

Bachelor's thesis

Fine Arts

2020

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LEARNING HOW TO LEARN TO DRAW

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BACHELOR'S THESIS | ABSTRACT

TURKU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Fine Arts

2020 | 42

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LEARNING HOW TO LEARN TO DRAW

In this text I examine how I learned to draw. I mostly talk about my own experiences and how I figured out my way of practicing and learning. Throughout the text I explain my views on how to improve at drawing, ideas which I think that can also be used to learn any other skill.

I also briefly mention what I am doing right now to improve my drawing abilities. I explain why I am currently studying designs of other artists.

During the writing of this text, I've come to the conclusion that my way of learning is perfect for me. I believe that the one and only way for me to improve further is to gain more experience through practice, therefore I will continue to practice the same way as I have over the past few years.

KEYWORDS:

Drawing, Learning Practice.

Hideki Kimura

PIIRTÄMISEN OPETTELUN OPETTELU

Tässä tekstissä tarkastelen sitä, kuinka opettelin piirtämisen taidon. Tekstissä tuon esiin enimmäkseen omia kokemuksiani. Esitän näkemyksiäni siitä, kuinka opetella piirtämään, ideoita joita minun mielestäni voisi käyttää minkä tahansa taidon opettelemisessa.

Tekstissä avataan myös sitä, millaista työskentelyni on tällä hetkellä, jotta voisin parantaa piirtämisen taitoani. Käyn läpi sitä, kuinka tutkin toisten taiteilijoiden töitä.

Olen tullut siihen tulokseen, että opiskelytyylini on täydellinen minulle, koska näen piirtämisen opiskelussa kaikkein tärkeimpänä asiana harjoittelun ja siitä kertyvän kokemuksen. Siksi aion jatkaa harjoitteluani samalla tavalla.

ASIASANAT:

Piirtäminen, oppiminen, harjoittelu.

CONTENT

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS	6
1 INTRODUCTION	7
2 THE JOURNEY FROM ZERO TO HERO	8
2.1 Let's get ready to rumble	10
2.2 Frostmourne hungers	11
2.3 Now I'm motivated	13
2.4 And this, is to go even further beyond	14
2.5 It's showtime baby	15
2.6 All that's left is pure white ash	16
2.7 No, Mr Bond, I expect you to die	17
2.8 Doin' it again	18
2.9 The Yeager family basement	19
3 RIGHT NOW	20
3.1 What makes the sky blue	21
3.2 What does it mean to be strong	33
4 CONCLUSIONS	40
REFERENCES	41

PICTURES

Picture 1. Screenshot of Narmaya from Granblue Fantasy Versus.....	11
Picture 2. Narmaya's character art from Granblue Fantasy Versus.	22
Picture 3. Vaseraga's character art from Granblue Fantasy Versus.	23
Picture 4. Zeta's MLB art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy.	24
Picture 5. Percival's MLB art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy.....	25
Picture 6. Soriz's character art from Granblue Fantasy Versus.....	26
Picture 7. Lucifer's FLB art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy.....	27

Picture 8. Predator's base art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy.	28
Picture 9. Golden Knight's MLB art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy.....	29
Picture 10. Belial's character art from Granblue Fantasy Versus.	30
Picture 11. Seox/Six's FLB art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy.	31
Picture 12. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307.....	33
Picture 13. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307.....	34
Picture 14. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307.....	35
Picture 15. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307.	36
Picture 16. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307.....	37
Picture 17. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307.	38

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

HDD	Hard Disk Drive
GBF	Granblue Fantasy
GBVS	Granblue Fantasy Versus
MMO	Massively Multiplayer Online Game
WoW	World of Warcraft

1 INTRODUCTION

So one day I decided that I wanted to learn how to draw. When I started learning how to draw, I was absolute garbage at it. I could find five year olds that had more talent than me. Anyway, the fun fact is that quite honestly, nobody will ever be “good” at drawing or painting or anything, there’s always room for improvement, and as I got better at it, I started noticing more mistakes. But of course I realize that as I notice more mistakes, it means that I’m just getting better at it because I can notice them in the first place.

Back in early 2017 I started as a complete zero, I had no talent, no experience, no skills at all. Last time I drew something was back in 1999 when I was nine years old. So, in 2017 I somehow ended up in an art school because I wanted to learn how to draw, now I have my motivations and those aren’t that important right now, maybe I’ll tell you later on in this text, but we’ll see. Anyway, as I was saying I somehow ended up in an art school, without any kind of knowledge or talent, how did that even happen? The people at this school are insane for accepting someone who has absolutely no artistic skill or knowledge. So in this “little” text I’ll talk about things that made me improve my drawing skills, I no longer draw like a three year old, I’ve been upgraded to the level of a six year old.

2 THE JOURNEY FROM ZERO TO HERO

And so my new journey began. So starting something you don't know anything about is as easy as brain surgery. So, instead of wandering around confused, I looked at how I learned to do other things, like playing instruments or how I became an excellent tank in Massively Multiplayer Online Games. So I spent some time figuring out what was the secret to me learning how to do the things I'm able to do. The most recent event of me doing this was not too long ago, while it was much easier to learn than drawing, it still served as a good reminder as to how I learned my other skills.

Due to a close friend enjoying rhythm games, I decided to take a shot at them too. I started out horrible. I could clear easy and normal difficulty songs, but hard and above were just far too difficult. But now, I'm able to clear songs on the hardest difficulty, obviously not the absolute, most difficult charts, but I'd argue I'm still well above average now.

Before I indulge you in the secret techniques that I've learned through experience, I want to share another story. One day I saw someone on the internet complaining about how hard it is to learn how to draw, how it's so difficult and that he's been working at it for 10 years. I decided to look at some of the drawings he had posted and he was right, they were...well, let's just say that 10 years of practice for that, something's wrong. So what was the issue? They only practiced a few times a month. And there's the issue, I thought.

In two to three years of practicing with this, not so revolutionary method, I would argue I've surpassed this random person on the internet. So what is this secret method? Something that'll allow you to learn all kinds of new things, what is this amazing secret? Practice every day (Brunet 2020).

