

painting beautiful

skin tones

with color & light

in oil, pastel and watercolor

Chris Saper



painting beautiful *skin, tones* with color & light

in oil, pastel and watercolor

Chris Saper



NORTH LIGHT BOOKS
CINCINNATI, OHIO
www.artistsnetwork.com

The Notion of Race

.

Other fine North Light Books are available from your local bookstore, art supply store or direct from the publisher.

15 14 13 12 11 17 16 15 14 13

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Saper, Chris.

Painting Beautiful Skin Tones with Color & Light / by Chris Saper.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN-13:978-1-58180-163-7 (hc: alk paper)

ISBN-10:1-58180-163-7 (hc: alk paper)

1. Portrait painting—Technique. 2. Human skin color in art. I. Tide.

ND1302 .S27 2001

2001030145

751.45'42—dc21

CIP

Designer: Wendy Dunning

Cover designer: Andrea Short

Content editors: Amy J. Wolgemuth and Michael Berger

Production editor: Stefanie Laufersweiler

Interior production artist: Ben Rucker

Production coordinator: John Peavler

Artwork on title page: *Sylvia*, oil, 16" × 12" (41cm × 31cm), collection of Milton and Sylvia Saper



Metric-Conversion Chart		
to convert	to	multiply by

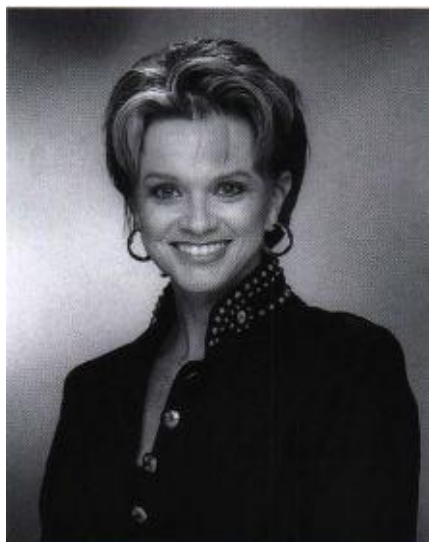
Inches	Centimeters	2.54
Centimeters	Inches	0.4
Feet	Centimeters	30.5
Centimeters	Feet	0.03
Yards	Meters	0.9
Meters	Yards	1.1
Sq.Inches	Sq. Centimeters	6.45
Sq. Centimeters	Sq.Inches	0.16
Sq. Feet	Sq. Meters	0.09
Sq. Meters	Sq. Feet	10.8
Sq. Yards	Sq. Meters	0.8
Sq. Meters	Sq. Yards	1.2
Pounds	Kilograms	0.45
Kilograms	Pounds	2.2
Ounces	Grams	28.4
Grams	Ounces	0.04

Acknowledgments

Dedication

To Ron, Aaron and Alexandra, who teach me every day what real beauty is.

About the Author



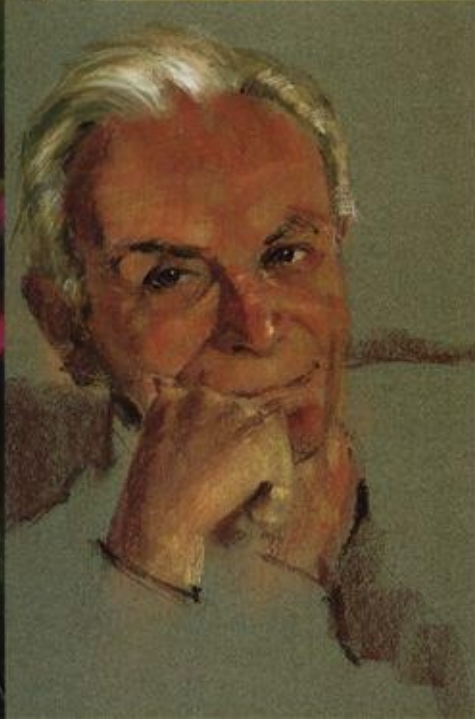




TABLE OF **C**ONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[1 The Five Elements of Painting](#)

[Drawing](#)

[Value](#)

[Color](#)

[Composition](#)

[Edges](#)

[2 The Colors of Light and Shadow](#)

[Making Friends with Kelvin: The Color and Temperature of Light](#)

[The End of Guesswork: The Color and Temperature of Shadow](#)

[Color Harmony for the Portrait Painter](#)

[Palette Selection and Key Considerations](#)

[3 The Local Color of Skin: A Question of Orange](#)

[The Determinants of Skin Color](#)

[Painting Different Skin Color Groups](#)

[• Caucasian](#)

[• Asian or Pacific Islander](#)

[• Black/African American](#)

[• Hispanic](#)

[4 Using Photographic References](#)

[Photographing Your Subject](#)

[Lighting Your Subject](#)

[Breaking the Chains of Photo Slavery](#)

[Constructing Sensible Composites](#)

[5 Organize Your Painting in Three Easy Stages](#)

[MINI-DEMONSTRATION 1 | Caucasian Group, Oil](#)

[MINI-DEMONSTRATION 2 | Black/African-American Group, Pastel](#)

[MINI-DEMONSTRATION 3 | Asian Group, Watercolor](#)

[MINI-DEMONSTRATION 4 | Hispanic Group, Pastel](#)

[6 Painting Demonstrations Step by Step](#)

[PASTEL PORTRAIT | Skin Tone, Indian Subcontinent \(Asian\)](#)

[OIL PORTRAIT | Skin Tone, Hispanic](#)

[WATERCOLOR PORTRAIT | Skin Tone, Caucasian](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Appendix A: Recommended Resources](#)

[Appendix B: Kelvin Temperatures for Portrait Painters](#)

[Appendix C: Sample Color Charts](#)



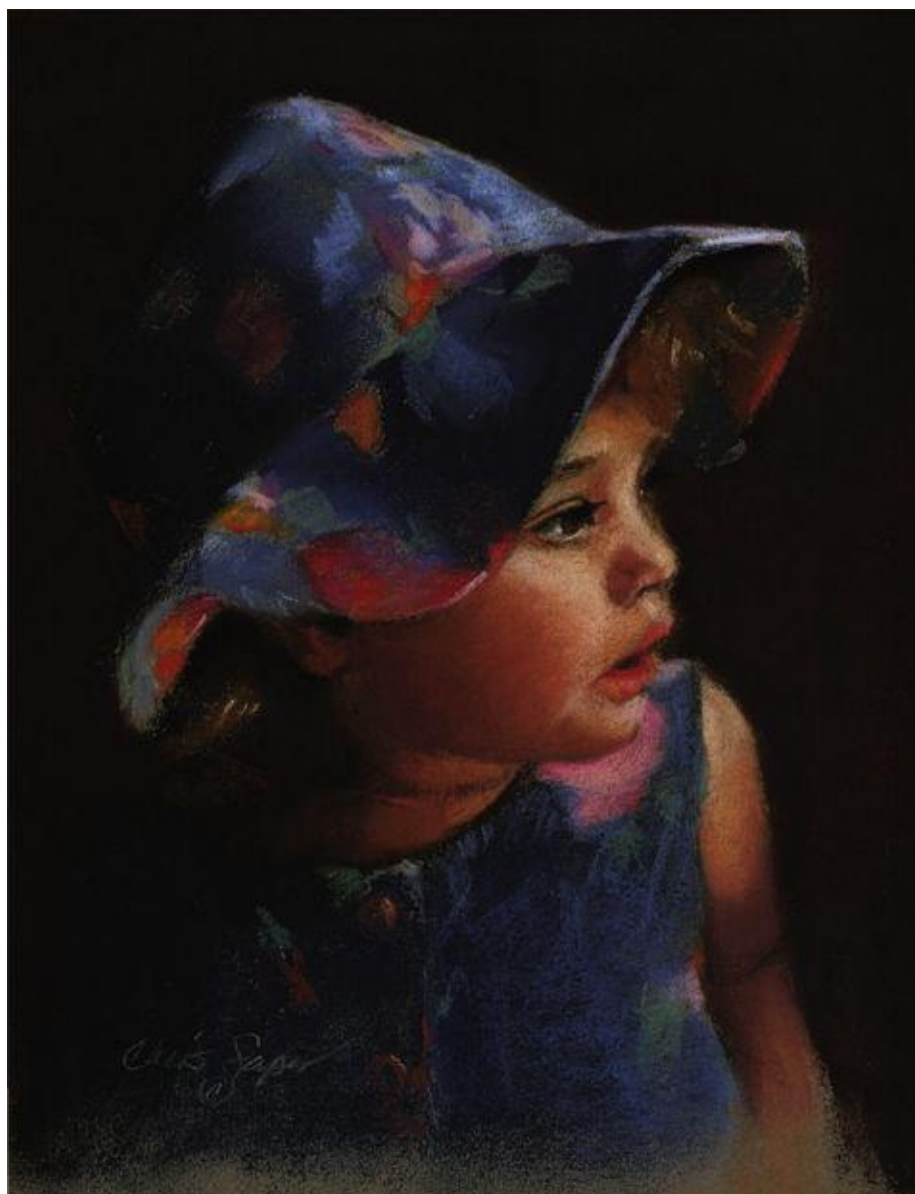
INTRODUCTION

MADELEINE (DETAIL)

Oil on linen

18" × 14" (46cm × 36cm)

Private collection



1 THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF PAINTING

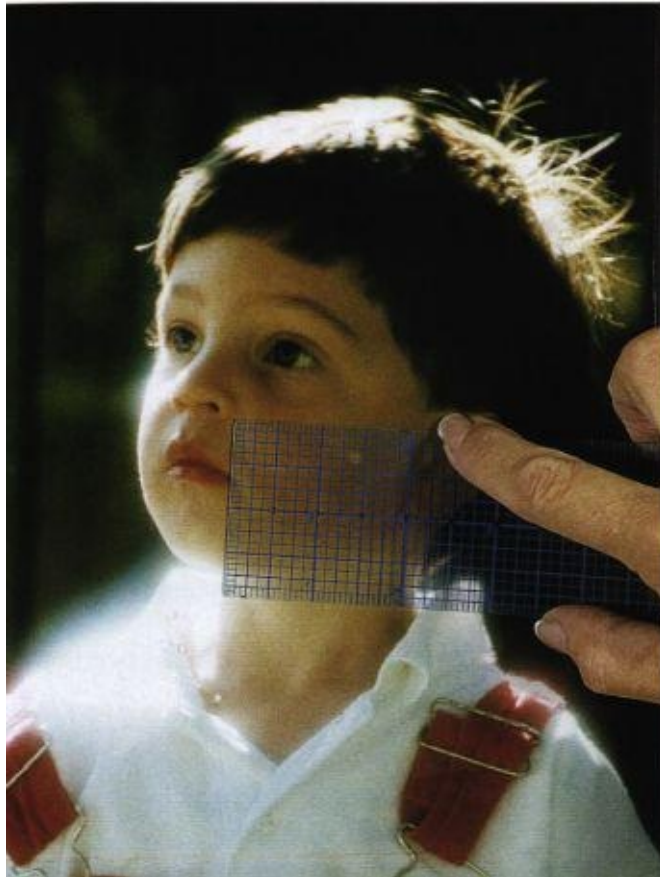
~

CHAMBRAY

Pastel on Canson paper

13" × 13" (33cm × 33cm)

