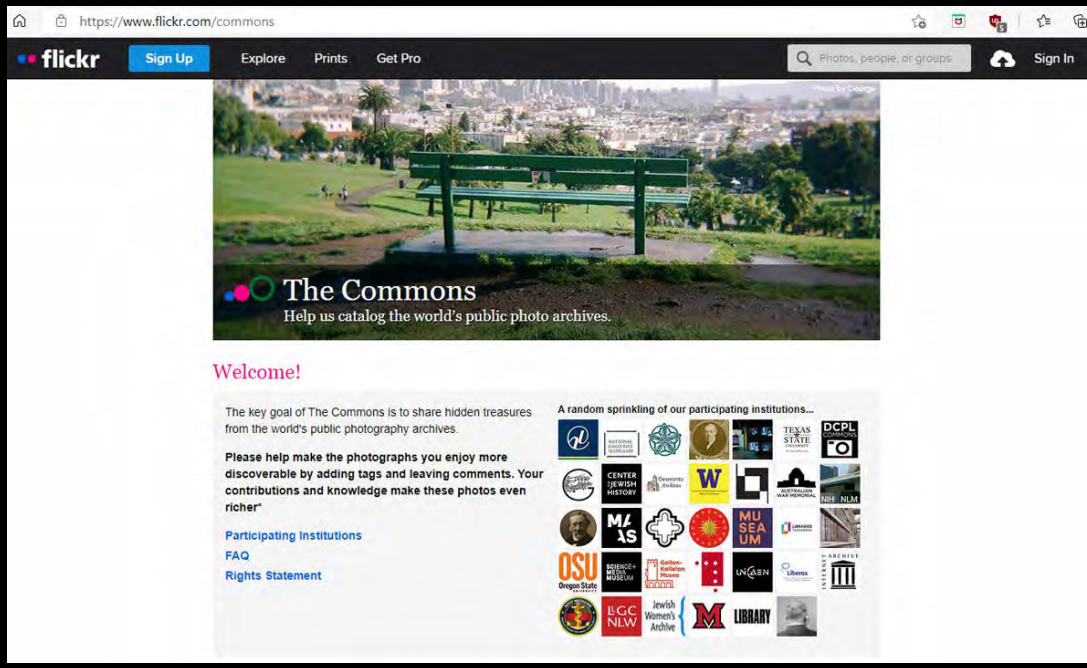


The Commons was launched in partnership with The Library of Congress.

The program has two main objectives:

To **increase access** to publicly-held photography collections.

To provide a way for the general public to **contribute information and knowledge**.



If you are unable to find a suitable image in the public domain, images licensed under CC provide a good alternative.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

* The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Photographs aren’t always accurate.

Seeing Isn't Always Believing

There is another, hidden problem with using photos as figure reference.

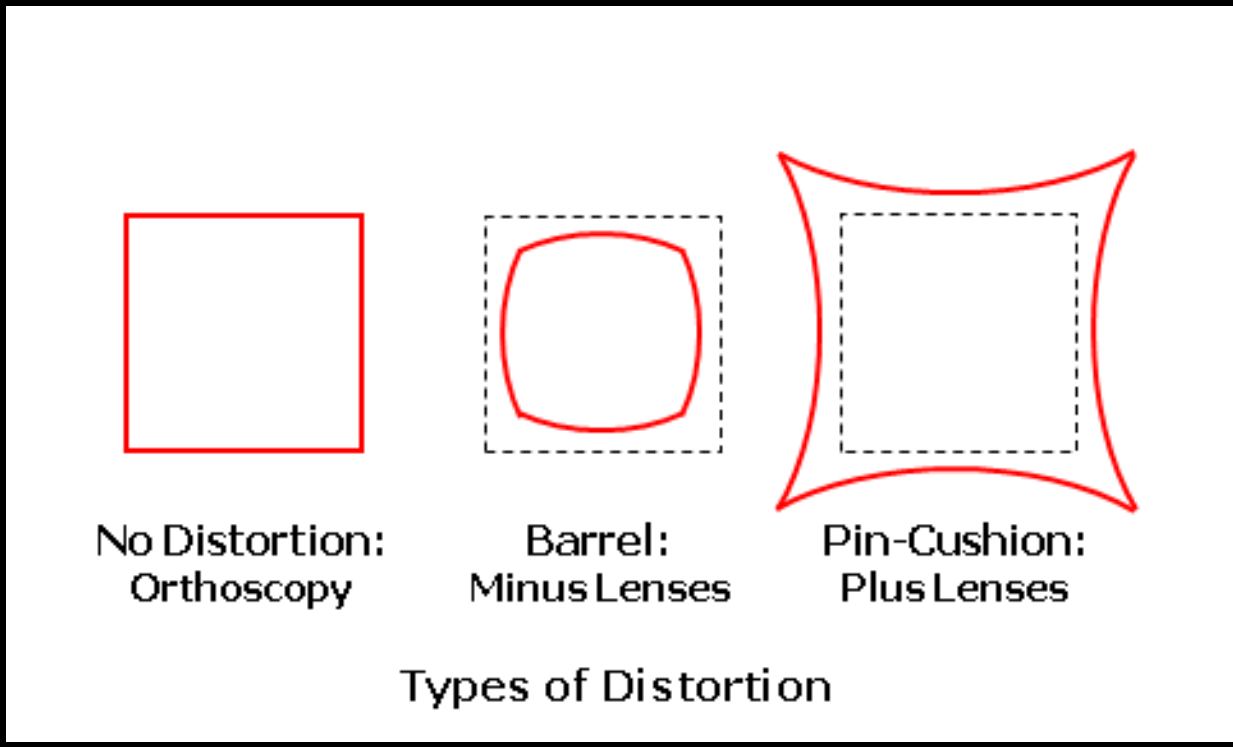
Unless the photographer really knows how to make up for it, all cameras distort things to one degree or another.

This is especially true when dealing with the human figure.