It's that simple. That's how I learned how to play an instrument, by practicing every day. That's how I became a good tank in MMOs, I played MMOs every day. I played rhythm games every day and little by little went from being trash to being quite decent. Over 20 years of playing an instrument, 20 years of tanking in various MMOs, 3 years of rhythm games. There's plenty of other examples, but from my experience I've a 100% success rate.

Now obviously, this means that it's going to be a long, hard journey with all kinds of setbacks, trials and struggles. I knew I was going to suck at it for years, but knowing that it was possible to learn drawing just like any other skill, I kept going. Besides, I have goals that I want to reach, things I want to do with the ability to draw.

Simply put, I suppose, the most important thing when learning something is to draw every day, and stay motivated to keep doing so. My personal motivation? It's a skill that I require in order to be able to achieve my meaning of life. That's why I practiced 6 to 12 hours a day.

“It is not difficult to wield a sword in one hand; the Way to learn this is to train with two long swords, one in each hand. It will seem difficult at first, but everything is difficult at first.” (Miyamoto Musashi 1943, 8.) “If you practice day and night in the above Ichi school strategy, your spirit will naturally broaden” (Miyamoto 1643, 11). “The Way is in training” (Miyamoto 1643, 11). These three quotes are in my opinion absolute truths. Everything is difficult at the start and it will continue to be difficult unless you practice. without practice you will never get anywhere. Back in his day, without practice you would be dead on the battlefield. While our modern battlefield may be different and we won't be killed, we will still be guaranteed to lose the battle to our rivals and they will be the successful, victorious ones.

2.1 Let's get ready to rumble

"For what is a man, what has he got?

If not himself then he has naught

To say the things he truly feels

And not the words of one who kneels

The record shows I took the blows

And did it my way" (Sinatra & Anka 1969).

So to start off learning I decided to start by just having fun with it instead of the usual practicing circles, lines, shapes and all that other jazz that you often hear. I did not, infact, start with the fundamentals. Instead I started by just having fun, to enjoy the time I spent drawing, to teach myself to love drawing for half a day straight.

"Do not act following customary beliefs" (Miyamoto 1645). Instead of following the path beaten path, I felt like carving my own path instead. This does not of course mean that I would reject logic or use useful information it only means that I would find my own path to learning there are as many ways to living life as there are living people and I believe that the same can be applied to learning.

I have my goals and in order to reach those goals I knew I would have to go through grueling training and practice. While I may not be training at 100 times earths gravity like Goku did while he was on the way to planet Namek, I'm still putting in the hours to make most ordinary people lose their mind. That's why before any real practice starts, I went about having fun with it, doing whatever I wanted, even if they weren't good at all.

So once I had established that, I started working on the fundamentals. I didn't make them the only thing to practice however. I made sure to do fun things, things I wanted, working towards my goal, working towards the reason I started drawing in the first place, while on the side adding some fundamental practice.

Now obviously I did these every day, and still do. The reason behind it is that I believe that everything deteriorates, when I say everything, I mean everything. Your very existence is deteriorating, so why wouldn't everything else? To counteract this gradual destruction, by practicing these things every day, I gain more than I lose each day.

"Even if a man has no natural ability he can be a warrior by sticking assiduously to both divisions of the Way. Generally speaking, the Way of the warrior is resolute acceptance of death." (Musashi 1643, 4.) I believe that natural talent will get you nowhere without practice and that people without any kind of talent, who spend their time working harder than everyone else will get further than any of them, with or without talent.

2.2 Frostmourned hungers

Practicing fundamentals only took me so far. Trying to draw something that I had never seen would still be impossible. How was I going to draw things when I didn't know how something looked like? The easy answer is that it's impossible. Shapes and forms, perspective, anatomy, composition, lighting, all these things are important, but just those are not enough. Drawing something without looking at some kind of references is not possible. This realization came almost straight away and while it's a simple and easy thing to realize.

If someone were to tell me to draw a florbo or Truininanashabadeprizure, I would have no idea how to draw those and would need to find some kind of reference. I doubt anyone can draw anything from just complete imagination without any kind of reference. While yes there are people who seem to be able to draw without references, in reality they simply have years and years of experience and those references are burned deep into their memories and they know exactly what something looks like because they've seen millions of references before.

So, I spent plenty of time gathering and studying references. I have about 130gb worth of references on my HDD right now. Pictures, artbooks, even videos which I pause just for a specific type of pose. For example this.



Picture 1. Screenshot of Narmaya from Granblue Fantasy Versus. (グランブルーファンタジー ヴァーサス/Granblue Fantasy: Versus PV#14 「ナルメア参戦編」 2020)

Picture 1 is from Narmaya's trailer, I went through it frame by frame to get the right pose, then flipped it horizontally to get a better view of the pose in the way I wanted it. I studied every line and figured out which line represents what and why (Brunet 2020.)

It's no different from learning a raid boss, especially if you're not in a top tier world first guild. For example back in Wrath of the Lich King, we were on top of Icecrown Citadel staring at the Lich King himself. Now we weren't stupid, we weren't going to waste time blindly charging in without knowing what we were actually getting ourselves into. It was and still is completely expected for most raiders to look up tactics before a boss fight. We saved plenty of time reading how to deal with ghouls and Shambling horrors, necrotic plague, infest, plague siphon and all the rest of the mechanics. Then we started practicing, spending hours and hours to actually be able to execute the tactics that we read. This is exactly how raiders that are not in the top 1% deal with raid bosses. Look up references or in this case tactics, then practice the execution of said tactics.

"An Karanir Thanagor, Mor Ok Angalor, Mor Ok Gorum, Pala Ah'm, Ravali Ah'm" (Duke etc. 2010). Hearing this back in the day as we listened to Arthas' dying words as he spoke to the spirit of his father. That feeling of elation as we had succeeded after hours and hours of practicing and polishing our strategies was something unexplainable. That same feeling, that millions of WoW players know all too well.

Yet when it comes down to it, the majority of the playerbase would never know what it feels like to take down an endboss if they didn't have access to multiple guides and strategies. All the information available for raid bosses are nothing more than references, ideas and suggestions.

The reason I find these strategy videos and the likes as nothing more than suggestions instead of strict guides is because not every raid group has access to the same raid compositions. As I was progressing in heroic Dragon Soul, more specifically on heroic Yor'sahj the Unsleeping, we would change our strategy constantly on the fly depending on our current situation, raid composition and which globules were coming. We wouldn't have been able to do that if we hadn't known what each globule did.

