

Visual Research

Biography and Memoir in the Graphic Novel format

WEEK 1 1/2

Associate Professor Sara Gómez Woolley | FEB 12th 2025

Recommendations for the class:

If you are NOT fluent in the language of comics then it would be a good idea to PRACTICE using it before trying to write a graphic novel project.

This is NOT a comics writing course, but a working knowledge of how to use the medium is important for your success.

I recommend weekly comics exercises in addition to your project research that will build your understanding of the medium. These would be short form comics in your sketchbook that take the form of visual life writing. One panel. Three panel. One page. No longer.

Also I think to freeing your visual voices and feeling joy expressing yourself visually will come from experimentation and doing it ALOT. Not all guided. I recommend having a separate sketchbook from the project book. One you will carry and draw (or paint or collage or?) in whenever and wherever you land. It is through this exploration that you'll find style and voice.

Lastly, read a comic a week. Informally like a book club. Just read.



-Asaf Hanuka, The Realist

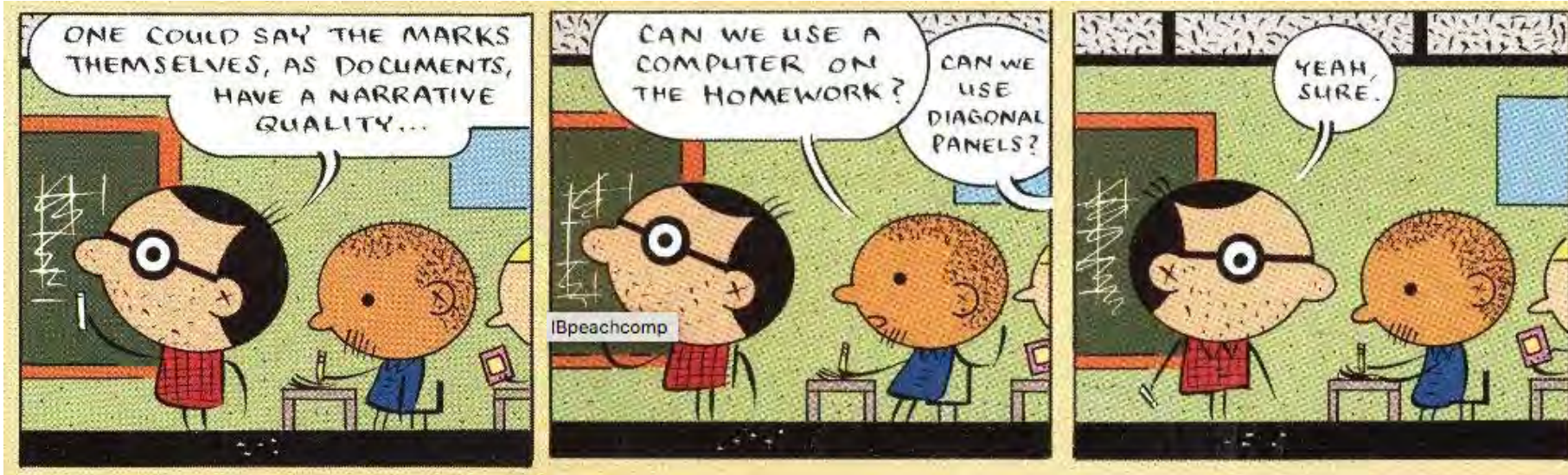
HOW DO COMICS WORK?

Philosophy:

Comics are language. Every language can be learned.

Comics are a language with a distinct Grammar Set. It's made up of Sequential Reading (left - right up down), of grammatical parts which are composed of BOTH words and images.

Realistic drawing is NOT a requirement.



Ivan Brunetti – excerpt from Mr. Peach, a strip about teaching from The New Yorker

WELCOME TO WEEK 2!

IT'S SELF PORTRAIT TIME!



