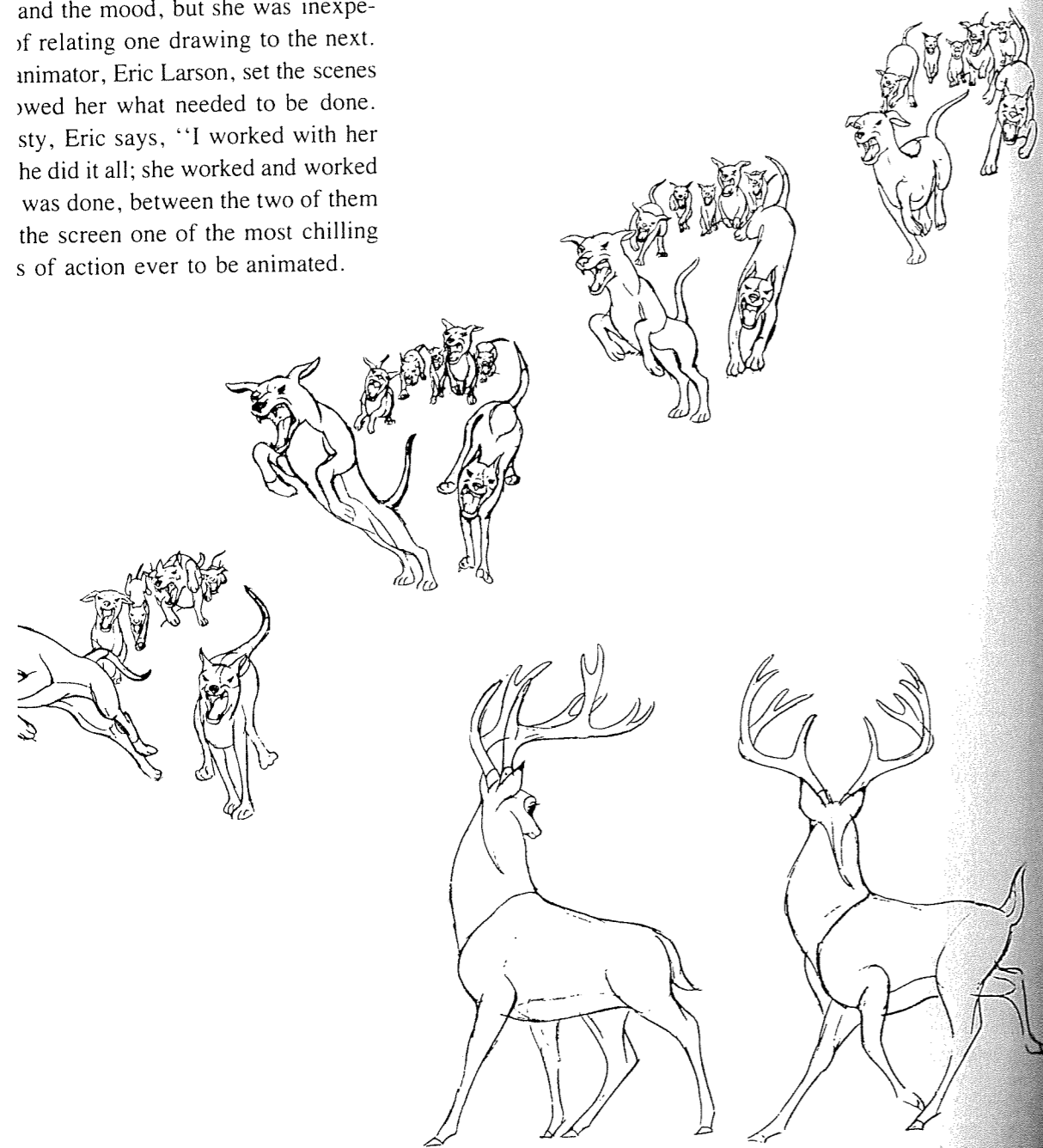


ive anatomy, illustrated with gentle
ngs that had no boldness or vigor,
racy.

unique talent in Retta Scott, the
studio to have an interest in ani-
astounding ability to draw powerful,
almost any perspective and in any
t in *Bambi*, we needed some con-
vening hounds to chase our heroine
the animators was advanced enough
g of hounds to tackle the assignment.
the dogs in any position, and she
and the mood, but she was inexpe-
rfect relating one drawing to the next.
animator, Eric Larson, set the scenes
wed her what needed to be done.
sty, Eric says, "I worked with her
he did it all; she worked and worked
was done, between the two of them
the screen one of the most chilling
s of action ever to be animated.

Another imaginative bit of problem-solving called
for in *Bambi* was the drawing of the stag's majestic
antlers. To follow through the perspective of each bony
prong as the head moved about was just too compli-
cated for even the most mechanically oriented artists,
and the first filmed tests of the animation drawings
revealed rubbery, wandering antlers—a distressing loss
of majesty in what should have been the stag's crowning
glory. So, a miniature plaster model was made of the
stag's head with the full complement of antlers atop,
and this was placed beneath the glass of the old roto-
scope machine. Up on the drawing board, the artist



had the first drawing of a scene with just the head of
the stag carefully drawn in. He slowly turned and
tilted the model underneath until the head lined up
exactly with his drawing. This done, he simply traced
the horns. That drawing completed, he moved on to
the next; with a slight change in the model, more
horns were ready to trace. The result was perfect—a
bit tedious, but not nearly so demanding as the attempt
to draw it all in perspective from imagination.

