Beginner Artist's Resources

And awesome refreshers for more experienced artists!

Ctrl+Paint http://www.ctrlpaint.com/

I always recommend this site for beginners to digital art. Though they are Photoshop centric, most of the tools and techniques apply elsewhere. The free library they offer is quite extensive, divided up conveniently and easy to digest.

"How to Draw What You See" by Rudy de Reyna

A textbook I had, or as much of a textbook as any art student ever gets (we made up for the cheap books with the expensive materials). Being able to 'see' the underlying forms in objects and how shadows fall, etc., is ESSENTIAL for an artist.This skill can be applied to objects, animals, people, landscapes or anything that falls under your gaze. These lessons aren't necessarily fun, but that's a part of making anything, just like learning basic grammar is the boring part that comes before writing the next "A Song of Fire and Ice"… Or that silly shipfic floating around in your head, whichever is more fun to you.

"Drawing the Head and Figure" by Jack Hamm

I was assigned this book when I first started taking lessons. It's not awe-inspiring or anything, but it does cover all of the necessary topics of drawing human beings. I did like how it cleanly covered some of the basic rules of drawing people, like how many heads between each landmark of the body of the "ideal" body.

"Atlas of Human Anatomy" by Stephen Rogers Peck

This is a much more technical approach but that's a good thing! Having an understanding of the basic skeletal and muscular structures of the human body helps out a lot.

"Color and Light" by James Gurney

A wee bit more advanced than the others but a solid understanding of how color and light work is absolutely crucial when you start adding in shading. This is one of the best books I've seen on the topic, good for beginners and intermediates. Plus you get to look at a lot of dinosaurs, so there's that.

http://artists.pixelovely.com/practice-tools/figure-drawing/

This awesome website gives you timed photos of people to practice gesture drawing, an absolutely necessary skill in drawing humans (or anything) quickly, efficiently and with LIFE in them.

http://artist-refs.tumblr.com/

A tumblr, I know, but a fairly decently organized one with a huge range of topics. They have a nice mix of references and tutorials that cater to beginners and intermediates. They also happen to have a few things for various fandoms.

Google Image Search

Our best friend and worst enemy. Brush up on your Google-fu and turn Safe-Search off at your own peril, especially when looking up anatomy references (So many awful diseases). **Referencing is important and isn't cheating.** I don't really understand why some people don't like to use them. Everyone has to use references if we want it to look right. As you go along, you'll build up a visual library in your head, but even then USE REFERENCES if you can.

Similarly, you look up tutorials for specific things. While usually looking at the source material is best, looking at how others deconstruct things can be very useful! For example, I needed good references for how bird wings fold. I put in the relevant terms and sure enough, this tutorial came up and seemed accurate with what I already knew, photos of birds and was very thorough. So use some Google-Fu for those specific needs and some good judgement on what looks legit.

Resources for Intermediate Artists

And really awesome for anyone to look at!

Though you should definitely focus on the basics when just starting, looking at these can be a massive inspiration and give you a lot more interesting food for thought.

http://artists.pixelovely.com/practice-tools/figure-drawing/

A repeat from abouve but seriously, practicing gesture drawings is good for everyone.

Feng Zhu: https://www.youtube.com/user/FZDSCHOOL

This guy is pretty much my art hero. He focuses on concept art, so if you're looking for the finer tips on anatomy or how to render detailed illustrations, you won't find it here. However, watching his work is excellent for stretching the brain, figuring out the why of a design or how to be mindful of composition. He does go ridiculously fast and then says things like "Oh, but this took 1 hour in realtime" and it looks so good you may want to cry (or is that just me?) so just a bit of warning on that.

http://www.creativeblog.com/imaginefx

My new love. This magazine has some amazing inspiration, discussions, tutorials (with videos and resources!!!) and all around awesomeness. It is pricey but every artist I know (including me) who reads it wishes they had started reading it earlier.

"Classical Painting Atelier" by Juliette Aristides

Though obviously very oil painting centric, there's a lot to learn from the traditional methods. If you want to practice trying to achieve a classical look, you need to follow classical techniques.

Recommendations from Others

So, a long while ago, an artist-heavy skype group got into a chat about resources just like the ones I've mentioned. I compiled a doc with all the links mentioned but I haven't had the time to personally watch these beyond a few videos. So, with no commentary or order, here's what others mentioned.

Bobby Chiu: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCot0A2t5alFh29lO1ssfz4A

Cubebrush: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKtu_JtQCY0yryly6zK4ZCg

Jesus Conde: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFEzYim7zU6urFkqKm6huhg

Sycra: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5dyu9y0EV0cSvGtbBtHw_w

Xia Taptara: https://www.youtube.com/user/idrawgirls