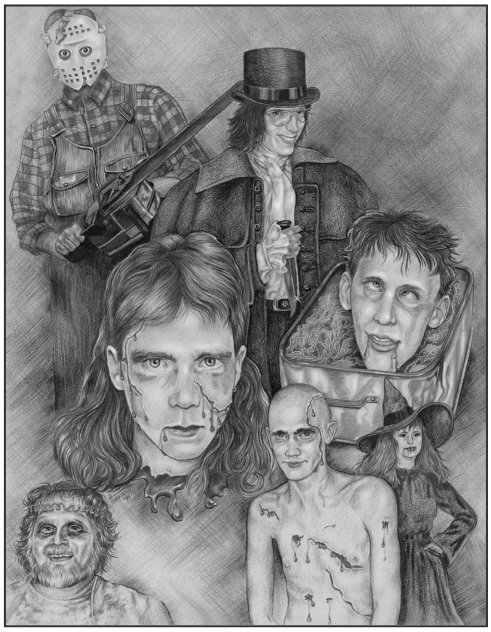


Drawing a Collage

Brenda Hoddinott

P15 INTERMEDIATE: PEOPLE

In this article I offer suggestions for putting several different subjects together in a drawing. If you're a fan of costumes and special effects makeup, I suspect you'll enjoy the drawing I use as an example.

This project is divided into the following four sections:

- **INTRODUCTION:** In 1991, one of my students dared me to create a scary drawing. You be the judge. Are you scared?
- **CHOOSING PHOTOGRAPHS:** The idea of putting several images together in a drawing works well for many different subjects.
- **PLANNING A COLLAGE DRAWING:** Can you imagine how complicated everything becomes when you try to combine several subjects into one drawing! Needless to say, you need to do lots of planning!
- **DRAWING A COLLAGE:** The coolest part of being an artist is having an artistic license, which entitles you to exercise creativity by modifying your photos any way you wish.

Accept the challenge at the end of this article. Then, gather together some photos, as well as drawing paper, pencils, kneaded and vinyl erasers, pencil sharpener, and sandpaper block.

This article is recommended for artists from age 12 to adult, as well as students of home schooling, academic, and recreational fine art educators.

7 PAGES – 10 ILLUSTRATIONS

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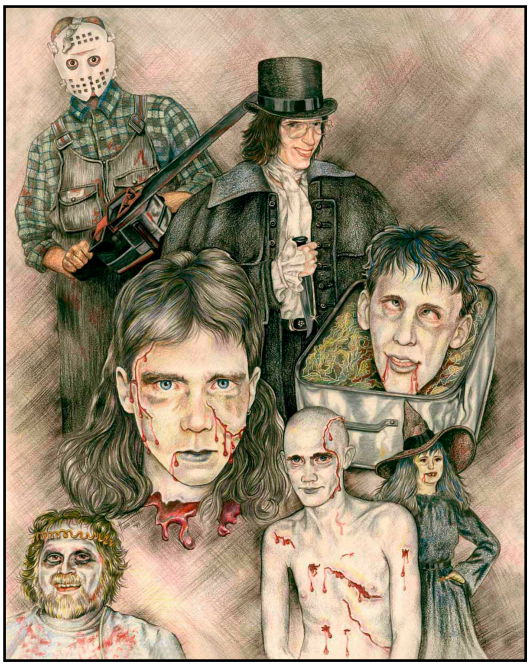
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INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, I was asked to organize a group of my students and friends, to paint the sets and backdrops and play some of the characters in a Haunted House production. Before the crowds showed up for the show, we had a dress rehearsal. Needless to say, I brought my old 110 camera to capture some of the fun. Unfortunately, the quality of the photos was not great (Figure 1501).

My drawings have always ended up looking "cute" even when I try my best to draw "scary". In 1991, one of my students dared me to create a scary drawing.

Figure 1502



I dug out my photos from the Haunted House and set to work planning a drawing that included several scary looking friends and students.

My collage drawing is quite small (10 by 13 inches) and rendered with colored pencils (Figure 1502).

To better illustrate this article, I used Photoshop to change the drawing into grayscale, which is less distracting than color.

Figure 1501



ART SPEAK

Collage is an artwork made by combining a variety of images (such as photographs or other artworks) or sections of images to create a new whole.

Iris is the colored circular section of the eyeball.

Pupil of an eye is the darkest circular shape within the iris.