Seeing Isn't Always Believing

Curvilinear (Barrel) distortion comes in several different types, but the one you'll see most commonly is barrel distortion. This is really easy to spot when you use an ultra-wide lens, and causes straight lines at the edge of the frame to bow outwards. The effect is even more obvious on a fisheye lens, where these distortions are left uncorrected by the designers in order to get the widest possible field of view.

Pincushion distortion is often seen on long telephoto lenses – and causes lines to bend inwards. The effect is usually subtle, and isn't normally noticeable unless you're photographing rectangular subjects straight on. Some zooms can show signs of moustache distortion – where one image can show both pincushion and barrel distortion. It's most commonly seen with wide-angle zooms, and causes straight lines to appear wavy.



Seeing Isn't Always Believing

Seeing Isn't Always Believing

Because you're seeing a photograph, your eyes are convinced that what they are seeing must be true.

If the same distortions are copied into a painting, however, things will seem very off.

Camera Distortion

This is an example of a purposeful camera distortion.

Many comic book artist's use this type of foreshortened pose to create dynamic image.

Camera Distortion

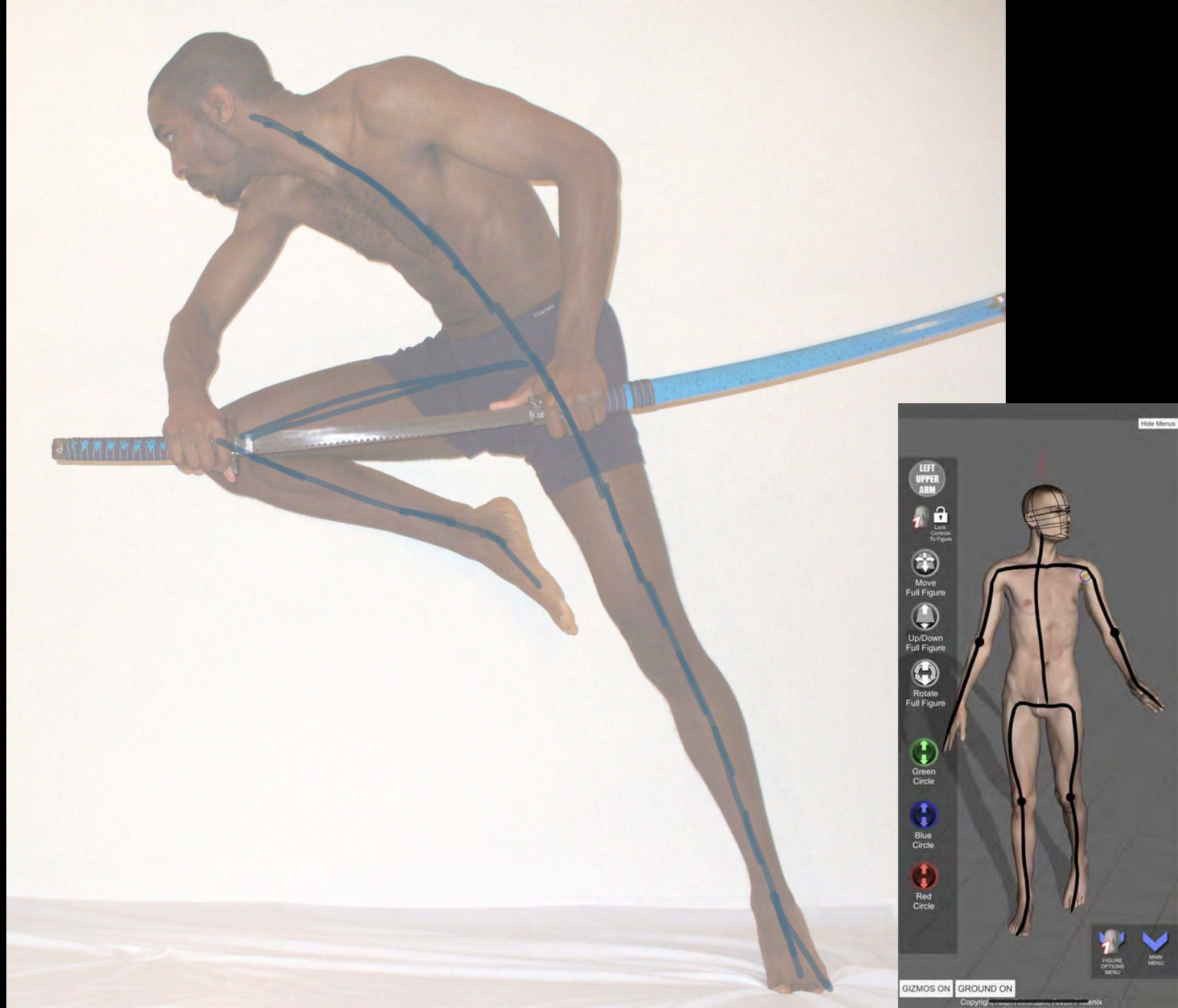
Camera Distortion

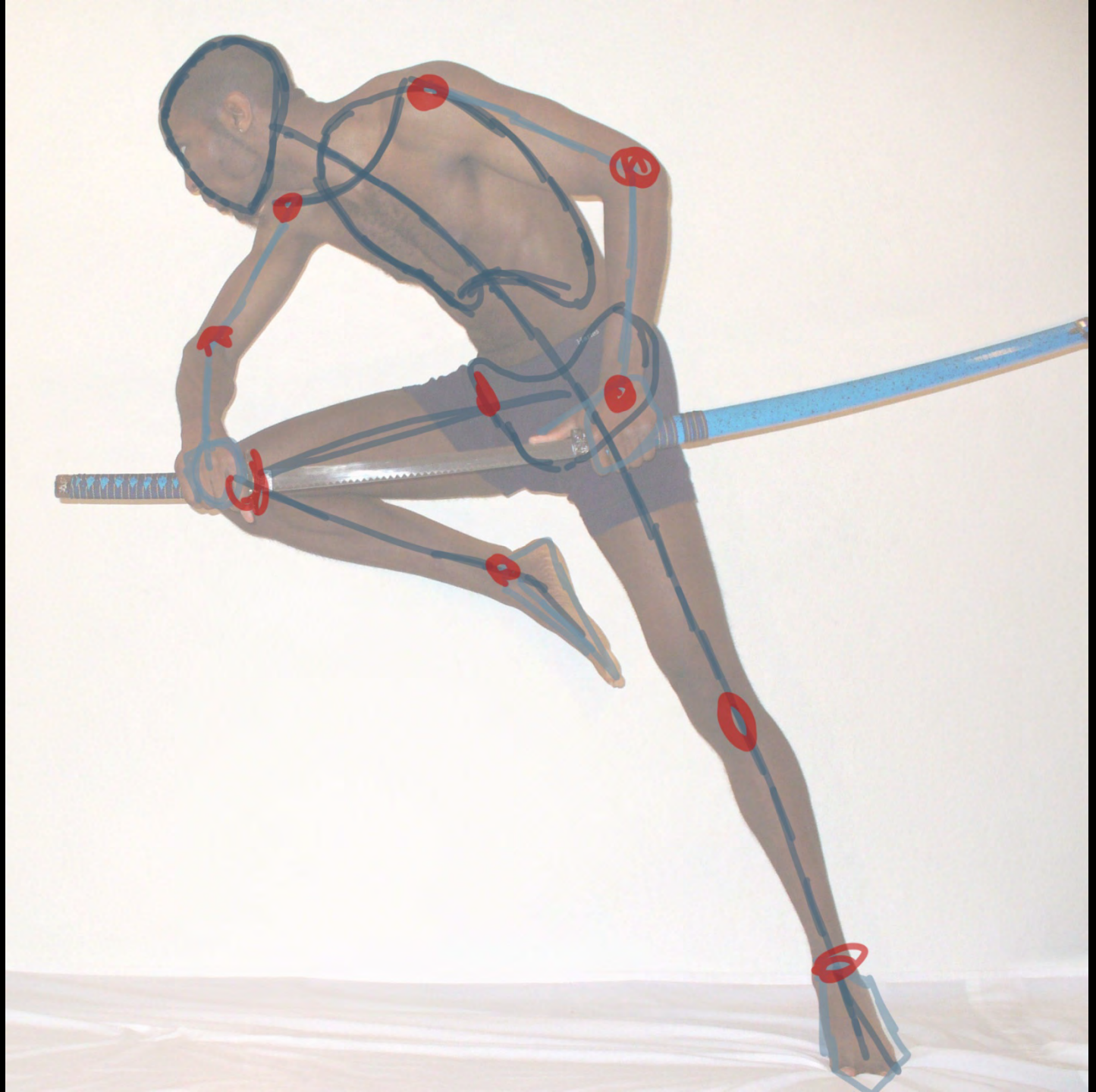
Eventually you want to be able to borrow from a photo only what you need.

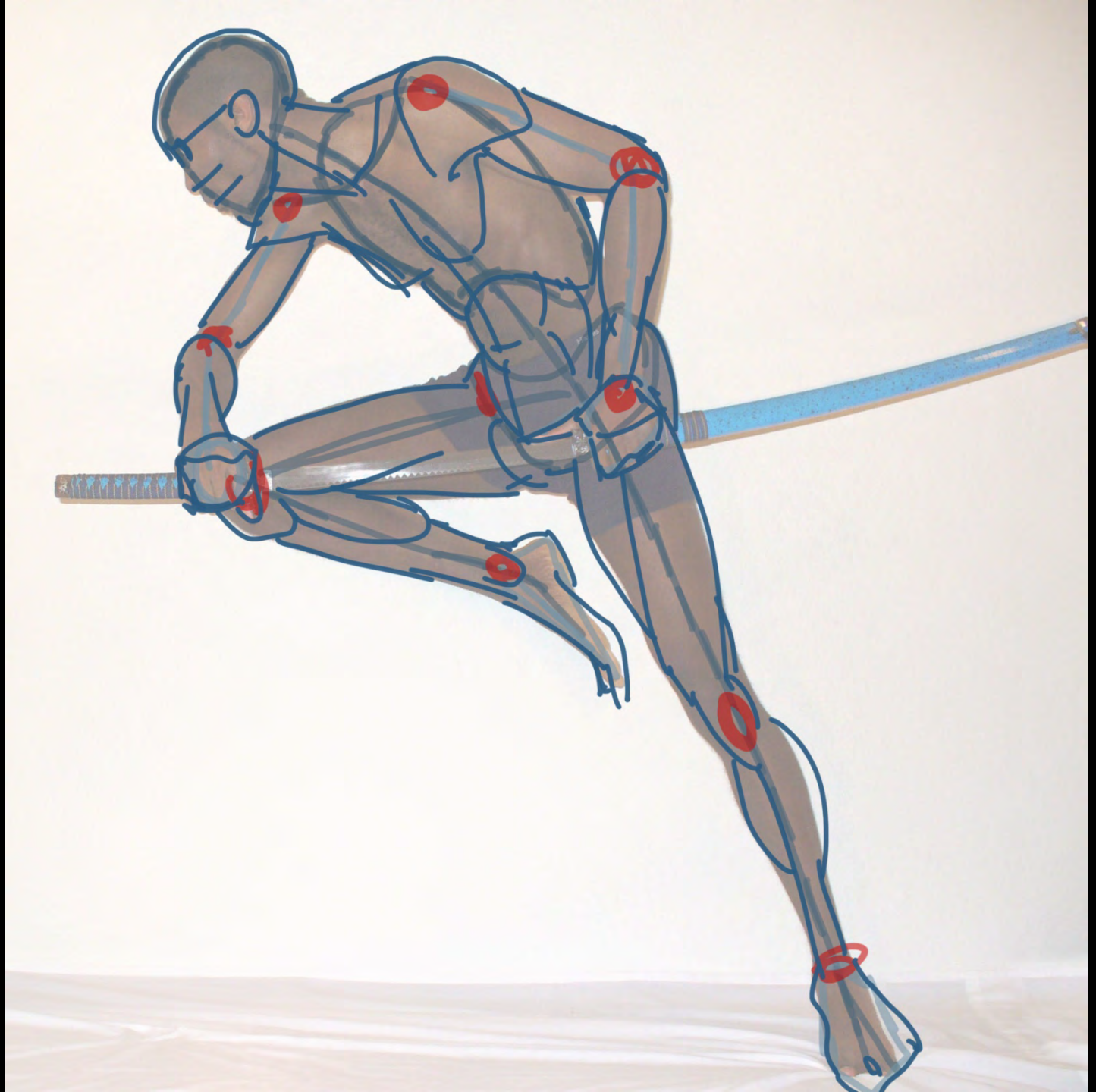
When you first start out drawing the human figure, you'll need to borrow a lot of it. The more you learn about how the human body is put together, the less you need to be married to your references.