BASIC GRAMMAR OF COMICS

Reading Order

Panel

Gutter

Tier

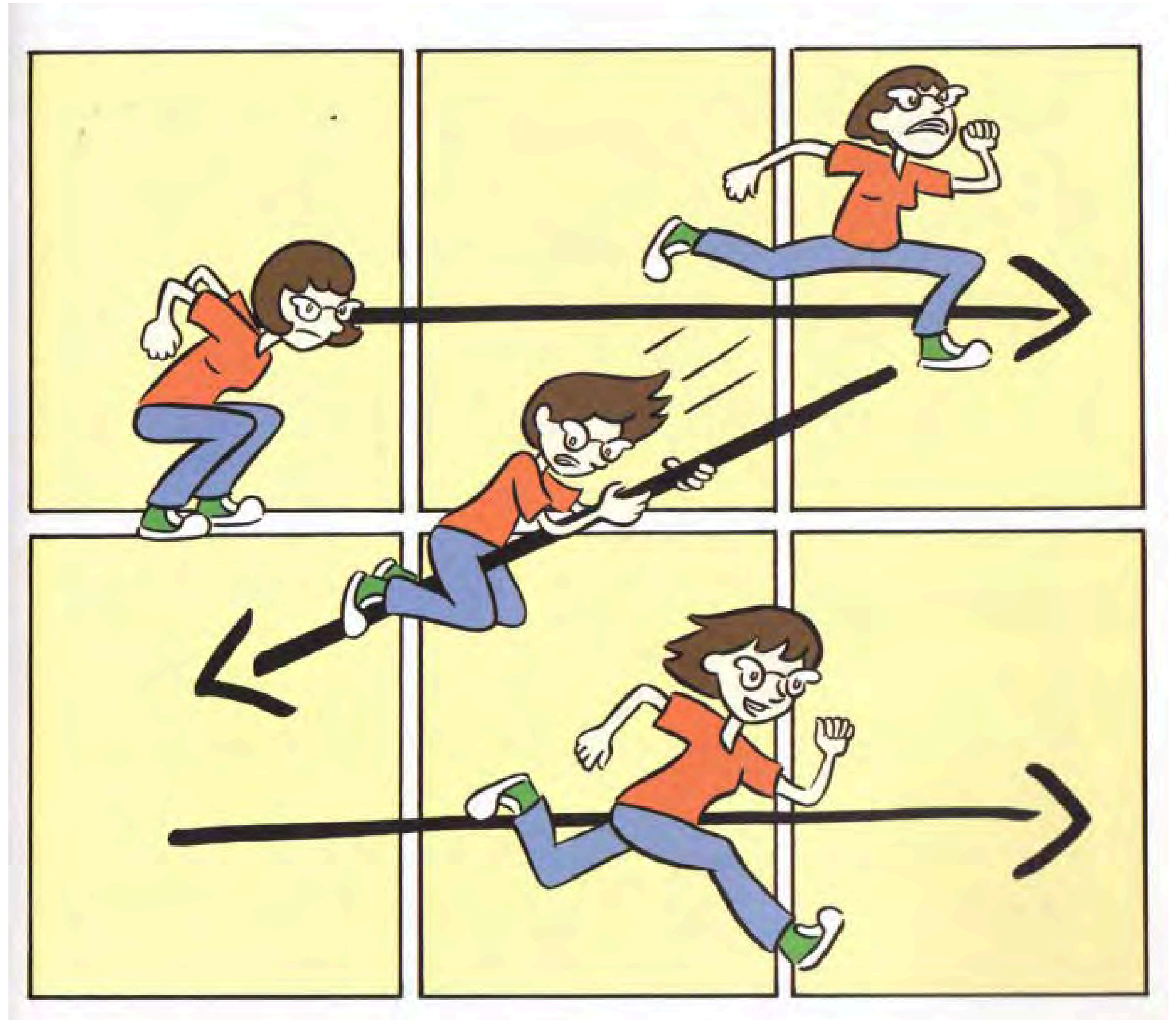
Flow and Eye Track

Beats and Timing

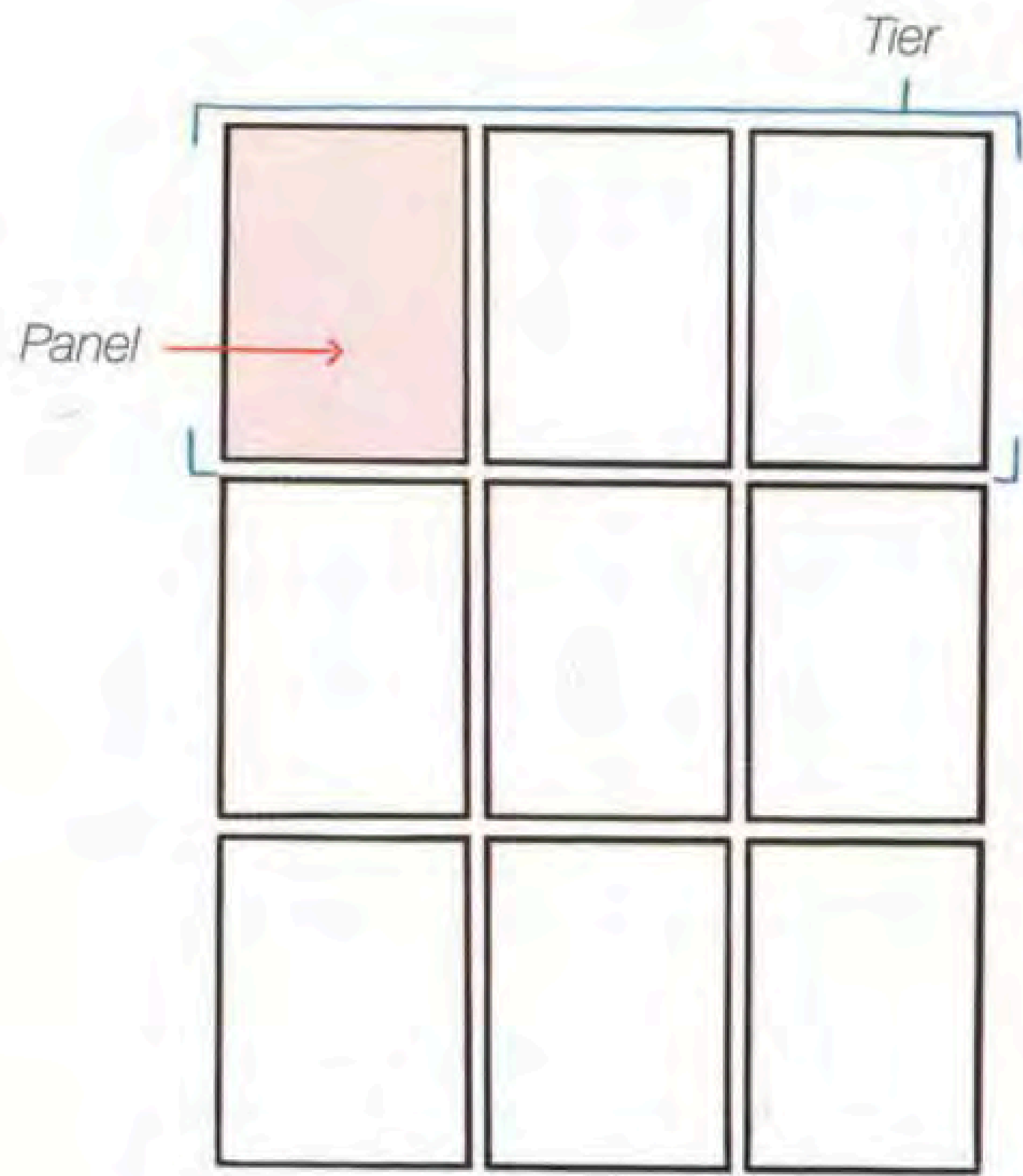
Shot Choice

Pagination / Page Turn

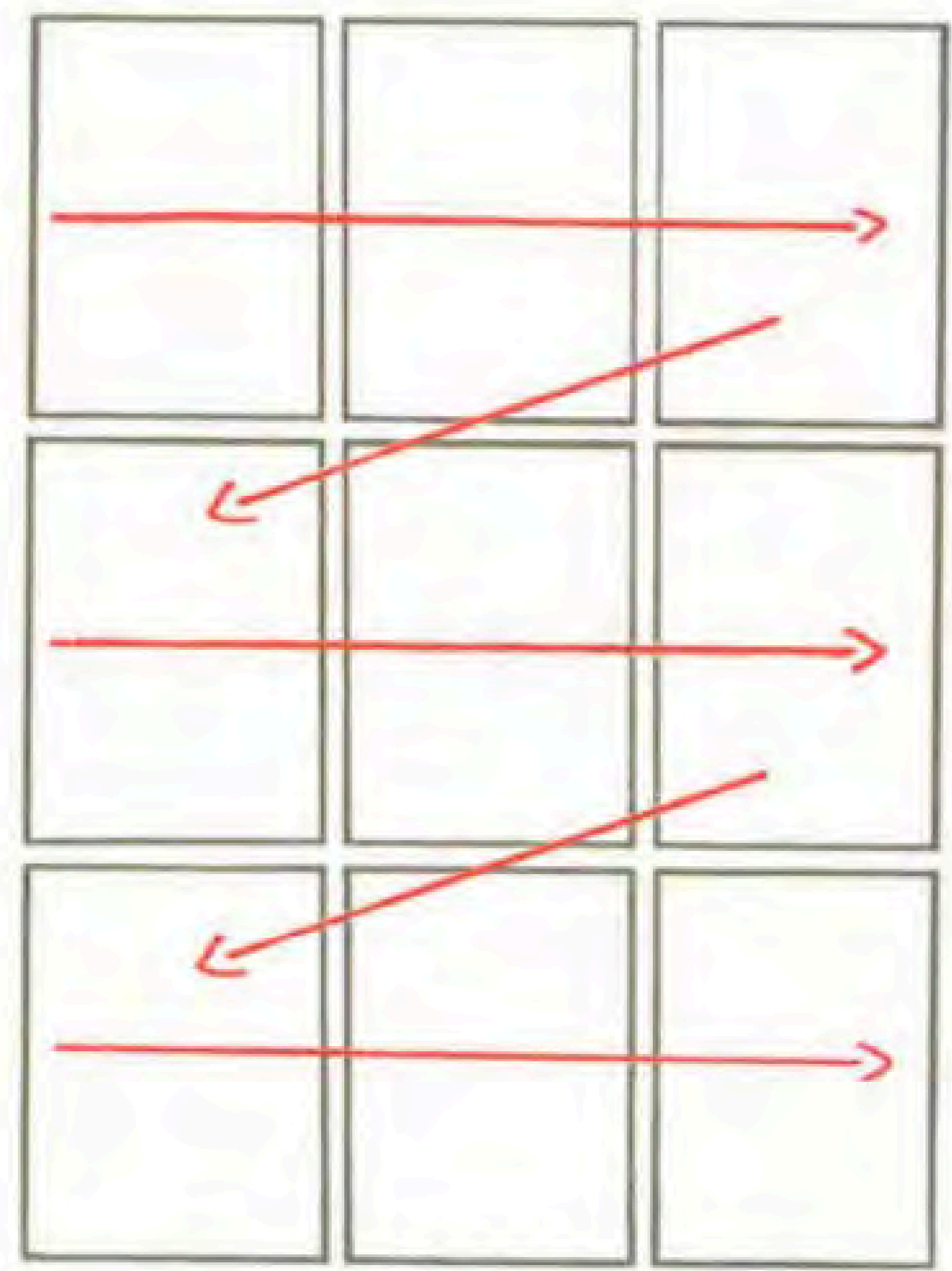
Z FORMATION



Robyn Chapman

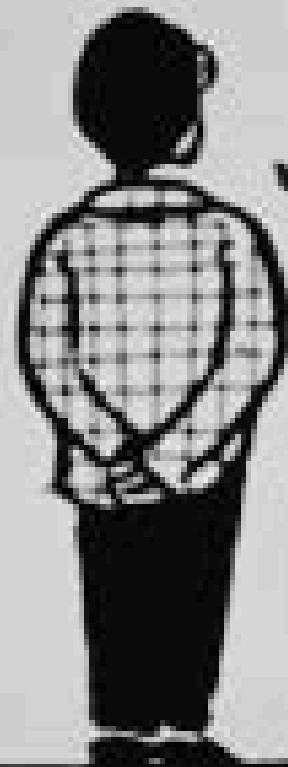


Most comic book pages are made up of panels and tiers.



The rule of directional flow: left to right, top to bottom

com.ics (kom'iks)**n.** plural in form, used with a singular verb. **1.** Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.



FOR ALL THE DOORS THAT OUR DEFINITION *OPENS*, THERE IS ONE WHICH IT *CLOSES*.

SINGLE PANELS LIKE *THIS ONE* ARE OFTEN *LUMPED IN* WITH COMICS, YET THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A SEQUENCE OF *ONE!*



"Mommy, why ain't I Juxtaposed?"

SUCH SINGLE PANELS MIGHT BE CLASSIFIED AS "*COMIC ART*" IN THE SENSE THAT THEY DERIVE PART OF THEIR *VISUAL VOCABULARY* FROM COMICS--