Rico Lebrun had been hired as we began to work on
Bambi because of his knowledge of animals and his
ability to teach. He felt strongly that the only way to
learn all about an animal was to get your hands on it
and move it about and feel how the parts worked. He
started a search for a young fawn, but since none was
then available we contented ourselves with studying
what film we had and observing older deer at the zoo.
One day, Rico got a call from a ranger in the Forestry
Service who had come upon the carcass of a very
young fawn, no more than two days old. It was still in
good condition, and he could have it! Rico was ecstatic.

That night in class, we crowded in close to watch
the movements of the legs and the back and the head
as Rico turned the body round and round, testing the
articulation of each joint. He was enraptured with his
model; we were a bit more reserved—after all, it had
been dead for three or four days. Excitedly, he an-
nounced his plan to remove the outer layers, a little
each night, so we could learn all the intricate workings
right down to the skeleton. The whole procedure might
take ten evenings in all.

The next night, we stood farther back as Rico

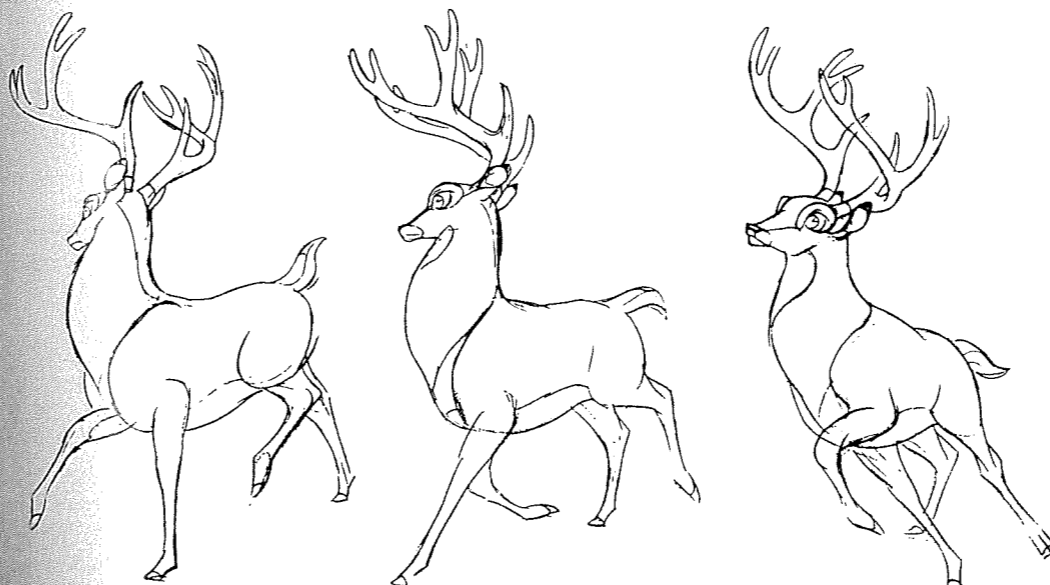


*The fawn that had been the
model for so many inspira-
tional sketches had grown
up by the time the anima-
tors started on the picture.
Here, Rico Lebrun shows
Frank Thomas how the
head fits onto the neck.
Also watching are Retta
Scott and Bob Youngquist.
(Man in foreground is keep-
er for the deer.)*

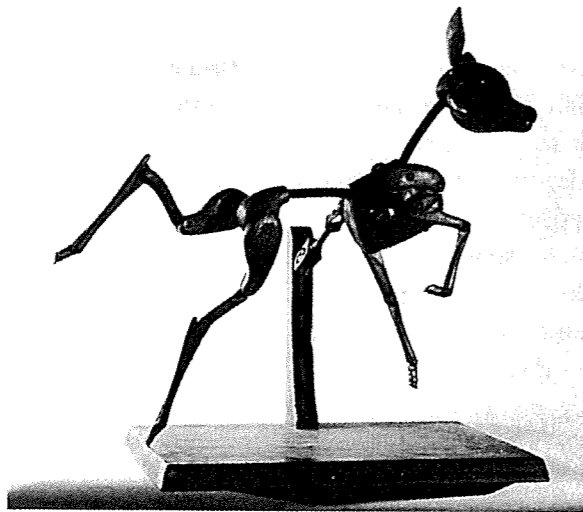
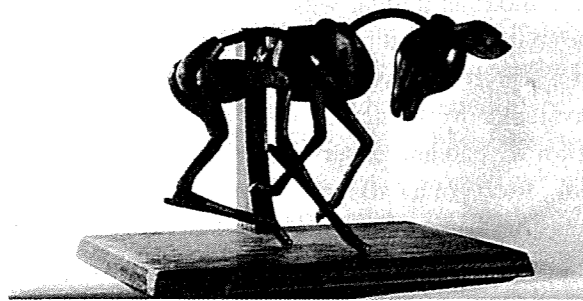
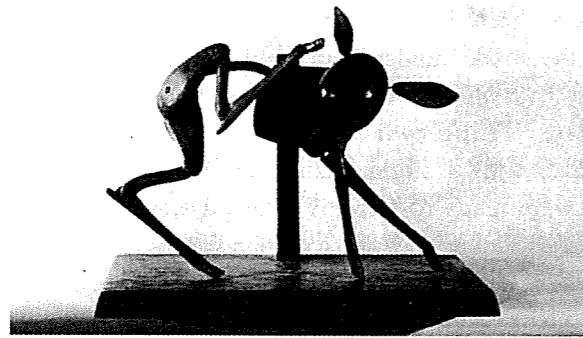
*The deer showed more in-
terest in Ollie Johnston's
drawing than in her job of
posing for the class. In
background, Milt Kahl,
left, and Bill Shull.*

