



## **Step 1 Preparing the Canvas**

### **Semi Transparent Ground**

Prepare a semi transparent ground using Burnt Umber and Linseed oil. Cover the canvas then wipe as much of the paint off as possible using a good quality kitchen towel. Something that doesn't leave a lot of lint behind.

Note; If the canvas surface is too oily then the paint will not take and skate around on the surface.

### **Dry Brushing Technique**

This is a dry brushing technique using only pure pigment (no linseed oil) which is wiped off with kitchen towel depending on the value we are trying to achieve i.e. a loaded brush would be a full value and a brush that has been wiped will be used for the lighter values.

### **About the Technique**

This is a good introduction to using oil paint as it is similar to using a pencil or charcoal because it uses the white of the canvas for the lights and building up tones for the darks.

**Brush =** Rosemary size 10 (Rosemerry Chungking Bristle Extra Long Filberts)



## **Step 2 Boundary Box (Construction)**

### **Warning**

Like any building we start by laying a strong foundation and then later finishing with the details which seems counter-intuitive to most beginners wanting to start with the details which usually results in a mess.

### **Placement**

Think about the size of the head and where the head will be placed on the canvas. Remember that if the person is looking to the left or right to give enough space to look into.

### **Plumbline**

Establish a plumb line to measure the widths of the head.

### **Top Bottom Sides**

Set a boundary box to contain the head, if you find yourself going beyond this boundary then something is wrong. Heads can grow if this rule not observed.

### **Extremities**

Now starting to draw the outline of the head. The easiest measurements to find would be the changes of direction along the edge of the boundary box.





### **Step 3 Outline (Construction)**

Establish the outline of the head by plotting the major changes of angle and connecting them with a straight line.

#### **Why we use straight lines?**

- Helps to simplify complex shapes
- Easier to adjust
- Gives an architectural strength i.e. curved lines aren't as strong as straight lines

Note the evidence of two curves that have been dissected to establish the hairline on the top of the head.

**Brush Size = Rosemary 3**





#### **Step 4 Brow Nose Bottom Lip (Construction)**

##### **Proportions,**

Look for the proportional differences of the head. The ideal is that the distance between the hairline, brow, bottom of the nose and chin are equally distant thirds.

##### **Variation**

Ideally the bottom of the Nose is halfway between the Brow and the Chin and the bottom lip is halfway between the bottom of the Nose and Chin.

So now we need to find the proportional distances i.e. the size of chin varies between men and women. Men usually have a larger jaw than women.