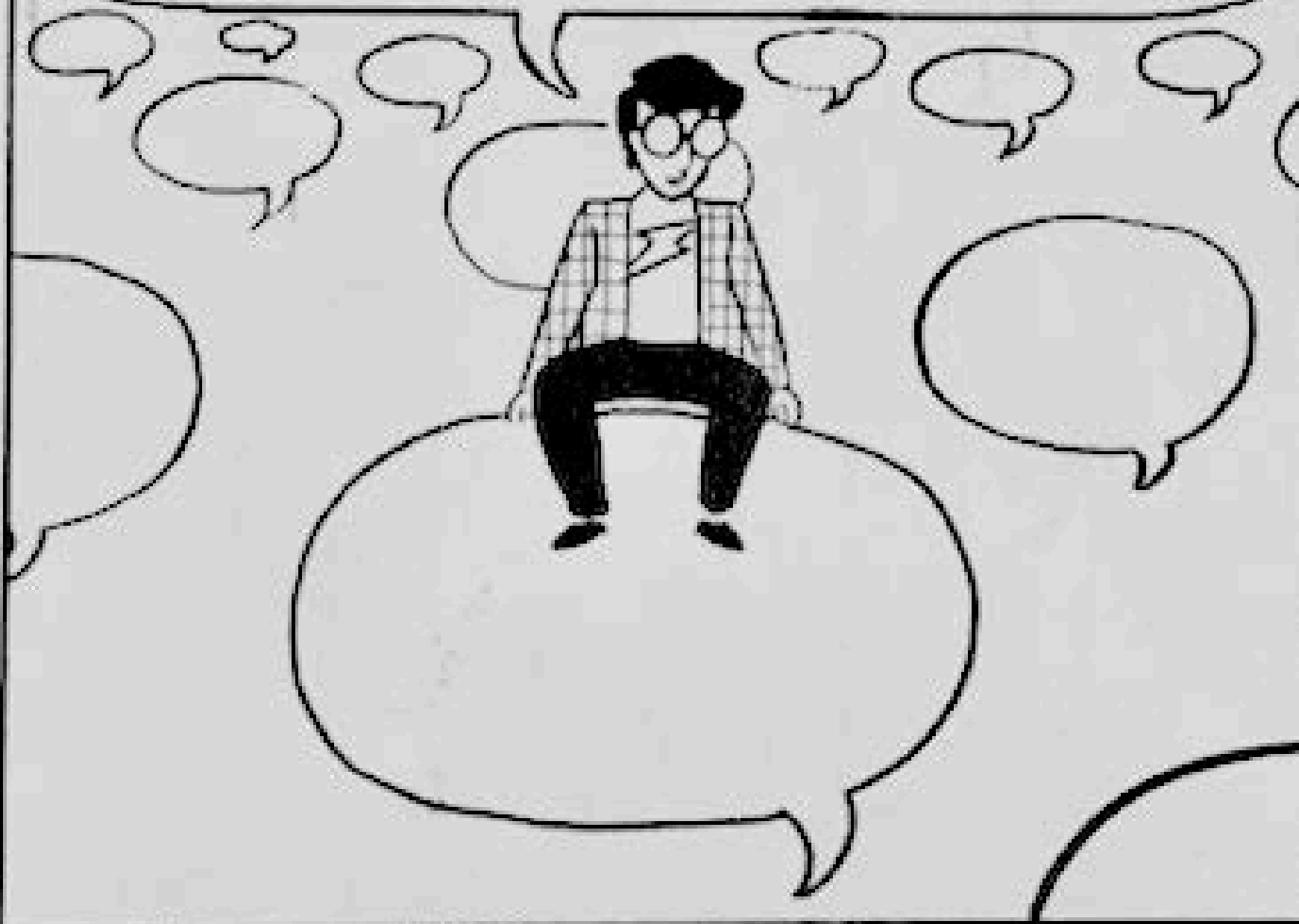


THIS SAME *SINGLE PANEL* MIGHT ALSO BE LABELLED COMICS FOR ITS JUXTAPOSITION OF *WORDS* AND PICTURES.



"Mommy, why ain't Juxtaposed?"

A GREAT MAJORITY OF MODERN COMICS *DO* FEATURE WORDS AND PICTURES IN COMBINATION AND IT'S A SUBJECT WORTHY OF STUDY, BUT WHEN USED AS A *DEFINITION* FOR COMICS, I'VE FOUND IT TO BE A LITTLE TOO *RESTRICTIVE* FOR MY TASTE.



OF COURSE, IF ANYONE WANTS TO WRITE A BOOK TAKING THE *OPPOSITE* VIEW, YOU CAN BET I'LL BE THE FIRST IN LINE TO *BUY* A COPY!



BUT I SAY THEY'RE NO MORE **COMICS** THAN THIS STILL OF **HUMPHREY BOGART** IS **FILM!**




HI, BOGEY.

THEY ARE **CARTOONS**, AS AM I, AND THERE IS A **LONG-STANDING RELATIONSHIP** BETWEEN COMICS AND CARTOONS.



-- **BUT THEY ARE NOT THE SAME THING!** ONE IS AN APPROACH TO **PICTURE-MAKING**-- A **STYLE**, IF YOU LIKE -- WHILE THE OTHER IS A **MEDIUM** WHICH OFTEN **EMPLOYS** THAT APPROACH.



MORE ON THIS **LATER.**

***text +
image***

~~***textyimage***~~

***text +
image***

meaning



APPLE



NEW YORK



TEMPTATION



DOCTOR REPELLENT

WORDS in comics are more than just captions or titles.

What other ways do we see text used in comics?

THOUGHTS

SOUND FX!

NARRATION

WORDS in comics are more than just captions or titles.

What other ways do we see text used in comics?

BACKGROUND TEXT

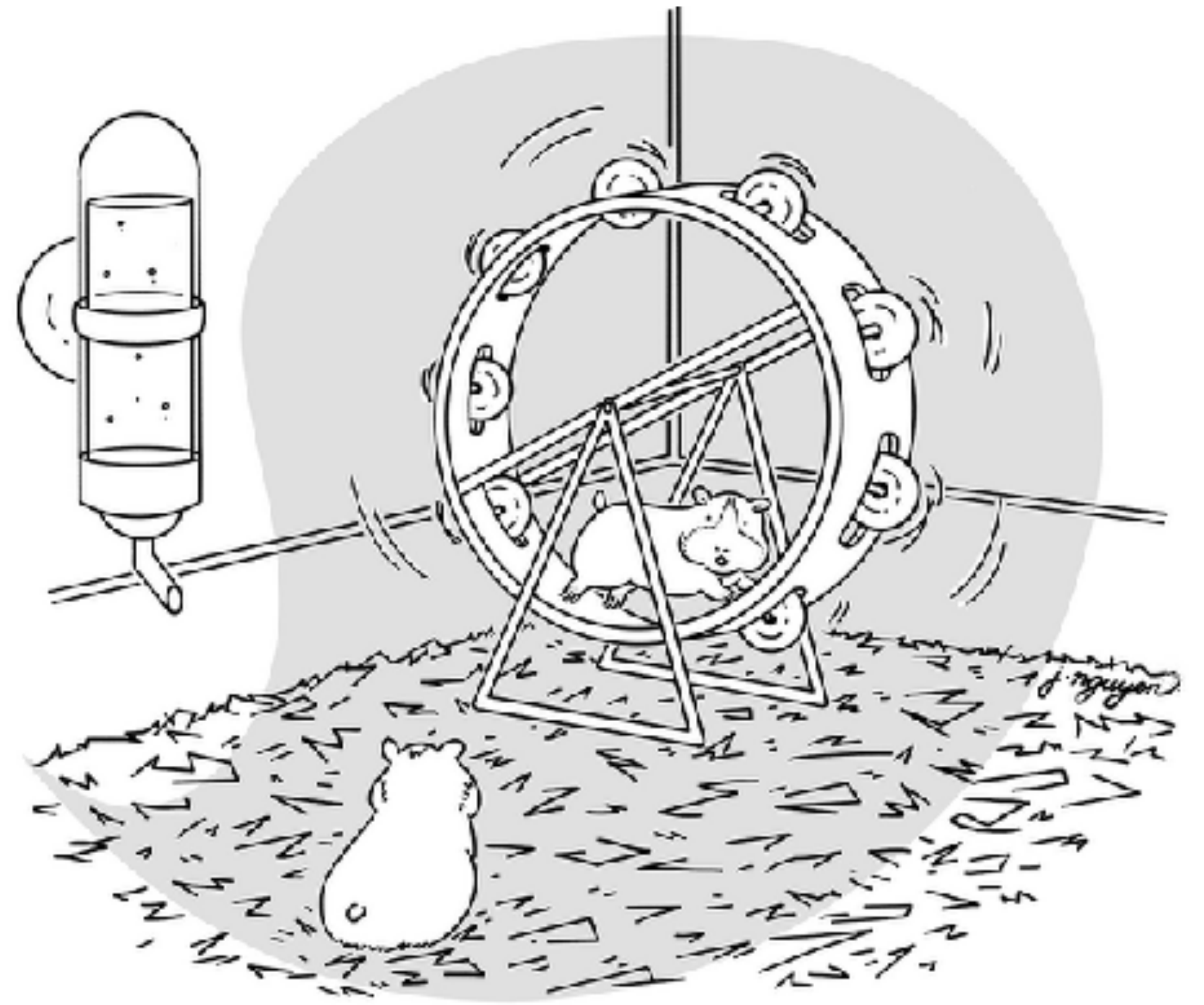
DIALOGUE!