Looking back at that experience and now looking at using references is the exact same in my opinion. Just like back when progressing on heroic Spine of Deathwing, I and my raid would take the original strategy and optimize it for our group specifically, which is no different from me looking for references and then optimizing it for my own purposes.

2.3 Now I'm motivated

Combining fundamentals and using references was a huge step forward. As I continued to practice every day, I would look around for information on how to improve faster and just general advice on how to work on things and noticed an interesting thing.

I noticed that people in different comment sections or on social media were mentioning how they would get demotivated when seeing people who do amazing work and comparing that to their own. They feel like they'll never reach the same level as the people who already know what they're doing.

I found that quite interesting, whenever I look at people whose work is better than mine, instead of getting demotivated like how most people seem to do, I want to get better than them.

“Never be jealous” (Miyamoto 1645). I still remember back in WoW, when I'd see someone with crazy endgame gear. I wanted to have the same gear and worked toward getting it instead of complaining about how it's too hard or how long the grind takes. Instead I started working toward getting the same gear, finding motivation in knowing that if some random person on the internet can get it, then I can too. And eventually, I was the one AFKing in Orgrimmar in endgame gear with people doing what I did before. As far as I'm concerned, this is the exact same thing, just with drawing instead of epics and legendaries.

2.4 And this, is to go even further beyond

In a way, I suppose this would count as advancing the idea of using references, technically but the next step I took was to see if people who are better than I am had any guides or if they had any instructions for specific things somewhere. At such an early point it's quite easy to find better artists and there's plenty of tutorials and how tos and such all over the internet.

So what I ended up doing was finding thousands of sources, not even joking there, and picking up various bits of information. In a way you could think of it as if I was stealing the knowledge of other people and using it to my advantage. The best kind of theft in my opinion, because it's legal.

So a thought popped into my head, how do children learn to speak? How do children learn anything at all? They imitate their parents. So I decided to imitate what people better than me did. I found a few dozen examples of how people did whatever I was trying to learn, then mixed and matched them to create my own way.

This way I saved plenty of time. Instead of doing the same mistakes other people did before they learned the correct way, I just took advantage of their mistakes and learned from their mistakes. There's an old saying that goes something like this: "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it." The same concept worked for drawing too.

2.5 It's showtime baby

So another important thing that I learned back in the days of playing an instrument was getting feedback. Obviously not all feedback is useful, especially when it comes to something like drawing, but there's guaranteed to be some kind of useful information now and then.

So now that I was at an art school I had an easy way to show my work and get constructive criticism and feedback on what I was doing. Sure social media is another way I could've done the same, but I personally think social media is a cancer killing society so I tend to stay away from it.

Now obviously, at some point when I can be bothered I'll probably share stuff online somewhere and I'm already well aware of how stupid people are on the internet. But people are also brutally honest on the internet, so it'll be fun to look through the spam to find the actually useful things. Especially these days when everything's politically motivated, there's an extra dose of idiots on the internet, that'll be fun.

As I've over 20 years of experience on the internet, I'm well aware of the brutality. I'm quite the professional when it comes to handling the internet and I have no doubts that I'll be good at drawing after enough time and practice, well I never had any doubts in the first place especially after hearing the following facts;

"Van Gogh was 27 before he even tried to paint properly" (exurb1a 2019).

"Darwin said that all his masters and his very own father considered him a very ordinary boy, rather below the common standard of intellect" (exurb1a 2019).

"Emily Dickinson wasn't recognized during her lifetime" (exurb1a 2019).

"It wasn't until a hundred years after Melville's death that anyone gave a damn about Moby Dick" (exurb1a 2019).

2.6 All that's left is pure white ash

So burnout is a thing that I've heard people talk about and I'm not one to get burned out easily or quickly. I draw a lot every day, anywhere from 6 to 12 hours a day if I can. Sometimes less, sometimes more, depending on how busy I am. Now I'm well aware of what it's like to be burned out.

I played WoW since vanilla and I played from Vanilla to Legion, I played anywhere from 12 to 18 hours a day and it was fun, obviously I took breaks from WoW every now and then like during the first tier of the Cataclysm expansion, but they didn't last long and I'd always go back to playing. So from 2004 to 2016 I played a lot of WoW.

So right now considering my tolerance with burnout, I probably won't run into burnout anytime soon. Besides, I still play video games when I'm not practicing drawing, and while playing I would still find plenty of references and inspiration from them. So while burnout is something that might happen, I've got plenty of games to play if that happens and I'll soon be back to drawing.

Besides, at the beginning I made practicing fun and just like how it was fun to play WoW, I consider practicing drawing the same thing and keeping it entertaining just like WoW or any other game that I used to or still do play, keeps the burnout from happening. As long as I keep it fun and entertaining, I won't be burned out any time soon. (Brunet 2020.)

2.7 No, Mr Bond, I expect you to die

So expectations. Over the years I've learned something pretty important, never go in with high expectations because you'll just end up getting disappointed. I mean, look at Warcraft 3 Reforged, yikes, I'm glad I didn't get into the hype and preorder that. I dodged that bullet like Neo in the Matrix. Looking at how big of a disappointment it was and how people reacted to it, I was glad I didn't have any expectations from it, because man, that was something.

So taking lessons from my life until now I'm going into drawing with the same mindset. I don't have any big expectations, hopes? Yes, I do have hopes, but I don't expect anything grand, I'm doing what I'm doing because I feel like it and it's something I want to do. Fame, fortune and all that mean nothing to me.

I'm just enjoying what I'm doing and enjoying learning new things. Everything in due time, there really isn't any need for me to hurry with my work. I've adopted the old Blizzard way of doing things. "We'll release it when it's ready." that's what Blizzard used to say back when they were still a good developer, of course now it's different and it's easy to see how they've forgotten that and how the quality of their work has plummeted.

2.8 Doin' it again

Now this is a funny thing I often see online when it comes to learning how to draw or probably for painting and many other skills too. Using references, copying and so forth is cheating and shouldn't be allowed, or you must always be completely original or some other nonsense. I'm sorry but only a fool would ever think like that.