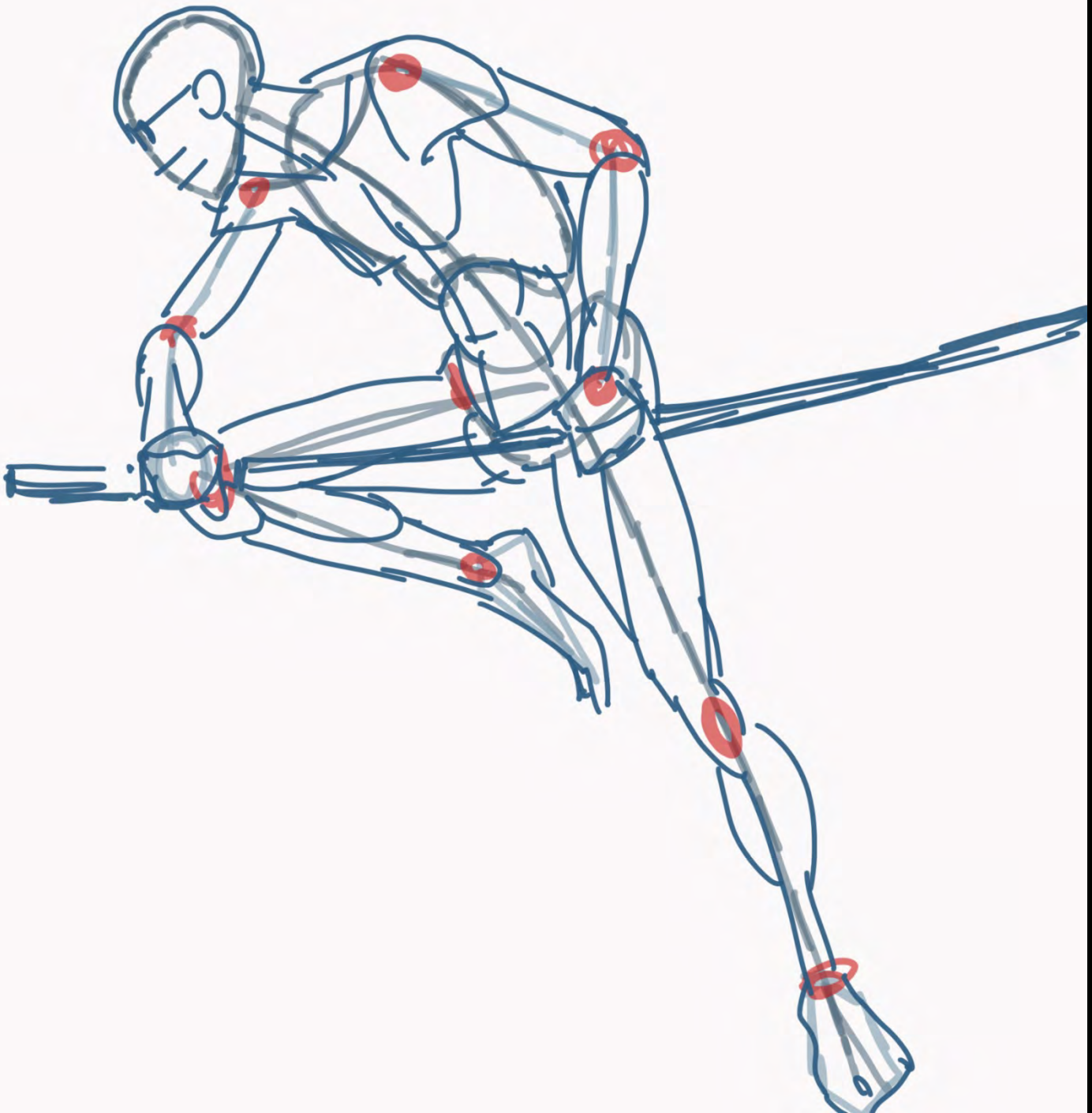
Breaking down reference photos in this way will help you become more confident about drawing people, be they real life models, photos, or your own imagination.

