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License Holder: *Faezeh Naderi Sadr*



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Designed by: *Hamed Vahedi*

Address :

Language & Literature Faculty of Azad University
Science & Research Branch, Hadis Alley, Kabirzade St,
Chahar Bagh Sq, Jannat Abad Place, Tehran

Tel: 021 44409101

Telefax: 021 44409101

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A brief history of caricatures



Caricatures by Da Vinci

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary tells us that the word caricature comes from the Italian *caricare*: to load and that it means exaggeration by means of often ludicrous distortion of parts or characteristics. In his book, *How to Draw Caricatures*, Lenn Redman wrote that the essence of caricature is exaggeration—not distortion. He suggests that caricaturists exaggerate for the sake of truth, as opposed to distorting in order to deny that truth.

Many caricature artists shape the way today's caricaturists draw and approach their art. Some shaped the very society in which they lived.



Caricature by Thomas Nast: *Can the Law Reach Him?*

In the mid-to-late 1800s, Thomas Nast became the most influential American political cartoonist of the time, helping to bring down the Boss Tweed ring and New York's corrupt Tammany Hall political machine with his caricatures. Along the way, he created our popular image of Santa Claus and the G.O.P. elephant.

The turn of the century brought the stylized works of Mexican American Miguel Covarrubias who was published in *Vanity Fair*, *Fortunes*, and the *New Yorker*. His pen and ink work was sharply geometric and his watercolors and gouaches still maintained the same dramatic yet highly stylized exaggeration.



Caricature by Miguel Covarrubias:
Impossible Interview: Clark Gable vs. Edward, Prince of Wales

His distortion and exaggeration is almost beyond belief, yet German caricature artist Sebastian Kruger retains a distinct likeness in all of his work. When addressing the National Caricaturist Network as their guest speaker in 2000 and again in 2003, he explained how he uses acrylics to create his surreal art.



caricature by Sebastian Kruger:
Sylvester Stallone



Caricatures by Monet

Al Hirschfeld was born in 1903 and was still publishing caricatures when he died in 2003. He will always be remembered for his caricatures of the New York theatre. The simple, elegant, economical lines that were his trademark made him perhaps the most famous caricaturist of our time.

The NCN is an association of caricature artists from around the world. At their annual convention, they have a competition among attending artists. Here are samples from the winners from the past few years:

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Batman splash page for MAD by Tom Richmond, 2000, 1999 winner



Steve Silver Michael Jordan by
2001 Winner



Morgan Freeman by Paul
Gaunt, 2002 Winner



Roger Hurtado Elvis by
, 2004 Winner



Court Jones Clint Eastwood by
, 2005 Winner



Kage Nakanishibay
2007 Winner