Copying and using references is honestly one of the best ways to learn. Pair them up with practicing fundamentals and that's it. Of course you can't just blindly copy something or use references without any kind of thought. Copying, using references or even tracing is completely fine in my opinion, as long as I learn and understand what each line represents and why it's there.

Now of course I'm not an idiot, copying someone else's work completely and then claiming it's completely original is just stupid and illegal. Using references and combining dozens of different parts from different works, to create something is exactly how you're supposed to do it.

"Think of how stupid the average person is, and then realize half of them are stupider than that" (Carlin 1990). And yet, there are plenty of people who plagiarize and think they can get away with it, including professionals and I think the vitriol against the idea of using references comes from these people.

"You may abandon your own body but you must preserve your honour" (Miyamoto 1645). As far as I'm concerned this quote from Miyamoto Musashi rings true, always. The best thing about life is that it's not permanent. But honour, the way people are remembered will last for as long as there are people who care enough to remember. Being remembered as a plagiarist is something that would besmirch my honour and I will not allow such a thing.

Pretty much everything is created out of some kind of references. Looking at the paintings of old masters, they've surely used different kinds of references. With enough experience I believe it's possible to draw without physical references, but only if one has originally learned from references and memorized how something truly looks like.

2.9 The Yeager family basement

Honestly, my way of practicing and learning is just me doing what I want and what I think is the most important thing for me at the time. As long as I'm having fun and getting to my objective, even if it's little by little and slow, it doesn't matter.

I'm stubborn and usually just do what I want, so I'm just going to do what's useful for me and what's fun for me and I think that's the big secret to learning anything. As long as it's fun and as long as I enjoy the process of doing something, I'll reach my goal eventually. I would be a complete moron if I were to do something that I didn't enjoy as my goal in life.

So as far as I'm concerned, I'm going to keep doing things my way. Draw whatever the hell I want, practice however the hell I want and achieve my goals through my own efforts. That's really all there is to it. I suppose for some people that wouldn't work, I understand that some people like being told what to do and how to do things but I guess I'm just the type of person who goes against the establishment all that time so my way might not work for other people.

As I continue to work on it and continue to study and take in more information from different references, I'll eventually gain the experience to become better. It's all just a matter of time and practice. (Kim 2019.)

"You must do sufficient research" (Miyamoto 1643, 6). "Any man who wants to master the essence of my strategy must research diligently, training morning and evening. Thus can he polish his skill, become free from self, and realize extraordinary ability. He will come to possess miraculous power." (Miyamoto 1643, 24.) I believe that with enough time and effort I'll be able to do what I want to do, the only thing that I need at this point is just more time to practice and gain the experience needed, I need the time to make mistakes as I draw and figure out how to fix them. For me, the effort is already there, I only need the time and ironically enough as I write this thesis, I realize that I'm wasting that time that I should be using on improving.

3 RIGHT NOW

So what am I doing right now, well a bunch of things. There's always the fundamentals to practice, so obviously doing those, but writing multiple pages about those would honestly be pretty boring and uninteresting so instead from here on out I'll talk more about things that I've been having fun with and what not.

I'll just do a quick recap on the fundamentals that I've been working on from the start and continue to do so until the end of time pretty much. The first thing I started out with was understanding forms. Everything you can see can be broken down into simple forms or a complex combination of forms. (Escobar 2015.)

After that, perspective. Honestly, perspective is pretty simple, but it just takes time and practice to get it just right. It's a really easy, simple concept, things moving away from the viewer's eye get smaller. That's all there is to it, just getting it completely right takes time and experience. (Concept Art Empire n.d.)

Anatomy, now that's a fun one, there's about a million and one guides on the internet and ways to learn anatomy on the internet, considering what I want to do relies so much on having proper anatomy it's been one of the major focal points of my studies. So that has been one of my main focuses this whole time. (Concept Art Empire n.d.)

Composition, something I've been looking at bit by bit but it's not been my main focus yet as it's mainly for finished works. I've a bunch of guides ready for it for later, once it's time to really study that I'll get to work with it but for now it's on the side as a thing that I look at a bit now and then. (Concept Art Empire n.d.)

Value and Lighting, another pretty big thing that I've been looking into, basically shading and lights and such. Again plenty of guides and video tutorials on the internet. (Concept Art Empire n.d.)

"Like the foreman carpenter, the commander must know natural rules, and the rules of the country, and the rules of houses. This is the Way of the foreman." (Miyamoto 1943, 5.) It always comes down to the natural rules, or in my case the fundamentals. The way I see it, is that there are rules, or fundamentals, that must be mastered. Once the rules have been mastered, one will have a better understanding of how to break those rules in a manner that won't lead to failure.

3.1 What makes the sky blue

So earlier I was talking about using references, and I use tons of them for everything. From looking at how a professional draws something to looking at different kinds of design ideas. I spend a ton of time looking at different references and ideas or inspirations to steal or “borrow” from. So here goes, a deeper look at different references that I’ve been using a lot of and where I like to find my references from.

One of the biggest inspirations for me is a man called Hideo Minaba, currently he’s the art director for Granblue Fantasy, before that he worked with Squaresoft (later Square Enix) and worked as the art director for several Final Fantasy games which include some of my favourites such as Final Fantasy 4, 6, 9, Tactics, Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn and Heavensward. I find his designs to be absolutely top notch and look at plenty of his work for ideas, so I’ll share some of them here. I’m a huge fan of the work he’s done on GBF and GBVS. The series has hundreds of characters, all of them look interesting in their own way and over the years there’s been a clear evolution in the character art aswell. To me, a clear indication that there’s always room to improve.



Picture 2. Narmaya's character art from Granblue Fantasy Versus. (Arc System Works & Cygames 2020)

Same character as picture 1. Now looking at the design, two things point out the most to me. The coat and the sword. First of all the hilt is half the size of the sword which at first looks strange, until you realize that it can change into a cleaver and a halberd-like looking weapon which just allows for some really fancy and stylish moves. And then we get to the coat which compliments the already cool and elegant movement. Besides, long coats look cool.



Picture 3. Vaseraga's character art from Granblue Fantasy Versus. (Arc System Works & Cygames 2020)

Again, weapons, Grynorth looks amazing, it's vicious and deadly. It's a simple design for a scythe, but it works and looks absolutely sick. In addition to that, his armour and cloak make him look like a great villain, but surprise surprise, he's actually one of the good guys. Even though everything about the design screams villain. While it can't be

seen in this picture, he doesn't wear a breastplate and instead has a bare chest which goes with his whole invulnerable berserker thing and inability to feel pain.