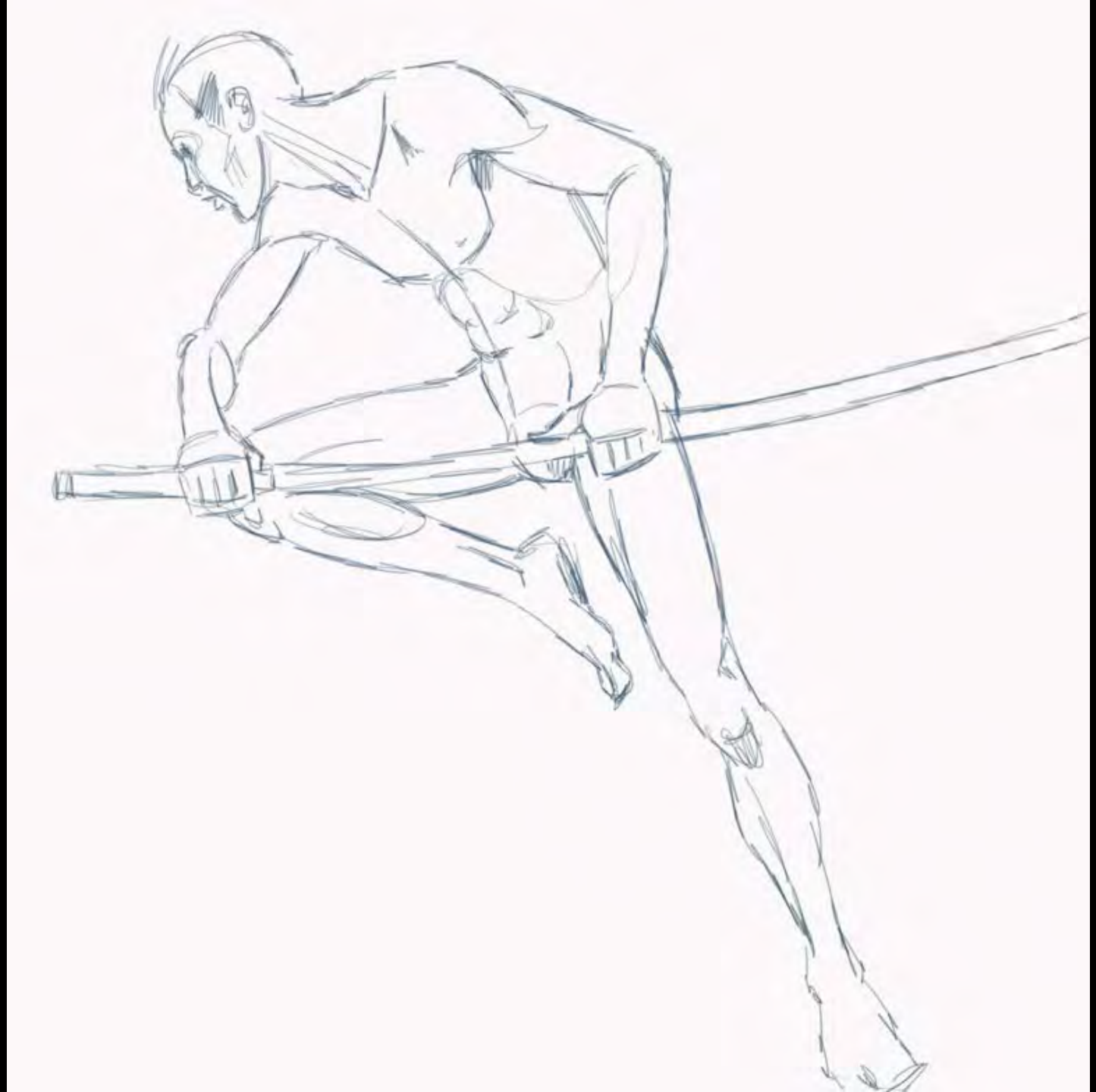
DRAWING FROM PHOTO REFERENCE

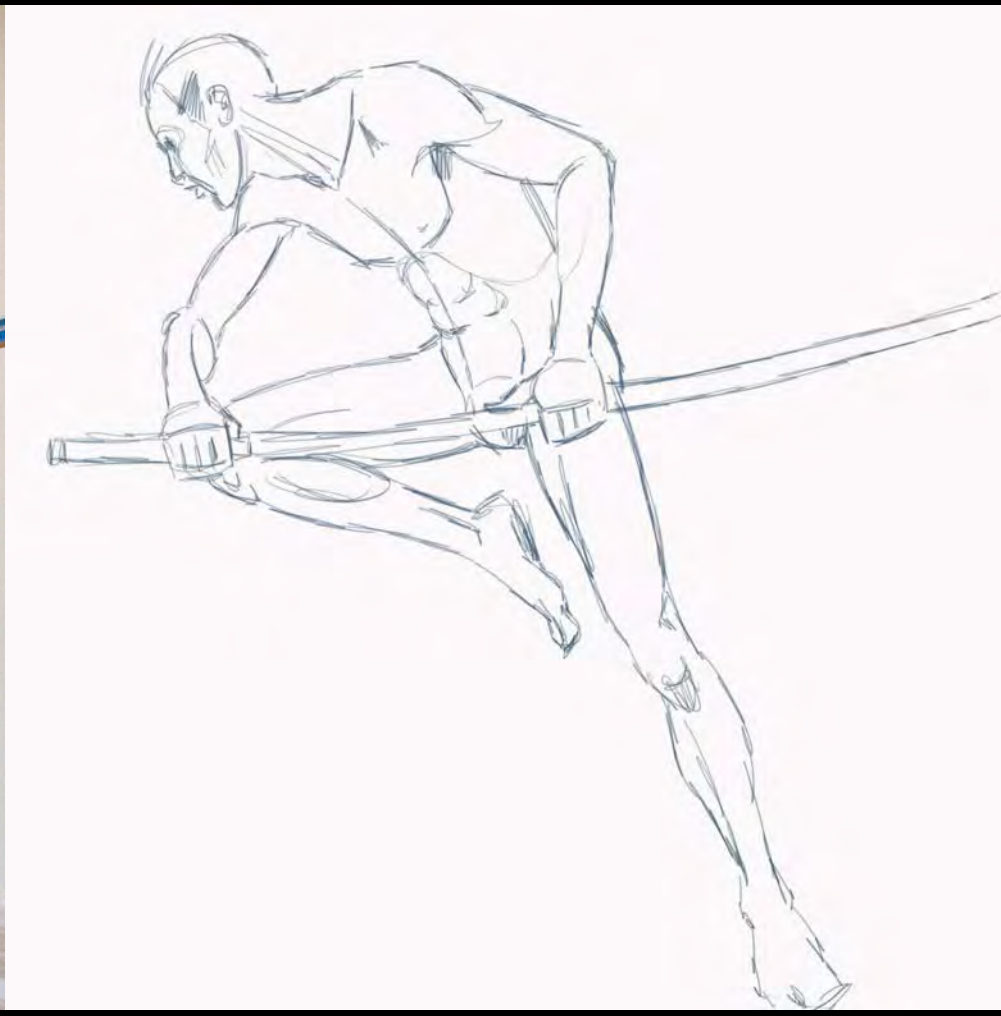

Hide Menus
LEFT UPPER ARM
Lock Controls To Figure
Move Full Figure
Up/Down Full Figure
Rotate Full Figure
Green Circle
Blue Circle
Red Circle
FIGURE OPTIONS MENU
MAIN MENU
GIZMOS ON
GROUND ON