Paint Many Paintings



Measuring



Thinking in Black and White

Black-and-white photographs eliminate the confusing variable of color and can

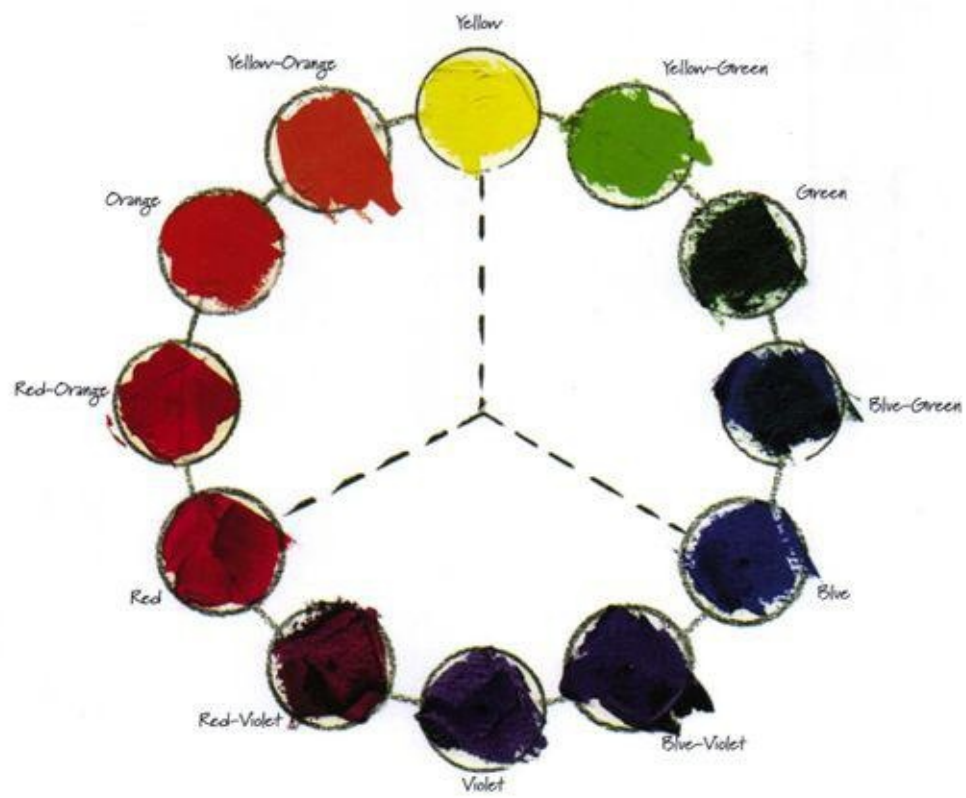
The Five-Value Scale

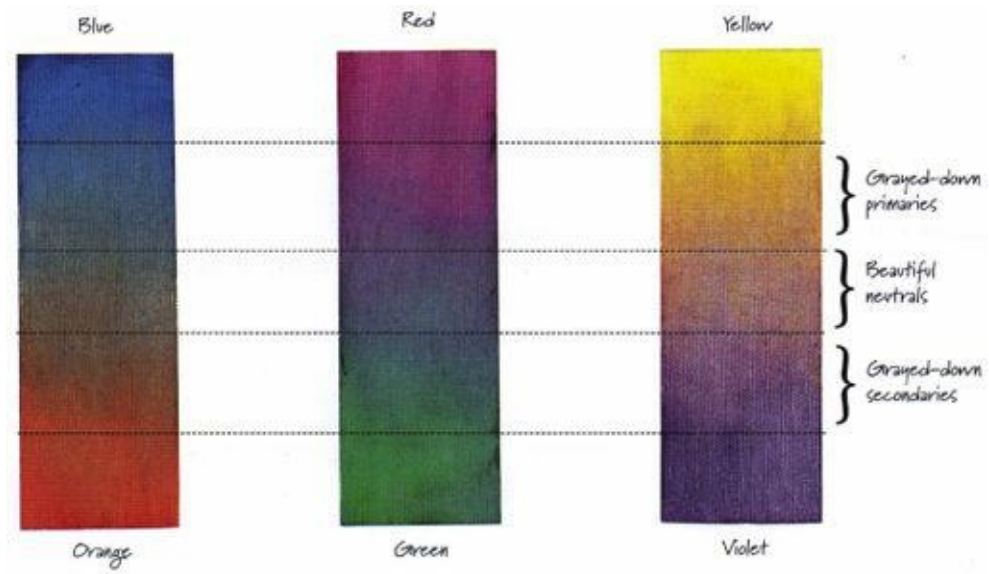


HUE

INTENSITY

The Terms of Color

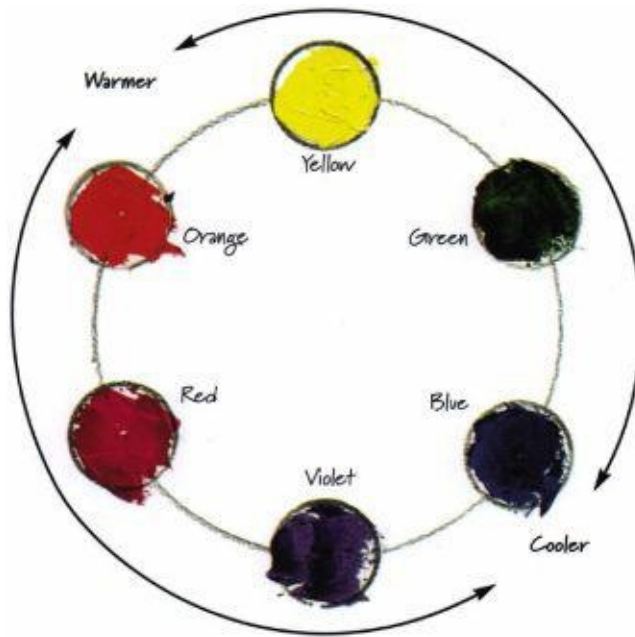




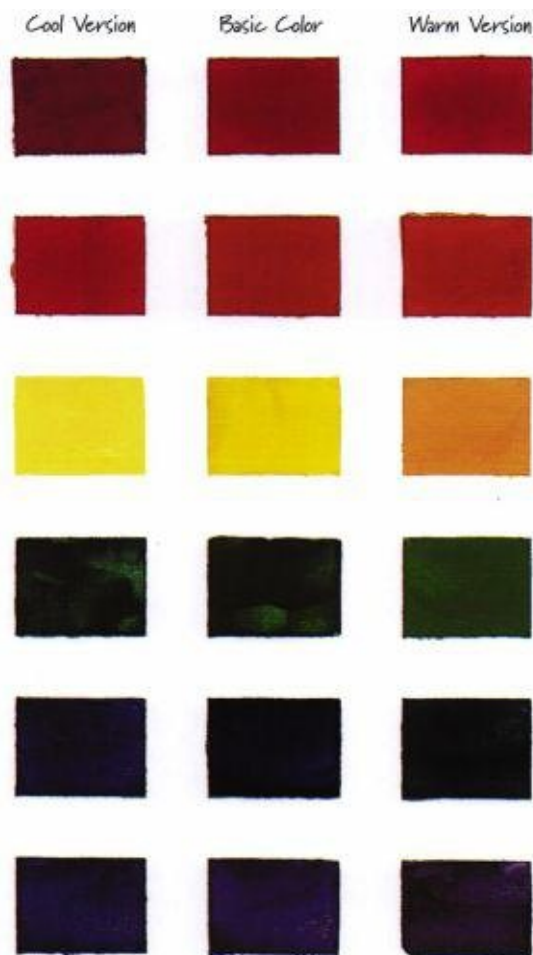
Loaded With Color: The Gray Zone



Sometimes Say Never



Go South to Cool Off



Temperature Is Relative

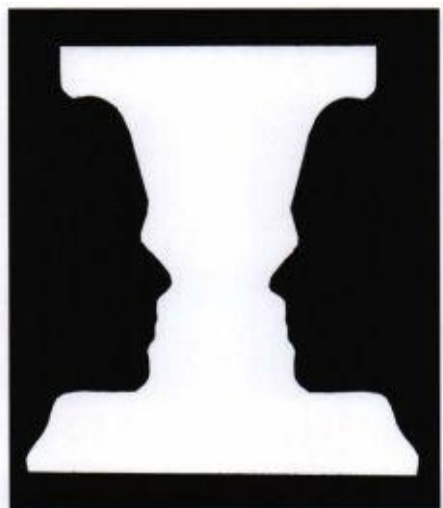
LOCAL COLOR



The Myth of Local Color

COMING OF AGE

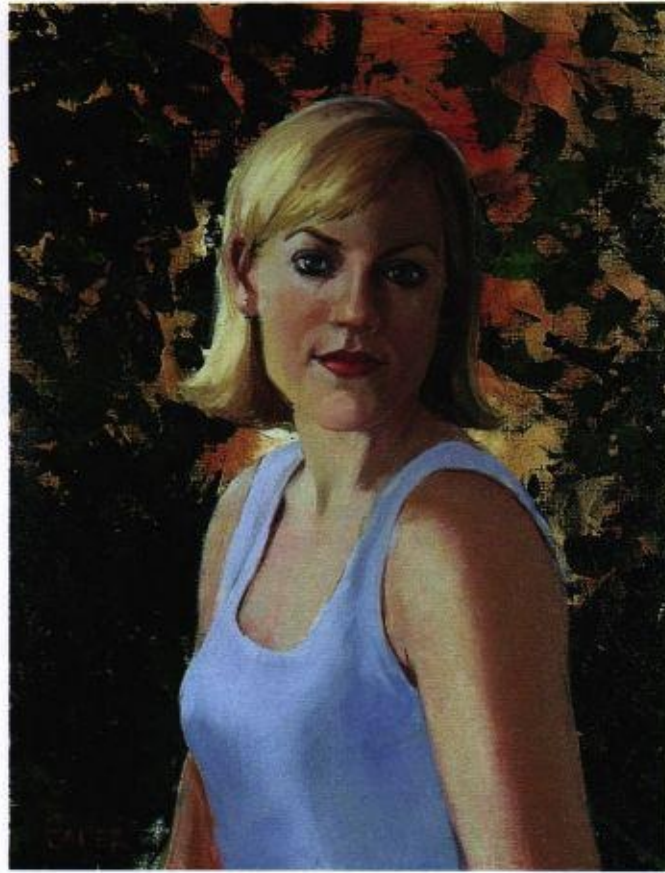
ENTER FROM THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT



Satisfy With Good Balance



Balanced Yet Unequal

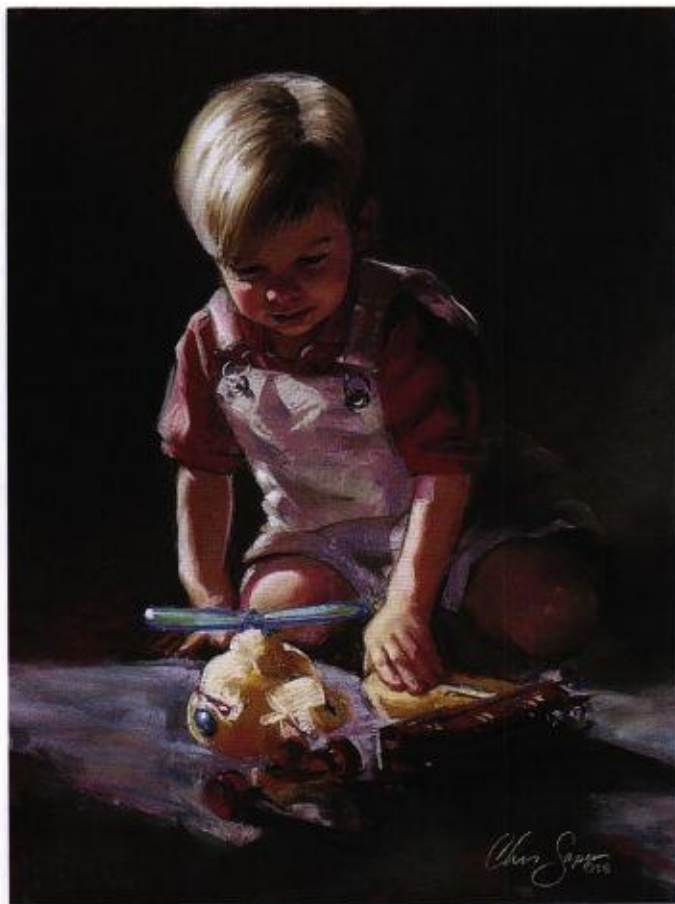


PORTRAIT OF NANCY

Oil on linen

18" × 14" (46cm × 36cm)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Perla



Step Right In

KIPP

Pastel on Wallis paper
22" × 16" (56cm × 41cm)



Collection of the Charlton Family

SILVER BRACELETS

Pastel on Wallis paper

16" × 12" (41cm × 30cm)

Collection of the artist **Lead the Viewer**

CREATE AN EYEPATH



A Flowing Eyepath

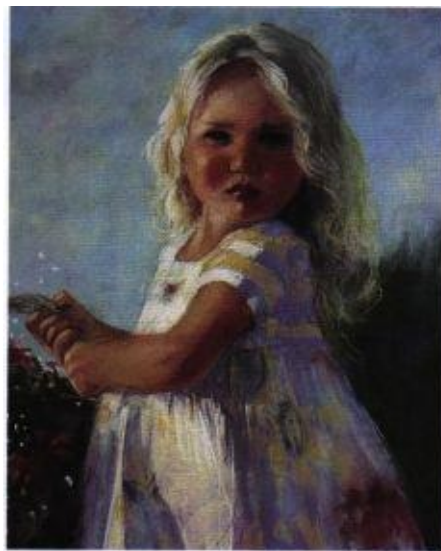
Choose Your Direction

MY CAT COTTON

Pastel on La Carte sanded paper



22" × 16" (56cm × 41cm)



