Manga and Graphic Novel Workshop

for students grades 7-12

Week 1: Story and Character Design

The **story** (plot, journey) is everything that happens to your characters: where they go, what they do, how they react. A good story has an **arc** from beginning to end, where everything that happens in the middle is **relevant** to your characters' journeys (*cough* no filler *cough cough*).

Your **characters** are the focus of your story. Good characters **grow** (develop) over time, and are **relevant** to the people (audience) you are trying to reach with your story.

Guiding questions:
- Who is the focus of your story? What are they like as people (funny, serious, quiet, loud AF, studious, athletic, rude, shy, etc.)? What is a normal day in their lives?
- What will happen to your characters? What is the arc of their journeys through life?
- What is a possible issue or delicate situation your characters might confront that will help them grow as people? How will they change as a result of their experiences?
- Who will read your story? What is your purpose in telling it (why this story in particular)?

Exercise: character profiles, rough plot outline

Week 2: Style

Your **style** is the unique way in which you, the creator, tell your **story** and present your **characters**. Your style should reflect who you are. It's normal (and completely fine) to copy the styles of other artists while you are developing your own.

Guiding questions:
- What in particular do you like about the work of your favorite artists? What do you like about their work artistically (how do they draw faces, bodies, scenery, dialogue boxes, etc.)? What do you like about how they tell the story (dialogue, pacing, etc.)?
- What will your manga or graphic novel actually look like? How does the look of your work reflect the story your are trying to tell (is it serious, silly, realistic, cartoonish, etc.)?
- How might the look of your work change depending on what the characters are doing? Do your characters look different when they are doing or reacting to particular things?
- What will your backgrounds (what goes on behind your characters) and lettering (for speech and sound effects) look like? How much detail do you want to include?

Exercise: character expressions (images and dialogue)

<u>Week 3:</u> Storyboarding

A **storyboard** is a rough version of how you will tell your story and what it will look like. It usually includes the <u>layout</u> of your **panels** (boxes or shapes with the images of your story in them) and **dialogue boxes** (boxes or shapes with what your characters or narrator will say).

Guiding Questions:
- What is the pace (timing) of events in your story? What will you show and what will you summarize? Which moments will you slow down and which will you speed up?
- How will you depict (show, display) important moments in your characters' lives?
- How might you demonstrate emotion through the setup of your speech and dialogue boxes? What does normal speech look like? What about shouting, thinking, crying, etc.?

Exercise: storyboard your first chapter

<u>Week 4:</u> Sketching

A **sketch** is a rough drawing (first draft) of your finished work. It is usually done in pencil, and usually includes all of the <u>focus lines</u> that are essential to telling your story.

Tips: work on broad outlines first (the rough positioning of your characters and dialogue in the panel), then detail (their facial expression, what they are wearing, what they are saying). This will help you avoid erasing your hard work if things need to get changed around!

<u>Week 5:</u> Inking

Inking is the process of going over the lines of your sketch with <u>permanent ink</u>. This step separates the temporary, casual work of a sketch from the more permanent look of professional graphic art.

Tips: remember that ink is permanent (arugheriuteksakweifjvldk;afjswu*&^$#!*@%#) and it is difficult to fix your mistakes!! take your time, work carefully, and remember it does not have to be perfect. if you mess up and want to change a line, you can use whiteout, cover part of the paper with new paper, or scan and finish inking your work digitally using a drawing tablet.

<u>Week 6:</u> Texturing

Texturing is the process of adding <u>structure</u> and <u>depth</u> to your drawings. This step makes your work feel real (touchable, tangible). It is usually done with ink or screens, but can also be done with color.

Tips: consider what the objects and materials you are portraying actually look and feel like (how can you convey what it is like to see and touch those things with ink or color? are your lines smooth, bumpy, round, sharp, etc.?). lines close together convey darker colors, lines further apart convey lighter colors. lines can also help reinforce movement and mood!

<u>Circle Schedule (10-15 min)</u>

Week 0: names + favorite manga or graphic novel, interest in art v. story, initial brainstorming
Week 1: names + favorite character and why, character profile and plot outline brainstorming
Week 2: favorite thing this week + one aspect of your favorite artist's style
Week 3: tell a one-sentence short story + panel breakdown (rigid v. open, straight v. round, one v. many, close together v. far apart)
Week 4: 2-minute sketch and share + sketching breakdown (positioning, dialogue, detail)
Week 5: 2-minute ink and share + inking breakdown (panels, characters, background, dialogue)
Week 6: 2-minute texture and share + texturing breakdown (materials, movement, mood)
Week 7: workshop reflection + presentations (time split among those present)