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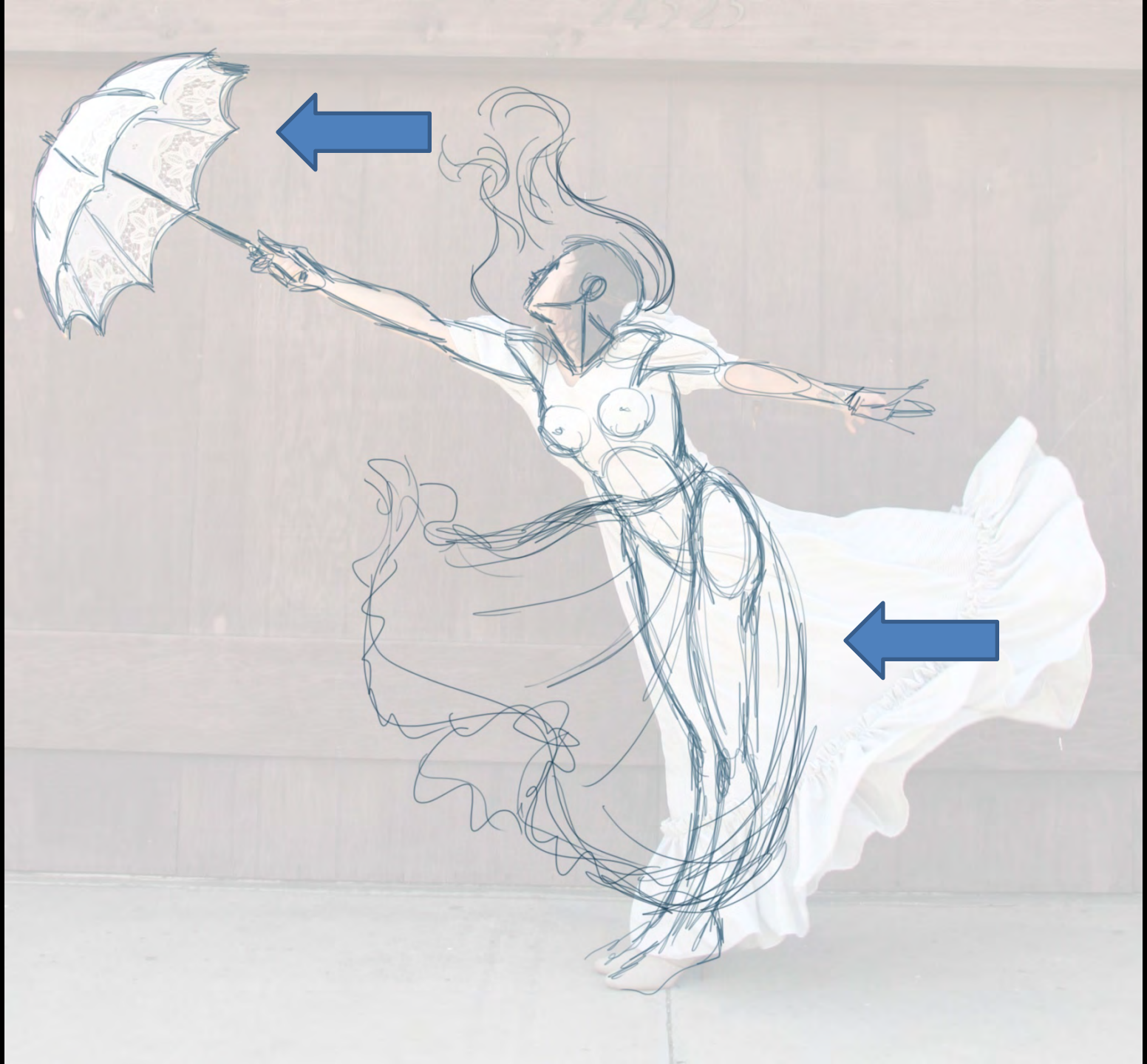
Not all photo reference you find online is accurate.
Here, the dress is being blow in one direction, but the gesture indicates the wind is blowing from another direction.



My own views on this topic are moderate and pragmatic. There is no right or wrong method: the final result is the test, and you should choose a process that will give you the results you want.

