

# HOW TO DRAW MANGA



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STUDIOS  
A MANGA STUDIO  
www.sweatdropstudios.com

PART ONE OF SWEATDROP STUDIOS HANDY GUIDE ON BECOMING A UK MANGA SUPERSTAR

Words: Emma Weall and Selina Dean

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or hopeful manga artists in the UK, the wait is finally over!

Those wonderful people at TOKYOPOP have gone far beyond our expectations and have actually created *Rising Stars Of Manga UK* to select the biggest successful US competition. No longer will we read the previous US-based ISGM (geisha, novels, with the bitter taste of regret) in our mouths. That we ourselves were not eligible to take part. How is the time to take mechanical pencil in hand and get your creative cogs racing.

Sweatdrop Studios, the largest small press manga group in the UK, is happy to offer a few hints and pointers to get you started on your way to manga-to fame!

## TOKYOPOP'S Rising Stars Of Manga UK Competition Rules

Before we dive in, allow us to whet your appetite with some important points about the competition itself.

- Your story must be between 15 and 20 pages long, and in black and white only.
- Entries must be received by TOKYOPOP no later than 30th September 2008, and must be presented as photocopies (A4 sheets unless stated) - originals cannot be returned.
- The top seven entrants will see their story printed in the all-singing, all-dancing *Rising Stars Of Manga UK* graphic novel, with the chance to pitch a full-length idea to TOKYOPOP in the bargain!
- As if this wasn't enough, there's prize money too - ranging from £200 right up to £1,000!
- So now you know WHAT you can win, let's have a look at HOW you can stand a chance to win it! Head on to your 'watch books'.....



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STUDIOS  
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Jar

Biomechanica

ISSUE 5

The Telephone

COOL ONE

Kindred Spirits

HOSTED BY BOBBI DELANEY PART #3

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STORY BY JEFFREY W. BROWN

ANTHONY BROWN

# HOW TO DRAW MANGA

HOW TO DRAW MANGA

## THE CONCEPT

### IDEAS

There are countless manga series and/or huge epic storylines covering the whole range of human emotion with a colorful cast of characters, upon a backdrop of anything from a Tokyo-wide postcard countryside to a bustling sci-fi metropolis. So when you first start drawing manga, there are exactly the types of stories to avoid.

Epics are appealing because of the range of content, and the freedom of writing a story which can continue indefinitely. However, for one person drawing manga in their spare time, short stories are much easier to achieve. Especially for a first-time comic artist, a short story is more realistic to complete, and doesn't tie you down to a timescale you may end up regretting coming up with just a few months later, once your skills have improved.

Writing short stories can seem difficult at first, but if you're drawn to the limitations, it becomes easier to work within them. Short stories work best when they focus on just one character or the expression of an idea. There's no need for any back-story – it's best when just confuses the reader.

Try to create an interesting plotline without relying too much on complex politics or the characters' traumatic pasts. Instead, the focus of the story should be just about what's happening at the moment.

## SCRIPTING THE STORY

Now you've got your idea and characters, it's time to start writing the script. There are several different ways to script a script. Some people concentrate mostly on the writing and work from a written script, whereas others go straight to the artwork and draw "thumbnailed" (pre-storyboards of the comic pages) on their script.

Even if you work from a written script, you will still have to thumbnail the pages before you pencil them properly. But you can get away with drawing far less detail on the script, as the dialogue and most of the action will already be written down. The thumbnails should just be used to work out the page layout. You can be as messy and loose as a stick man drawing if you like!

Putting more detail into your thumbnails means you can skip the written script altogether. As well as showing the layout of the pages, the thumbnails include more detail on the figures and backgrounds, and often all the dialogue too. Copying the way you give your greater awareness of the characters' surroundings and how they interact and react to each other. Be careful showing thumbnails this way if you spend too long drawing them, as it's better to spend the time you come to pencil the final version. You just need to draw enough that you won't forget what the characters are doing or saying.



## POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Rely on characters as a way of establishing shotcuts. The reader will largely have preconceptions about many types of characters (like mecha pilots or scientists) which will make the character easier to understand without much explanation.
- As a guideline for planning panels when you pencil your pages, fold your thumbnail in half each way. This gives you 4 areas (instead of the center of the page, which will help you work out the proportions of the panels).

### SCRIPT

- Panel 1: [A character with long hair and a surprised expression.]
- Panel 2: [A character with short hair is shown in a dynamic pose, possibly running or jumping.]
- Panel 3: [A character with short hair is shown in a dynamic pose, possibly running or jumping.]
- Panel 4: [A character with short hair is shown in a dynamic pose, possibly running or jumping.]
- Panel 5: [A character with short hair is shown in a dynamic pose, possibly running or jumping.]
- Panel 6: [A character with short hair is shown in a dynamic pose, possibly running or jumping.]
- Panel 7: [A character with short hair is shown in a dynamic pose, possibly running or jumping.]
- Panel 8: [A character with short hair is shown in a dynamic pose, possibly running or jumping.]

# HOW TO DRAW MANGA



## • FILMATIC EYE

Now we start to lay out our panels onto the page. Our storyboard has already given us an indication of what will be where on the page, but this is the point where we can play with frames and pacing.