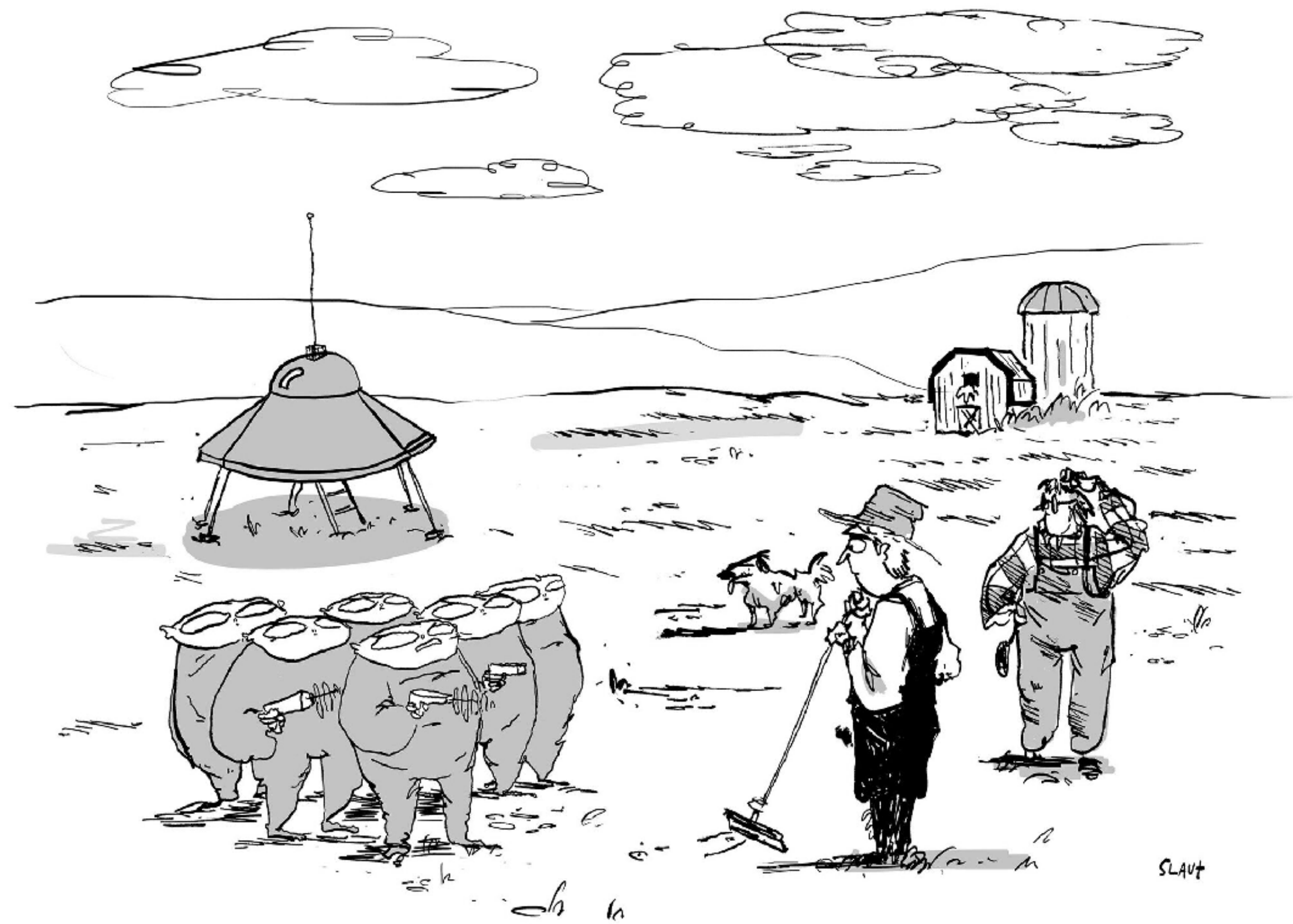
THE ONE PANEL COMIC



"This is the precise reason I didn't want bamboo flooring."



"I need music when I run."



“Take us to your most influential power couple.”

HOW THEY WERE NAMED



*"I like his style.
He makes it look like an accident."*

In-Class Exercise

NEW YORKER CAPTION CONTEST!



ONE SECOND, DADDY NEEDS TO TAKE THIS CALL



I'M SORRY WE DID EVERYTHING WE COULD IT'S OVER



Reminders:

Elevator Pitches for at least 2 different GN project ideas to share 2/26

ELVIS is collecting topics of research for GN projects in advance of the 2/26

Draft GN Project Pitch assigned week 3 2/26

3/04 Author Visit with Josh Neufeld

Sketch key objects from your research throughout.

Experiment with materials and play throughout.

THE PERFECT PEN

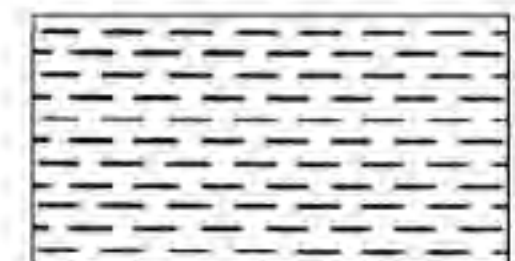
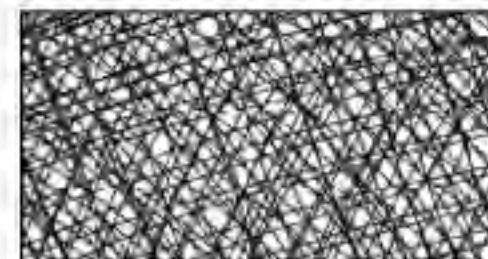
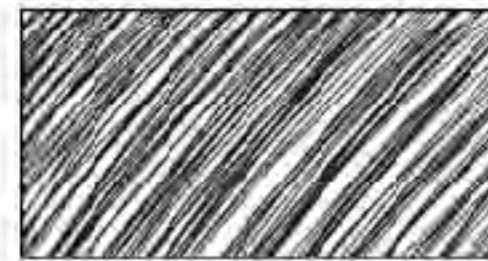
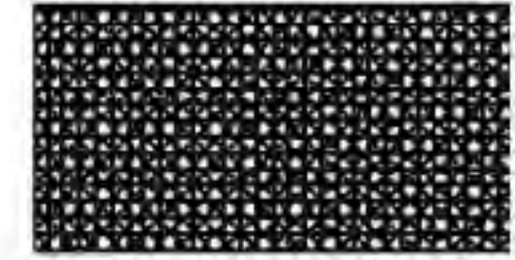
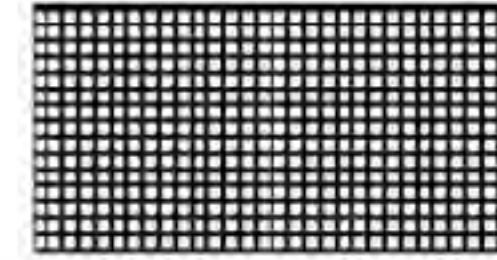
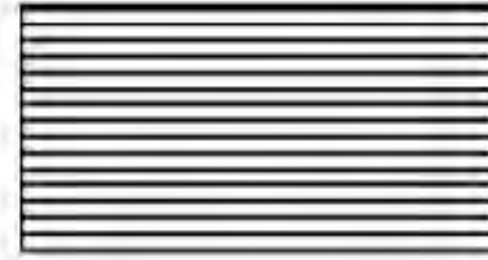
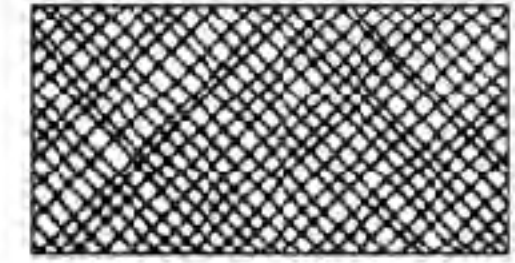
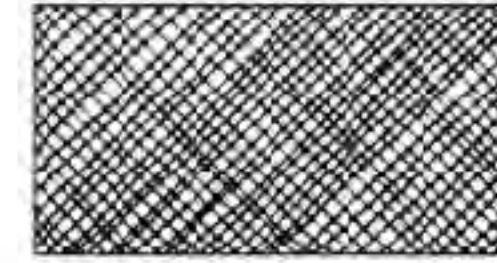
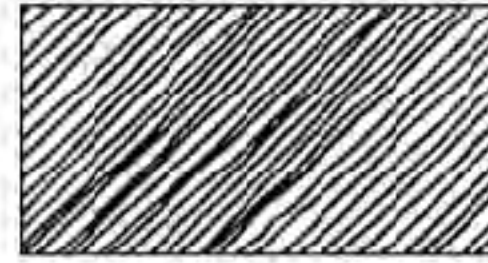


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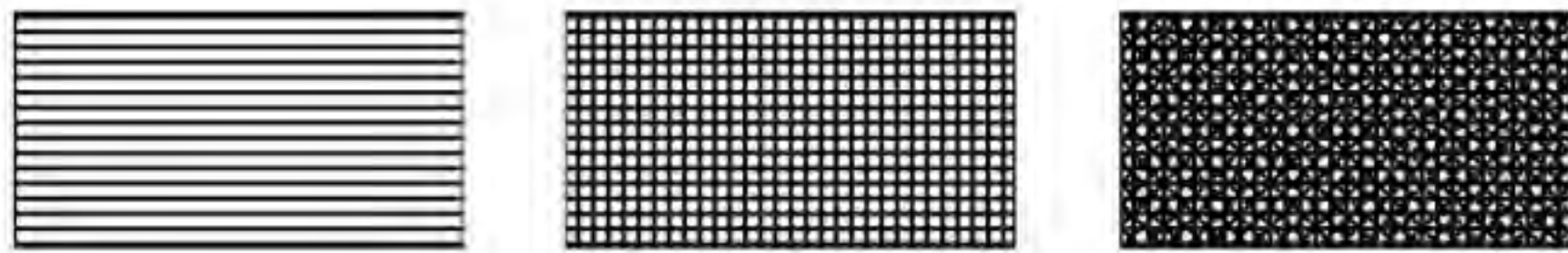
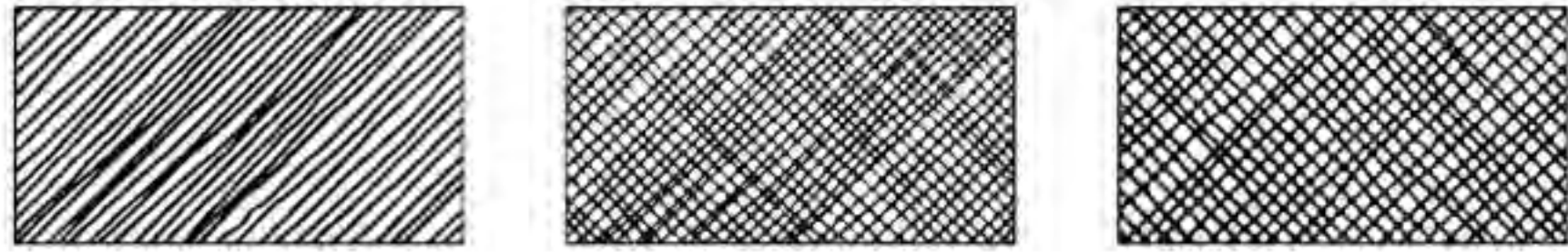
Inking vs Pencil

