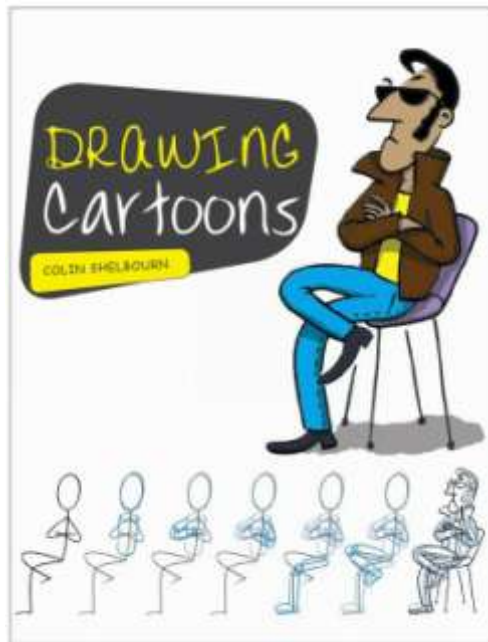


NEWS RELEASE

BOOK LAUNCH



Drawing Cartoons by Colin Shelbourn is published by The Crowood Press and costs £16.99. ISBN 978 1 84797 1722. For more details see www.radiocartoonist.com. The book is available from Amazon, Waterstones and all good book shops.

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Article: Can't draw? Don't bet on it.
“Drawing Cartoons” by Colin Shelbourn

Trade secrets of the UK's top cartoonists are revealed in a fascinating new 'how-to' guide to cartooning - "Drawing Cartoons", by Lake District cartoonist Colin Shelbourn.

"Anyone can draw cartoons," insists Colin. "You don't have to be an expert artist to produce an engaging and amusing drawing." And this is a point he has proved again and again at cartoon workshops across the UK.

Drawing on more than a decade's teaching experience, he guides the reader on a journey into the world of cartoon drawing, with easy step-by-step chapters on everything from sketching people and using the right equipment to inspiration for jokes.

As part of his research he has interviewed some of the UK's best-loved cartoonists, like Matt of The Daily Telegraph, Pugh from The Times and Daily Mail, Gerald Scarfe of The Sunday Times and Grizelda, one of the country's few female cartoonists, who entertains readers in The Spectator.

Each celebrity cartoonist describes their trade secrets – how they work, what equipment they use and most importantly, how they tap into the news stories of the day to come up with their biting witty, artistic masterpieces.

All have their own unique ways of working. Some draw on computer, others prefer good quality paper and ink, some gain inspiration from sitting in newspaper offices bombarded by breaking stories, others prefer the calm of home.

Matt enjoys the buzz and feedback of the Telegraph newsroom. He explains: “Out of the office, I completely switch off. I don’t even keep a sketchbook. If I see news, I don’t even think of ideas. I’ve found that the way to have ideas is to sit here at this desk. If I think I’ve had a brilliant idea somewhere else, especially late in the evening, it’s always rubbish.

“Moments of inspiration are to be avoided at all costs. I once dreamt a cartoon, woke up and drew it. I looked at it in the morning and it was the worst idea I’d ever had. It’s not divine inspiration, it’s just the product of a deranged mind.”

And he confesses he always keeps a copy of that day’s cartoon by his bedside for reassurance, just in case he wakes up in a night time panic about the spelling of a word.

Like Colin, many of the cartoonists did not study at art school but achieved their success by constantly honing their craft and seeking feedback from their audience. Even these highly professional cartoonists like to take regular soundings from their editors about what is funny or too obscure.

Colin describes cartoonists as the stand-up comedians of the art world but believes they fail to attract the respect and high value accolades accorded to other artists.

“A great cartoon can be a great piece of artwork but it’s also part theatre because it has to have recognisable characters in an identifiable setting. And it’s also part stand-up comedy because it has to deliver a knock-out joke.” he explains.

“I think the cartoon is a serious art form that deserves more respect. It is not just art. The biggest challenge is coming up with a joke that is immediately accessible in a few seconds and that taps into what people are thinking.”

Colin himself had ambitions to be a cartoonist almost as soon as he was out of nappies and produced his first recognisable drawing at the age of four. While other boys were kicking footballs around, his spare time was spent copying drawings from comic books and tracing cartoons by his great hero, Giles.

Despite this love of art, he avoided art college as a reaction against art teachers who constantly chided him for doodling and drawing cartoons. “I couldn’t stand another three years of being told what not to do,” he recalls and went off to study psychology at York University instead.

For the past 26 years, Colin has worked as a professional freelance cartoonist and writer. Since 1984 his incisive cartoons have amused readers of the award-winning Westmorland Gazette, Readers Digest and Saga Magazine, and his Lap Maps and cartoon postcards are best-sellers in tourist destinations across the UK. He also has more than a dozen books to his credit.



Some might say the cartoon is only the preserve of print media, but not Colin. He believes cartoons can go beyond the visual. In 2007, he forged a new role for his profession by becoming Britain’s first radio cartoonist – drawing cartoons live on air for the Sunday breakfast show of Liverpool’s City Talk station.

Colin began teaching cartooning ten years ago when he was invited to run a holiday course for complete beginners. And now London’s Natural History Museum, Leeds City Art Gallery and the Holiday Fellowship are just a few of the many organisations who keep inviting him back to entertain and train would-be cartoonists.

Many people, who declared “I can’t draw”, have Colin to thank for their artistic awakening. And it is these tried and tested teaching techniques that form the basis for the inspirational, step-by-step guide in Drawing Cartoons.

The book offers practical advice on everything from stick figures to full-colour computer art, and with the aid of three basic shapes, enables you to draw anything and everyone you encounter.

If you think you can’t draw – think again.

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