Composition refers to the arrangement of the various facets of a drawing subject within the borders of a drawing space. A strong composition brings the eyes of the viewer into what the artist considers the most important elements.

Proportion is the relationship in size of one component of a drawing to another or others.

Sketch is a quick, representation or a planned drawing subject. A sketch can also be a completed work of art.

Texture refers to the surface detail of an object in a drawing. The properties of a texture are identified with vision, a sense of touch, and a general knowledge of the subject.

Values are the different shades of gray created in a drawing by various means.

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CHOOSING PHOTOGRAPHS

The idea of putting several images together in a drawing works well for many subjects, including:

- ✓ A large family (such as grandparents, children, and grandchildren).
- ✓ Family pets, wild animals, or birds.
- ✓ Favorite flowers.
- ✓ Various still life objects.

1) Sort your photos and select the ones that look like they may be fun to work with.

Include cropped close-up views of some subjects, and full presentations of others. Make sure the subjects are in sharp focus, well lit, and highly detailed. You can't draw what you cannot see.

You need an excellent photo to draw a close-up of a face. If you can't distinguish the iris from the pupil, you won't be able to do a detailed drawing. Even when you want to draw the full body of a person or animal, make sure you can see fine details. As an aside, drawing a close up of a person from a full body pose is extremely difficult. You can rarely find enough detail in the facial section.

PLANNING A COLLAGE DRAWING

Can you imagine how complicated everything becomes when you try to combine several subjects into one drawing! Needless to say, you have to do lots of planning!

2) Plan the arrangement of your images.

You can scan and print your photos and arrange them on a large sheet of paper; or, you can scan any non-digital photos and do your arrangement in Photoshop.

Your first compositional goal is to choose a focal point. The human eye tends to enter an artwork from the lower left, so put this photo into place first. *(I decided on a close up of a face (Mike), for which I had a reasonably detailed reference photo.)*

The second goal is to bring the viewer's eye upward from the focal point and around the drawing in a clockwise direction. Put the remaining images into place based on their visual strength. Consider such details as light and dark values, and textures. Continuously move the images around until your find a reasonable composition.

The next goal is to check your arrangement for unity. If you randomly draw your subjects on your paper, without connecting them together, you end up with a weak and disjointed composition. By overlapping some sections of your subjects, you unify your composition and create a sense of depth.

For example, larger presentations of the heads and shoulders of parents can partially overlap and compliment smaller full figure views of children. Also, a creative background can help unify any number of subjects.

When you have the images in order and unified, you may find that some appear too small or too big for what you envision. Hence, you simply resize those images and kept adjusting the layout accordingly.

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In my drawing I placed the character with the dark chainsaw (I call him Jason) above and to the left of the focal point. The dark values of the chainsaw attract the viewers' eyes upward and to the left; the start of a circular composition. I chose the character with the dark, highly-textured clothing and top hat (playing the part of Jack) to be below and to the right of Jason. With this worked out, I could easily find a place for the other four characters.

Follow along with my collage drawing (Figure 1510) as I summarize my compositional strategy:

- ✓ The viewer's eye enters from the lower left and upward toward the focal point;
- ✓ then, upward again and to the left toward the second strong image;
- ✓ then, downward and to the right toward the third strong image;
- ✓ then in a clockwise direction through each of the other four images;
- ✓ and finally, back to the focal point - a complete circular composition.

DRAWING A COLLAGE

The coolest part of being an artist is having an artistic license, which entitles you to exercise creativity and modify photos any way you wish.

3) Draw your collage.

Your goal is to meld together the randomly overlapping subjects of different shapes and sizes, into one abstract silhouette.

Before you begin, identify which subjects you want in the foreground and middle ground. Draw the subjects in the foreground first and then work on those in the middle ground. The background is added last.

