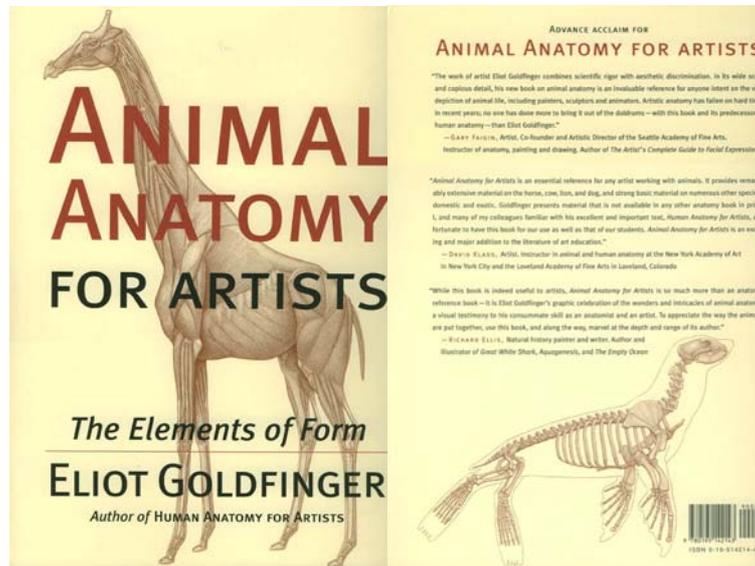


Goldfinger, E. 2004. *Animal anatomy for artists. The elements of form.* – Oxford, Oxford University Press

Book review by M.H. Kriek



In more than 250 pages with over 570 illustrations (most of them original handmade pencil drawings) Eliot Goldfinger delivers an excellent reference guide on animal anatomy. With a scientific approach Goldfinger sets out describing the ideas of basic form and elements of (animal and human) anatomy. He explains and illustrates how muscle and bone together form the strong basis for body composition, creating what he calls the body plan: a standard conception of how an animal body is constructed. Understanding this body plan is necessary for a thorough perception of the outer surface of the animal body. As Goldfinger himself explains in the introduction of his book (p. xi), it is the understanding of that what lies beneath this outer surface which is of utmost importance to the artist: “Artwork can embellished with the most numerous of details, but it must conform to a greater concept of larger shapes and volumes”.

Goldfinger continues after this explanatory part with showing that the body plan is transferable to all animals (classified in groups) he presents in his book by minutely illustrating the different muscle groups and bone collectives of the animals, showing in detail all the small individual differences, but more importantly, the large similarities they have in the way their bodies are constructed.

The second half of the book is a presentation of individual animals in a catalogue like order. Common animals like the cat, dog, cow, horse, pig and rabbit, and wild species like the lion, elephant, deer, giraffe, camel, rhinoceros, hippopotamus and sea lion all get a two page study in detail by means of drawings that illustrate their bone structure, their muscle structure and their appearance. There even is a section on bird anatomy with a very thoroughly researched study on their feather structure.

The author has created a very sound and thorough way of looking at body anatomy and construction in general and, together with the detailed studies of individual animals, has made a reference guide that will not only be of great use to artists in general working on animal form (illustrators, sculptors, painters etc.) but also to those with an interest in the better understanding of nature itself. A truly impressive piece of work!

Goldfinger, E. 2004. *Animal anatomy for artists. The elements of form.* – Oxford, Oxford University Press. 242 pp. ISBN 0 19 514214 4. Price \$ 50.00 (hardback).