ALEXIS (DETAIL)
Pastel on Wallis paper
22" × 16" (56cm × 41cm)



Place Your Hardest Edges Near the Center of Interest

CATHERINE

Pastel

22" × 16" (56cm × 41cm)



Collection of the Hemingway Family

Look for Hard and Soft Edges

Lost and Found

FINDING SHARP EDGES

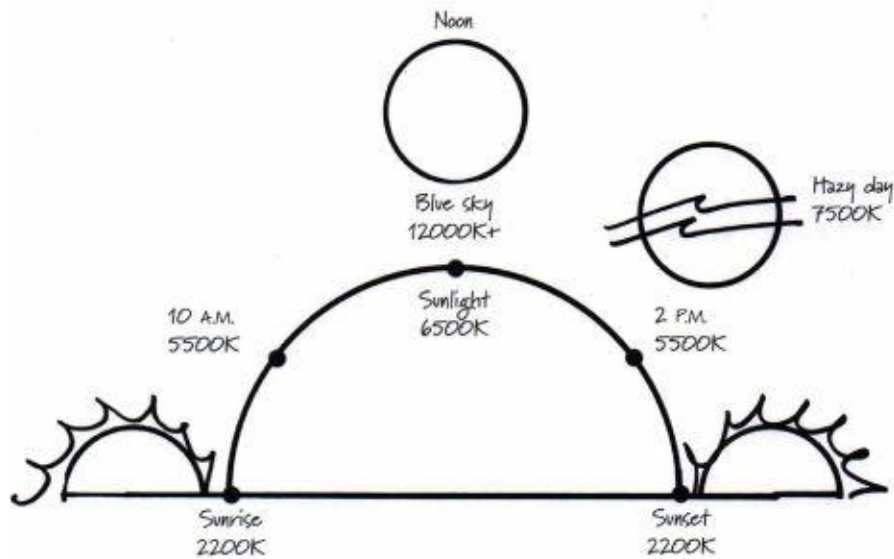


2 THE COLORS OF LIGHT AND SHADOW

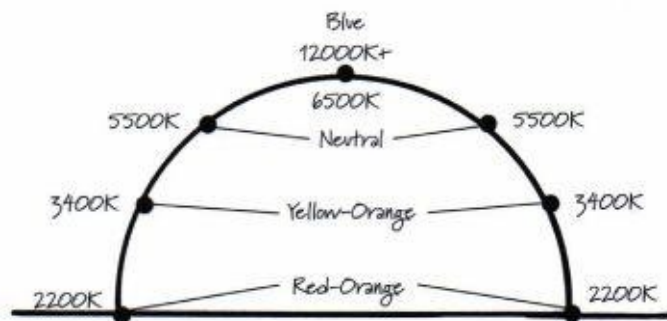
LINDA (DETAIL)

Pastel on La Carte sanded paper
18" × 26" (46cm × 66cm)

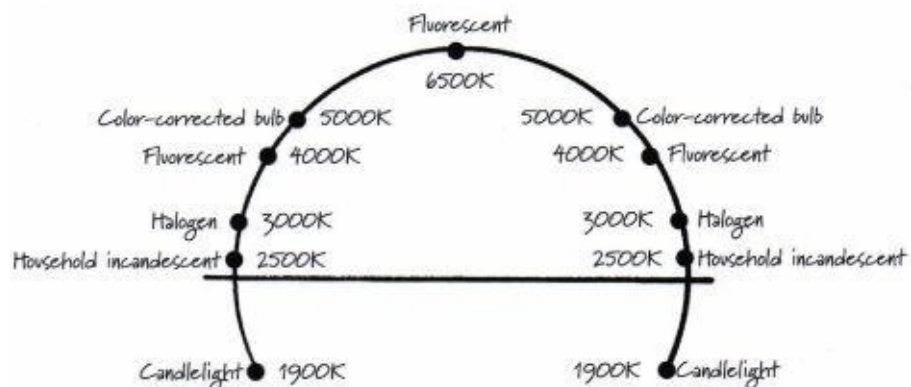
Blue Noon



The Changing Color of Natural Daylight



The Color of Light and Kelvin Degrees



Common Artificial Lights and Their Kelvin Degrees

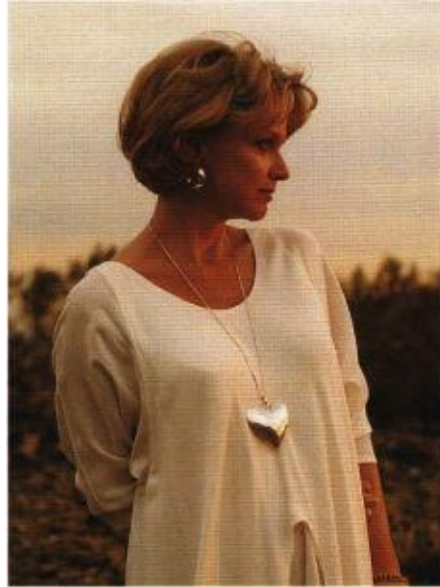
DIRECT SUNLIGHT

Sunrise/Sunset

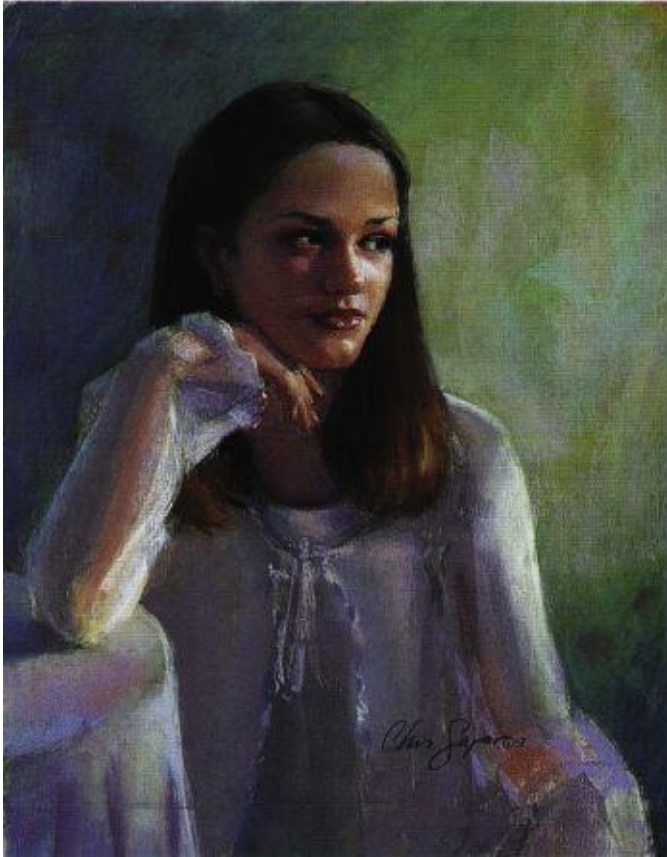
Mid-morning/Mid-afternoon

Noon

Colors and Shadows



Sunset Distortion



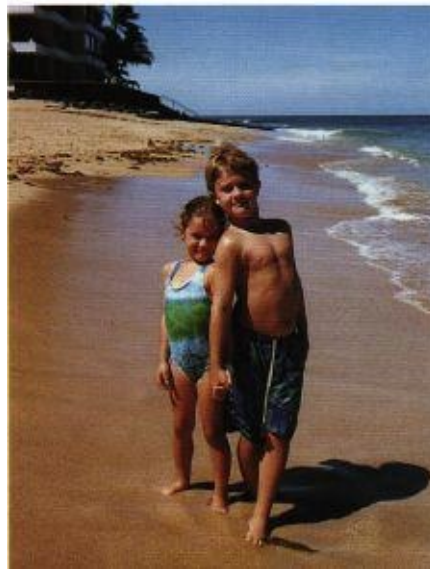
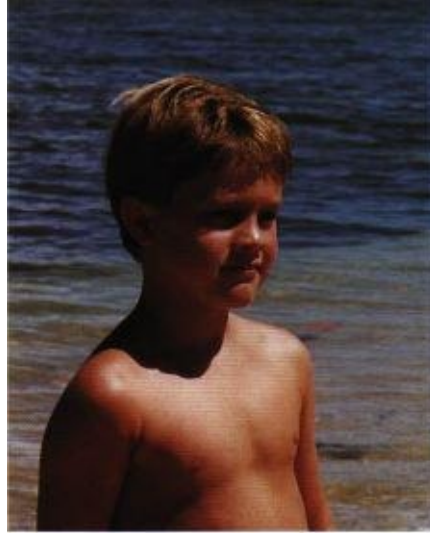
Crase)

Use Color Distortion to Set a Mood

JESSICA

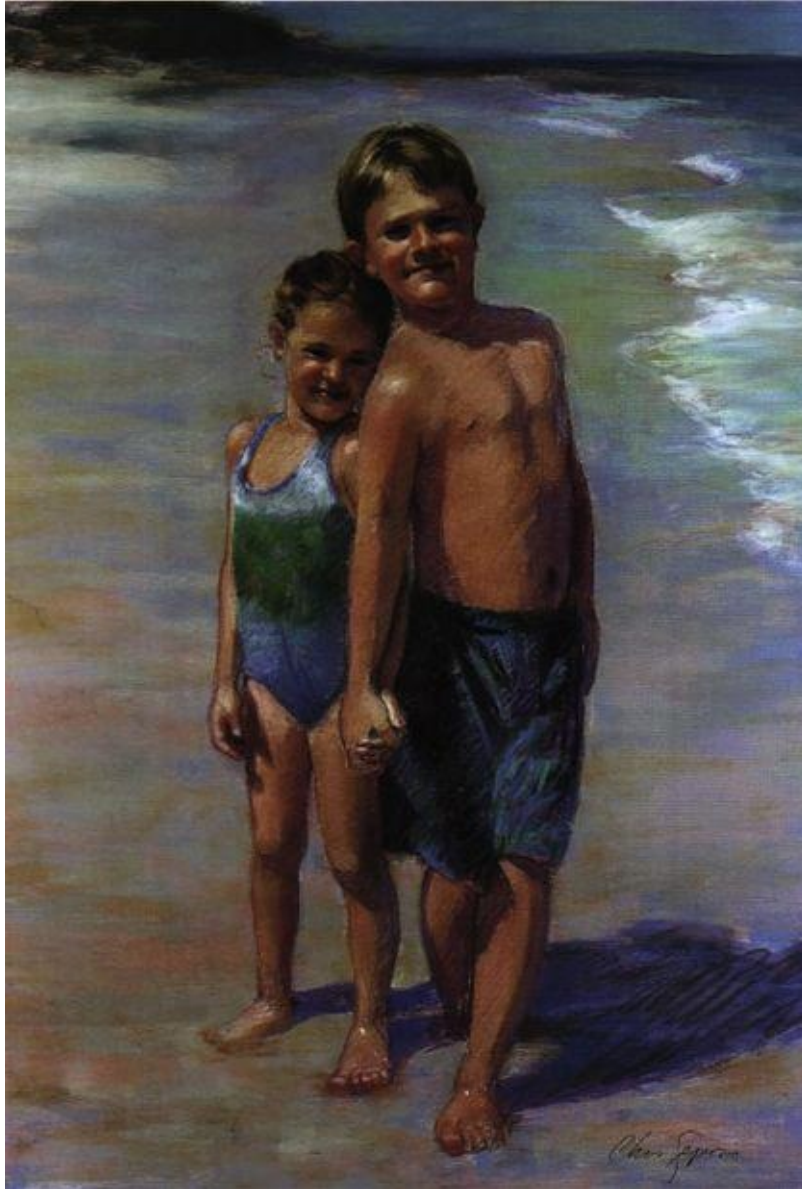
Pastel on Wailis paper

16" × 12" (41cm × 30cm)



Collection of Eileen and Preston Long

Cast Shadows Tell Time



Painting Beach Scenes

BEACH BUDDIES
Pastel on Wallis paper

36" × 26" (91cm × 66cm)

Collection of the artist **INDIRECT SUNLIGHT**

Clear Skies

Hazy or Cloudy Skies



Weil-Balanced Warm and Cool Light

VICTORIA

~

22" × 16" (56cm × 41cm)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Crase ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