Figure 1503

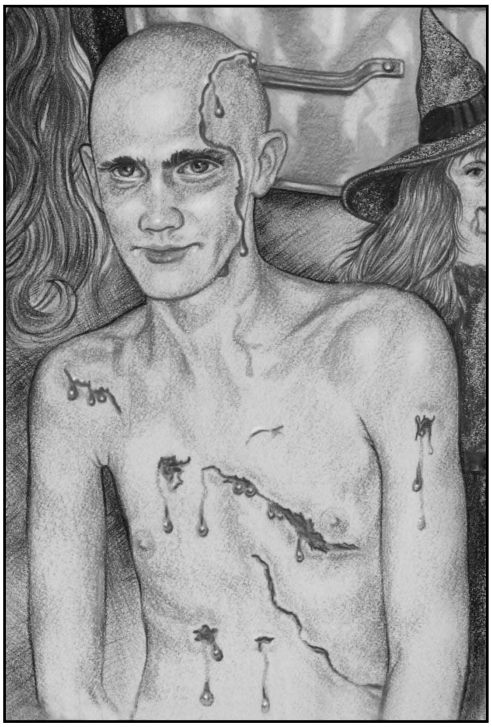


Figure 1504



If necessary, find other references for subjects you can't see clearly. For instance, you may actually have the scarf shown in a photo, or at least a better photo of it.

For example, my photo of Jason was very poor, so I did a little research and found a few reference photos of plaid shirts and chainsaws.

Figures 1503 to 1509 show you the individual characters in the order in which I drew them.