Shading vs. Hatching

Hatching and Cross Hatching Examples



Hatching and Cross Hatching Examples



Hatching



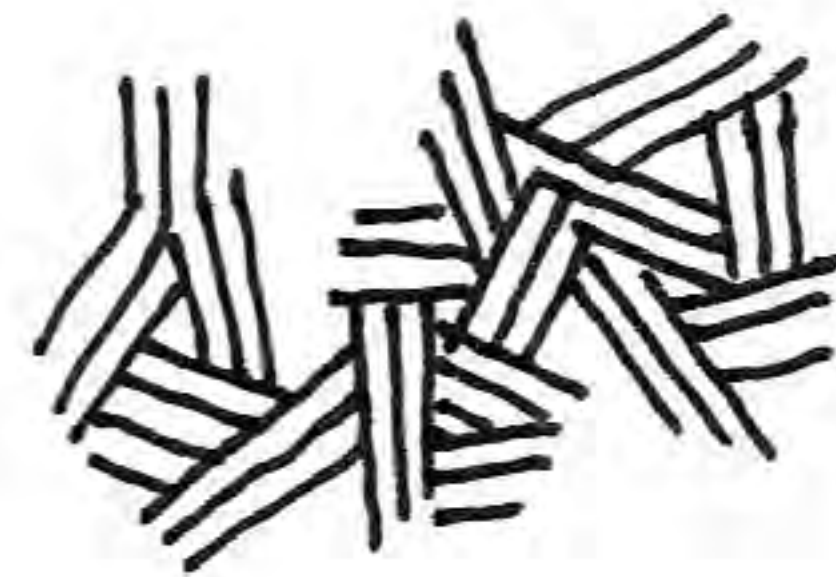
Cross Hatching



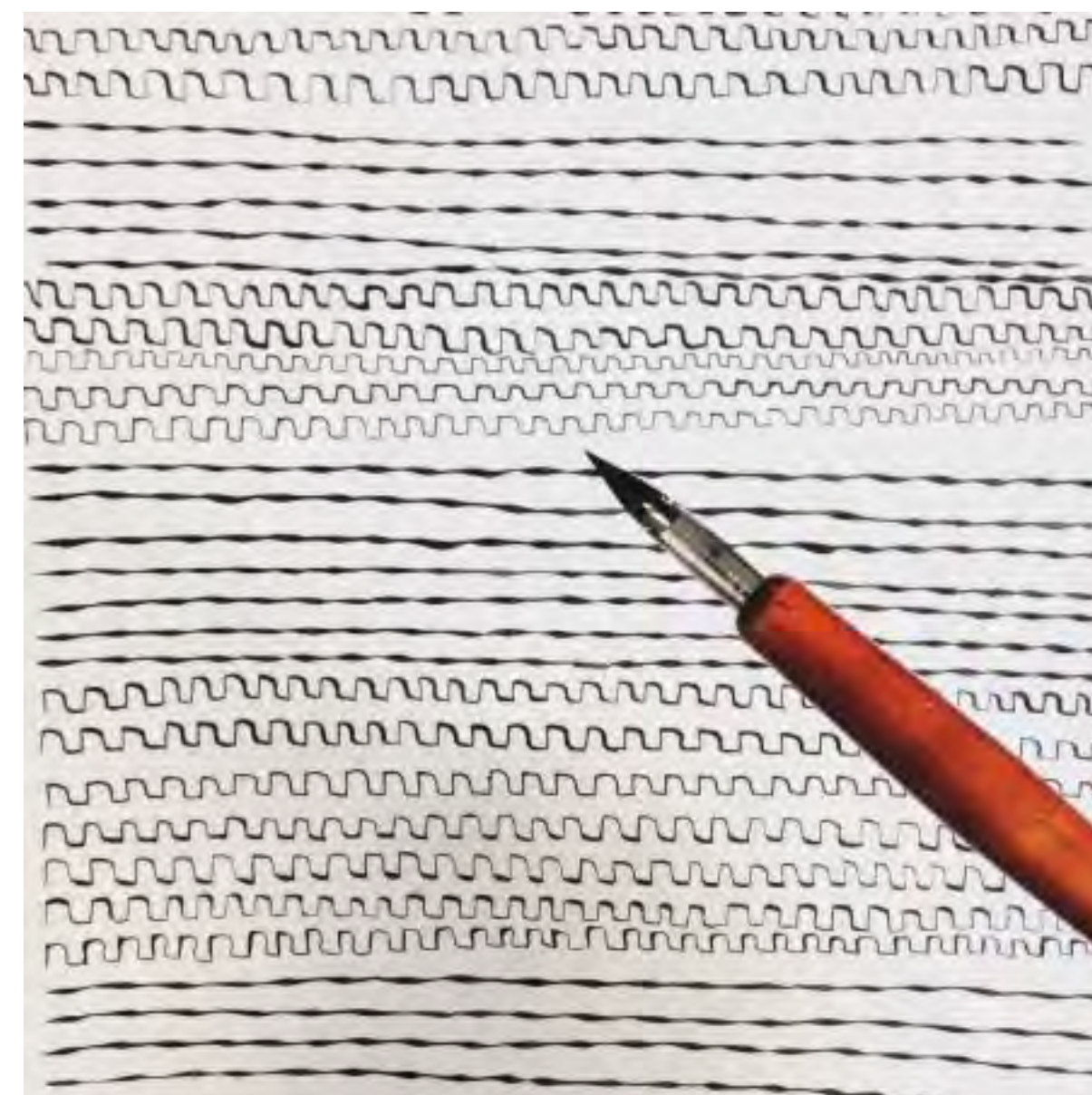
Stipple



Random Mark

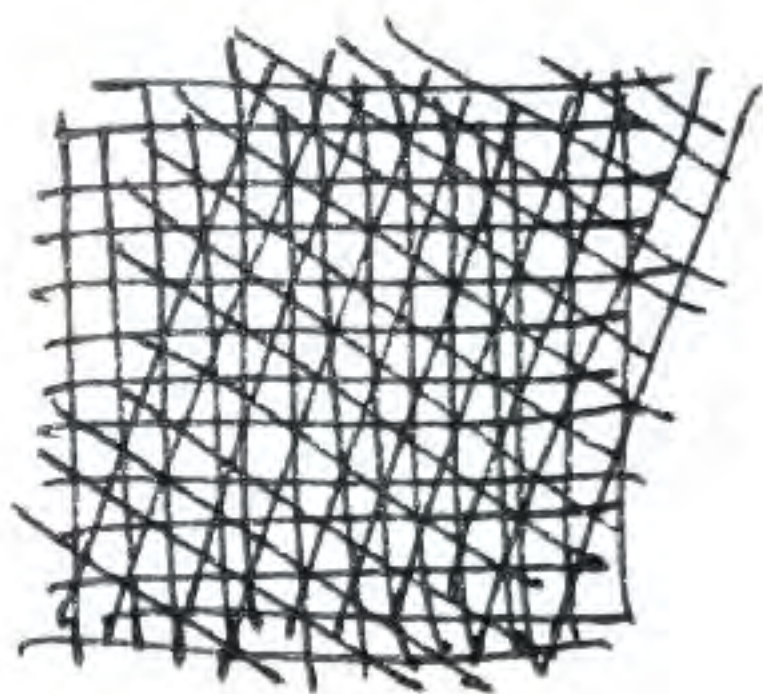
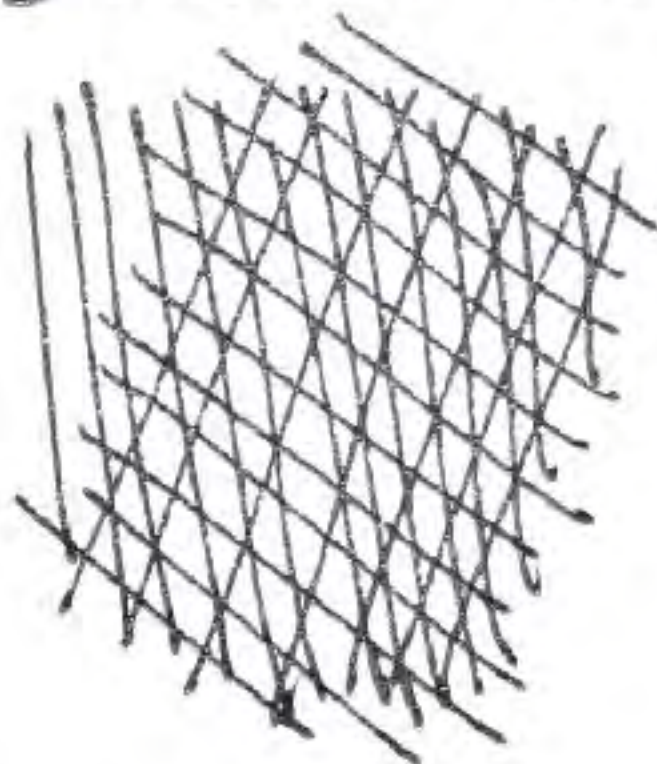
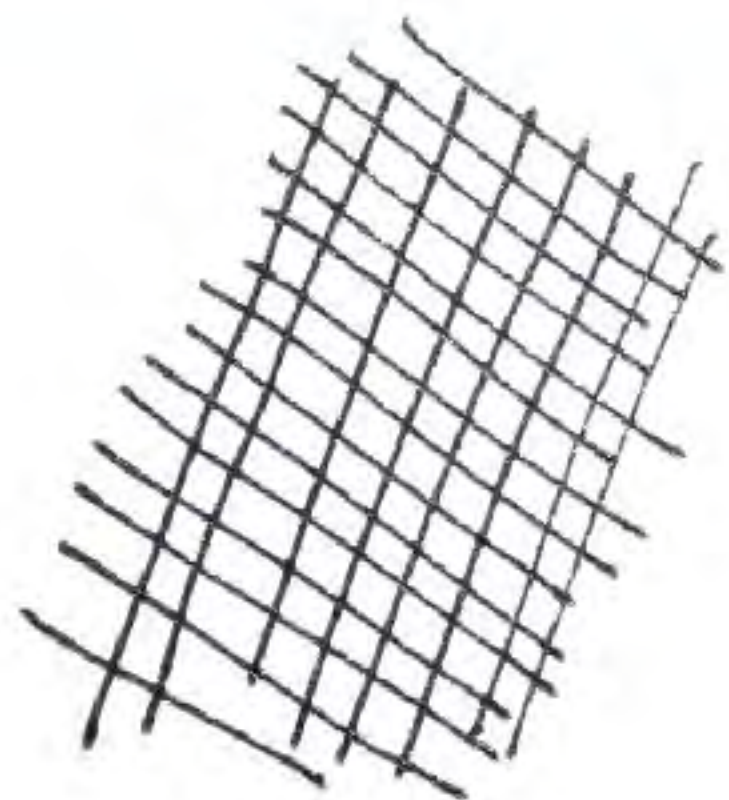