Incandescent Household Light

Fluorescent Light

-1

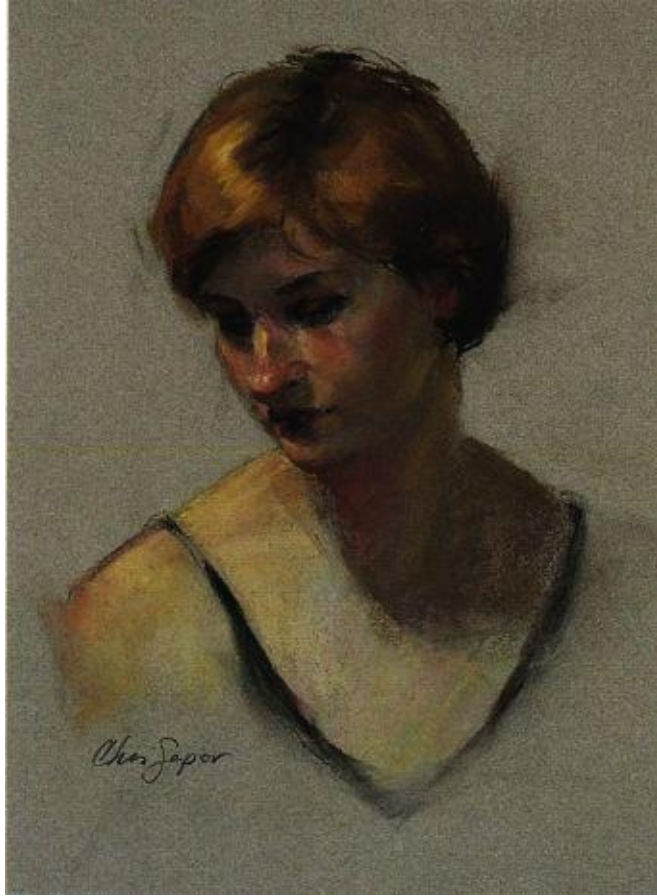
Halogen Light

3200 Tungsten Photo Light

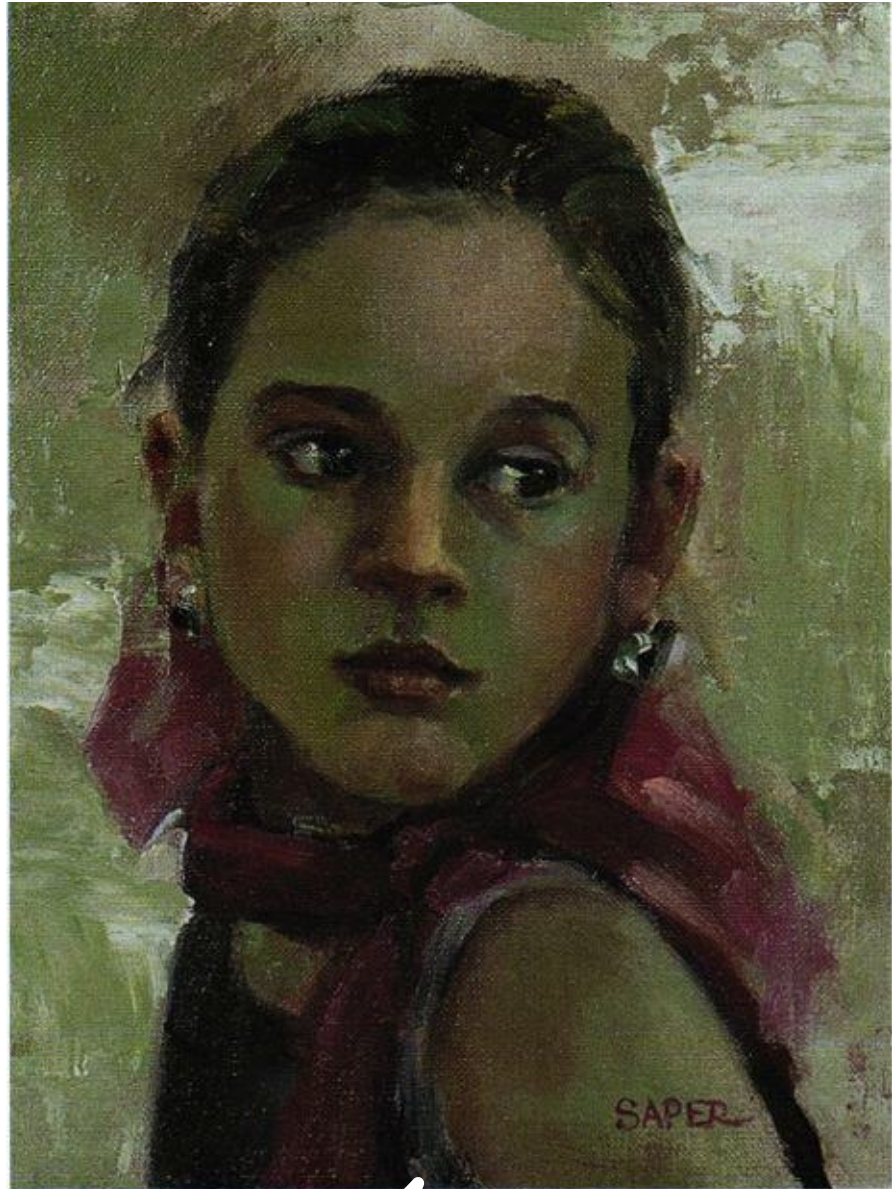
-



Mismatched Kelvin Degrees



BETTINA'S CHOICE
Pastel on Canson paper
16" × 12" (41cm × 30cm)



Collection of the artist

Cool Fluorescent Light

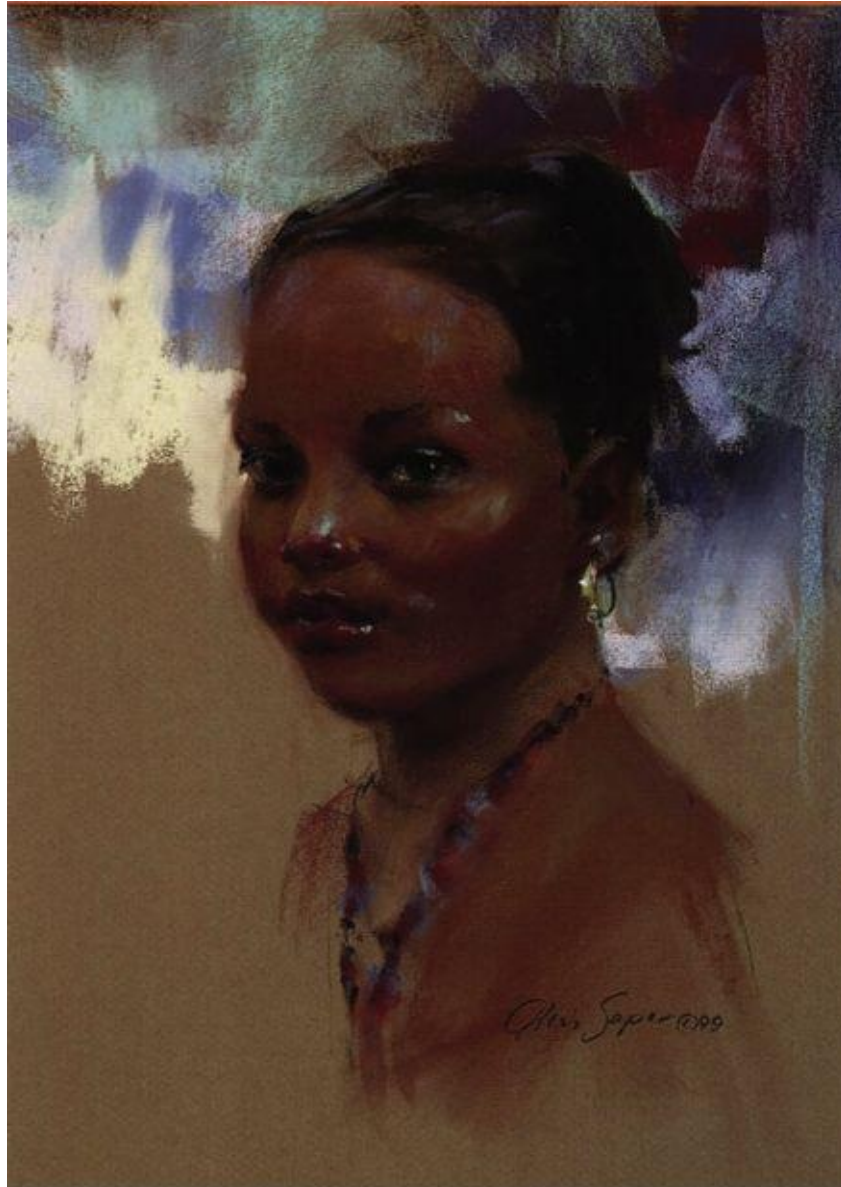
Oil on linen panel

8" × 6" (20cm × 15cm)

Collection of the artist **Work in the Right Light**

LIGHTING AND DISTANCE

Roving Highlights



Using Highlights

ANGELIE

Pastel on Canson paper

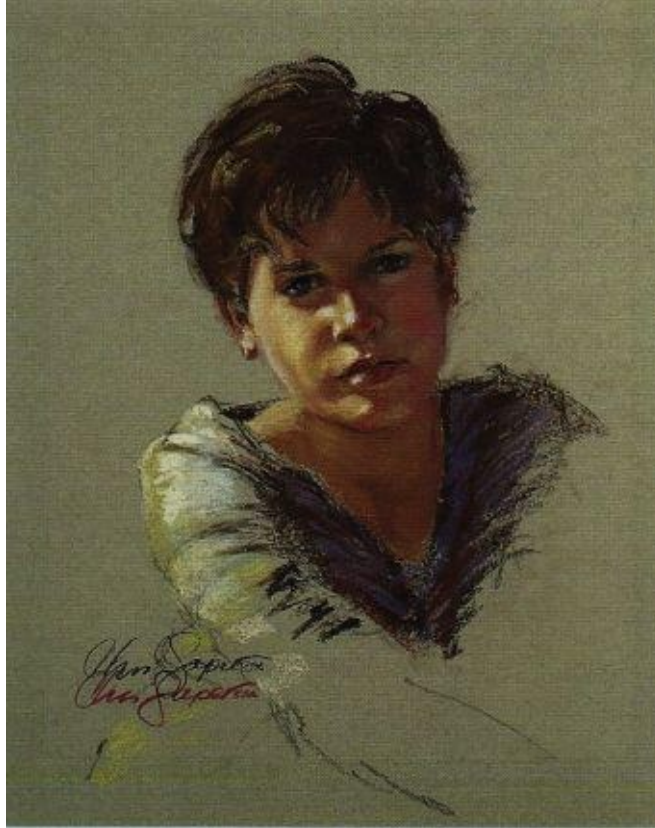
16" × 12" (41cm × 30cm)

Collection of the artist **The End of Guesswork: The Color and Temperature of Shadow**

THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF SHADOW



Problem



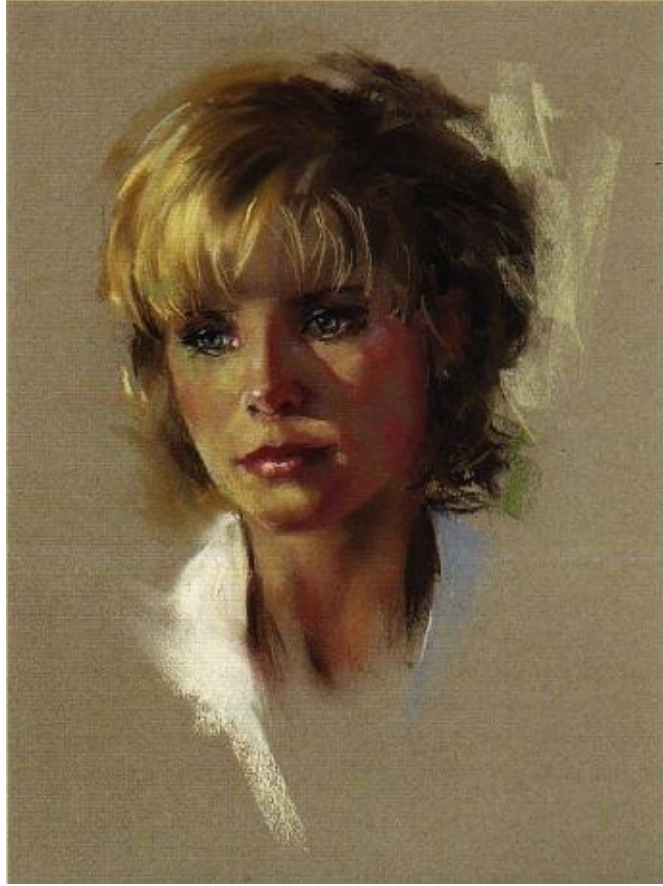
Solution

CHRISTINA

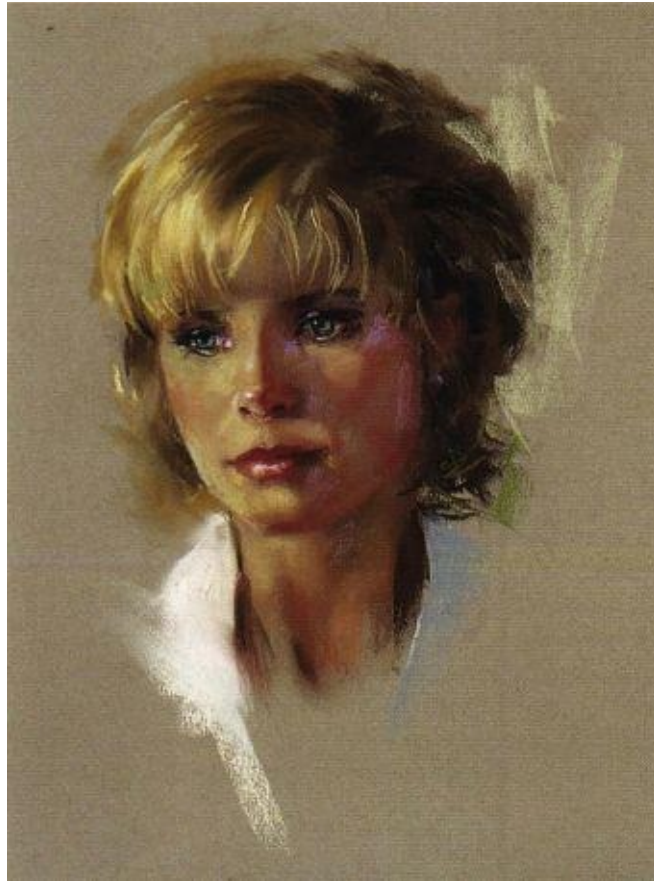
Pastel on Canson paper

16" × 12" (41cm × 30cm)

Collection of the Roger Mueller Family **THE COLOR OF SHADOWS**



Close Light Creates Sharp Edges



Distant Light Softens Edges



Skylights Capture the Beauty of Blue Daylight

SOLITARY SONATA

Oil on canvas, 14" × 18" (36cm × 46cm)

Collection of the Lieb Family **Two Paintings in One: Dark and Light**



Use Uplighting to Lend Drama and Mood

PRIVATE THOUGHTS

Chris Saper with Phil Beck

Oil on canvas

20" × 16" (51cm × 41cm)

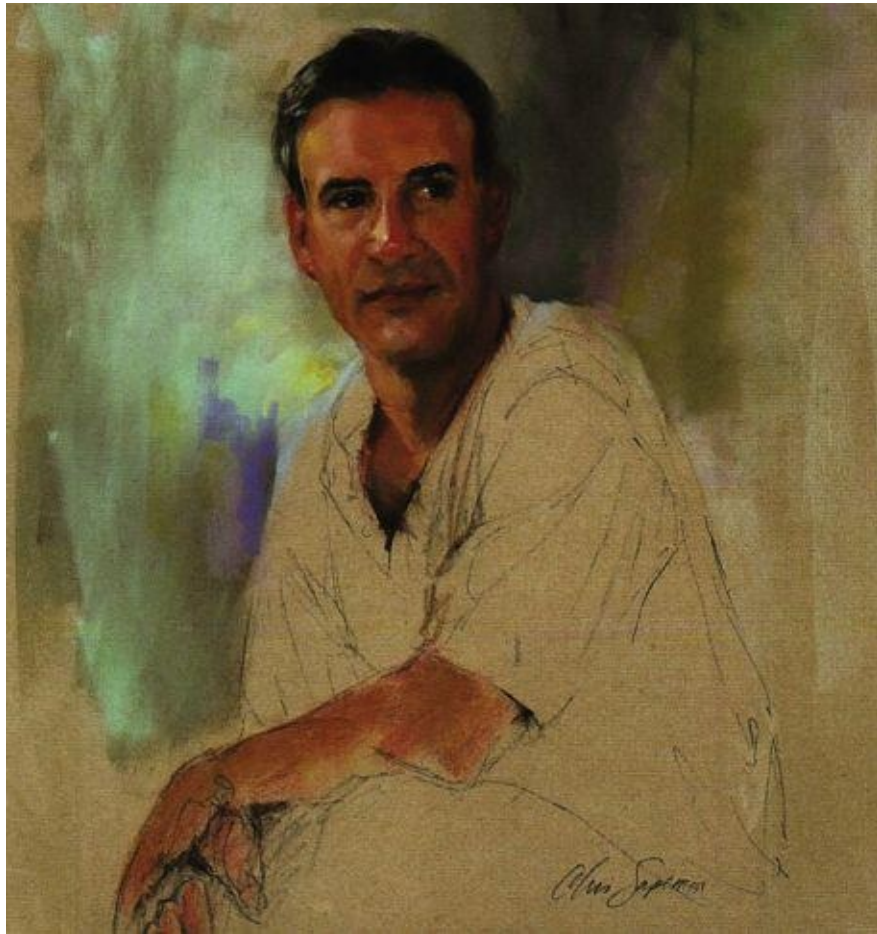
Private collection **THE EDGES OF SHADOWS**



An Undefined Shadow's Core



A Core With Drama



Create a Strong Character

RON

Pastel on La Carte sanded paper

22"×6" (56cm ×41cm)

Collection of the artist **SHADOWS AND REFLECTED COLOR**

Arbitrary Color: A Fatal Flaw



The Impact of Adjacent Color

SHADOWS AND REFLECTED LIGHT



Too little reflected light



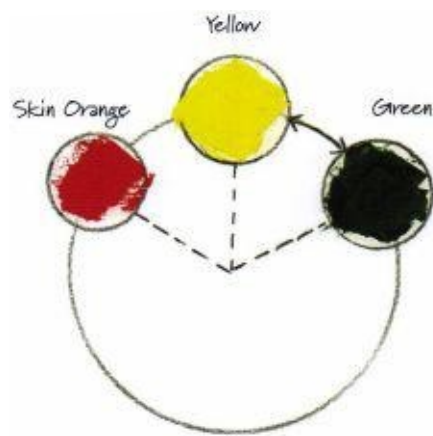
Too much reflected light



Just right

Use Reflected Light Sparingly

ANALOGOUS COLOR HARMONY FOR PORTRAITS



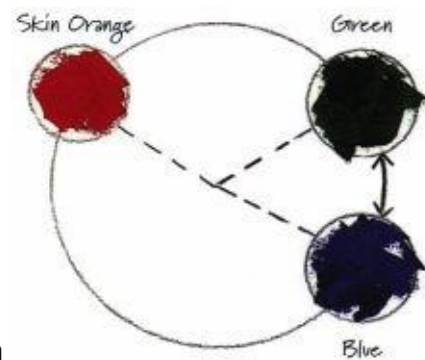
Yellow-Green Analogous Color Harmony



JIMMY & JAKE

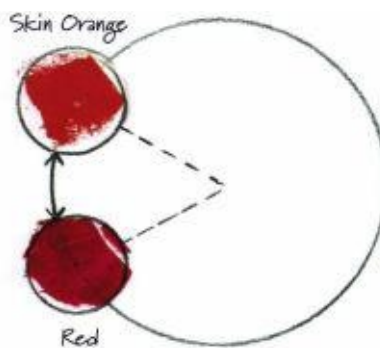
Pastel on Wallis paper

22" × 34" (56cm × 86cm)

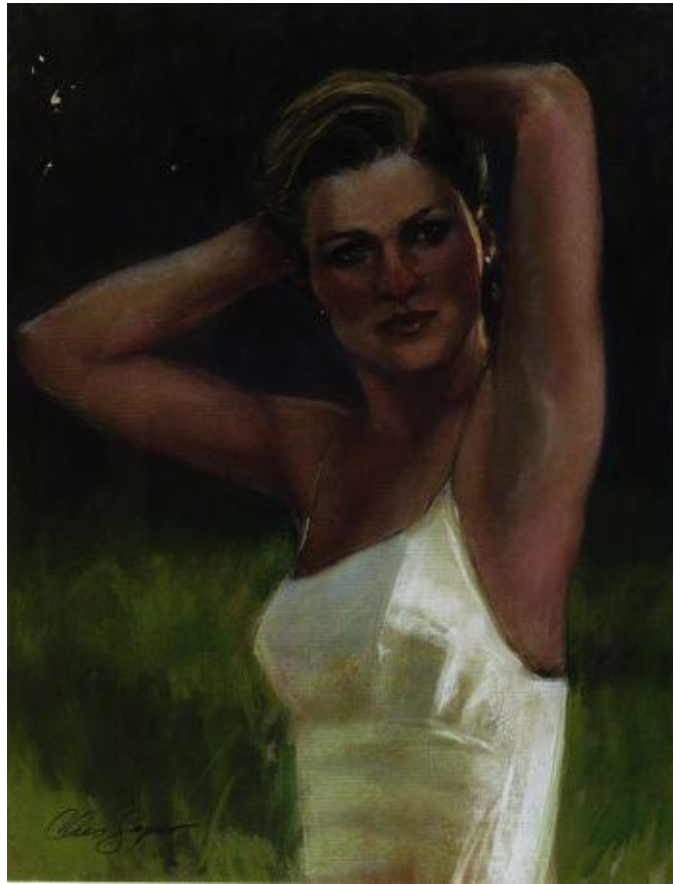


Collection of Mr. and Mrs. James Hoselton

Blue-Green Analogous Color Harmony



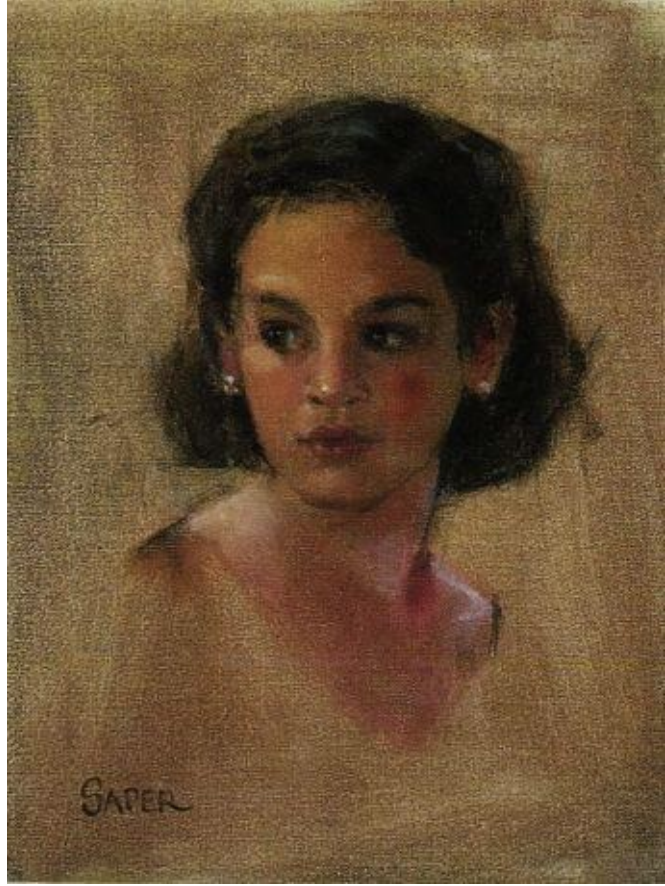
Red-Orange Analogous Color Harmony



A MOMENT'S PAUSE

Pastel on La Carte sanded paper

22"×6" (56cm ×1cm)



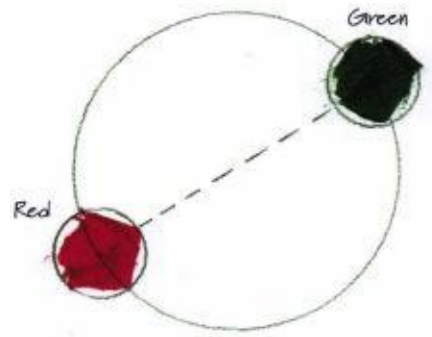
Collection of Ms. Victoria Gordon

THE FAERIE TALE

Oil on linen

12" × 9" (30cm × 23cm)