ANIMATOR: Don Lusk—
Bambi.

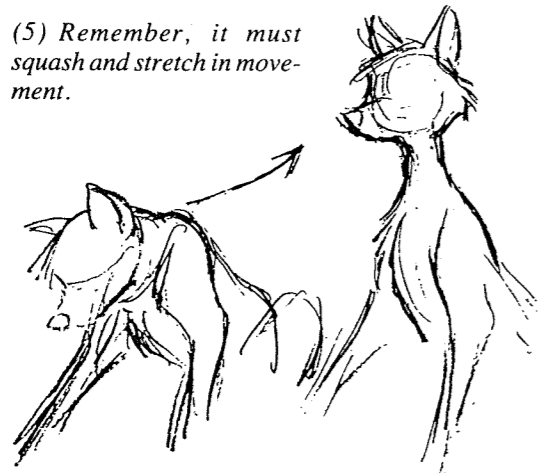
*Drawing problems were
more of a threat to the ma-
jestic stag in Bambi than
the bullets of the hunters.
No one could draw the im-
posing antlers so that the
volume and perspective
were constant from draw-
ing to drawing. The ac-
curacy seen here came from
tracing a plaster model that
could be turned in any di-
rection to match the ani-
mator's drawing.*



Expert model-makers constructed a jointed armature of a young deer for the animators to study while working on Bambi. Based on Rico Lebrun's drawings, everything moved correctly, right down to the toes.



(5) Remember, it must squash and stretch in movement.



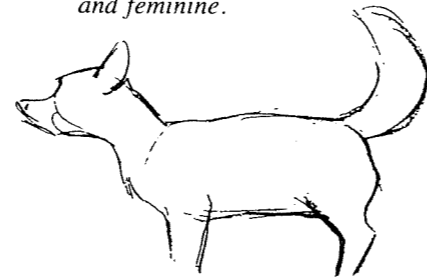
Tails and Ears Are Important Too



(1) Ears are an important part of the attitude on any animal.



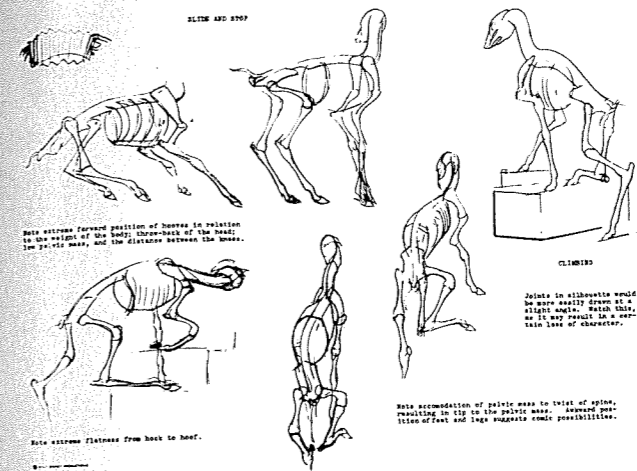
(2) Hair can be a key to personality, and many times will show how a character feels. Scraggly hair gives an unkempt, irritable look. Smooth and sleek fur is soft and feminine.



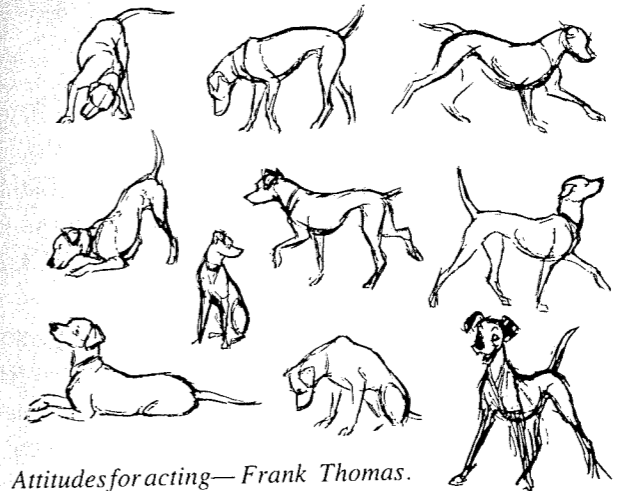
(3) Tails can do much to show the mood of an animal. They can give a perky feeling, or show dejection, or affection. They should not rest on the ground without a reason. They must have life too. Watch out for "dead" tails.