**Comparative Measurements**, once we have established the proportions by establishing the difference of





### **Step 5 Smaller Boundary Boxes (Construction)**

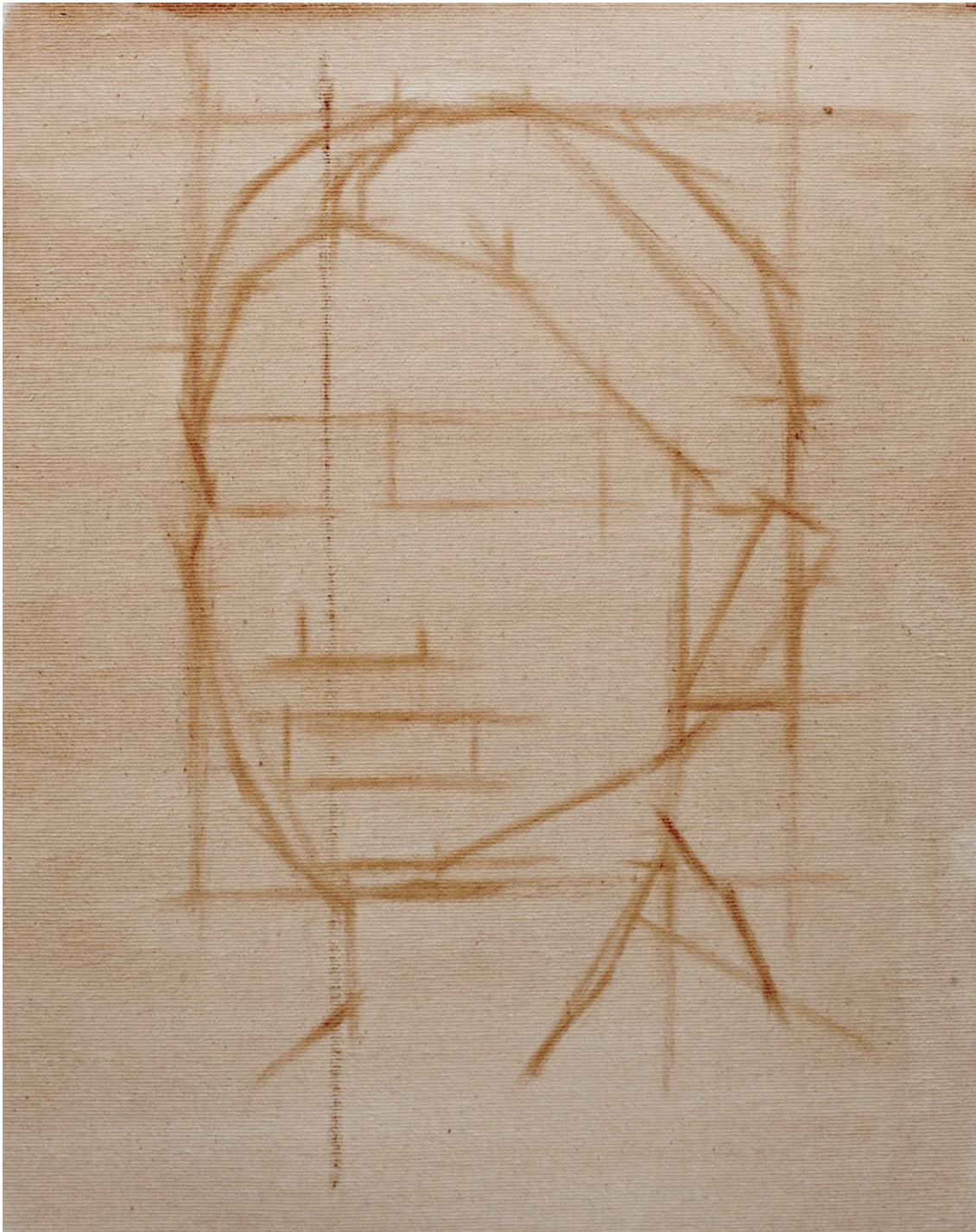
#### **Top Bottom Sides**

Plot the boundary box for each feature looking for the top bottom and sides of the eyes, nose, mouth and ears.

#### **Rinse Wash Repeat**

It's the same process as plotting the outline of the head but getting smaller and smaller, the outline of every shape has a top bottom and sides.





