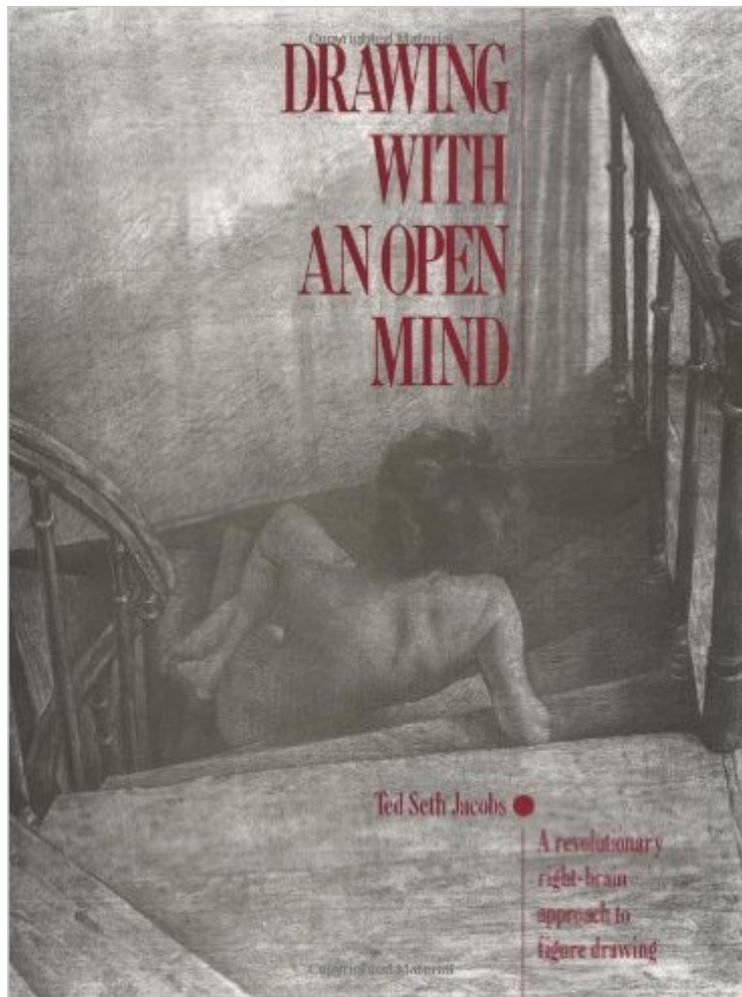


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# Drawing With An Open Mind



## Synopsis

Book by Jacobs, Ted Seth

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you were stripped of every luxury of life, and had to exile yourself to an abandoned island with only the essentials for human existence, you'd think of things like food, water, and shelter. Likewise, if I ever had to get rid of every book in my how-to art library except for the ones that I would absolutely shrivel up and blow away without, this book would remain on my shelf along with Richard Schmid's "Alla Prima" and "Life Drawing in Charcoal" by Douglas Graves. These three are my food, water and shelter for surviving as a serious art student. This book puts a greater emphasis on the artist's focus and state of mind than it does on technique. Sound a little "Zen-like?" It is, in a lot of ways, but "you will draw what the mind sees" until you learn to draw what the eye sees. "The problem," Jacobs writes, "is not that we don't see well enough but that we do not draw what we see. We draw what we think." This is coming from a man whose drawings look like the masterpieces of da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael. Better listen to him. While developing your mental-visual muscles, Jacobs goes into symmetry, balance, and light. But only after opening your eyes to what you see before you so your art won't be contaminated from an image file in your brain. Each topic is broken down into bite-sized segments--you can literally read a topic and digest it in 5 minutes or less. Or, if you want to sit down for the full meal, read and absorb several topics, review some you've read before, and skip ahead to some other stuff you found in the index. Then go draw. You'll be flexing art muscles you never knew you had. And you will be very pleased with your results.

Jacobs' book focuses mostly on figure drawing, and not drawing in general. He makes a number of points that are highly useful for someone who wants to draw well, such as emphasizing the need to avoid imposing symbolic forms (circles, tubes, etc.) on figure drawings. As part of that emphasis he stresses some practical points, including the need for the artist to notice that there are no true parallel lines or concave forms in the human body. Unfortunately he is a bit too long-winded and mystical-sounding when he makes these points, and I found myself having to re-read many of his passages to figure out what he meant, or else simply saying, "Huh?" This book would probably be better to use after you've read one by Jacobs' former student, Anthony Ryder, called "The Artist's Complete Guide to Figure Drawing," which is one of my favorite how-to art books. Ryder covers much of the same ground as Jacobs, but is much clearer and has more practical detail. However, as a previous reviewer noted, Jacobs' drawings included in the book are quite impressive and inspiring by themselves. (Many of Ryder's drawings in his book are remarkably similar in style to those done by Jacobs- you can definitely tell where he learned to draw.)

I DON'T KNOW WHAT BOOKS YOU HAVE READ ON DRAWING BEFORE BUT THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS ON DRAWING EVER WRITTEN. ANOTHER EXCELLENT BOOK IS BY HIS FORMER STUDENT ANTHONY RYDER ENTITLED THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO FIGURE DRAWING. EACH IS INCREDIBLY DETAILED IN ITS DESCRIPTIONS ON TECHNIQUE AS WELL AS THE LEVEL OF ATTENTION AND CARE REQUIRED TO CREATE BEAUTIFUL DRAWINGS. IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO HAVE A CAREER IN REPRESENTATIONAL ART YOU HAVE GOT TO READ AT LEAST ONE OF, IF NOT BOTH THESE BOOKS. OTHERWISE YOU WILL HAVE TO PAY "MORE MONEY" FOR A GUIDE TO DRAWING BY MARCUS MANDELOWITZ WHICH SAYS THE SAME THINGS, IT JUST TAKES LONGER TO SAY THEM AND MAKES YOU PAY MORE FOR IT. ANY OTHER BOOK IS PROBABLY NOT WORTH BUYING.

This book has several simply marvelous sketches by the artist, many of which you'll wish were available as prints. While perhaps not as instructive in teaching you how to draw as it might be (the author focuses more on mind-set than techniques), the drawings will inspire you to improve.

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