Collection of the artist **COMPLEMENTARY COLOR HARMONY**

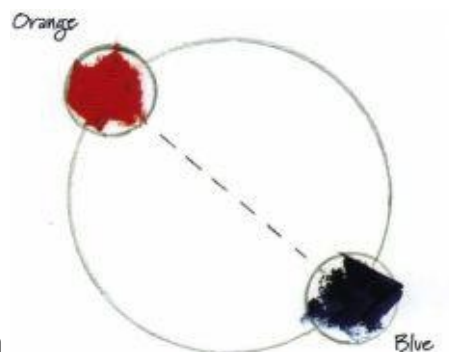


Red-Green Complementary Color Harmony



DUFFY'S FOLKS

Pastel on Wallis paper
18" × 24" (46cm × 61cm)



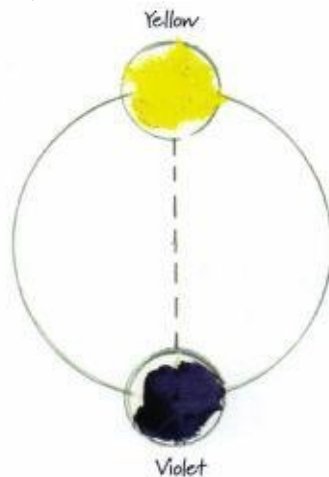
Collection of Pat and Duffy McMahon

Blue-Orange Complementary Color Harmony



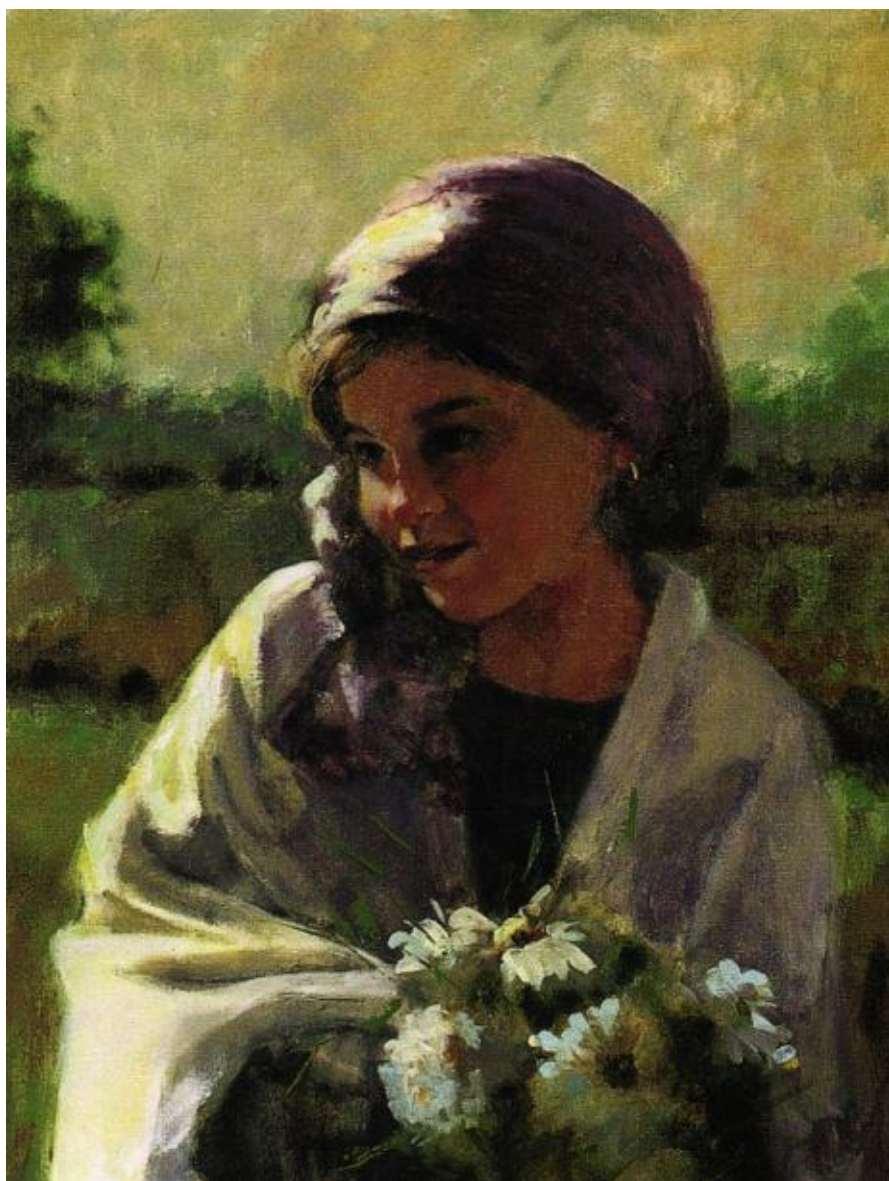
REID & ERNIE

Pastel on La Carte sanded paper
18" × 26" (46cm × 66cm)



Collection of G. Price

Yellow-Violet Complementary Color Harmony



SPRINGTIME IN ODESSA

Oil on linen

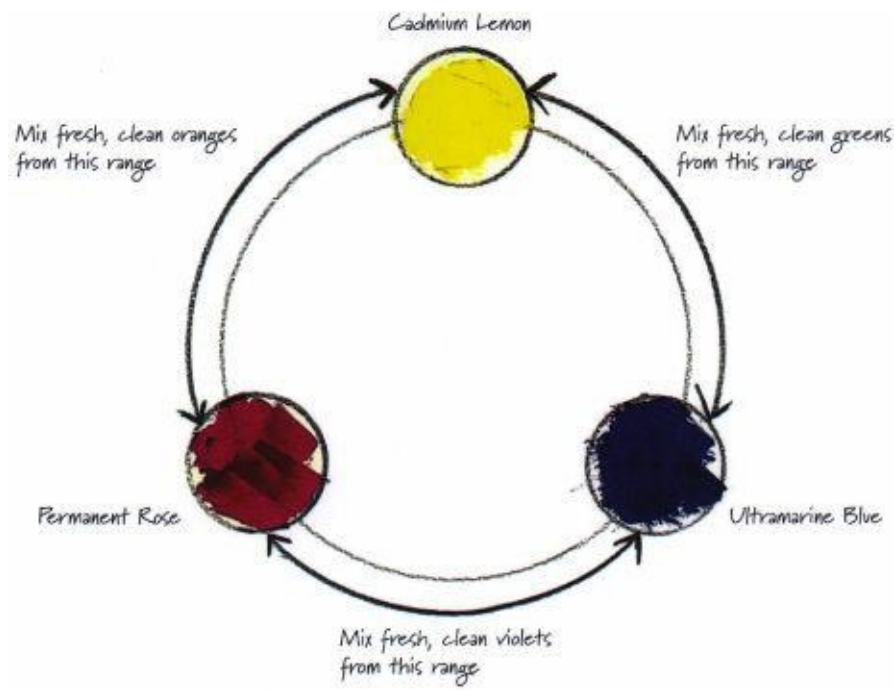
18" × 14" (46cm " 36cm)

SETTING UP YOUR MIXING PALETTE

THE KEY TO CLEAN, FRESH COLOR

NOTES ON BLACK AND WHITE

Make Your Own Black



Pay Attention to Temperature When Mixing Colors

PASTEL

Make One Color Your Star



THE CEREMONY

Pastel on Sabretooth

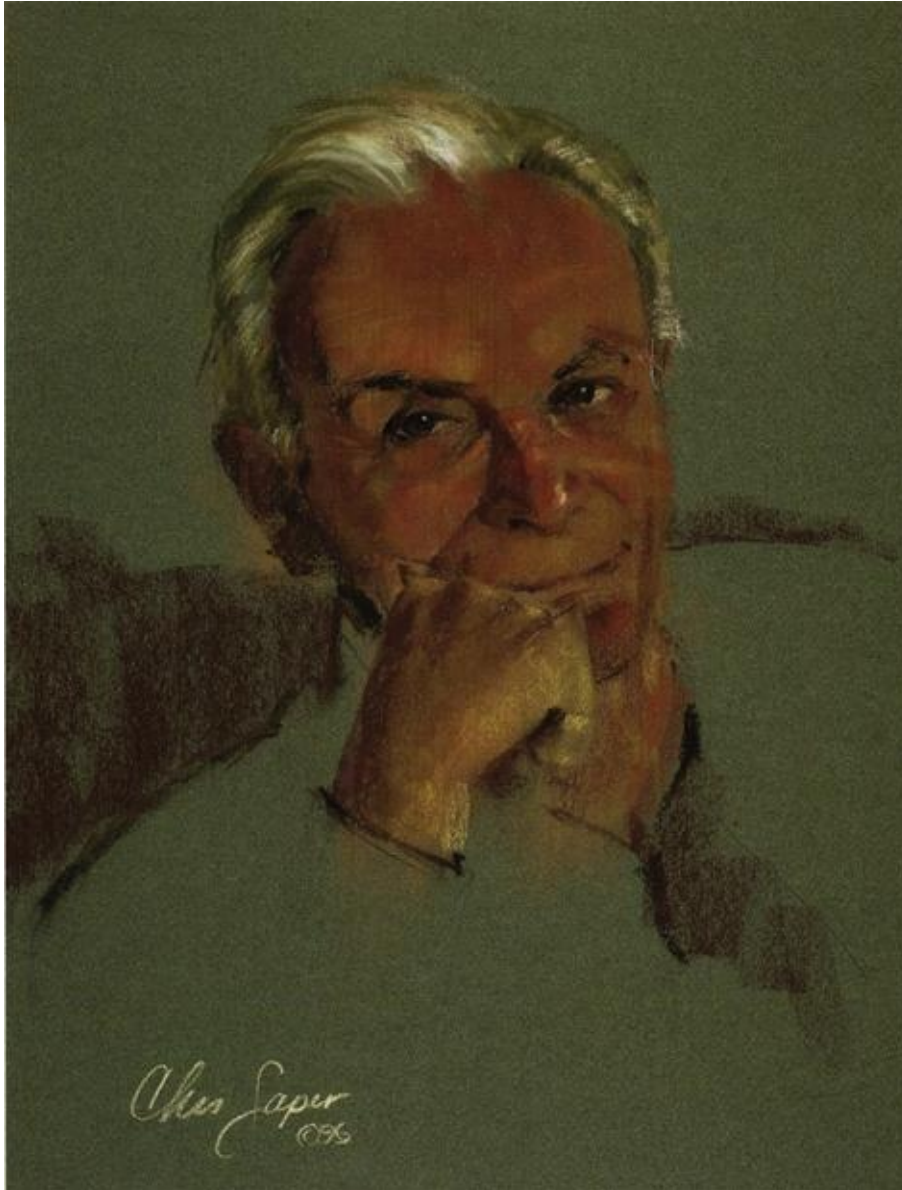
16" × 12" (41cm × 31cm)

Collection

of

the

artist



Less Is More

MY UNCLE MURRAY

Pastel on Canson paper

16" × 12" (41cm × 30cm)

Collection of Jeffrey and Vivian Saper



3 THE LOCAL COLOR OF SKIN: A QUESTION OF ORANGE

—

THE ARTIST'S CHILD

Oil on linen

12" × 12" (30cm × 30cm)