(4) The neck is often passed over when considering parts of the anatomy that can help show an attitude. It can be arched for belligerence, show alertness, be cocky with chest out, or indicate anger.



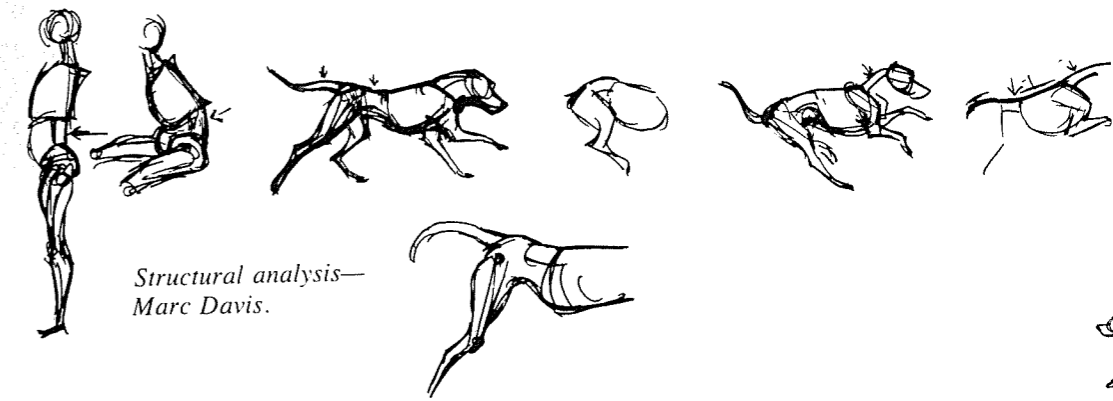
Drawings by Rico Lebrun of the skeletal construction of a fawn in various positions, done after his exhaustive research on the cadaver he brought to class.



Attitudes for acting—Frank Thomas.



Action sequences—Ollie Johnston.



Structural analysis—Marc Davis.

removed the skin—so we could examine the tendons and the remarkable principles revealed in this wonder of nature each time he contracted or extended. Each cadaver a rich aroma was pumped called to us, "Hey, fellas, get in here, we can see what this thing is doing."

We answered warmly, "Oh, we're coming from back here!"

In spite of this unique opportunity and knowledge, attendance at those evening lectures to fall off. However, Rico's enthusiasm increase in direct proportion to the longer could be described as merely finally turned us all away, but not his prize until it was only bones. furnished us with a wonderful set of studied with considerably more rel-

While it is extremely helpful to study the anatomy of an animal, its movement and grace and rhythm are just as important from a standpoint, and probably they all together. This is a comforting thought when you study a lion, or tiger, or rhinoceros, or an

Exhaustive research was always done to gain a new character. Sketching directly from the animal catches the spirit of an animal and movement. For 101 Dalmatians we used this way more often than on photostudy.

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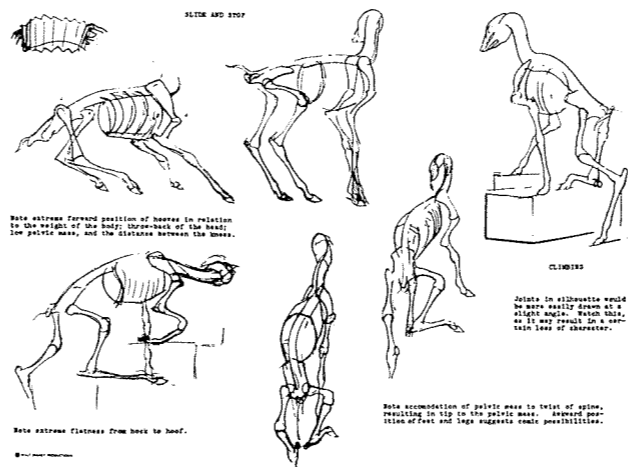
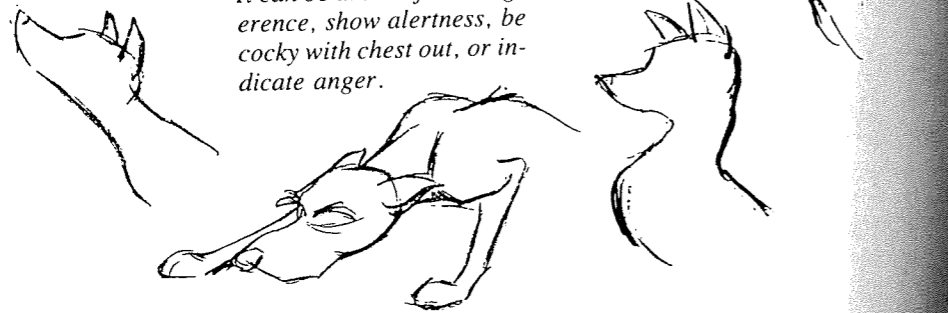