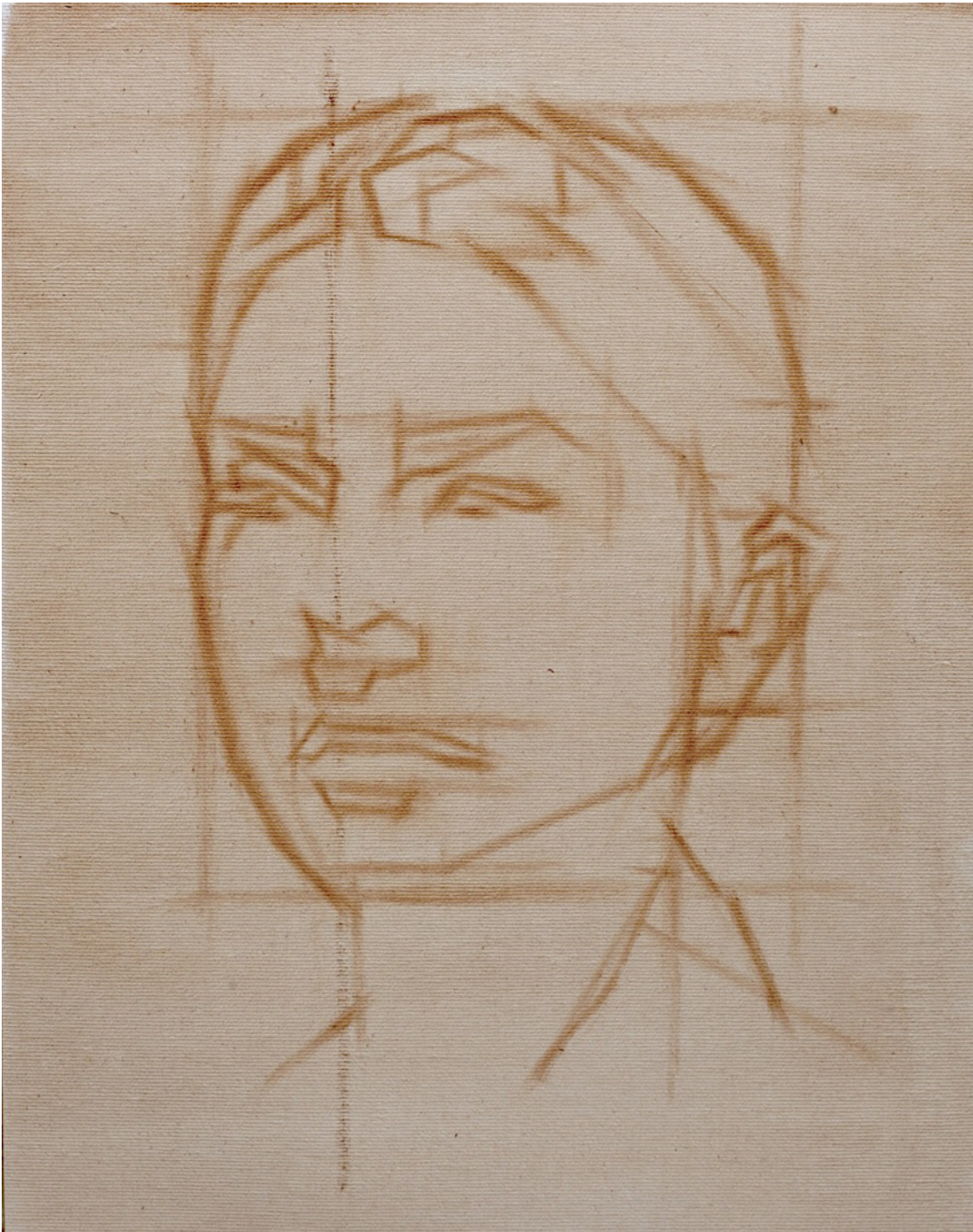
### **Step 6 Inner Outline (Construction)**

#### **Hair and Jaw line**

Establish the major changes of angle along the hair line and jaw line that frame the face.

We began outside of the head gradually working into the centre, its good practice to set your perimeter and then work within, its an common mistake to begin with the features and then work out as the head can grow much larger than expected.