It is important to try and visualise a page of comic in the way you would a film. Manga is very dynamic and focuses largely on pacing. Two frames with a single line between them for example would signify a fast succession, whereas two frames spaced apart may suggest a pause. Empty frames can even be added to really lengthen the pauses allowing the reader time to absorb what has been said.

If a character is saying something very important, why not offer a large, close up image? If they are making an aside comment, then they would most likely be positioned further back and smaller... and, in some cases, not even fully drawn!

## Think Like A Camera – Filmatic Eye Is The Key

In our sample page, the biggest example of the filmatic frame usage is in the two panels showing the pencil before and after its dramatic break.

By using just one thin and diagonal line to separate the two images, we have bound them together as a set. They appear to occur in fast succession. Note as well in the frame to the left of this that the character's jaw hand has crossed over the line of the panel. This break from the standard 'looked in' style can add dynamic to a page.

## • TWEAKING

Once the frames are down we start working through the drawings themselves.

This is the stage where you can choose to tweak the original ideas and add to the details of the page. For example, you will see that the character's expressions are slightly different in the pencil than in the storyboard – there is a distinct element of determination in the down turned eyebrows.

This makes the transition into doomed failure even more evident and adds more comedy than sympathy.

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

- In this example we have chosen to actually draw in the speech bubbles at this stage – integrating them into the artwork. You could also choose to leave them out and add them at a later point.
- Although you want this stage to look neat and clear, the pencil will not be clean in the final print and so the pressure is off... for now!
- Some artists may choose to create their pencils stage in non-photo lead. This can be dark, red or even purple. It means that the pencils can be removed cleanly after inking rather than rubbed off.

## GET OUT YOUR PENCILS!

The pencils stage in any comic creation can be the most important, the most stressful, but also the most satisfying step! Don't be daunted by what seems such a big job. Remember that if you have already storyboarded your piece, then pencilling is merely an embellishment on your planning stages and you're already halfway there!

This is the point between your rough storyboard and your clean and finished ink work. You're looking to draw your frames and line-art more as a guide for your inking process than as a finished page.

## • ORIGINALITY

As with every element of Manga artwork, every artist will find his or her own methods. So anything here can take it as merely a guide! Experiment with your ideas and really make them stand out.

## • WHICH PAPER SIZE?

Deciding on a paper size to work on is important. The TOKYOPOP BSOdel UK competition is requiring entries on A4 paper which will then get shrunk down to print size, but there is nothing to stop you from working on A3 and scaling it down to A4 at a later date!

It all depends on your pencil strokes (we recommend using Stabilo's Chisel range) and how you feel comfortable working. Be sure to leave a border around your frames as this will save any areas from being left out of the print if they are too close to the edges. In our examples, we have made a 2cm border around the page.



Illustration by: Shinya Kuroki



## TO BE CONTINUED

There you have the first two steps to creating your very own manga! In next issue's instalment we shall take you through the hopes of inking and toying your comic. After that, all that's left is to send the pages off to **TOE TOPIC!** (see p.16)



Illustration by: Shinya Kuroki

## SWEATDROP UK MANGA STUDIOS

Unbeknownst to much of the professional world, a small industry specialising in the production of Japanese 'manga' influenced comics has been growing inside the belly of the UK's for some time now.

Now, in a time when Japanmania seems to be grasping the world, the UK Manga scene is soaring in head – and Sweatdrop UK Manga Studios is right up there with it.

Beginning life as a few individual artists who believed much was to be gained by pooling their efforts into a collaborative, Sweatdrop Studios now boasts over 20 artists and a large back catalogue of material, with new comics being created and released all the time. Along with their fast growing on-line label,

Sweatdrop feeds an active forum and one now branching out into the world of tutorials in a bid to increase awareness of this unique and diverse art form. Catch them at [www.sweatdrop.com](http://www.sweatdrop.com)

# WIN! A LETRASET MANGA ART PACK

### NEO TEAMS UP WITH LETRASET TO OFFER WANNABE UK MANGA STARS OVER £500 WORTH OF ARTIST MATERIALS!

#### HERE'S WHAT YOU COULD WIN!

##### 1ST PRIZE (APPROX. £200 OF PRODUCT)

- 50x60cm 10K MARKER COLLECTION
- 50x60cm 10K MARKER COLLECTION
- TEXTURES & TONES SET 1
- TEXTURES & TONES SET 2
- SCREEN-TONE VARIETY PACK
- A3 RUBBED-PROOF MARKER PAD

##### 2ND PRIZE (10 WINNERS)

- 10K MANGA PACKS

##### WINNERS UP!

- 20x4 SCREEN-TONE VARIETY PACKS

The Manga Pack includes all you need to start producing your own manga! Textures and tones give you digital greyscale images on CD - create manga on your computer or print your own tone sheets using the adhesive sheets included in each pack. If you want to create truly different manga, Screen-Tone is the medium of choice - a range of adhesive tone sheets for producing dramatic works of manga art. For more experienced Manga artists, the 10K and 20K sets collectors offer professional quality markers in 24 specially chosen colours.

#### What is Shojo manga?

- Manga for boys
- Manga for girls
- Manga for pets



Send drawings on a postcard to the editorial address printed on page 16.  
Some competition rules apply as described on page 118. Closing date: 21st July 2009.