



CREATIONS

For students in 3rd & 4th years

3-Week Project: Professional Portrait Painting

Overview: Students will work on a self portrait in the same manner that professional painters do.

Step 1. (10 minutes) Set up for your portrait with a mirror at a good height for you to work, and a light for good shadows. Try moving the items around to look at your face from several angles and lighting effects. Don't just settle for the first thing that happens. Make the world conform to your own viewpoint.

Step 2. (20 min) Warm up loose sketches. Create 10 different charcoal sketches on 4 sheets of 14" x 17" paper. Make 4 per page for the first eight sketches, and then make larger sketches with one per page. Use these sketches to specifically LEARN about the proportions of your face and how the shadows work.

Step 3. (22) Make two pencil sketches, beginning with big shapes and proportions before practicing some of the details. Take your time. One of the sketches should be small and have no shading because you'll add oil pastels to it. the other sketch will become your final portrait, so make sure it is big enough to cover the canvas, and that you like the way it looks, getting everything as accurate as you desire. If you want to be more expressive, and less accurate, that is fine.

End of Part 1 (if dividing into two sessions)

Step 4. (5) Set up for acrylic painting. Tape a sheet of canvas to a board or use a stretched canvas.

Step 5. (15) Use your largest brush to cover the canvas with a thin coating of a warm color of your choice. Orange works well, but you can also try red or brown colors. Do NOT use any white, but add a little water to the paint to make it spread easily and cover well. Set aside to dry and put away acrylics.

TIP: If you want to get more creative with your colors, try using a cool color instead.

Step 6. (10) Use oil pastels to create a color practice version of your portrait over the pencil sketch you made in STEP 3.

Step 7. (20) If you can make a copy of your good sketch from STEP 3, that is helpful. Otherwise make a tracing of the outline and main features. You can tape the sketch and a new piece of paper on a window so you can see to trace it easily. Then cut out the copy or outline you've made so you can place it on the dry canvas (use a blow dryer if needed).

Trace the outline of your copy using your canvas pencil. You can then coat the back of your copy or tracing with some graphite (rub the side of the pencil lead over it - making sure it's the back and not the actual drawing side). Re-position the cutout face on the canvas, lining it up with your outline, and then draw over the lines of the main features so you transfer the graphite, making guidelines for the bottom of the nose, eyes, and mouth.

TIP: place a book underneath a stretched canvas so you have a surface to press against.

Step 8. (5) Clean up your area and save your materials for next week.