CREATIVE CROSS HATCHING



3 directions

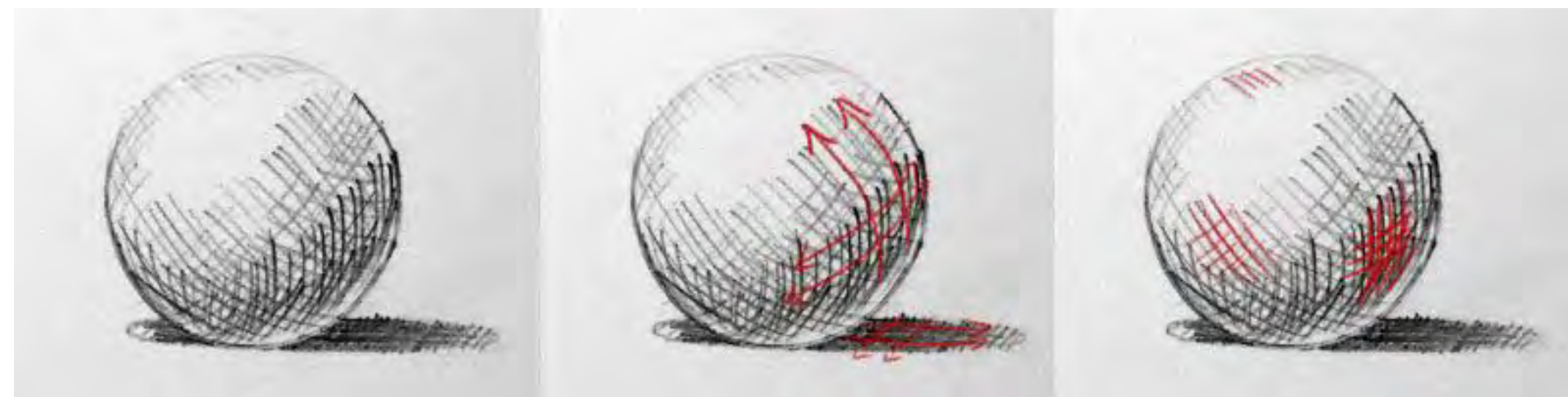
4 directions



5 directions

6 directions

7 directions



Inking

Tools and Techniques



An almost endless number of pen and ink tools and techniques exist, and it's highly recommended that you experiment with as many opportunities as possible within this amazing medium. Some substantial differences exist between tools; it's likely you will prefer some over others. Take the time to experiment and discover your own interests and comforts

In this and subsequent posts, we'll cover the most commonly used pen-and-ink drawing tools and materials. In addition to the obvious ink-specific tools such as pens, brushes, and paper, you may also need to acquire paper towels, white-out pens (useful for reproduction work), an old toothbrush, and a water jar

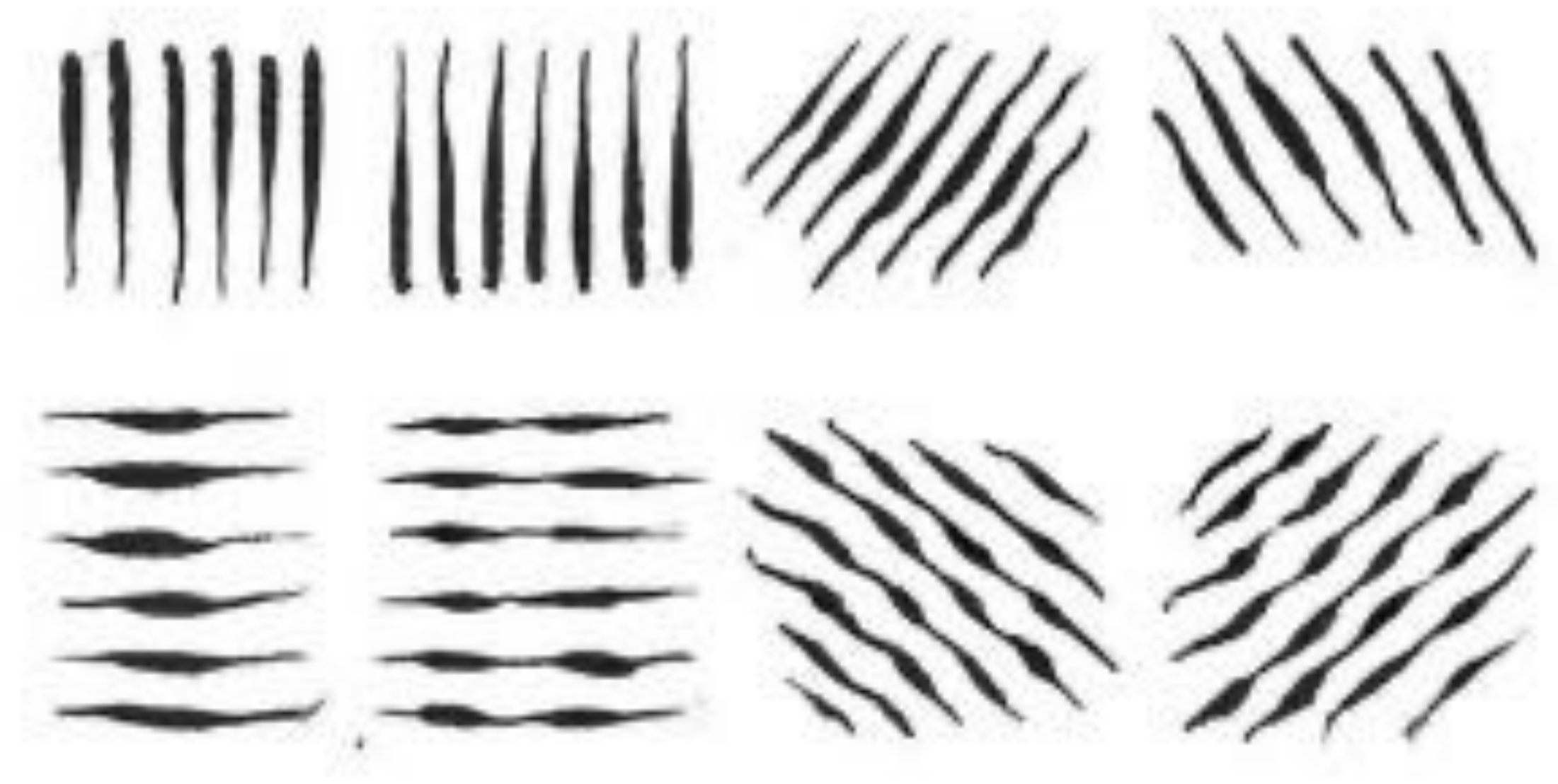
- 1 
- 2 
- 3 
- 4 
- 5 
- 6 
- 7 
- 8 
- 9 

Inking

Quills



The first pens were made from feathers (quills), bamboo, or reeds. Usually, quills are created from the wing feathers of geese. Other common feathers used for quills come from the crow, eagle, owl, hawk, swan, and turkey. These feathers are carefully treated in order to retain their shape despite frequent wetting and drying. The hollow shaft of the feather acts as an ink reservoir, and ink flows to the tip by capillary action.



