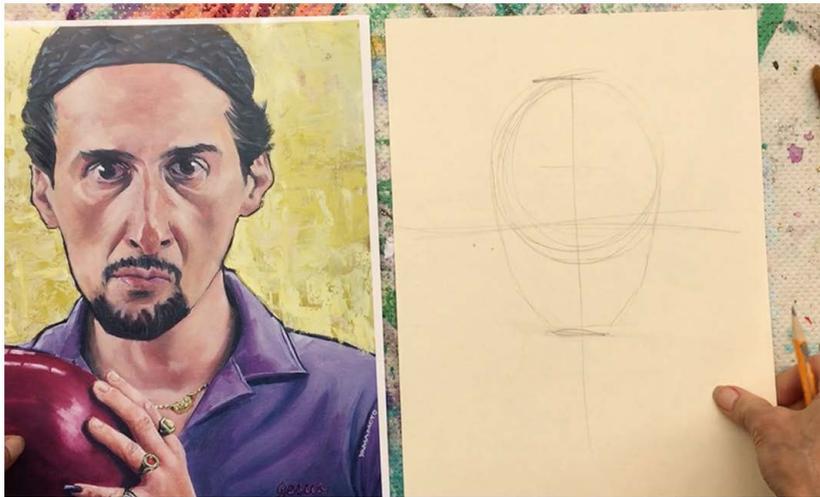


“Drawing the Portrait - The Full Frontal”

page 1

When the subject is looking directly at the viewer it is called a “full frontal” and we will work from a painting of mine taken from a character named Jesus from the movie “The Big Lebowski.” I always start by marking with a little horizontal line where I want to place the top middle of the head and the bottom of the chin. In looking at my reference material, I look at the general volume of the cranium and I draft in loosely a circle which should take up 3/4 of the length between the top of the head to the bottom of the chin. Next, I take a line right down the middle which marks the center of the head and then right in the middle cross ways I draft in another line. These two lines will help me place the facial features. Eyeballing my reference material, I draft in holding my pencil loosely to make soft lines of the jaw along both sides of the circle to the chin. In this case, Jesus’s chin is skewed to the left a bit so I took that into consideration.



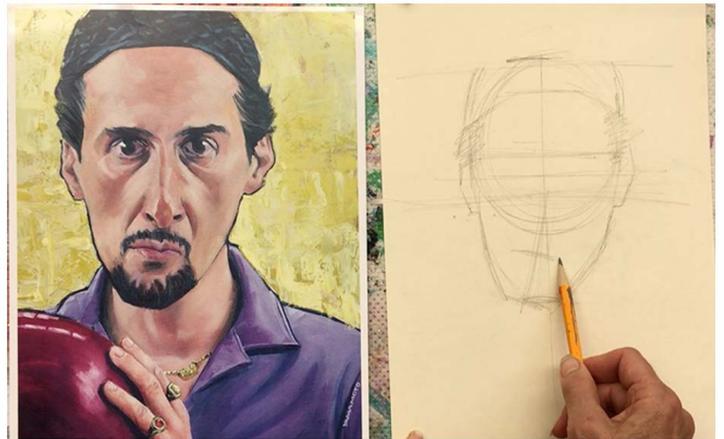
Using my pencil as a measurement tool, I lay it horizontal to make sure that the eyes are on the same horizontal plain and this also allows me to gauge roughly where the bottom line of the eyes will be roughed in so I adjust that middle line up a bit.



“Drawing the Portrait”

page 2

Now, I am using my pencil to double check my estimate as to where the eyes will be positioned and this also helps me place the ears, the base of the nose and the middle part of the mouth. Once these rough lines are placed, I will go back into my construct (outline of the head) and go into more details such as sketching in his hat and hair and try to gain more accuracy with his ears and jawline.