Figure 1505



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Figure 1506

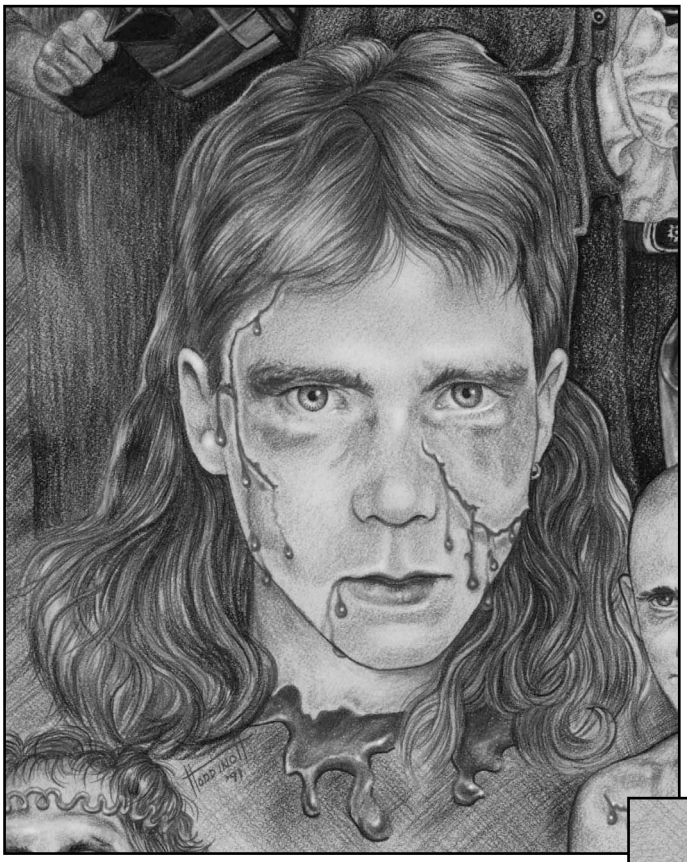


Figure 1507

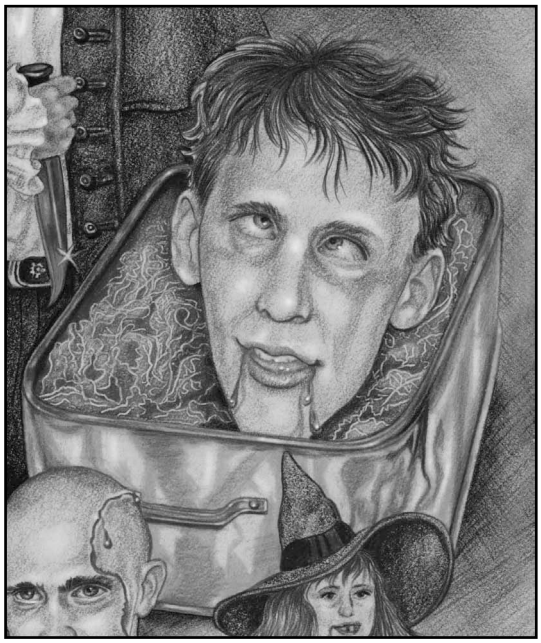


Figure 1508

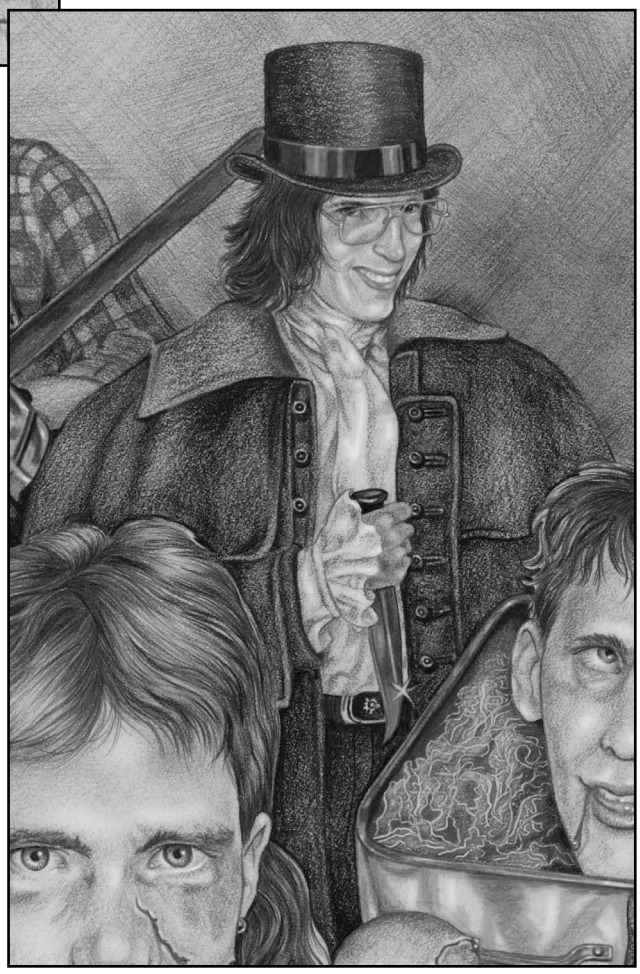
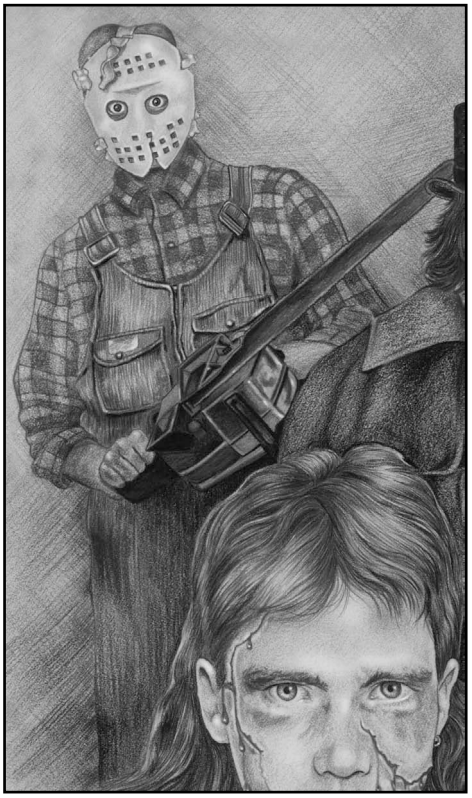
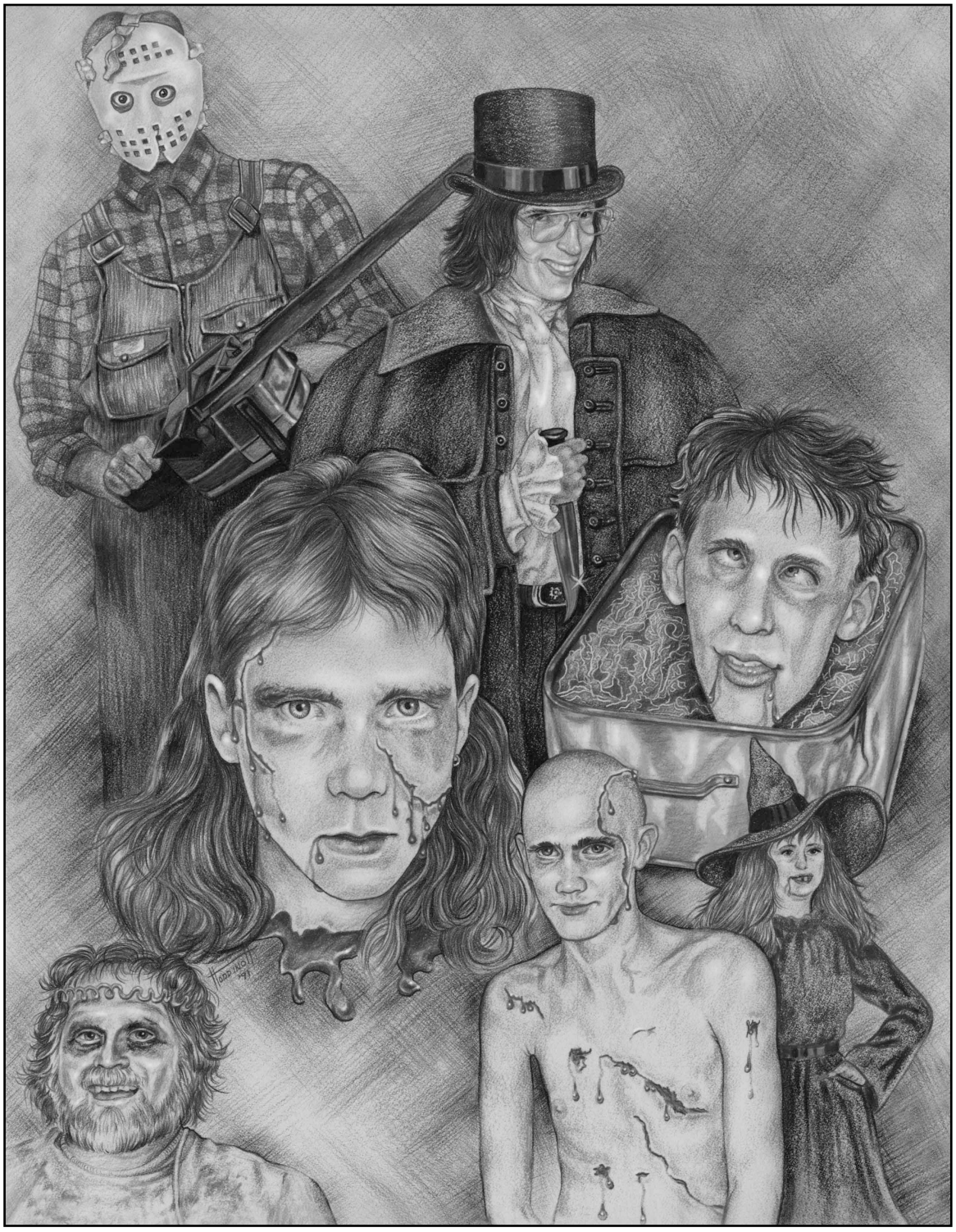