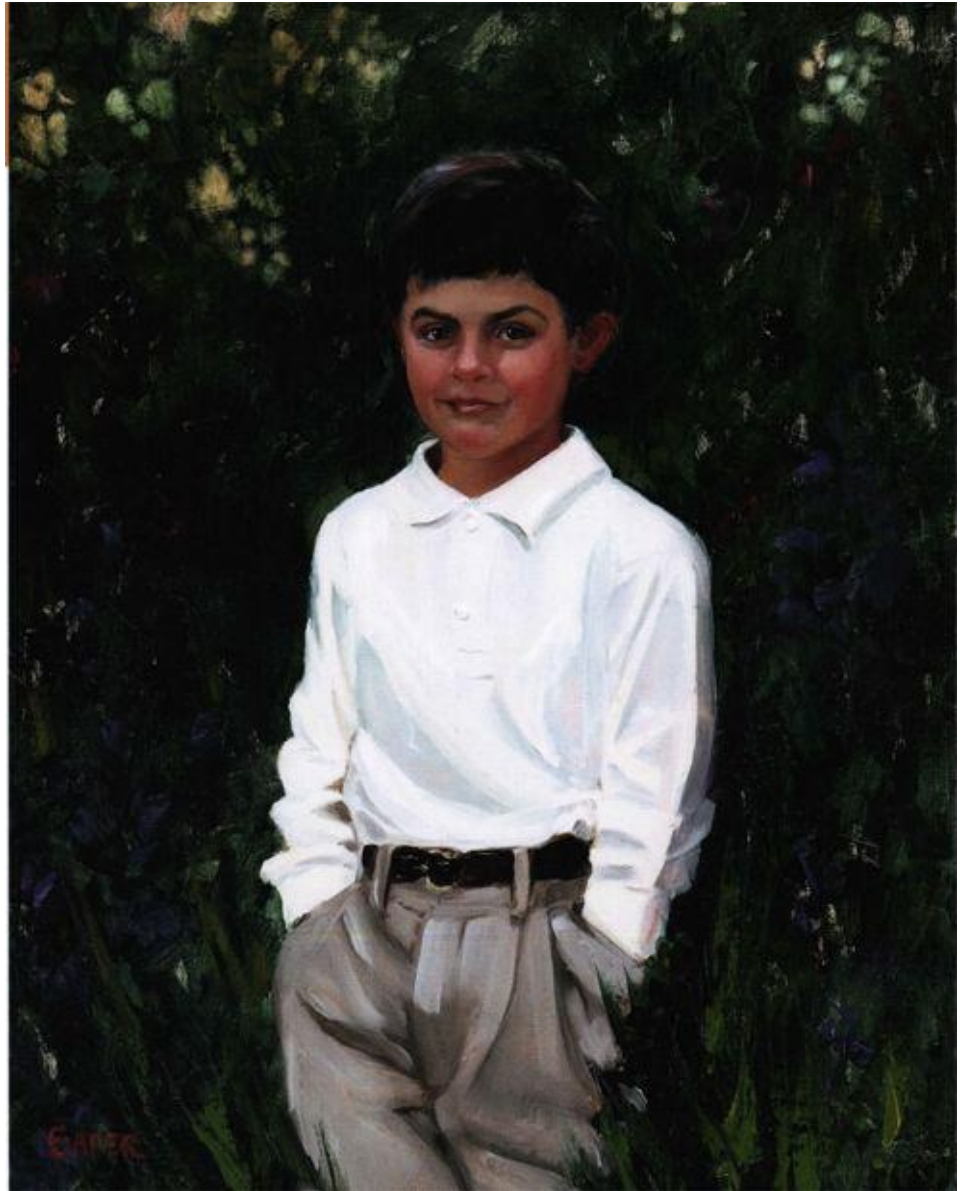
—

THE PAINTER'S PERCEPTION OF SKIN COLOR

KEY POINTS TO PAINTING SKIN IN SHADOW

Conveying Ethnicity

1



Whites and Blacks

Capture the Strength of Hispanic Heritage

PORTRAIT OF DIEGO

Oil on canvas

30"×24" (76cm × 61cm)

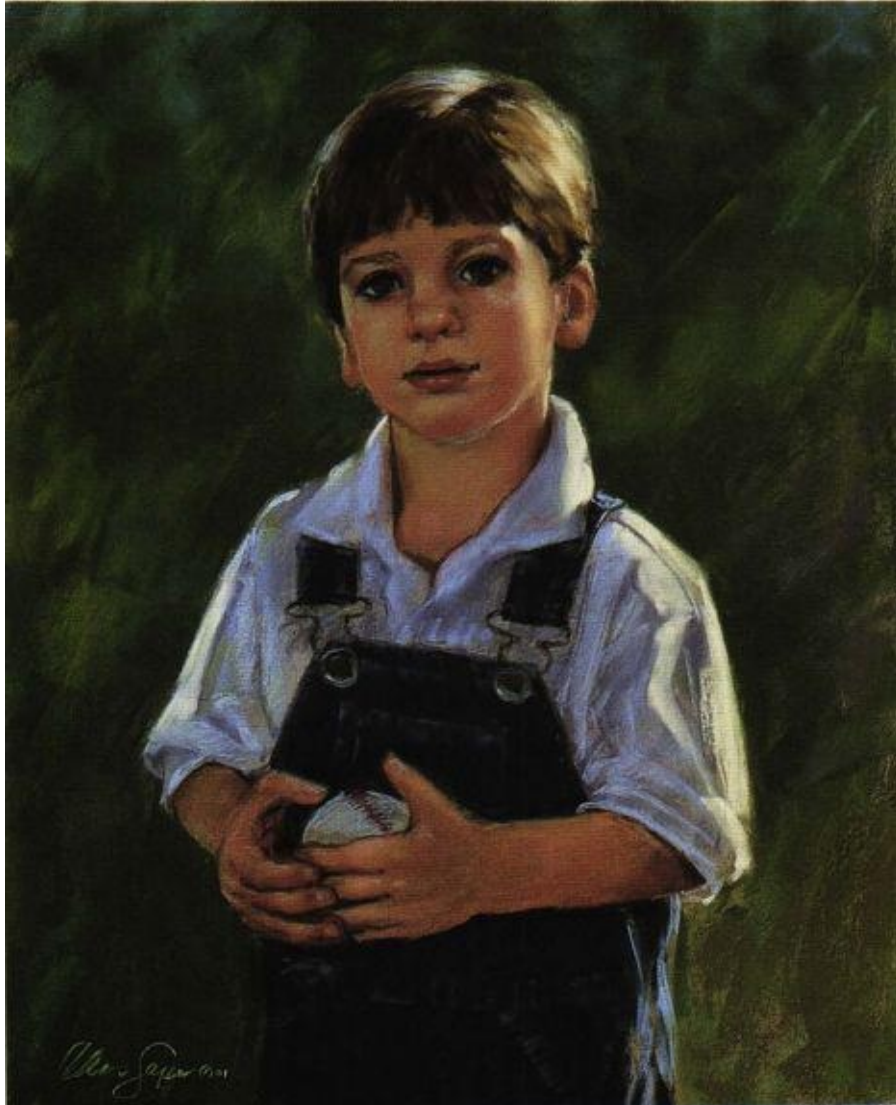


Private collection

Use the Color of Light to Support the Center of Interest

SUMMER MEADOW
Pastel on Wallis paper

44" ×2" (112cm×1cm)



Integrate Your Skin Tones With Background Color

Redheads



The Beauty of Translucent Skin

ANGEL TIP

Oil on linen

12" × 12" (30cm × 30cm)

Collection of the artist



The Value Range of Skin

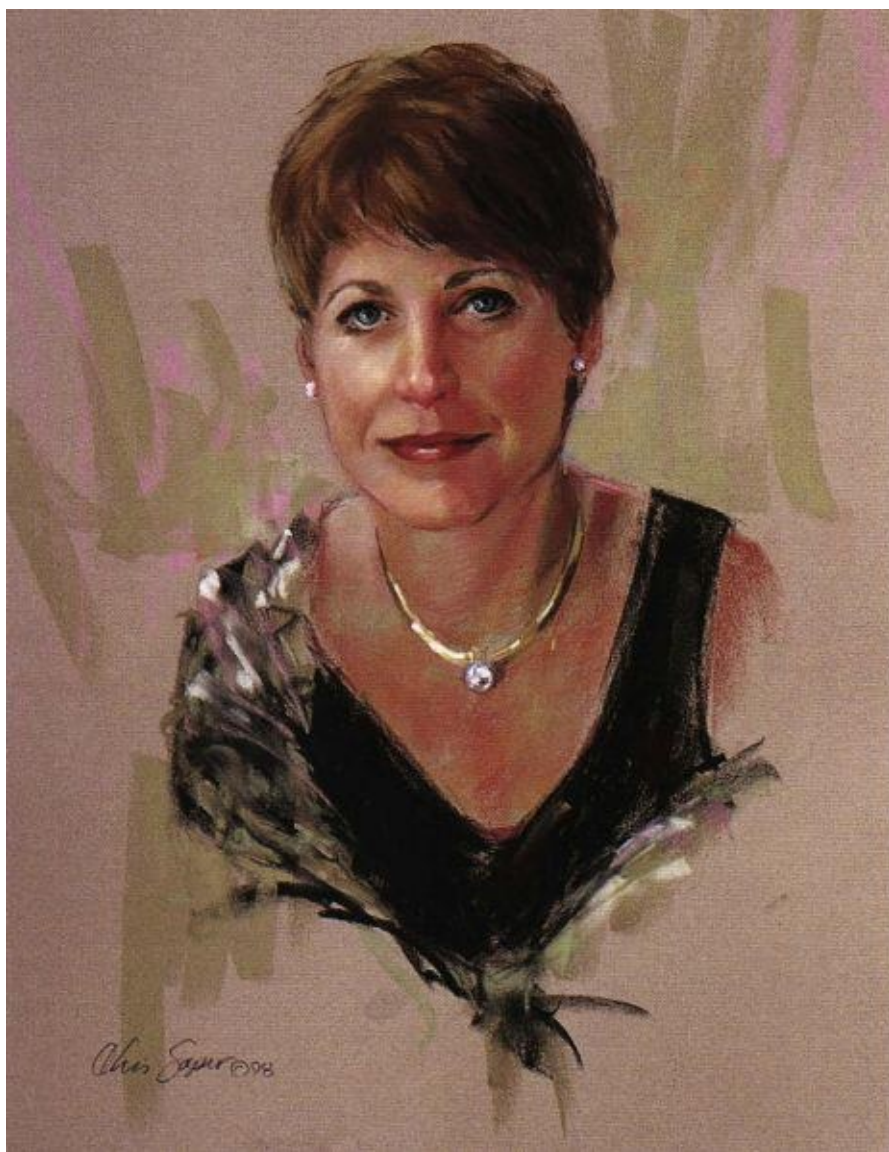


The Value Range of Hair



Sample Palette for Redheads: Yellow-Orange

Brunettes



Use Background Color to Reinforce Olive Skin Tones

BARBARA

Pastel on La Carte sanded
paper 20" × 16" (51cm × 1cm)



Cadmium Scarlet +
Cadmium Lemon +
Permanent Rose

Grayed down with
Titanium White +
Phthalo Green

Private collection

Sample Palette for Brunettes: Orange

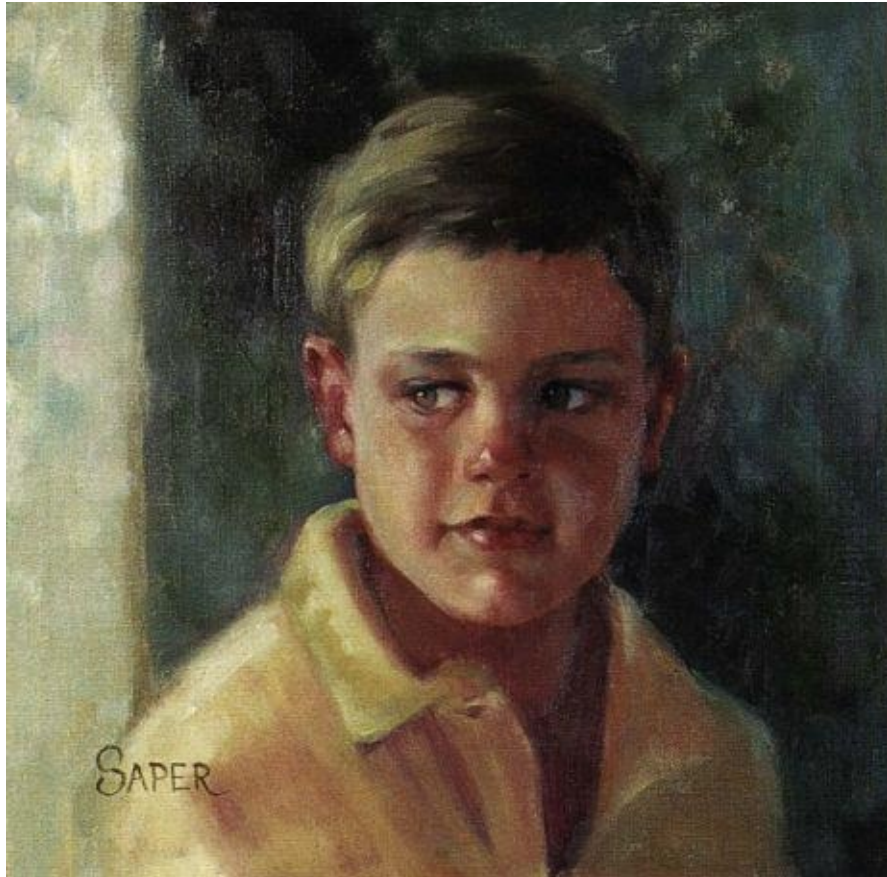


The Value Range of Skin



The Value Range of Hair

Blondes



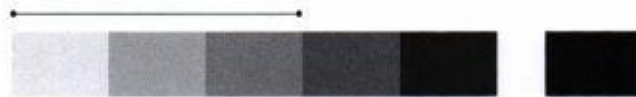
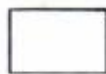
Color Bands Add Vitality to Children's Skin