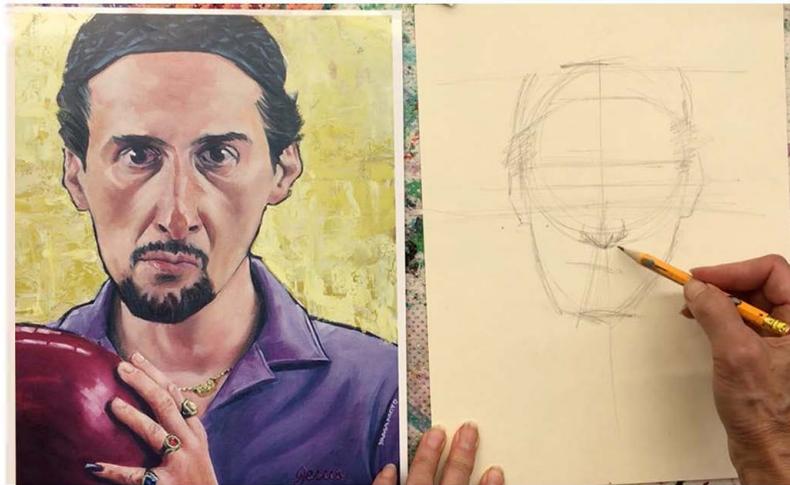


When you are drawing, be sure that your eyes spend just as much time on your reference material as on your drawing, that your eyes are constantly darting back and forth between your two images. In doing this, you are developing new muscles in the right side of your brain that help you measure volume, size and angles of your line placement. Even though I have been drawing most of my life, I still make all of my first drawing lines soft and light so that if I change my mind and move a line, it is easy to do. If draw in heavy dark lines, they will not only be difficult to erase but they will show through slightly and might make me have to start over.

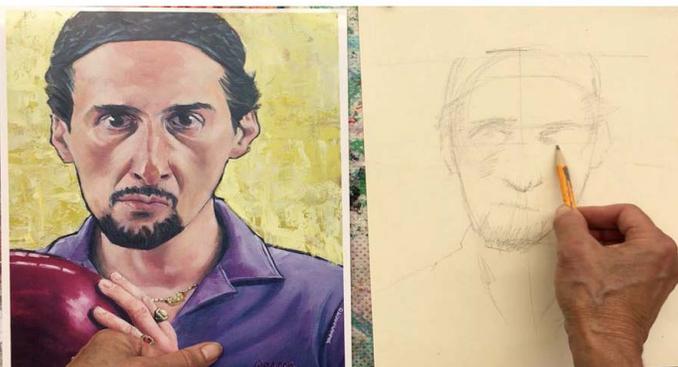
“Drawing the Portrait”

page 3

The first feature that you want to work on is the nose as it is the largest facial feature and its central position on the face makes it perfect for drawing where everything else goes around it once you have nailed it. Since I have already placed the bottom of the nose, I started by measuring the width of the nose on my reference material and then marking them lightly on my drawing. Two important things about the nose is to make sure to put in a shadow underneath it so it can appear to come forward toward the viewer. Secondly, don't draw the nostrils as dark circles. You want to just dust them in and look very closely where the darkest point within the nostril is and be sure to not make it bigger than it is. Also the sides of the nostrils are not dark lines, they are usually shadows made from how the cheek rests against them so be delicate there.



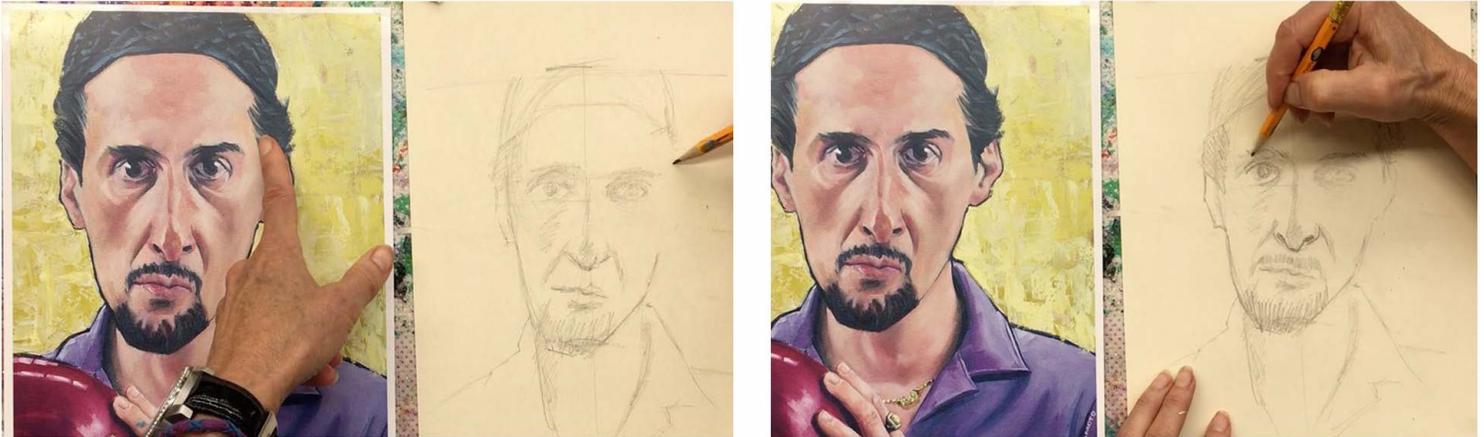
I highly recommend that for the eyes, start with drawing in with hatch lines the shadow shapes around the eyes before going in and committing to drawing the shapes of the eyes. Notice: the shadows on the side bridge of the nose and how it travels into the eye, the distance between the side hairline and the outer eye. You are training your eyes to see these nuanced details and it takes lots of practice but if you stay light, erasing and correcting is not a big deal. Never forget to draw in the neck and shirt collar, to avoid the floating head effect. ;) A light touch is also good for drawing in facial hair and eye brows. For the lips, I put a light shadow on the upper lip and did not put an outline for the bottom lip. Instead I placed a light shadow under the lip to suggest its shape. This is the best approach for mens lips.



