

Portrait

However, people vary from the 'classical norm' in many ways - length of nose and width of jaw etc... Only careful observation can successfully show these individual differences and complete a very real looking portrait.



The sitter's 'hooked' nose seems to defy the classical rule.



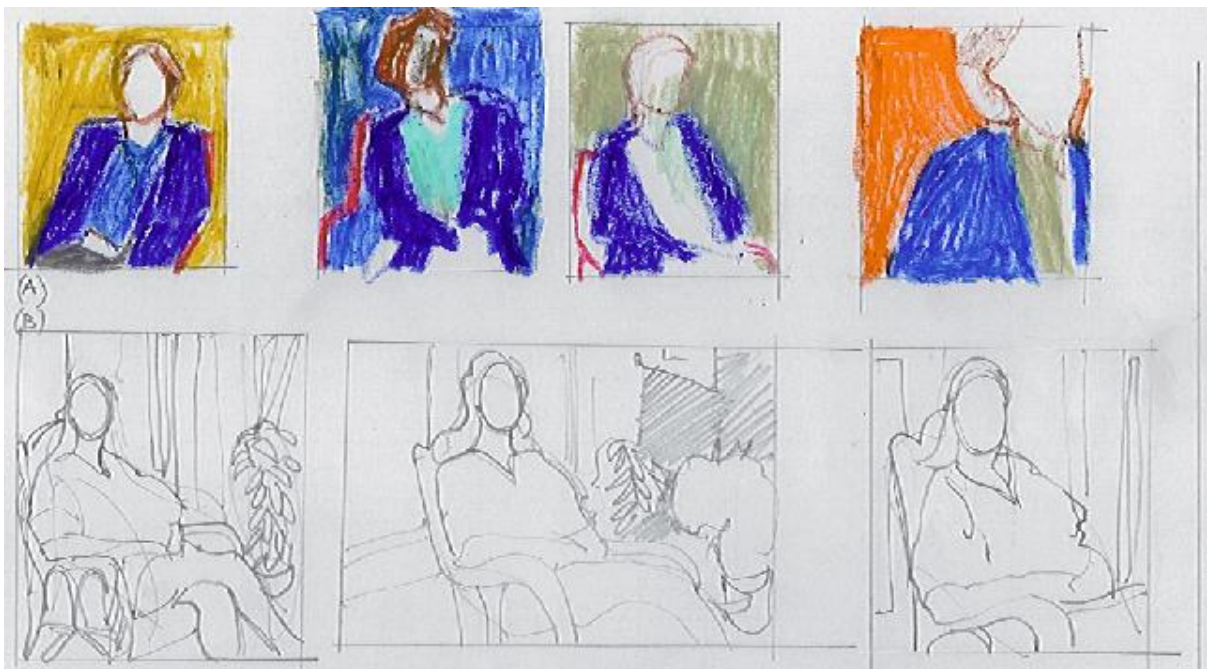
Left - Note the distinctive chin!

Portrait

Let us look generally at the possibilities of composition with the considerations of shape and colour balance. We will then consider the other elements of backgrounds, pose and settings, as well as lighting, separately.

It is helpful as you think about beginning work on your portraits to make a few composition studies, bearing in mind that colour and shape are both important elements. Try the technique of cutting a rectangular shape out of paper and viewing your subject through the frame. Or alternatively cut two L-shaped brackets which can be moved and adjusted to form a rectangle of any proportions.

Here are some examples for you to consider. Do try some of your own.



Studies for composition.

(A) Colour and Shape

(B) Position in square or rectangle.

Study Unit 13

Acrylic

The advent of acrylic paint in the early part of this century was the most significant discovery in artists' materials for many years. It offered the rich colouring of oil, with the advantages of being water-based and fast drying. While the glazes painted in oil paints take a long time to dry the acrylic glazes dry in minutes. It can also be used for underpainting and a base for oil. It can be applied both as a rich impasto and a transparent glaze and while it may resemble watercolour or oil it is in fact a medium in its own right. It is a harder and more permanent medium resisting adverse conditions.

SUPPORTS

Acrylics can be used on almost any type of surface without priming, although acrylic primer can be used on canvas and hardboard. Commercially prepared surfaces are available - canvas, boards and paper. Make sure that the surface is treated for acrylics and not for oils. Pads of acrylic paper can be found in art shops for colour sketching.

BRUSHES

Brushes suitable for oil or watercolour are generally suitable for acrylic also. There are synthetic types suitable for both impasto and translucent washes. Palette and painting knives can also be used with acrylics.

Almost every manufacturer of artist materials produces its own brand of acrylic paint and the thickness of the paint depends on the brand. Rowney makes a 'Flow' formula series, and PVA colours are cheaper and thinner than acrylics. Large quantity acrylics are generally cheaper - made with less costly pigments.

Acrylic paints can be mixed with other materials. They can be used with collages, especially as it is an adhesive in its own right. Acrylic can also be mixed with sand or other material to create textures.

DILUTANTS

Acrylics are water-based and the basic medium for mixing is water, though there are several substances to make a gloss or matt surface and one to slow down the drying time. Acrylics dry very quickly and a working process needs to be adapted to this feature. Gel medium and texture paste both build up the thickness of paint and are particularly effective when added with a palette knife.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Usually the equipment used for oils or watercolour can be used for acrylic. It is best to use a white clean-off palette, because acrylic dries very hard. Rowney produce a 'stay-wet' palette that keeps colours wet for a few days if you find that easier.