

Utkin A.L., candidate of pedagogical sciences, member of the Union of artists of Russia, professor of the department of drawing and painting of the Russian university of traditional art crafts 191186, St. Petersburg, Griboyedov canal embankment, 2, lit. A, e-mail: alut@list.ru.

The specifics of anatomical drawing in the process of training artists of lacquer miniature painting

Abstract. Anatomical drawing is considered by the author as a necessary practical part of teaching in the discipline «Anatomy for artists». The article defines the specifics of drawing anatomical objects in the training of future artists of lacquer miniature painting, which is directly related to the features of lacquer miniature, its traditional technologies, stylistics and plot-figurative system. The author sees ways to improve the training of miniature painters in the professional orientation of teaching anatomical drawing and anatomy for artists in general, the establishment of stable interdisciplinary links between general professional and professional disciplines.

Keywords: anatomy for artists, lacquer miniature painting, anatomical drawing, lacquer miniature painting, stylization, teaching, interdisciplinary connections

The necessity for further development of professional education in the field of traditional art crafts has determined the relevance of this research. The article discusses the role of anatomical drawing and its specificity in such a specialized area as general professional artistic training for students learning lacquer miniature painting.

Anatomical drawing has accompanied scientific studies in the field of human and animal organism morphology, exploring the structure of organs and systems since the establishment of anatomy science. During the Renaissance era, anatomical drawing evolved into an independent graphic genre serving as anatomical illustration for scientific purposes, primarily medical treatises and also for educational purposes. Due to the impossibility of verbally describing images of such a complex system as human body anatomy with all its volumetric and topographic characteristics, anatomical studies were complemented by illustrations accurately depicting external shape and constructive essence of anatomical details. This allowed recording observations and summarizing research results.

Anatomical drawing constitutes a practical component of the plastic anatomy curriculum for future artists across various specializations including architects, designers, graphic artists, sculptors, painters, etc. The lecture portion of the course, where the theoretical basis of body morphology is explained, runs concurrently with the practical segment. Assignments in anatomical drawing reinforce knowledge acquired in the theoretical part of the plastic anatomy course and create conditions for successfully applying it in future creative endeavors. Anatomical drawing

rightfully qualifies as a “synthesis of science and art” because it represents an investigation of bodily form utilizing artistic-graphic methods.

When executing anatomical drawings, learners explore the morphology of human and animal bodies, focusing on common patterns shaping their external forms. This distinguishes it from academic drawing, which primarily concentrates on studying individual traits of models. Additionally, anatomical drawing differs from academic drawing both in objects depicted, such as skeletons and plaster casts of *écorché* figures, and in objectives set before the draughtsperson. When working on anatomical drawings, attention is directed towards universal principles of structure and typical features of human or animal figures. These drawings exhibit broader generalization levels. Emphasis lies on comprehending the logic behind form generation, balance, movement dynamics, and how exterior appearance reflects internal construction [9, p. 8].

Drawing from nature helps perceive the figure holistically, in spatial context, appreciating perspective distortion and volume effects. Purposeful drawing enables students to grasp logical structural mechanics, muscle attachment points and skeletal movements, leading to accurate representation of humans in static poses, motion, memory-based reconstructions and imaginative creations [11, p. 335].

There is no universal method or manner of depicting anatomical objects. Numerous renowned artist-anatomists have emerged, each possessing distinct personal styles of drawing, such as G. Bammes (Fig. 1⁴⁴), B. Hogarth (Fig. 2⁴⁵), J. Barcsay (Fig. 3⁴⁶), V.A. Mogilevtsev (Fig. 4⁴⁷), among others.

The pedagogical system and methodology of anatomical drawing developed by G. Bammes [1], followed by his disciples R.P. Kurilyak and A.N. Ryzhkin, represent a method of explaining form through drawing. This pedagogy emphasizes constructively linear technique characterized by speedy execution, conciseness and expressiveness of line conveying spatial qualities of voluminous forms.

B. Hogarth's approach [12] stands out due to energetic and emotional renditions capturing the figure and its elements (head, hands) dynamically posed in varying angles and potential motions. To achieve this effect, the representations are stylized, tonally contrastive, accentuated in volume, simplified yet structurally clear.

J. Barcsay's anatomical illustrations [2] exemplify meticulously elaborated black-and-white graphics effectively communicating volume and form of the figure alongside its anatomical details.

V.A. Mogilevtsev's drawings [5] closely approximate real-life forms adhering to the academic traditions of the Russian drawing school. His sketches achieve

⁴⁴ Fig. 1. Bammes, G., Image of human being: textbook and practical guide to plastic anatomy / G. Bammes. – Saint Petersburg: Diton, 2011, p. 483.

⁴⁵ Fig. 2. Hogarth, B., Dynamic anatomy for artists / B. Hogarth. – Publisher: AST, Astrel, Rodnichok, 2001, p. 216.

⁴⁶ Fig. 3. Barcsay, J., Anatomy for artists / J. Barcsay. – Fourth edition. Budapest: Korvina, 1973, p. 289.