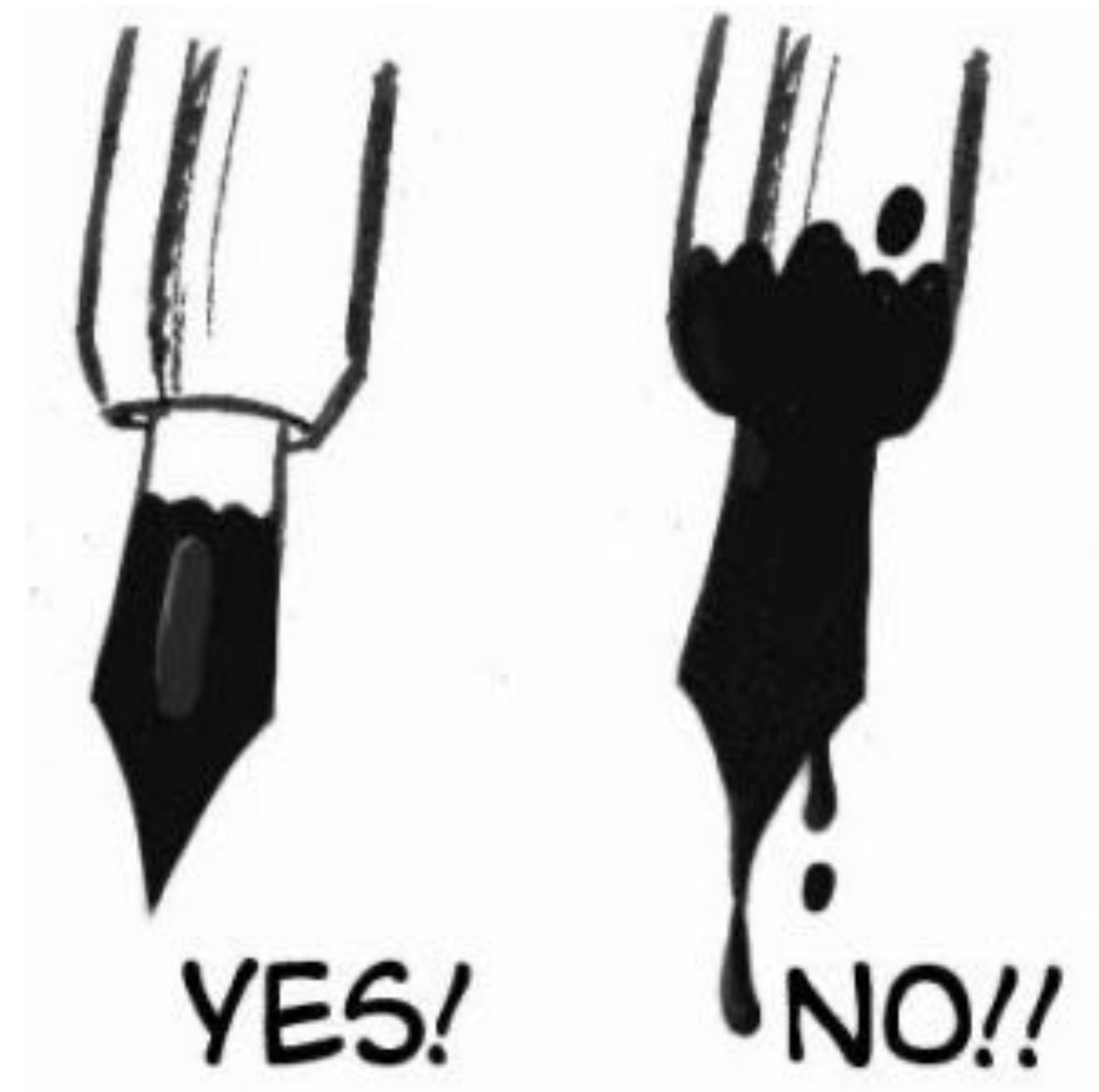
Aside from the traditional look it gives an image, a crow quill helps to develop hand techniques that are needed for all drawing media. When working with a quill, you must learn to control the pressure that you apply to the nib in order to vary the weight of your lines.

Crow quills are made of both a holder and a nib. The nib is the metal point that you dip into the ink. They come in a variety of sizes and with a variety of point shapes (pointed, angled, or rounded), but all are flexible, have a small hole or reservoir, and are split at the tip, thereby allowing the ink to flow onto the work surface. They also work on the same principle as the feather, sucking up the ink through capillary action. You're encouraged to experiment with several different types and sizes of nibs in order to see how they all perform differently.

Inking

Caring For Your Crow Quill

When using your crow quill, don't dip it into the ink past the nib. Doing so will cause messy, uncontrollable drips on your artwork and will also damage the pen, shortening its life. Dipping in just past the reservoir is ideal.



Inking Drawing Pens

These drawing pens are similar to a felt tip pen, but they use archival ink. Several different brands exist but the most commonly used are the Microns pictured here. Various point sizes make it easy to control line weights. These pens are often used for sketching, particularly for comic book art and illustration. Again, note the consistent line weight and various sizes, each of which is ideal for different purposes. You're highly encouraged to try using these pens if you haven't already done so.



Inking

Brushes As Drawing Tools

Watercolor brushes and brushes for working in ink are generally the same: they both use water as the dilution and clean-up medium. However, keep in mind that once a brush has been used for inking, it's difficult to get perfectly clean again, so be careful that leftover ink doesn't stain your artwork when subsequently using other media. Keep in mind we are specifically discussing drawing here; painterly brush techniques will be covered in later modules.

Brushes used for drawing purposes are generally of a smaller gauge. Though the sizes of brushes you'll use will vary given the size of your picture (the larger the picture, the larger the brush, in general), good sizes for general inking—such as comic book style illustration—are the number 0 to number 3. These allow for both thicker and thinner lines, but will also give a “drawn,” as opposed to “painterly,” feel.

Also similar to the style produced via crow quill, a brush allows for line width variation based on pressure. For this course, drawing with a brush in addition to the crow quill is recommended. Take the time to practice with both.



Inking

Caring For Your Brushes

Don't dip your brush into the ink all the way to the metal.

This will make for a messy drawing tool and will shorten the life of your brush. Clean your brush every time you're finished using it. If you plan to use it again in a short time, rinse it in water that's completely clean. Don't leave your brushes sitting in water for long periods of time, as this will damage your brushes' tips. In general, it's better to periodically wash brushes with soap and water, which will not only keep your brushes in good shape but will also ensure their ability to manipulate ink effectively. Don't use turpentine or other hard solvents to clean, as they're unnecessary with ink and will deteriorate the hairs on your brush.



Inking

Pen-and-ink Drawing Surfaces

Pen-and-ink drawings are usually created on different types of paper. The tooth or grain of the paper can affect the marks made by the pen. Because of this, most illustrators prefer to work on smoother surfaces that are still absorbent to the ink, creating detailed ink drawings in this way.

You can use ink to draw on your sketchbook paper, but over time this paper will warp or fray with the wetness of the ink. The paper in this sketchbook simply isn't heavy or absorbent enough. For final work, illustrators usually choose something with a little more heft.



Inking

Pen-and-ink Drawing Surfaces

Paper

Bristol Board is a smooth-surfaced paper that's heavier than regular drawing paper. It's a popular choice for pen-and-ink drawings.



Another popular choice for ink drawings, and the paper used for this class, is **hot-press watercolor paper**. *Hot press* refers to the method used to make this special kind of paper. This paper's surface has been ironed smooth, and is very versatile, allowing artists to make fine details in ink as well as combine other media such as watercolors or colored pencils.



Inking

Ink Can Be a Messy Medium!

