

Children's Proportions for Artists

Eugene Fairbanks

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Serious figurative artists, especially those who specialize in portraits of children, will be amazed by the wealth of information in this book, meant to be a companion to the author's previously published work, *Human Proportions for Artists*. Those who may not have studied human anatomy, but would like to know enough to be able to draw or paint the figure accurately and confidently, will find their questions about the correct proportions to render convincing children answered comprehensively.

Artists must be aware that children are not merely "small adults;" their body proportions will vary dramatically through the various stages of development. Fairbanks has devoted the majority of his book to measurements and measurement comparison charts of idealized male and female children from birth to the age of eighteen, together with illustrations that show the developing child in a variety of positions and stances. For comparison, he has also included the body measurements of mature adult males and females, aged twenty-five to thirty. His illustrated discussion of skeletal terminology, reference points on the head, portrait details, and explanations of the anatomy of the ear and nose will benefit artists of all skill levels; even those who have a background in human anatomy will benefit from the concise review. Especially useful are the illustrations with superimposed body measurements, as these give the artist a very clear picture of how to apply them to a human form. Great attention is given to details like the actual shape and size of the skull that lies beneath the hair, the relationship of the eyebrow to the eye, and the angle of the ear relative to that of the jawline; these elements alone, to a serious figure artist, are well worth the price of the book.

Many artists have difficulty rendering hands and feet, and the inclusion of detailed explanations of their features will help in training the eye to notice their structure and parabolic form, making it possible to produce them in a manner that is not only accurate, but expressive.

That being said, this book is not for every artist. It will be most helpful to serious representational artists who specialize in drawing or painting the human figure; professional portrait artists will find much to appreciate, as the book opens both mind and eye to perceive how children's proportions differ from those of adults, and how male and female children develop at different rates to arrive at their mature form and stature.

Eugene Fox Fairbanks is a medical doctor, author, and the son of sculptor and educator Avard Fairbanks. He has had a successful career, both as a medical professional and as the writer of books on his father's work and on the proportions of the human body for artists. He is also the creator of a heroic monument to fisherman lost at sea that stands in Zuanich Point Park in Bellingham, Washington.

KRISTINE MORRIS (November 30, 2011)

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