### **Step 7 Features (Construct)**

#### **Major Changes of Angle**

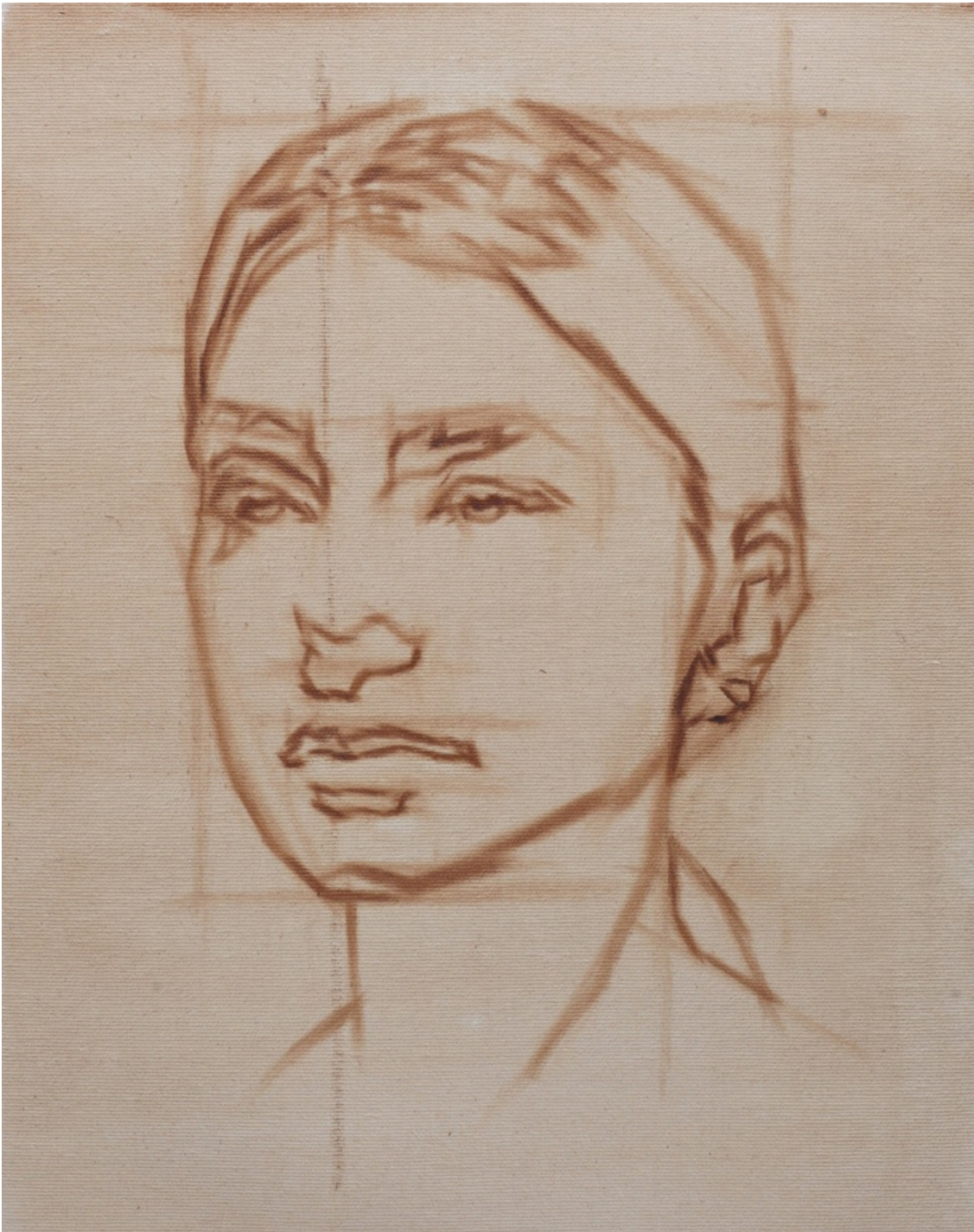
Same principle as the outline of the head but on a smaller scale. The eye socket is represented by a boundary box and the eyelids by another smaller boundary box then we look for major changes of angle for the brow and the eye lids

#### **Construct**

Remember this is the construct stage, once everything is established then we can start with the smaller details. The less time we invest the easier to correct, so avoid the temptation of details.

Plot the major changes of angle boundary box for the outline of each feature looking for the top bottom and sides.





### **Step 8 Smaller Changes of Angle (Articulation)**

#### **Smaller Changes of Angle**

Now its time to describe the detail. Looking for the smaller changes of angle. Don't get to carried away as we will be painting over the edges and bringing them back again in the later stages.

**Brush Size** = Rosemerry 1 or 0





### **Step 9 Shadow Shapes (Silhouette)**

Filling the shadow shapes with one flat tone about half of the full tonal value of the paint. We want nice neat flat tone overall, that's "a flat tone", yes you read this correct "a flat tone"

Q. Why do we want a flat tone?

A. if your shadow shapes are shaded with an irregular brush strokes then it creates a camouflage effect. Camouflage is used to confuse the shape of an object so you will not be able to see your shapes clearly and correct them accurately.

This is the silhouette stage, once your shadow shapes are filled in then the silhouette of the shadows should look like the person, if not then don't kid yourself things aren't going to get any better. Bite the bullet now and make the corrections necessary.

