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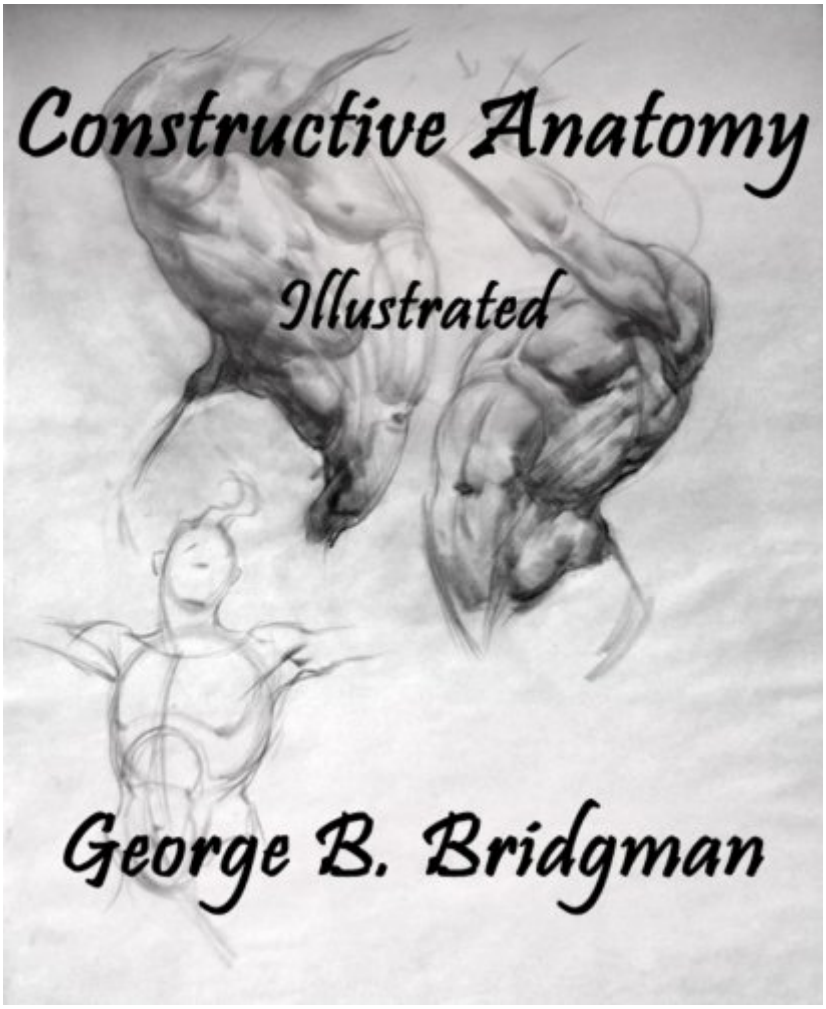
Constructive Anatomy: Illustrated



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Synopsis

George Brant Bridgman (1865-1943) was a Canadian-American painter, writer, and teacher in the fields of anatomy and figure drawing. Bridgman taught anatomy for artists at the Art Students League of New York for some 45 years.Constructive Anatomy: Illustrated by George B. Bridgman. Excellent book of anatomical drawing instruction. Ideal for beginning to intermediate artists, begins with instruction on drawing hands and works its way through the human body giving detailed instruction on how to draw realistic human figures. The drawings that are presented here show the conceptions that have proved simplest and most effective in constructing the human figure. The eye in drawing must follow a line or a plane or a mass. In the process of drawing, this may become a moving line, or a moving plane, or a moving mass. The line, in actual construction, must come first; but as mental construction must precede physical, so the concept of mass must come first, that of plane second, that of line last. Masses of about the same size or proportion are conceived not as masses, but as one mass; those of different proportions, in respect to their movement, are conceived as wedging into each other, or as morticed or interlocking.

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Customer Reviews

Mainly for intermediate-level artists- it’s actually *GREAT* for enthusiastic beginners. It has a little bit

of *everything* depicting anatomy construction from memory. It’s also great for general improvement; a few tips & tricks- an *excellent* reference for all working artists.This is the book that really turned me on to the genius that is Bridgman. At first glance it may not be immediately impressive, but flip to page 167 for a quick look at his cubed-construction of the head. It’s Bridgman’s brief but effective treatment of cube-construction in this book that really, really impresses me. Many books *mention* cube-construction for heads; many books show a brief picture or two. But not many show it with the precision & detail that Bridgman conveys in just a few short pages. It deals with figure construction mainly in its parts- for full-figure movement, check out Bridgman’s Complete Guide, or his less overwhelming Bridgman’s Life Drawing. Constructive Anatomy begins with hands, which in my opinion is the weakest part of the book. (Bridgman’s 100 Hands is much, much better.) Arms are next and they’re easily among Bridgman’s best, although not all the drawings are crystal clear. Many of the BEST drawings in Bridgman’s Complete Guide are taken from this book, and his depiction of arms here is definitely among them. The shoulder & neck briefly follow, and are above average in their depiction. Then it’s time for that excellent section: the cubed-construction of the head. It’s only a FEW pages- I don’t want to oversell it. But in my opinion at least, it’s worth the price of the book. Individual features follow: eyes, nose, ears and mouth are simply & accurately treated. This is a more *in-depth* book than Heads, Features and Faces- which is mainly a simple introduction to the basics.

In fact, I can safely say that this really is the most important book on artistic anatomy one can learn from. Many seem put off at first glance (I know I was) and say one of or all of the following...1 - "the drawings look sketchy sometimes"2 - "the anatomy seems exaggerated"3 - "the look might "cramp" your style"4 - "will copying the drawings really teach me anatomy?"Well, after having gone through the book once, reading how others go through it, working on form & exercises, and since I’m going through it again, I’ll address these points.----------1: The "sketchiness" isn’t there for the sake of being rough. Those lines & curves are there to show the rhythm and flow of how this part leads into that part. Keep in mind that not every drawing in the book is like this.2: The anatomy isn’t really exaggerated. Consider that Bridgman’s approach is on how muscles wedge into one another. If you study form, can analyze it, and can combine verious forms with overlapping, and then look at the drawings, things will click. The forms of various muscles stand out to show how the wedging works and sometimes the muscles happen to look flexed, that’s all.3: This was an odd comment I read at [...], and there’s no way that going through this will "cramp your style." If this is the first anatomy book you’re considering, and if you’ve never gone through a drawing book at all, then you don’t

have a style. Don’t worry about finding your style if you’re just starting out - take the time to learn foundational principles & techniques, and make that your goal.

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