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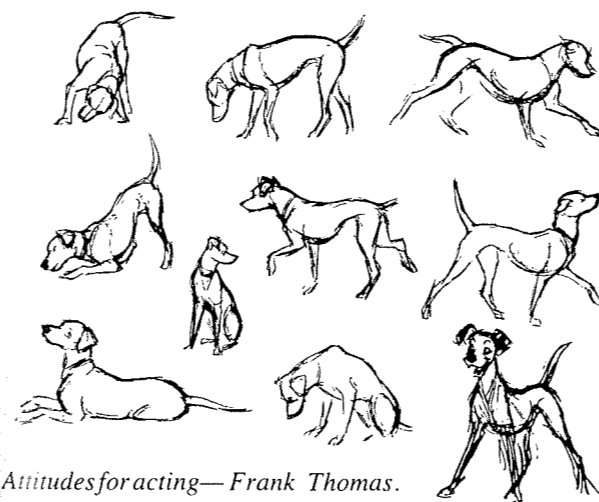


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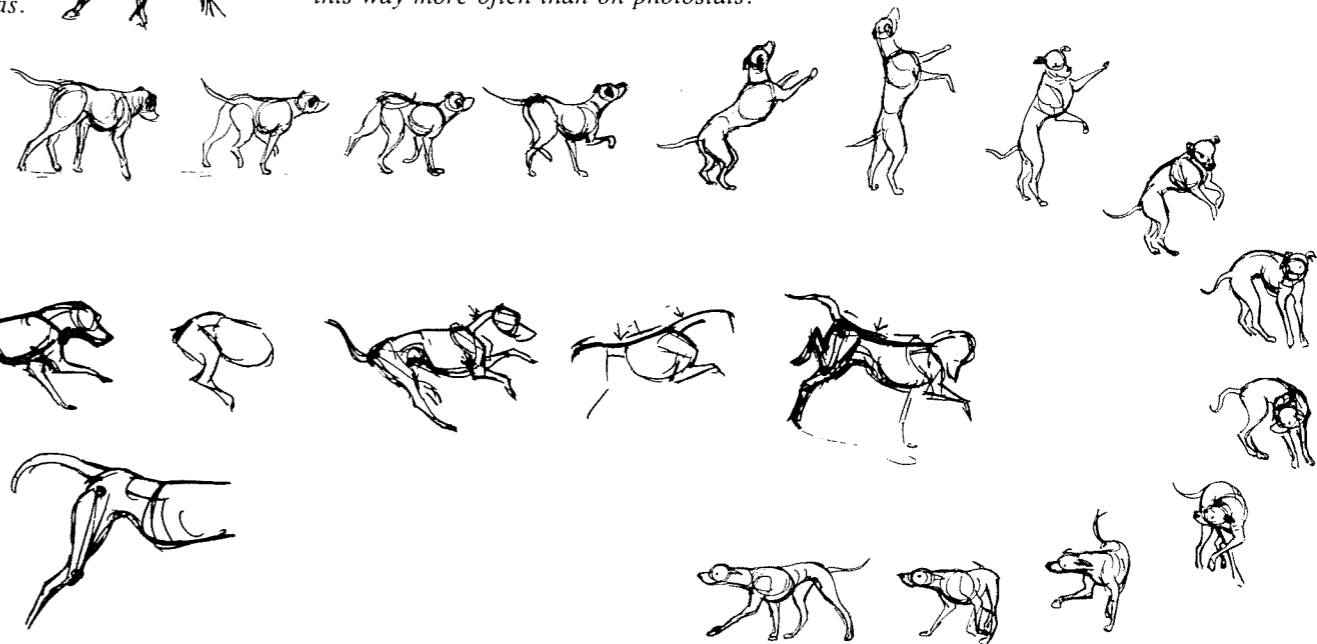


Drawings by Rico Lebrun of the skeletal construction of a fawn in various positions, done after his exhaustive research on the cadaver he brought to class.



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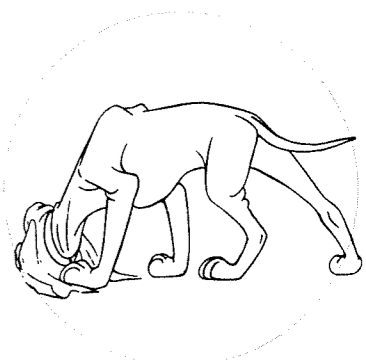
removed the skin—so we could examine the muscles and the tendons and the remarkable engineering principles revealed in this wonder of nature. Unfortunately, each time he contracted or extended any part of the cadaver a rich aroma was pumped into the air. He called to us, "Hey, fellas, get in here close where you can see what this thing is doing."