Picture 4. Zeta's MLB art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy. (GBF.Wiki 2016)

Can't talk about Vaseraga without Zeta. Zeta's hot... quite literally because of all the fire from her spear, Arvess. Just by looking at her, the colours, the design and especially the fire, you can probably guess what her personality is like. Also, I like spears, I think spears are cool, and Arvess looks really fancy. While it clearly has metal pieces, I have no idea what the blue parts are made out of, then again I don't think anyone does considering the lore of the weapon. Still, it looks great, gives off that mysterious vibe because the lore about it isn't even fully released at the time of writing.



Picture 5. Percival's MLB art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy. (GBF.Wiki 2016)

Percival's hot... because of all the fire. Again, his personality comes out just by looking at him. Even though he has the same fire motif as Zeta, Percival instead has a more calm, noble but cocky attitude and the picture alone brings that out. Also, badass long coat just like Narmaya. The armour looks fancy, the sword looks fancy, the coat looks fancy. What can I say, a picture is worth a thousand words, and I think that everything so far points to that being true.

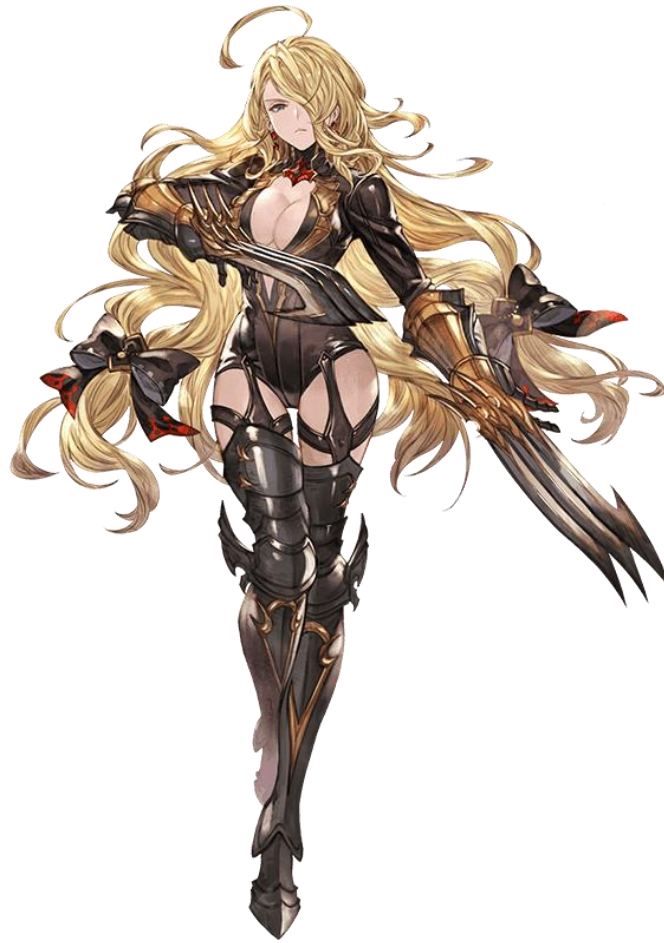


Picture 6. Soriz's character art from Granblue Fantasy Versus. (Arc System Works & Cygames 2020)

Old man martial artist, I'd be cool with an uncle like him. Again, a design that shows exactly what the character is all about. There really isn't much to say except that a picture is worth a thousand words just like before. From here on out I'll just add a few more pictures and talk about them at the end.



Picture 7. Lucifer's FLB art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy. (GBF.Wiki 2019)



Picture 8. Predator's base art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy. (GBF.Wiki 2020)



Picture 9. Golden Knight's MLB art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy. (GBF.Wiki 2020)



Picture 10. Belial's character art from Granblue Fantasy Versus. (Arc System Works & Cygames 2020)

So what I've noticed from all of these designs, is the surprising simplicity of them. They're not ridiculously overly designed. I don't see many insanely detailed parts in any of them, some slightly more detailed sure but nothing too over the top. So probably the thing I've really taken from this is to keep things simple while still bringing out the personality of the characters through their poses, facial expressions and their clothing/armour. Just by looking at them I get a good sense of what these characters are about, I can get a rough guess about their personalities the moment I see them, though I will admit that I've quite a few hours in both GBF and GBVS so I already knew what the characters were like, so I am unable to give a first impressions type of thing with these. Hopefully one day after plenty more practice I can get to a similar skill level.