⁴⁷ Fig. 4. Mogilevtsev, V.A., Anatomy of the human figure / V.A. Mogilevtsev. – Saint Petersburg: Artindex, 2015, p. 81.

equilibrium between graphic aesthetics and structural clarity of the represented body form.



Fig. 1. G. Bammes, anatomical illustration from the book "Image of human being"



Fig. 2. B. Hogarth, anatomical illustration from the book "Dynamic anatomy for artists"



Рис. 3. J. Barcsay, anatomical illustration from the book "Anatomy for artists"



Рис. 4. V.A. Mogilevtsev, anatomical illustration from the book "Anatomy of the human figure"

In educating future artists specializing in lacquer miniature painting, there exist certain peculiarities beyond standard assignments and requirements. These include distinctive features of anatomical drawing itself, its stylistics, methodologies and particular exercises. Such specifics arise from the professional nuances inherent in miniature painting, encompassing preparatory graphic style, selection of main themes portraying animals and human figures, ultimately influenced by the small scale of lacquer paintings dictating degrees of abstraction and inclusion of anatomical details [10].

Four distinct styles of lacquer miniature painting have been established in Russia: Fedoskinskaya, Palekhskaya, Mstyorskaya, and Kholuyskaya. At the Russian university of traditional art crafts, future artists receive training in all four variations of this art form. The principal object portrayed in lacquer miniatures is the human figure, hence significant emphasis is placed on teaching plastic anatomy during instruction for aspiring miniaturist artists. As a practical component of the plastic anatomy curriculum, anatomical drawing encompasses self-directed student sketching of anatomical objects from anatomical atlases and live drawing sessions conducted in classrooms under instructor supervision. Drawing from life enhances spatial comprehension of body volumes and proportions; educational aids include replicas of skeletons, skulls, gypsum casts of écorché human figures and their anatomical details, as well as skeletons and écorchés of animals. Sketching from

gypsum anatomical casts simplifies the intricate challenge of studying three-dimensional bodily forms. Gypsum surfaces, unlike living models, offer uniformly white matte coloring, immobility and consistent lighting, emphasizing form contours [9, p. 12].

Let us examine the specific characteristics of representing human and animal figures in lacquer miniature painting and the corresponding peculiarities of anatomical drawing in the training of future miniature artists.

1. The primary visual element in preliminary drawings for lacquer miniatures is the line, which should be flexible and expressive. Lines are constructed in three phases: thin line, filling, and "tone impact" at the base of its structure, marking the highest point of curvature, tone dominance. Light-shadow gradation complements the volume of the form according to the principle of icon-painting black-red tracing [8, pp. 188-189]. Therefore, when working on anatomical drawings, students focus on the expressiveness of the line, its ability to convey space, volume and plasticity of form through pressure intensity and thickness variation (Fig. 5⁴⁸).

In the creation of lacquer miniatures, tradition dictates a specific sequence for rendering any object: initially, the outline of the figure is filled with a medium tone known as "roskrysh"; subsequently, the process continues with highlighting convex areas ("probel") and shading darker regions. This same working principle is naturally transferred to drawing anatomical objects on toned paper, revealing volume through lightening (Fig. 6).

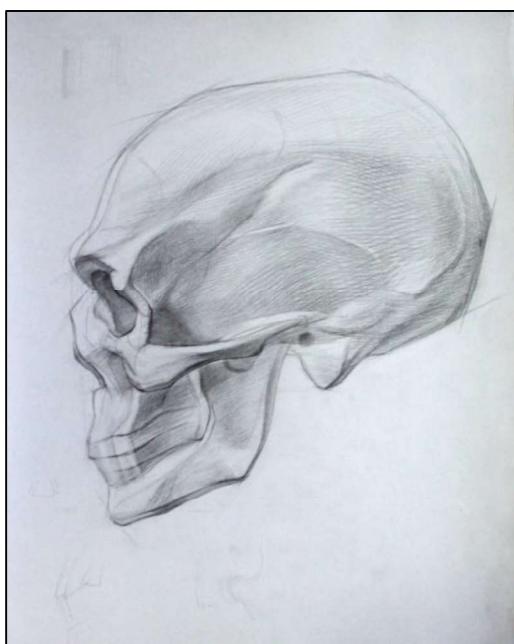


Fig. 5. First-year student's drawing from life of a human skull

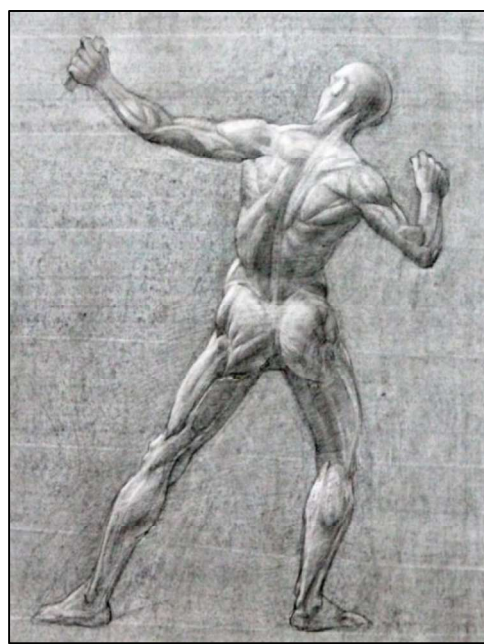


Fig. 6. Second-year student's drawing from life of Brenec écorché (archer)

This technique allows for either working on gray paper, detailing lighter areas with white paint, or using independently toned watercolor or diluted sauce paper. In the latter case, lightening occurs through eraser work.

