

DDLETB Art Lesson

Charcoal Portrait with White Chalk

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Materials Used:

*Grey Paper
*(any colour paper may be used)
Charcoal pencil
white chalk pencil
rubber

1. To Begin, study your copy or whatever picture or source you will be working from. Understand where the light is and the direction it is coming from. Also the types of shadows created.

2. Sketch lightly the shape of the head on the page by first drawing an oval shape. Remember to use the central median line. Ask yourself, " Is the central median line running right down the middle of my head, left of center or right of center?" Once you determine this then position the guidelines of the brow, nose and mouth. Remember the lower eyelids are placed at the middle of the head.

3. Next block in the shadow shapes of your portrait. Use a single tone or shade to block in all the shadow shapes. Try not to differentiate the tones but keep a simple solid tone for all of the shadows. All the while keeping in mind where the direction of the light is coming from.

4. Now alter or correct the drawing by fine tuning the shapes and outer contour. Draw the finer shapes, the more subtle ones that will bring about the character of the portrait. Remember that simple straighter lines will bring out the character more. Soften or harden the shadow edges. Ask yourself, " Is this a form shadow or a cast shadow?"

5. Keep refining the shapes until you are satisfied with the likeness. Try turning the drawing and copy upside down and view it this way along with your copy. By viewing it upside down you are getting away from a "Likeness" and you will be seeing it from another point of view. In doing this you will only see shapes and not "a likeness."

6. Now proceed with the white chalk. Only place the white chalk on the brightest areas first. Study just how much brighter the forehead is as compared to the rest of the face. Try not to overload the drawing with too much white chalk. The head is a ball. That being said the highlights will radiate out from the lightest area and gradually become dimmer as the light moves along the roundness of the face.

7. Remember to use the grey paper as a "tone." Try not to cover all the grey with the white or the charcoal. The grey will be acting as the middle tone. You will be amazed how details will suddenly be drawn without you physically drawing them in.

8. Practice this technique using any photograph of a portrait you can get your hands on taken from either the newspapers or magazines. This is a wonderful way to perfect your skills. You can similarly use this technique with landscape or still life. The more you practice the better you will become!