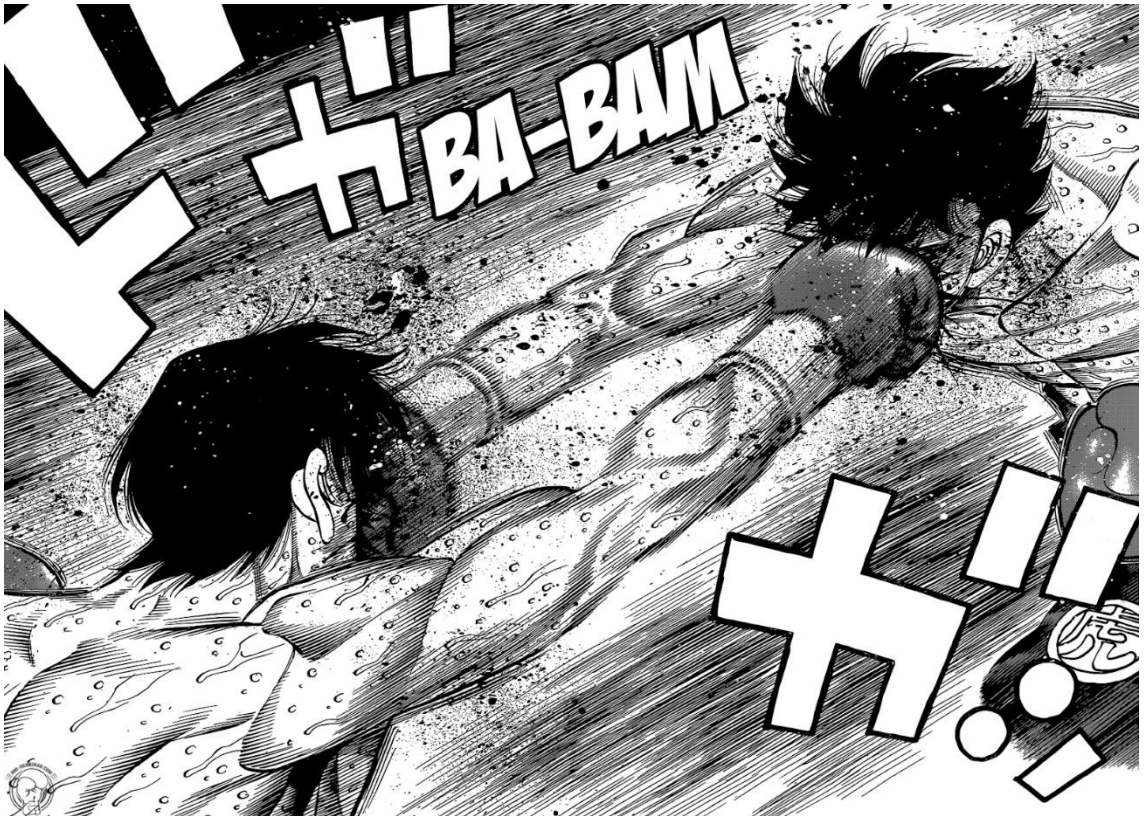


Picture 11. Seox/Six's FLB art from Cygames' Granblue Fantasy. (GBF.Wiki 2017)

“The bridge that leads to Nirvana is the ultimate mastery of technique” (Seox 2019).
Ultimate mastery of technique. Something to strive for in anything, for me it's drawing.
It's something so true that I didn't even think about it before now.

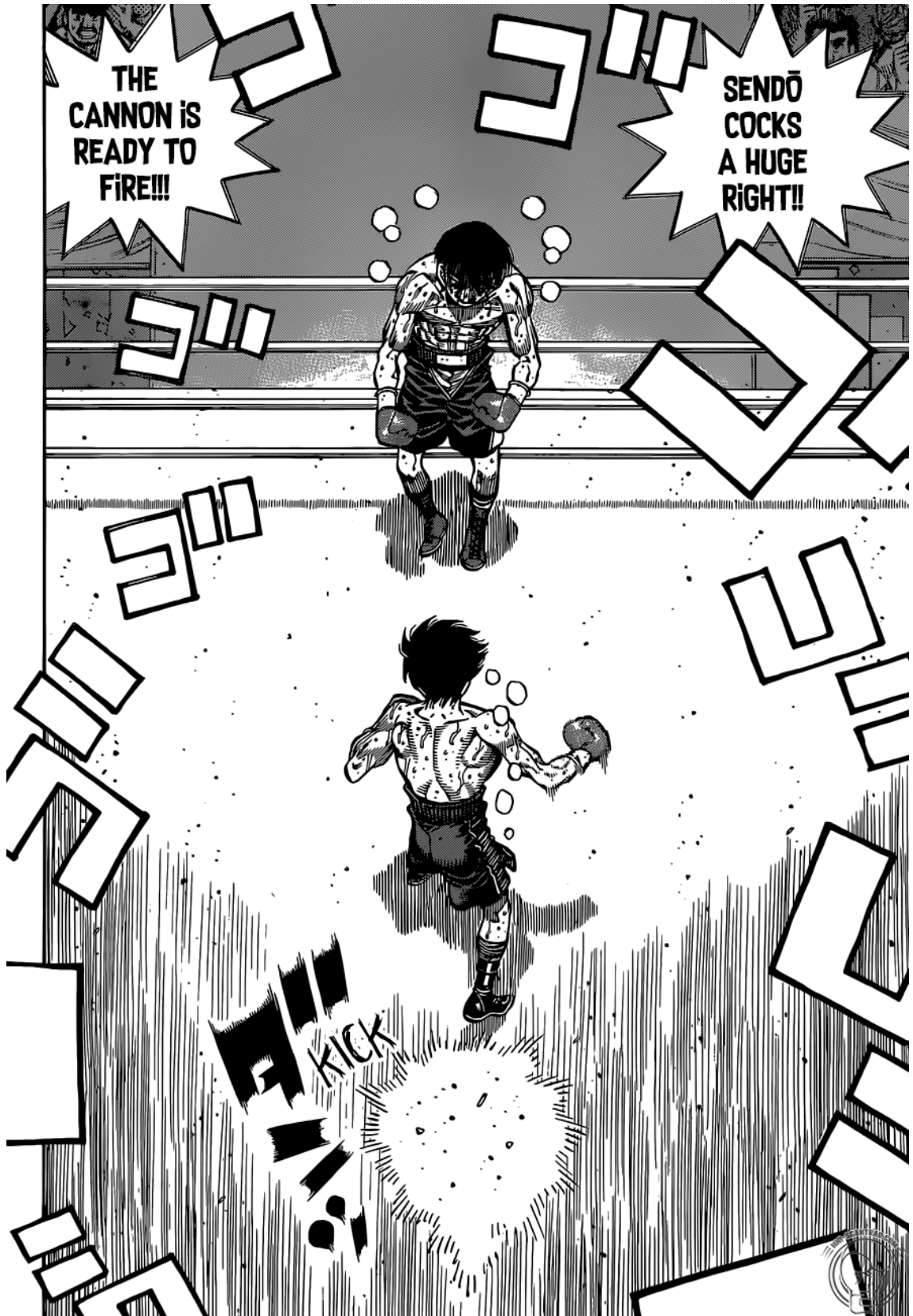
3.2 What does it mean to be strong

Depicting movement and impact in a still image is another interesting thing I've been looking into recently. Looking through a bunch of examples, the best ones I've found are from George Morikawa's *Hajime no Ippo*. Both movement and impact are presented in such a good way that everything hit feels extremely violent and visceral.