⁴⁸ Figs. 5-12. Photos by the author of the article.

2. Copying from anatomical atlases follows the traditional method of instructing miniature artists through reproducing masterpieces of lacquer miniature painting. Similarly, copying easel paintings in miniature format is widespread in Fedoskinskaya lacquer painting [3]. Through this practice, technical and stylistic techniques are assimilated, and proficiency in handling materials is cultivated. Copying from anatomical charts instills familiarity with names and topographical locations of anatomical structures and their components, fostering graphic culture.

3. Many scholarly works on plastic anatomy place the section "Plastic anatomy of animals and birds" after the section "Plastic anatomy of humans," as this information carries comparative significance and builds upon analysis of anatomical structures regarding analogies and differences between human and animal figures. Despite the diversity of the animal kingdom, similarities exist between animal constructions and human body structure, both generally and even in some specific details, including anatomical terminology. This sequential approach was adopted in their pedagogical practices by artists like G.N. Karlov [4], M.Ts. Rabinovich [6] and W. Tank [7].

At the Russian university of traditional art crafts, the sequence of studying topics in plastic anatomy aligns with curricula of professional courses such as "Design and modeling" and "Lacquer miniature painting techniques", where training progresses from simpler to more complex tasks: starting with depiction of animals in lacquer miniatures (horses), followed by representation of human figures.

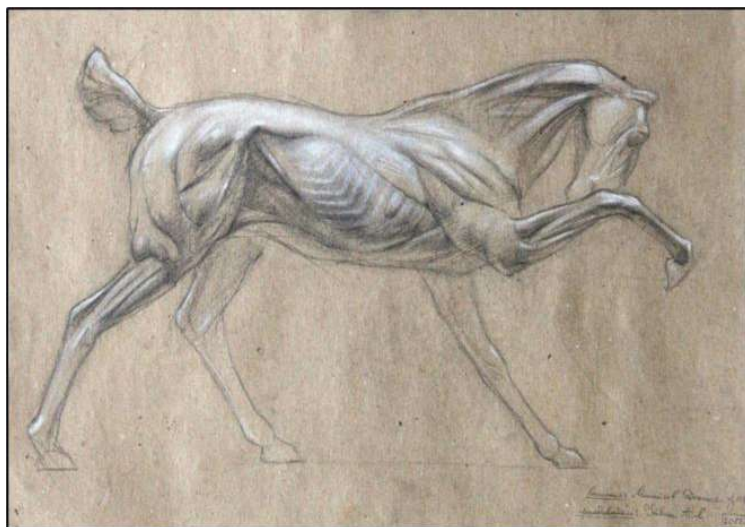


Fig. 7. Second-year student's drawing from life of a horse
écorché gypsum cast

4. In studying the section "Plastic anatomy of animals and birds", the choice of animals studied is determined by their prevalence in traditional motifs of lacquer miniature painting. Consequently, horse and deer anatomy are predominantly examined, whereas other animals are addressed less extensively (Fig. 7).

Additionally, considering that future miniature artists trained in Palekh, Mstyora and Kholuy schools study iconography (historically established stylistic, technological and technical foundation for imagery in lacquer miniatures), attention is drawn to wing construction and plastique when acquainting themselves with bird anatomy. This aspect is particularly important for depicting angel wings and is reflected in assignments involving anatomical drawing.

5. The diminutive size of lacquer paintings determines both the dimensions of anatomical drawings and establishes priority for studying specific anatomical details and plastic characteristics of human and animal figures.

Primary focus is placed on proportionality of the figure and its components, with greater detail devoted to the head, hands, feet, joints, range of possible movements (including those of animals). Thus, the curriculum incorporates assignments for drawing skulls, écorché heads, skeletons, hands and wrists, torsos, feet, moving figures in écorché form, animal skeletons and horse écorché.

6. To establish closer ties with professional disciplines, the syllabus for plastic anatomy introduces assignments focused on studying specific objects (heads, hands, feet, human and animal figures) from the perspective of plastic anatomy compared with realistic drawing and stylization within the tradition of lacquer miniature painting (Figs. 8-12). Through this exercise, students acquire factual knowledge and connect anatomical insights with techniques for depicting human and animal figures relevant to their professional practice.



Figs. 8-12. Development of the project "Horse" by a second-year student

Knowledge of anatomy is an indispensable competence for miniature artists and anatomical drawing must be regarded as an integral component of plastic anatomy education. Specific features of anatomical drawing tailored for future miniature artists should reflect stylistic and thematic attributes characteristic of depicting human and animal figures in lacquer miniature painting. This ensures alignment with professional disciplines such as "Design and modeling" and "Lacquer miniature painting technique", manifested through synchronization, thematic sequencing of assignments, stylistic consistency and overall professional orientation of plastic anatomy instruction.

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