**Brushes** = Rosemary 6,3,1





## Step 10 Grouping of the Darks

### Average Tone

Looking for a flat average tone for the shadows, hair, backgrounded and skin tone. Note, I'm using the ground as a skin tone which is around a 2-3 if 1 is white and 9 is black on the tonal scale.

Avoid the halo effect which occurs when we try to carefully paint around the edges in order to preserve the work they have already done by painting over the edges and then bringing them back again.

### Q. How do we evaluate an average tone?

A. i.e. shadows look for the lightest and darkest part of the shadows and think what tone would be halfway between the two.

### Q. Why do we group the darks?

A. The surrounding tones effect the tone your looking at, i.e a mid gray tone would appear darker on a white surface than on a toned surface because the contrast of the white background is much stronger making it appear. By putting in these larger areas of tone we can evaluate the more subtle tones in the later stages much more accurately.

**Brushes** = Rosemary 10, 6, 3, 1





### **Step 11 Lightest Light Darkest Dark**

#### **Lightest Light**

Indicate the lightest part of the form which is the top of the forehead.

#### **Eraser**

Use a brush with a little oil to reveal the white of the canvas and dab with kitchen roll to take out the tide mark.

#### **Darkest Dark**

Look for the darkest dark in shadow, hair or the background. In this case the darkest dark will be the area above and below the ear.

#### **Q. Why do we do this?**

A. To establish the tonal range, i.e. by establishing the lightest light it gives us an idea of how much we need to lighten or darken the surrounding area. Same for the darkest dark

Brushes = Rosemary 3





## Step 12 Big Form Modelling Fall of Light

### Gradation

Paint a gradation from the edges of the face towards the lightest light of the forehead using a 6-7 Rosemary Brush. If the lights surrounding the lightest light are too dark then use a clean brush the same size slightly oiled to reveal the lights.

### Q. Why big form model?

**A.** To establish the illusion of the overall form of the head. as the sides of the head turn away from the light source the darker they become.

Q. What is the fall of light?

**A.** The further from the light source the darker the form becomes. i.e the neck area will be darker than the forehead because it's farther from the light source.

### Counterintuitive

Big form modelling is probably the most difficult concept to understand for two reasons. It just seems like a waste of time. A lot of this stuff appears to be but only when you repeat the process and test its efficiency will you understand.

### Temptation

The biggest problem with this concept is that people just can't resist getting stuck into the smaller forms.

**Brushes =** Rosemary 6, 3  
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### **Step 13 Big Form Modelling the Darks**

#### **Gradation**

Paint a gradation from dark to light, from the ear to the clavicle.

#### **Q. What is reflected light?**

A. The light reflected into the shadow from an illuminated surface. In this it's case the light bounced up from the chest.

Note, the further from the light source the darker the reflected light becomes.

**Brushes = 6**





#### **Step 14 Lightest Lights Darkest Dark Features**

##### **Value Range**

Just as we established the value range of the overall form, we do the same for the smaller features and look for the lightest light and darkest dark of each feature.

**Eraser** = Cotton wool bud

**Brushes** = Rosemary 1





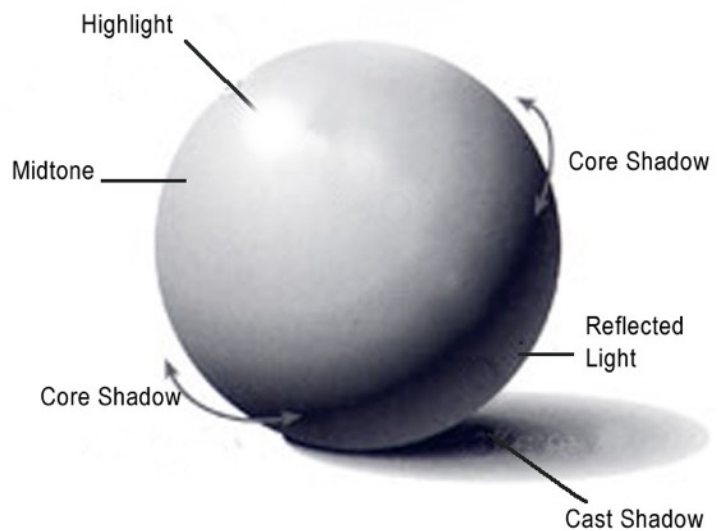
**Step 15**  
**Render the shadows**

We render the shadows first to establish the value range of the darks to compare the lights of the face.