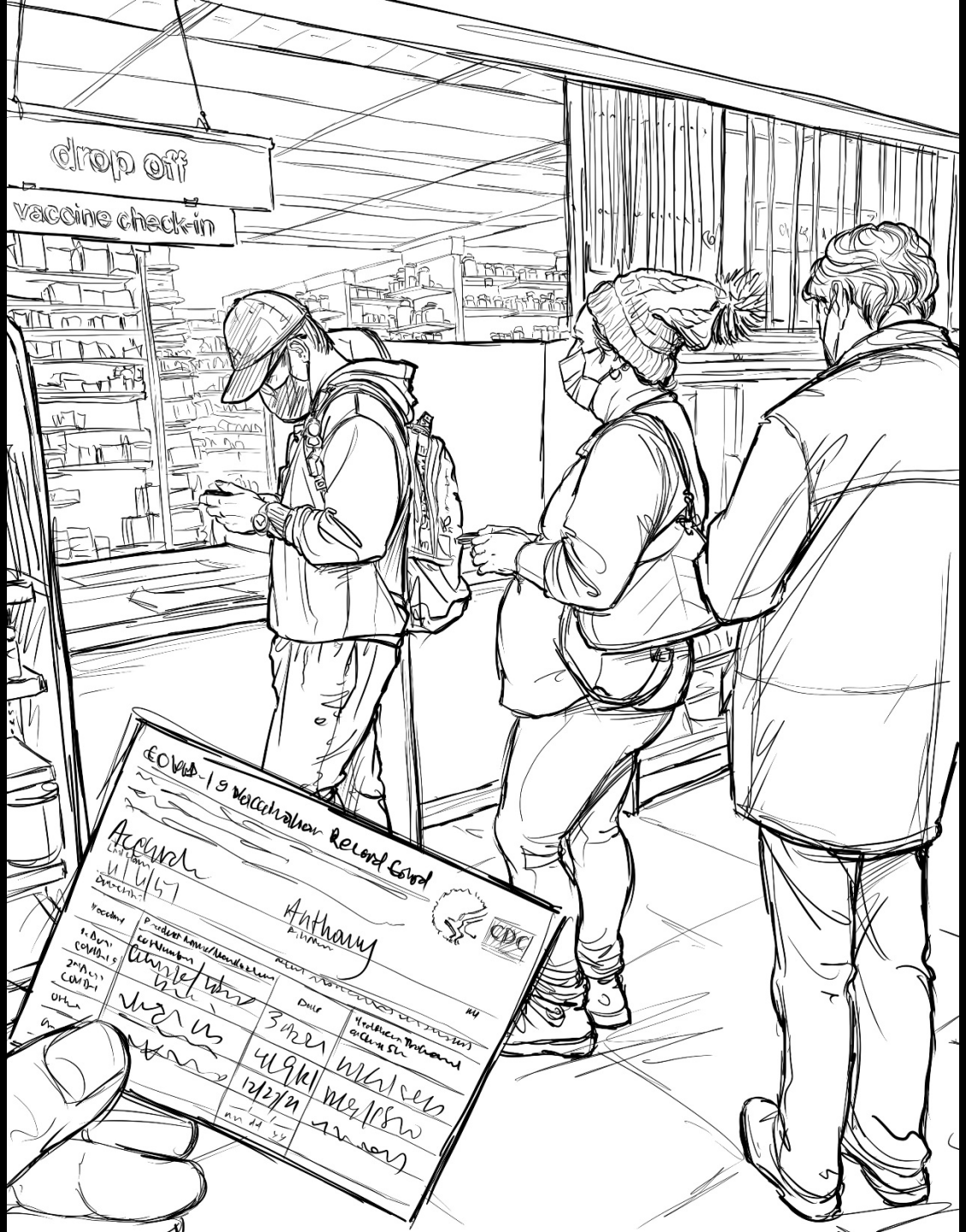
I have done paintings without photo reference and others with it. I use photos as one kind of reference, along with traditional pencil studies from observation, maquettes, and scrap file reference.

The caution I feel about using photos is that one can be easily lured into copying their random details. Photos are compelling. Without conscious effort, we tend to forget what we had in our mind's eye at the beginning of the picture making process.

Characters based on photos of friends or neighbors sometimes have a mundane snapshot quality, rather than an otherworldly "storybook" feeling.

There's also the danger of copying the colors and the black shadows literally from the photos.

From direct observation.



From a photograph.

From imagination.

If you want to work only from observation or only from imagination, more power to you!
But if you want to use photos, let me suggest the following four safeguards:

1. Do your initial sketches purely from your imagination and develop those sketches as much as you can before going after reference. Even if those sketches don't look that great, trust your mental image and let it guide you later.

2. Try using the photos only for the comprehensive stage, and put them away for the final painting.

3. Print your photos in black and white to avoid being influenced by the color.

4. Take lots of photos, and use more than one model or more than one costume.

The Intern

(Phillip)