Picture 12. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga *Hajime no Ippo* chapter 1307. (HNI Scantrad & Good Sir Scanlations 2020, p 10)

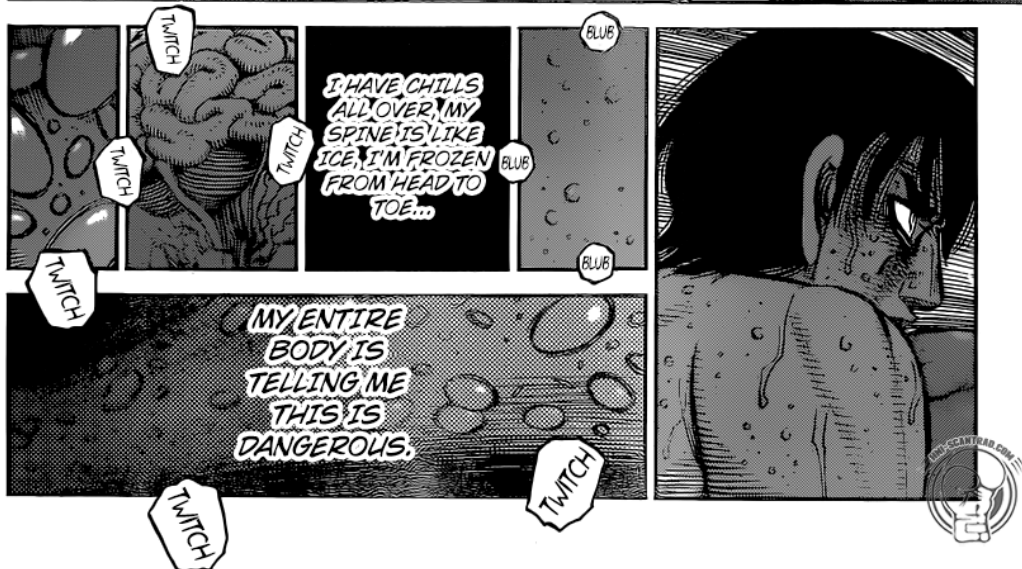
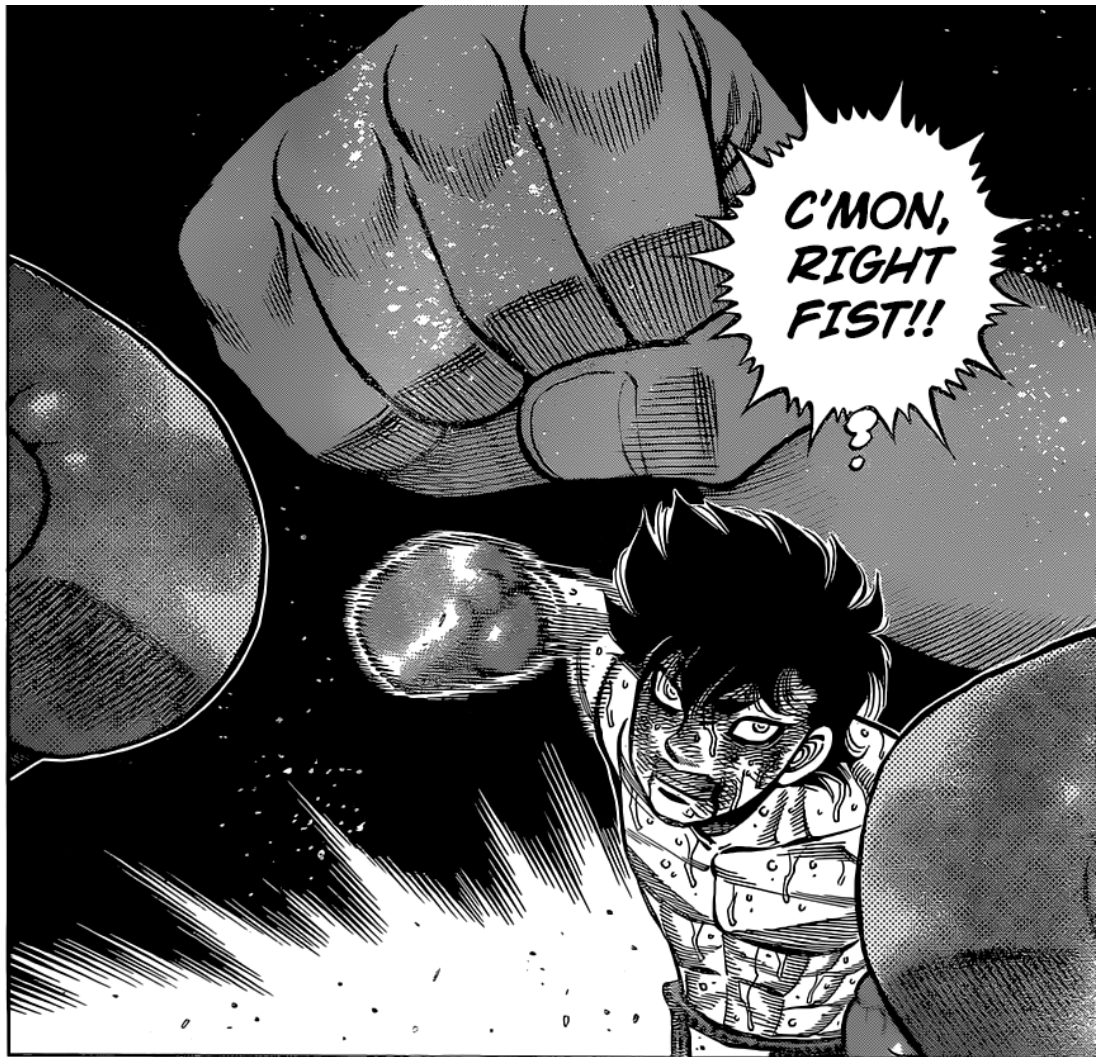
By itself, I don't really feel or get much out of it except a dual exchange by two boxers. Sure there's some motion with the motion lines and some blood splatter, but the whole impact is missing until I look back at some of the previous pages.