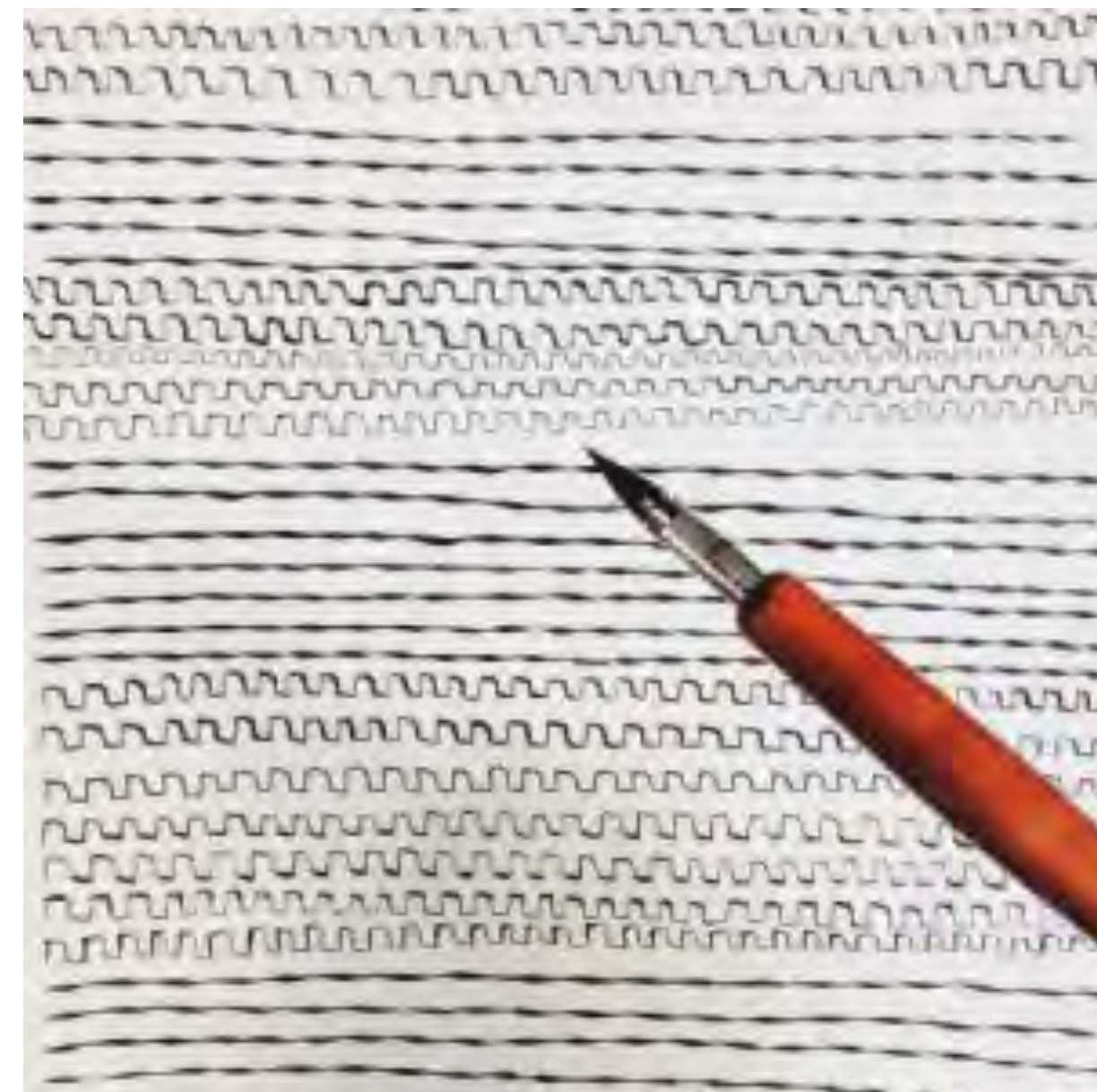
Before you begin your work in this medium, here are some helpful tips and tricks.



- **Always warm up.**

Just as you would warm up before exercise, warm up before using ink. Take the time to work on your lines and strokes on a separate sheet of paper before you begin working on your actual illustration. This will ensure that you have proper command of your hands.

This image is of comic book artist Jacob Halton's inking warm-up, which he does in the morning to "get command of his hands".



Inking

Ink Can Be a Messy Medium!

- **Don't tape down your page.**

Marks are easier to make when moving your hand in certain directions, so move your page around in order to make this possible. Work your hands in the way that they move naturally.

- **Begin with thicker lines.**

This is a way to keep warming up your hands. Thicker lines are safer to work with until you feel confident enough to move onto the drawing's fine detail portions.

- **Work in a way that minimizes smearing.**

Don't try to work on the illustration in a left-to-right method, or in any order like that. Instead, think about where your hand may smear the ink, and work in a way that minimizes that smearing. Some artists place a piece of paper or paper towel under their inking hands in order to help with this process.

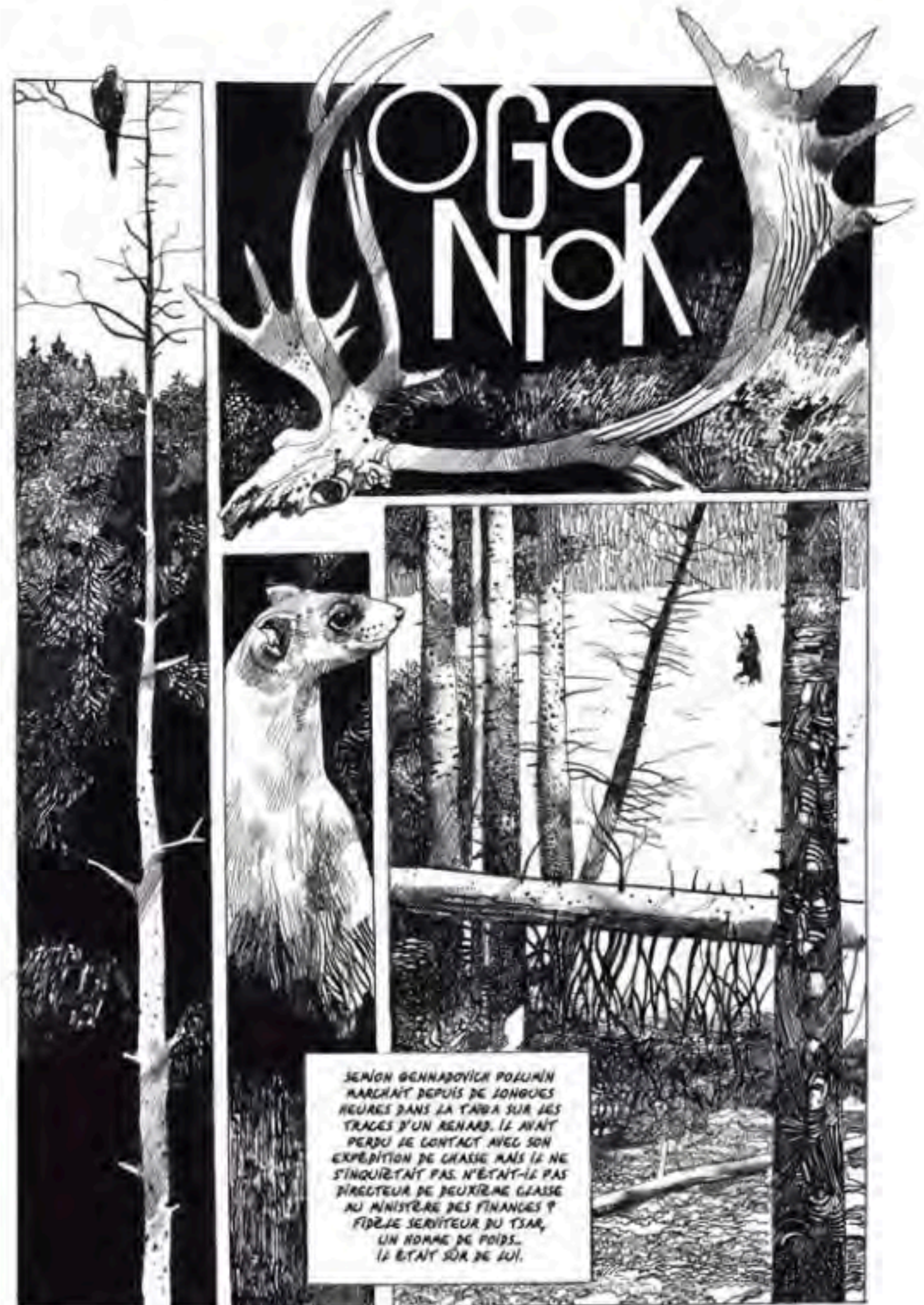
- **Address large areas of ink last.**

All paper, including watercolor paper or Bristol board, will warp when wet. It's much easier to draw controlled lines on completely flat paper. Therefore, draw your lines before soaking any large areas with ink, otherwise known as executing an ink wash. Another method is to fill in large areas of ink, and then either allow for drying time or use a hair dryer before moving on to finer details.



What Does Line Do?

It defines things in a drawing.



Light/Shadow

Mike Mignola (Hellboy) is a great example of an artist who uses areas of heavy black to define light and shadow in a drawing. These areas are sometimes referred to as “spot blacks”.



Positive/Negative Shapes

Similar to Mike Mignola, Michael Avon Oeming (Powers) uses heavy areas of ink/spot black to accentuate drama and graphically break up the panel/page with positive and negative space.



Form/Volume

Gideon Kendall uses line in this drawing of a sock to show how the forms overlap and go in and out of each other.



Eric Canete



Bill Sienkiewicz





Kim Jung Gi

- Copic Gasenfude <http://amzn.to/2w5BNOu>
- Zebra Fude <http://amzn.to/2xdG6HL>
- Copic Multiliner <http://amzn.to/2g6zUNt>
- Sakura Micron <http://amzn.to/2xe2CA2>Hi-Tec-C
<http://amzn.to/2xdWgkm>
- Nikko Manga Pen Nib N-Gpen <http://amzn.to/2g6KrZa>
- My HOW TO INK class from SVSlearn: <https://svs.thinkific.com/courses/how...>
- THE INKTOBER SHIRT: <https://cottonbureau.com/products/ink...>
- My list of art tools and materials that I use: <http://mrjakeparker.com/tools>
- Artsnacks 10% Discount: <http://www.artsnacks.co/jakeparker>
- Website: <http://mrjakeparker.com>
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/mrjakeparker>
- Instagram: <http://instagram.com/jakeparker#>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jakeparkerart>