Reference Shot

Converted to B&W

Additional Hand Pose

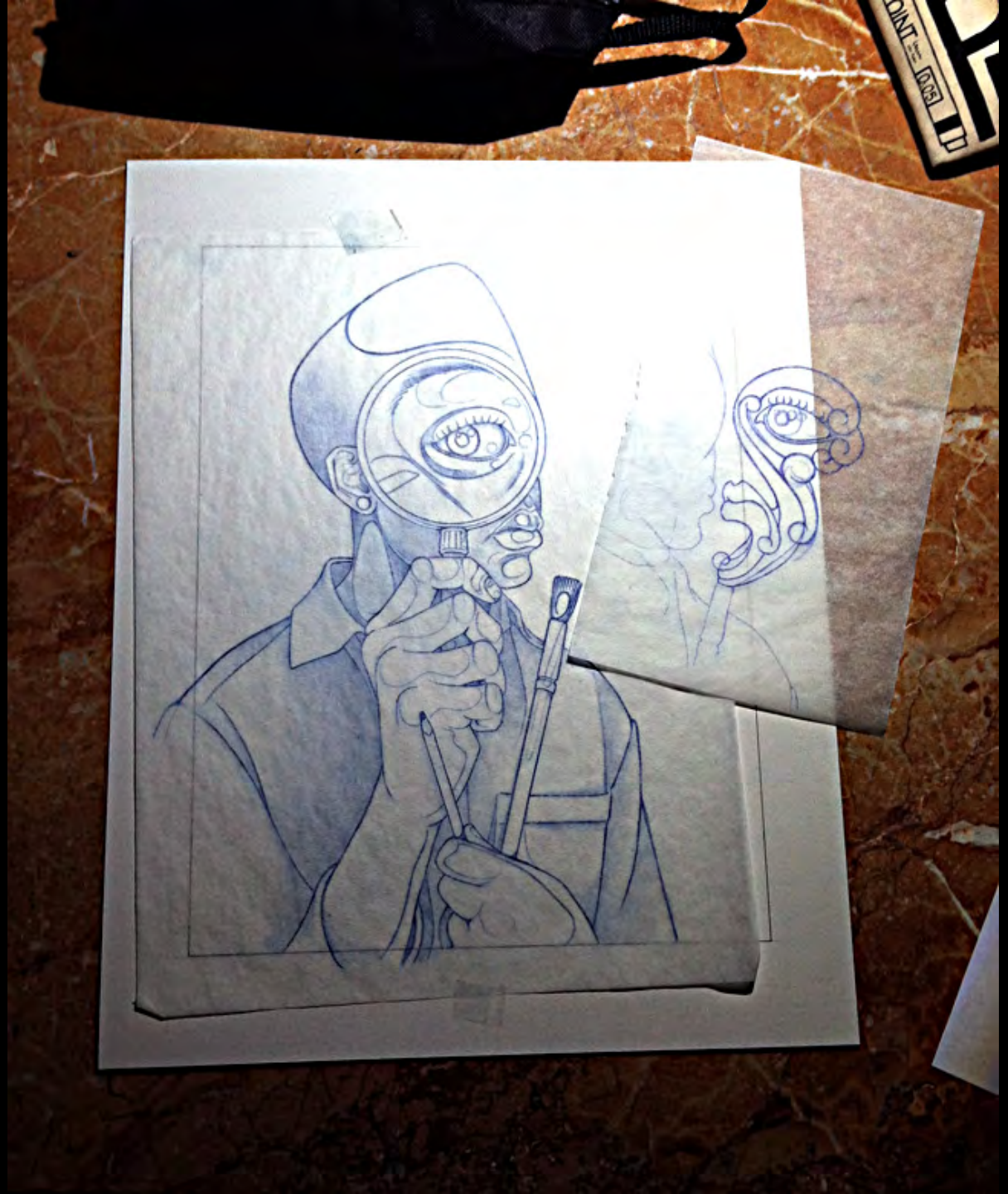
Reference Composite

Simplifying Shapes

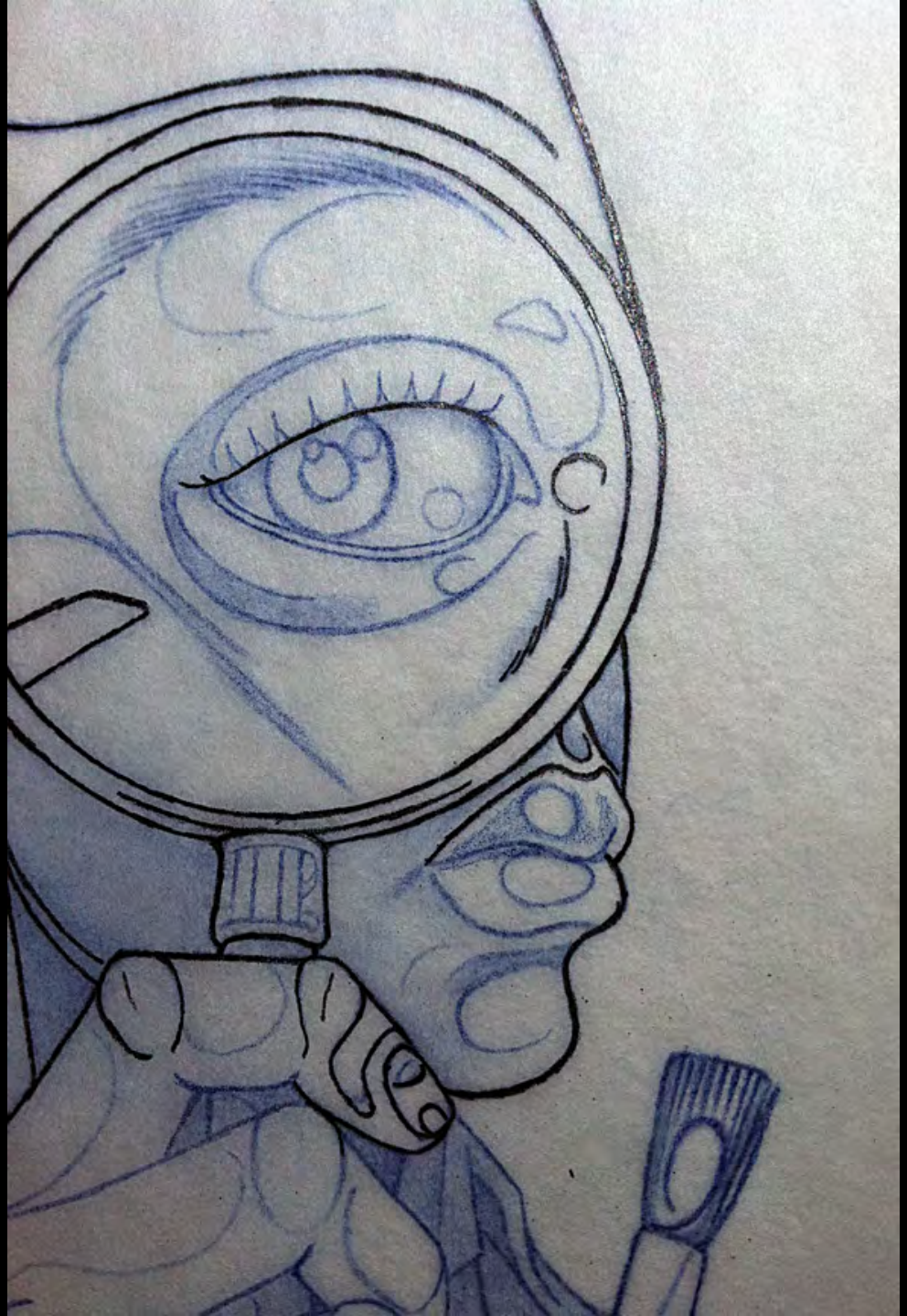
Reduced Hands & Further Simplification of Shapes

Drawn in Reverse and
Tone Added

Fantasy Drawing Added



Drawing Transfer



Tracing in Reverse