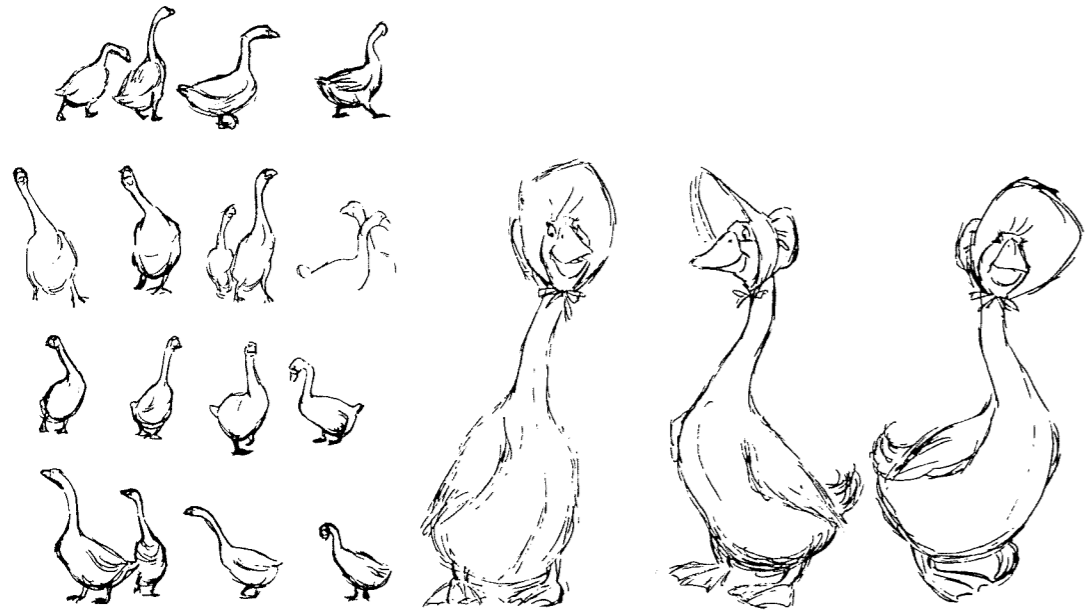
We answered warmly, "Oh, we can see just fine from back here!"

In spite of this unique opportunity to gain vast knowledge, attendance at those evening classes began to fall off. However, Rico's enthusiasm seemed to increase in direct proportion to the odor, which no longer could be described as merely pungent. Our noses finally turned us all away, but not his. He stayed with his prize until it was only bones. In the end, Rico furnished us with a wonderful set of drawings that we studied with considerably more relish.

While it is extremely helpful to understand the anatomy of an animal, its movement and timing and balance and rhythm are just as important from an animation standpoint, and probably they all should be learned together. This is a comforting thought if the subject is a lion, or tiger, or rhinoceros, or any large, wild crea-

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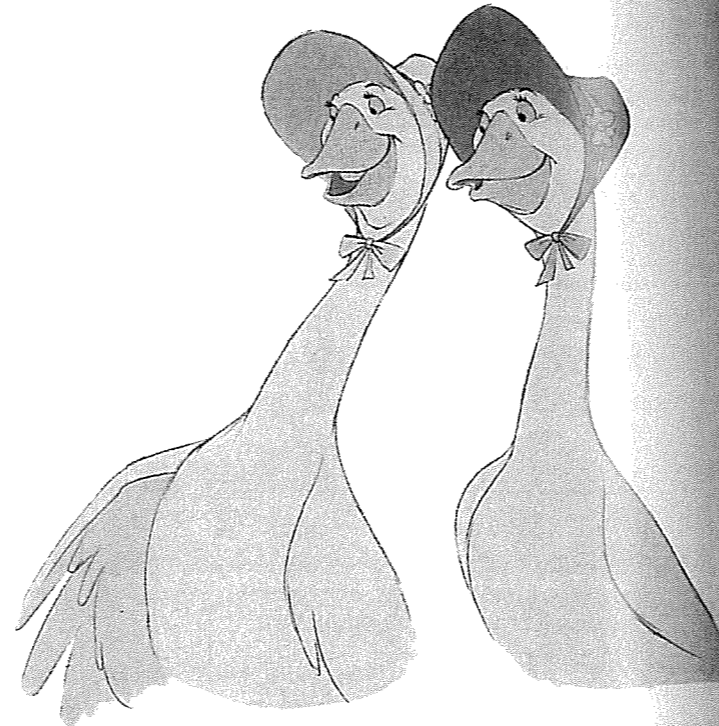


Two special characters begin to emerge in these sketches from film and from memory by Ollie Johnston. These were the geese we had photographed for a sequence in *The Aristocats*.

The vain and giddy spinsters Amelia and Abigail, as they appeared in the final design.

ture. We had little desire to probe with our fingers the inner workings of the orangutan while animating King Louie for *The Jungle Book*. A few charts of comparative anatomy and some reels of film told us as much as we wanted to know.