Figure 1509



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Figure 1510



The background of my drawing is a simple pattern of crosshatching lines, which helps unify the composition. In the final stage, the composition is anchored on the bottom by cropping the lower sections of three figures. On the other three sides, the background is closely cropped (Refer to Figure 1510).

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WARNING!

Cropping does not mean cutting away sections of your drawing.

Rather, cropping a drawing composition refers to the process of deciding which sections to make visible inside a matt or frame. Use a viewfinder frame to help you choose your final composition.



BRENDA HODDINOTT

As a self-educated teacher, visual artist, portraitist, forensic artist (retired), and illustrator, Brenda Hoddinott utilizes diverse art media including her favorites, graphite and paint.

Brenda is the author of *Drawing for Dummies* (Wiley Publishing, Inc., New York, NY) and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Drawing People* (Winner of the Alpha-Penguin Book of the Year Award 2004, Alpha - Pearson Education – Macmillan, Indianapolis, IN). She is currently writing two books on classical drawing.

My philosophy on teaching art is to focus primarily on the enjoyment aspects while gently introducing the technical and academic. Hence, in creating a passion for the subject matter, the quest for knowledge also becomes enjoyable.

>Brenda Hoddinott<

Born in St. John's, Newfoundland, Brenda grew up in the small town of Corner Brook. She developed strong drawing and painting skills through self-directed learning.

During her twenty-five year career as a self-educated civilian forensic artist, various criminal investigation departments have employed Brenda's skills, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In 1992, Brenda was honored with a commendation from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and in 1994, she was awarded a Certificate of Membership from "Forensic Artists International".

In 2003, Brenda retired from her careers as a forensic artist and teacher to work full time writing books and developing her website (Drawspace.com). This site is respected as a resource for fine art educators, home schooling programs, and educational facilities throughout the world.

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