“Drawing the Portrait”

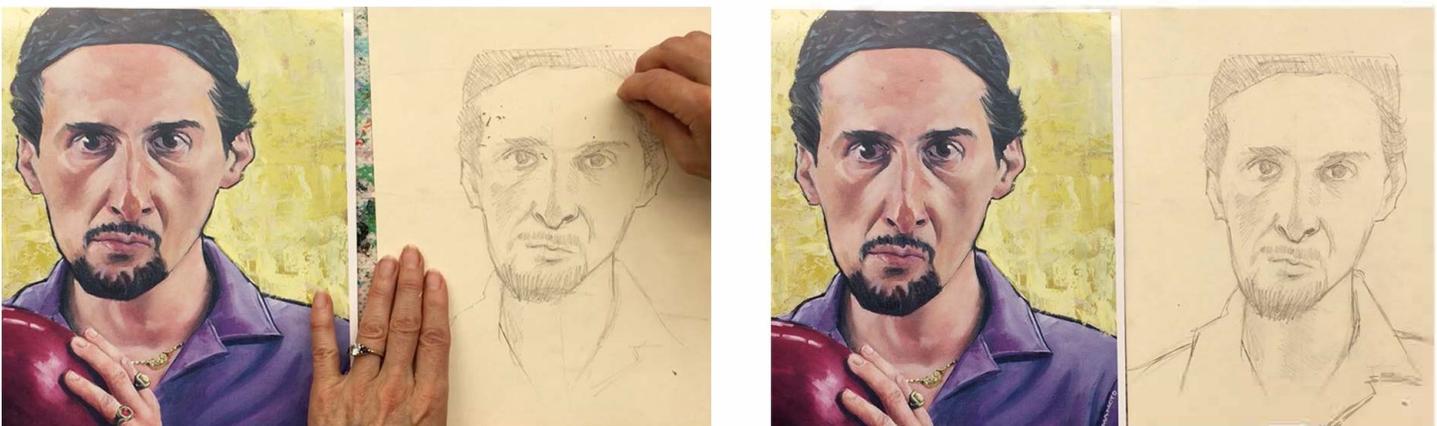
page 4

As I was shaping the shadows around the eyes, I noticed that my head was too narrow so here I am making a correction so that the temple is wide enough. I will redraw the ear and hair as well.



Now I am going into the eyes but first I make sure that the eyebrows frame the ocular shadow shapes nicely and then I tentatively draft in the lines of the eye. Quite often people's eyes are not exactly the same so make sure to keep your watchful eye on details that make the eyes look different. When I shadow in the pupil and iris, I liked to leave a little highlight shape in there which is on the same side as the direction the light is coming from. The light source is quite centrally positioned in this photo so I just picked a side for the light because it would look startling if the highlight was right in the middle of the eye.

Careful attention has to be made to the values of your shading. Values are the grades of a color changing from light to dark. Be very picky about drawing in your values accurately because it will be so important in capturing a true likeness and sensitively to the personality of your subject.



In the final image here, can you see the how the grades of lightness and darkness change? Basically, that is when you know you are becoming more sophisticated with your artist's touch, is when you get good at handling these and also the microscopic changes in angle and length of your lines. It takes a lot of practice but it is so rewarding to capture someone's essence in your artwork so stay at it!