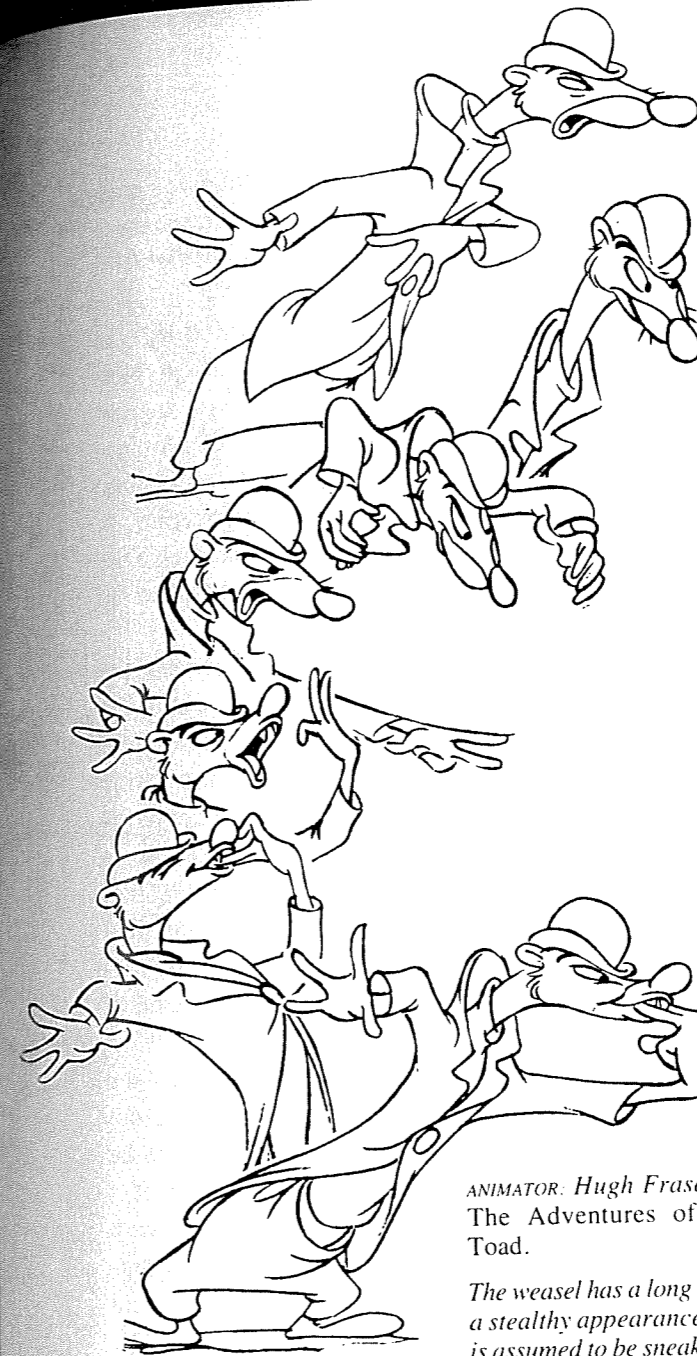
Long before our artists encountered Rico's fawn cadaver, they had been studying the general behavior of real deer at close range. The studio had been sent a pair of fawns from Maine that were kept in an area alongside the animation building, and the artists had only to glance out the window for stimulation and reference to the real thing. Despite the great value to the artist in directly observing an animal in its daily activities, when a story called for a rare or unfamiliar action from a deer it was still a major problem for the animator. In the first sequence of *Bambi* we needed to portray those initial few minutes in a fawn's existence, when it is wobbly and vulnerable and puzzled by the world, and dependent on its mother. However, nature endows fawns with a strength and coordination that develops so quickly that within only a couple of hours they are very different creatures. When the San Diego Zoo phoned to say they had a doe ready to foal any day, the studio shipped a film crew down there immediately. They set up their equipment just outside the deer's enclosure, at a spot that gave them full coverage of every part of the pen. There was no place the doe could have privacy if she desired it. Although she



had given all signs of being ready to deliver, a long night's vigil produced nothing. Nor the next day's either. The weary crew prepared for the second night under the watchful gaze of large, doe eyes. Morning came and the prospective mother was calm and reserved. The crew was exhausted.

When nothing happened during the whole day, no signs, no indications of any kind, the crew decided to get some sleep and come back about midnight, having been assured by the zookeeper that most births occur during the small hours of the morning. They were gone for barely five hours and returned still groggy and bewildered from too little sleep, but they were even more bewildered to gaze upon a frisky, playful five-hour-old fawn prancing about the enclosure. The crew went back to bed.

In contrast to live action films of humans, scenes of animal action seldom can be spliced into any kind of helpful continuity. There might be a short sequence of action scenes in a run or a fight that could be pieced together from scraps, but more often the animator has to be inventive, to find a specific place where he can use a particular action. Hopefully, he can find some film of an animal flopping down in an exhausted state, or one getting to its feet with a feeling of tired, aching muscles, or a spirited, excited turn, breaking into a run—all movements that suggest an attitude. Against this, the animator can place a line of dialogue delivered



ANIMATOR: Hugh Fraser—*The Adventures of Mr. Toad*.

The weasel has a long body, a stealthy appearance, and is assumed to be sneaky and up to no good. As a cartoon character, he became a fast-moving hoodlum.

with the same type of feeling, and with a little adjustment here and there (to improve the sync and match the phrasing) produce a scene with convincing action and believability.