**Anatomy of light**

It's important to understand the anatomy of light before attempting to render the shadows.

Note the core shadow around the edge of the jaw and the reflected light at the back and along the underside of the jaw.







## Step 16 Planes of the Face

### Structure

After establishing the tonal range of the overall form it's time to start chiseling out the features.

### Big Planes

Divide the head into the big planes first, looking for the line that divides the front from the sides of the face along the line from the ear to the corner of the lip and along the edge of the temple.

### Smaller Planes

Now divide the features into smaller planes looking for a simplified approximation of the front and sides.

### Approximation

At this stage we are looking for an approximation of each plane.

Note observe the planes of the Assaro Head and adapt them to fit the structure of the model's face.

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## Step 17 Finishing Features Left Eye

### Finishing

Now that everything is set to start finishing each feature. Starting with the eye.

### Hierarchy

Observe the hierarchy of edges from the sharpest to softest edges i.e. the sharpness of the two edges meeting at the front of top eyelid, compared to the softness of the two edges meeting along the light edge of the eyebrow.

### Gradations of Each Plane

Looking for the gradation of tone of each plane from top to bottom and front to back

### Edges Soft and Sharp

How the edge of each plane connects to the other, some may have sharp edges and some soft.

### Edges Contrast

The contrast of an edge whether it be lighter or darker can make it look sharp or soft.





### **Step 18 Finishing the nose**

#### **Lights Come Forward and Darks Recede**

note the lightest light which will sit on the ball of the nose to bring it forward and then the highlights get darker as they recede up the bridge of the nose sending it back.

#### **Detail sits on Form**

The flare of the nostril sits within the value range of the side of the nose. i.e.the lights or darks describing the nostril should neither be too dark or light should they interfere with the overall sideline of the nostril.





### **Step 19 Finishing the Lips**

#### **Reflected Light**

Note the reflected light being bounced up into the top lip from the bottom.

#### **Core Shadow**

The shadow edges of the top lip have varying degrees of softness and sharpness along the core shadow.

#### **Edges**

The edges of her left top lip are sharper towards the front and softer towards the back.





## **Step 20 Finishing the Right Eye**

### **Making the Eye Recede**

With the receding eye play down the sharpness of edges and contrast of highlights so the eye sits back into space. The closer something is the sharper it is the further away the softer it is.

### **Nearer = Sharper Stronger**

Things that are closer have sharper edges and stronger contrast.

### **Further = Softer**

The further things are the softer the edges and the softer the contrast.





## **Step 21 Finishing the Ears**

### **Highlights**

Make sure highlights or accents and edges are played down to maintain the illusion of the overall form.

### **Big form Modelling**

The tonal range in the lights of the ears are darker than the reference photo to make them recede back in order to make the lights of the face come forward.

Its a good practice to constantly keep in mind the overall form of the head and make sure that the shadows and the darker halftones towards the sides of the head are receding by making the sharp edges softer and the contrasting accents and highlights weaker.





## **Step 22 Finishing the Hair**

### **Highlights**

Make sure highlights, accents and edges are played down to maintain the illusion of the overall form.

### **Accents**

Dark and light accents were added to suggest hair strands at the front of the hairline to bring it forward and less information was added at the back to make the back of the head recede.





## **Step 22 Finishing Touches**

### **Conclusion**

The most difficult part of academic painting is temptation. The temptation of putting in the details too early. The most overlooked and misunderstood part of this process is the big form modelling. You have to constantly be aware of the overall form, making sure the details are either coming forward or receding depending where they sit.

### **Last Minute Additions**

I took the strands of hair out behind the ear, thought it would look stronger without.

Added some context to the shoulder line, her head was starting to look like a lollipop.

Didn't get too involved with necklace and top as they're just trimmings and didn't want to distract eye from the face.