Picture 13. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307. (HNI Scantrad & Good Sir Scanlations 2020, p 6)



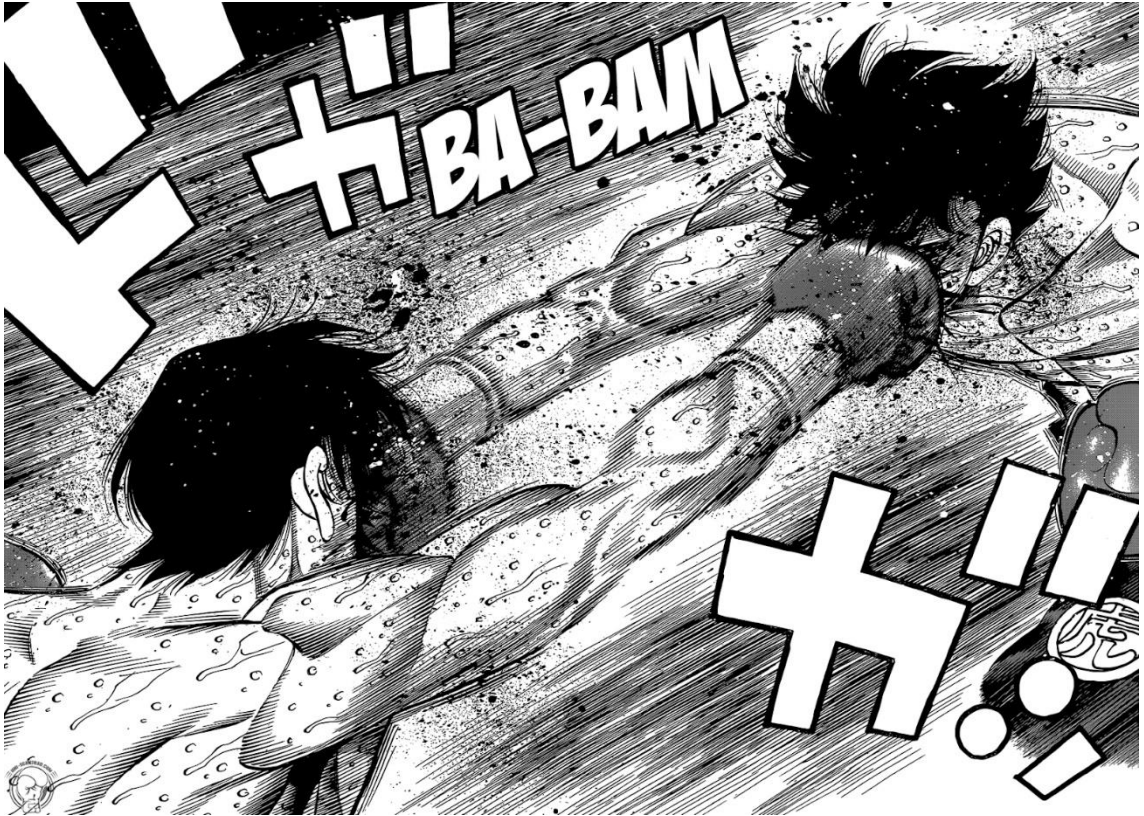
Picture 14. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307. (HNI Scantrad & Good Sir Scanlations 2020, p 7)



Picture 15. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307. (HNI Scantrad & Good Sir Scanlations 2020, p 8)



Picture 16. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307. (HNI Scantrad & Good Sir Scanlations 2020, p 9)



Picture 17. Sendō Takeshi vs Alfredo Gonzales from George Morikawa's manga Hajime no Ippo chapter 1307. (HNI Scantrad & Good Sir Scanlations 2020, p 10)

And now I have four pages dedicated for the feeling of impact. Slowing down what's happening in order to bring out that one, big, climactic moment where the tension of the scene gets released. The pages before the final impact in a real life situation would only be a second long at most, but with the way everything comes together it really feels like you're watching everything unfold in slow motion and the anticipation of what's going to happen gives it a whole different level of excitement.

As far as I'm concerned, there is only one person who can do this similar type of feeling of impact with images, is Akira Toriyama and his work on the Dragon ball series, especially in Z. Sadly, I'm unable to find proper scans of the examples I would like to give and I am not going to rip the page out of my original copy just to get a proper, high quality scan, so you will just have to go with my word on this.

The way Toriyama guides the reader by using the energy trails of different characters. He manages to get the feel of movement and guides the reader's eyes so that you're never wondering where to look at next. Not only does it guide the reader's eyes but it also gives the pages a sense of speed and velocity. Toriyama's ability to also bring that action to a complete stop with his impact panels pairs exceptionally well with his ability to really make you feel like everything is moving at near lightspeed as it's supposed to. (Super Eyepatch Wolf 2018.)

Similarly to how Morikawa slows down the action, Toriyama uses more anticipation panels before the impact which gives the panels a genuine feel of weight and force, similarly to how Morikawa does in Hajime no Ippo. (Super Eyepatch Wolf 2018.) Eventually I would also like to be able to create similar feels of motion and impact, it looks great and giving the reader that feeling of being in the middle of the action would be nice to achieve.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Here's a short sweet summary of what I've picked up:

1. Try to draw every day.
2. Make sure to learn the fundamentals.
3. Always draw from reference.
4. Stay motivated.
5. Look at people better than you, steal knowledge from them.
6. Show your art, get constructive criticism.
7. Avoid burnout, try to draw every day, but take a break if you're at your limit.
8. Have realistic expectations, but big dreams.
9. No, seriously, use references, they're not cheating.
10. Have fun, the grind will be a lot more bearable then.

As for designs, go for something simple, too much decorating and too many small details might be impressive, but might completely overshadow the rest of the design. As for movement and impact, they come hand in hand. With a good way of portraying movement, may it be movement lines or energy or whatever, you can really highlight an impact panel with an anticipation panel. Giving the reader that feeling of slow motion and, as the panel name itself implies, anticipation of a huge impact moment, or potentially subverting the readers expectation and not having an impact afterward, if you want to play with the readers emotions.

Anyway, I'd argue that the most important thing when it comes to drawing is to just take your time and practice, practice, practice. Time and experience are the things you need if you want to really learn how to draw, and so I will finally end this text and get back to actually practicing instead of wasting any more time doing something that has no use to me.

"Do nothing which is of no use" (Miyamoto 1643, 11). I take this to heart now. The only path forward to me at this current time is to simply practice and gain experience. I didn't learn to play an instrument by hitting the books and only the books. The only way I improved at that was to practice and gain experience. With that, I've decided to simply continue doing what I've been doing the past few years. Draw as much as I can, keep doing those 6 to 12 hour days. It has worked wonders so far, and there is no reason that it wouldn't continue to work.

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