

## Tip #73

### *Feature Focus - Hands*

Artists often tell me they have problems drawing hands ... and they DO take some attention, I'll admit, to look natural. But it's worth it, because hands are graceful, beautiful, elegant, poignant, comforting, sensual, tender, strong, touching - in both senses of the word.

Try not to think of hands as a difficult subject - fear can make any subject loom large in our imagination - but simply as shapes, like anything else. Look closely, notice relationships between the shapes and relative sizes, and just try to draw what you see. Try a blind contour sketch to help you focus, looking just at your hand and not at the paper! (Of course it will look funny! But hey, you weren't looking at the paper, so what?)

#### **Art 73-1, Simplify the Shape**

One thing that helped me get over my hand-anxiety, years ago, was someone pointing out that a hand basically fit in a mitten-shape-naturally! Thinking of it that way and not even thinking about fingers or joints helped me to see the overall shape and position much more easily! Then I could fill in the details.



Art 73-2



Art 73-1

#### **Art 73-2, Pay attention to relationships**

Notice how long each finger and joint is in relation to other measurements - make a rough, quick line or a more formal measurement, with a ruler - your fingers, thumb, and palm will be much more accurately sized in relation to each other.

### Art 73-3, Practice!



Art 73-3

Get yourself a kneaded eraser; knead it to a point and press it against the tone you've just made to see how much you can lift, to regain lighter values as in the lighter round area at center. Or erase with a white vinyl eraser, which can take you almost back to clean paper, usually without damaging the surface, as you can see at right.

Blend with a rolled-paper stump or with your fingertip - or a Q-tip. You can get very smooth effects with this method.

### Art 73-4, Draw what you see

Notice the foreshortening in the palm, here, because of the angle of my hand in relation to my arm and to the green man mask I'm holding. (You can see, too, that my hands are a bit crippled with arthritis - I earned those kinks with a lifetime of work, and I don't sugarcoat when I paint a self-portrait! Makes it look more real, this way...)

Give these tips a try and see if hands don't become a lot easier for you to depict!

Be sure to look for my NEW CDs for artists in my Cafepress store, [http://www.cafepress.com/cathy\\_johnson](http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson), and watch for my fine arts auctions, <http://members.ebay.com/aboutme/cathyjohnsonart>, weekly on eBay.



Art 73-4