For *101 Dalmatians*, scenes were shot of a dog running up stairs, stopping and turning, coming down the stairs, straining on a leash—all of which were definite aids in timing scenes for the picture and assisting animators to achieve natural-appearing action. But the scenes that brought the characters to life were

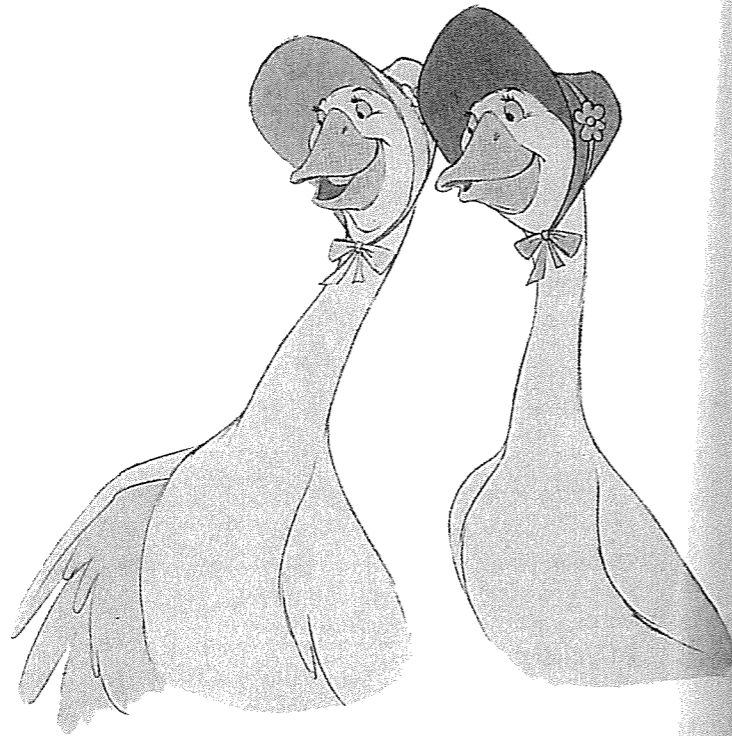
the ones imagined by the animator, the dog could have done, in ways the animator did it.

In addition to movements needing continuity, many miscellaneous actions were tried, trying to capture something of the character's own personality. These natural movements were the most helpful, since special effects were given them by adding dialogue, or special effects, thereby interjecting an external behavior.

Probably the most important rule of animal photography is, "Don't be afraid to film!" To get the natural, the animator must be unlimited in his use of the camera. The director who is only what is called for in his script will miss the wonderful things that nature does. The animator who takes the tedious business to others will miss the edge that only can come from being in the scene while attempts are made to capture the action. The best actions are invariably those that come from being in the scene.

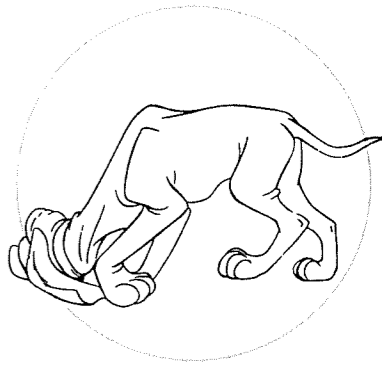
When the casting was set for us to do *Aristocats*, we borrowed a camera and visited a friend's ranch. He had a variety of assorted chickens, and a decrepit, old key who had an amazing desire to strut. The whirl of film running through the camera made him strut about with his three or four feathers askew, but it made the geese

As the geese ran, we were amazed to see they stayed together, with their necks twisted. We had expected the geese to paddled about clumsily, but the way they worked together was startling. An actor emerged for the two, which made the dialogue we were contemplating seem to spinsters on a walking tour of Florida. The geese seemed to have an almost comical preposterous turkey, but behind his two heads peering around, keeping the camera and the highly suspect character sketched from the film and from memory we had seen these girls in action, the reality of their intense ske-



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In addition to movements needed for scenes and continuity, many miscellaneous actions were filmed in trying to capture something of the individual animal's own personality. These natural movements proved to be the most helpful, since special meaning could be given them by adding dialogue, or music, or sound effects, thereby interjecting an extra quality into the behavior.

Probably the most important rule for any kind of animal photography is, "Don't be afraid to waste film!" To get the natural, the unexpected, the rare moments, there must be unlimited patience and a running camera. The director who is determined to get only what is called for in his script, and get it right, will miss the wonderful things that make an animal what he really is. The animator who leaves the whole tedious business to others will miss the firsthand knowledge that only can come from being with the animal while attempts are made to capture its unique attributes. The best actions are invariably unplanned.

When the casting was set for us to animate the geese in *Aristocats*, we borrowed a camera from the studio and visited a friend's ranch. He had two geese, some assorted chickens, and a decrepit, tattered white turkey who had an amazing desire to star in a screen test. The whirl of film running through the camera caused him to strut about with his three or four remaining tail feathers askew, but it made the geese run away.

As the geese ran, we were amazed to see how closely they stayed together, with their necks almost intertwined. We had expected the roll of the body as they paddled about clumsily, but the way the two geese worked together was startling. At once a kind of character emerged for the two, which went beyond the dialogue we were contemplating for a pair of silly spinsters on a walking tour of France. The film we took seemed to have an almost constant overlay of the preposterous turkey, but behind him were always these two heads peering around, keeping their eyes on the camera and the highly suspect man behind it. We sketched from the film and from our memory, for once we had seen these girls in action, nothing could erase the reality of their intense skepticism. The nicely