MY SON AARON

Oil on linen

12" × 12" (31cm × 31cm)

Collection of the artist



The Value Range of Skin



The Value Range of Hair



Sample Palette for Blondes: Red-Orange

ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Reduce the Red for Beautiful Asian Skin Tones

GRANDFATHER'S GARDEN

Oil on linen



Cadmium Scarlet +
Cadmium Lemon +
Titanium White



Grayed down with
Titanium White +
Cadmium Lemon +
Ultramarine Blue

30" × 4" (76cm × 61cm)

Sample Palette for Asians: Yellow-Orange

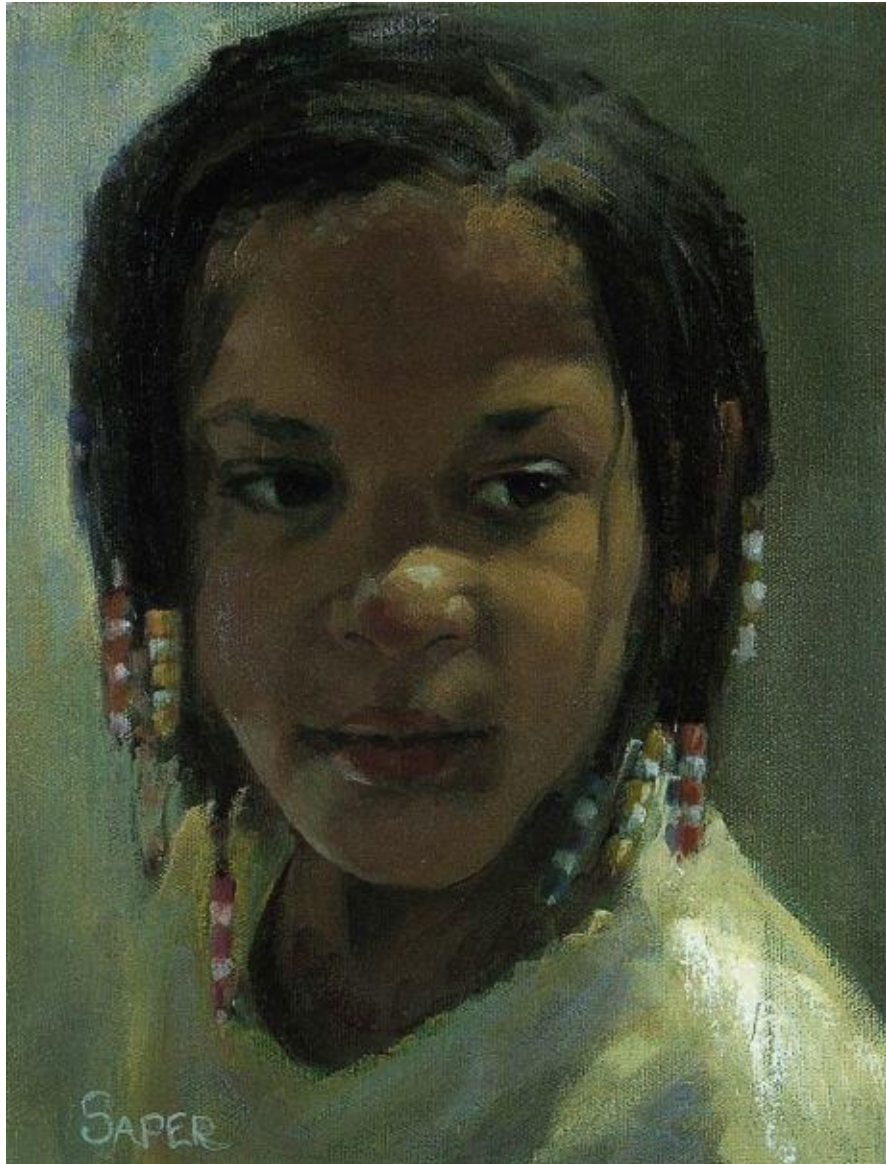


The Value Range of Skin



The Value Range of Hair

BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN



Use Beautiful Neutrals in Shadows to Support Rich Color in Light

GRACE

Oil on canvas

12" × 9" (30cm × 23cm)



Collection of the artist

Sample Palette for Blacks/African Americans: Red-Orange



The Value Range of Skin



The Value Range of Hair

HISPANIC



Rich Red-Oranges Convey Hispanic Skin Tones

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Pastel on Canson paper
21" × 5" (53cm × 8cm)



Collection of the artist

Sample Palette for Hispanics: Red-Orange



The Value Range of Skin



The Value Range of Hair



4 USING PHOTOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

SAND DABS (DETAIL)

Pastel on La Carte sanded paper

18" × 24" (46cm × 61cm)

Collection of Lauren and Georgia Hanss

Photographing Your Subject

SETTING UP THE POSE



Use Your Camera to Capture Fleeting Light

KOLLE

Pastel on Wallis paper

34" × 22" (86cm × 56cm)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. James K. Smith



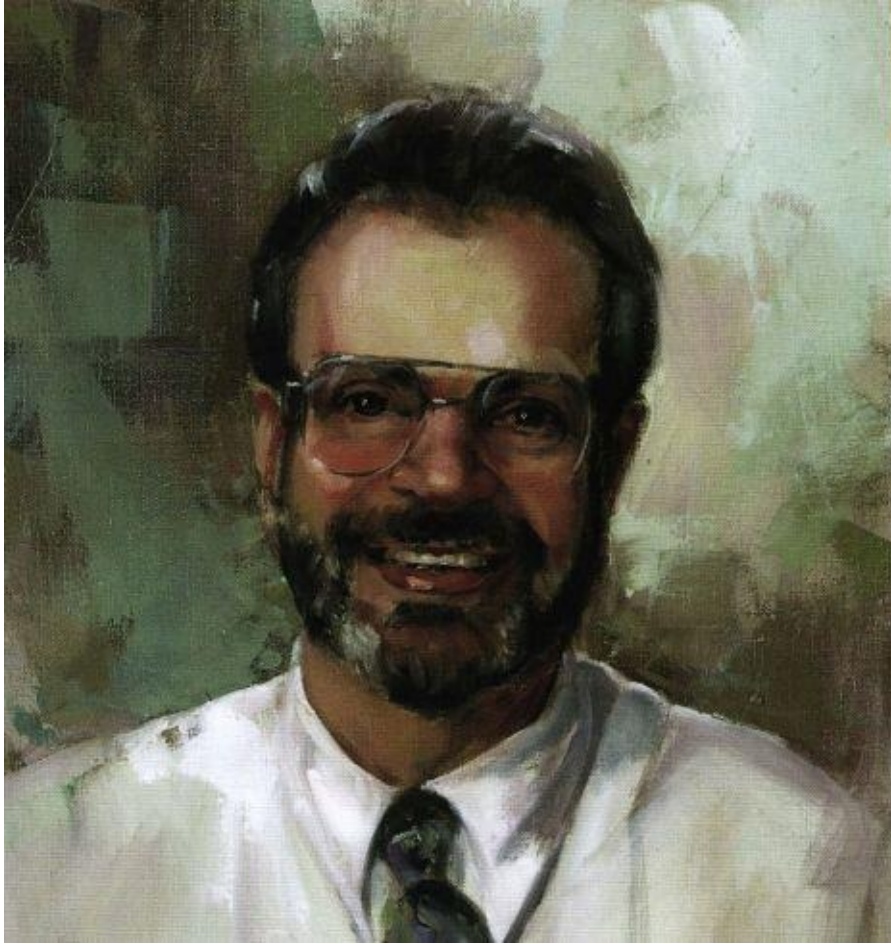
Attend to Details Up Front



Rely on the Classics for Modern-Day Poses

by G. G. G. G.

11/11/11



Add Spontaneity to Your Smiling Subject

BARRY J. FISHER, M.D. (DETAIL)

In Memorium

Oil on canvas

18" × 14" (46cm × 36cm)

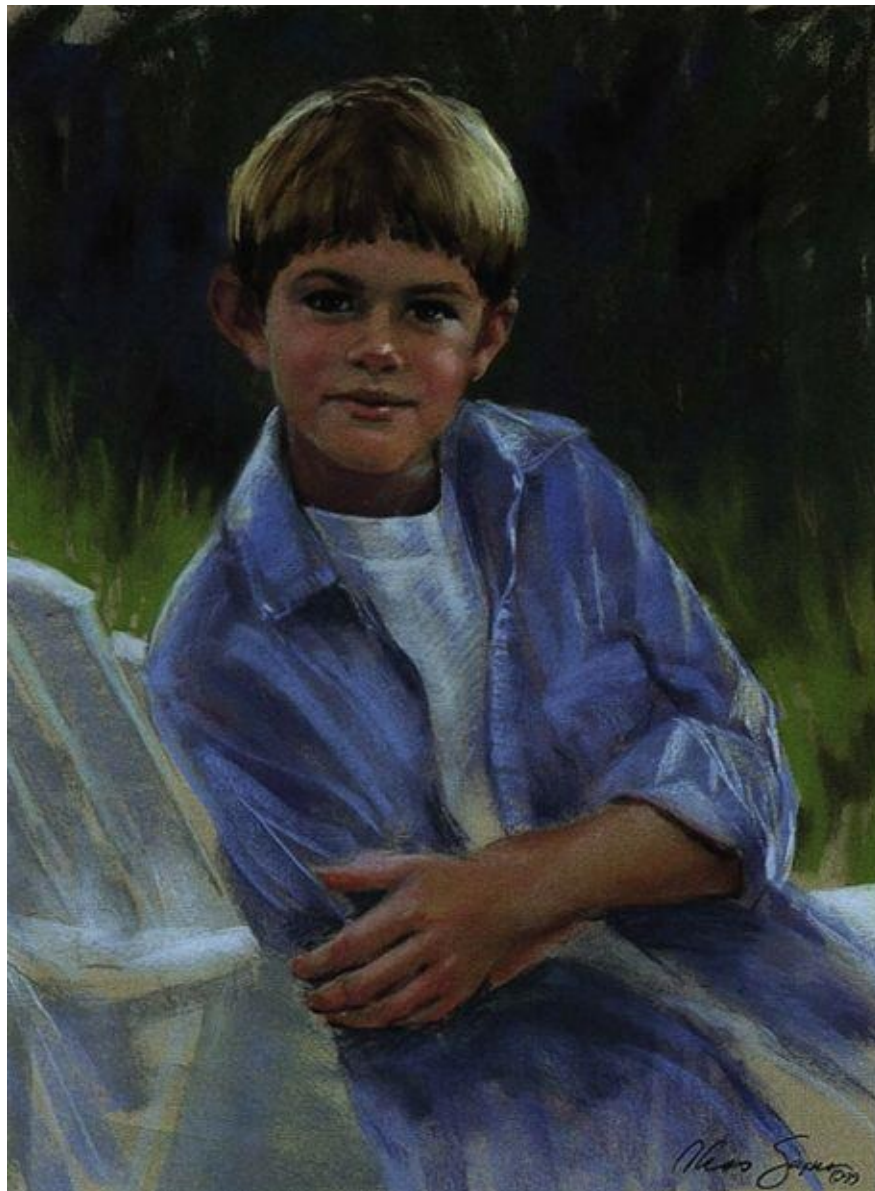
Permanent collection of Phoenix Children's Hospital

CAPTURING AND EXPRESSING YOUR SUBJECT'S HAPPINESS

Painting Broad Smiles

SELECTING YOUR VANTAGE POINT

DRESSING YOUR MODEL



Selecting Your Vantage Point

T.J.

Pastel on La Carte sanded paper

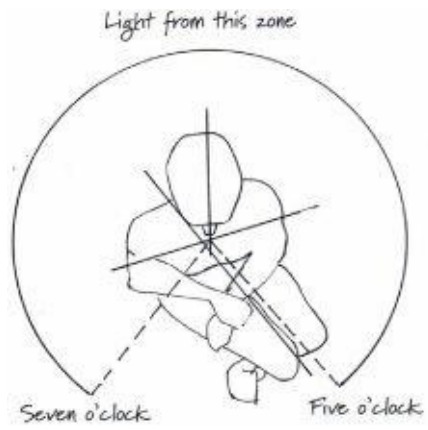
22" × 16" (56cm × 41cm)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Tesdahl

Lighting Your Subject

ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

NATURAL LIGHT



Light Your Model From Seven O'clock to Five O'clock



Position Your Subject for Exciting Sunlight

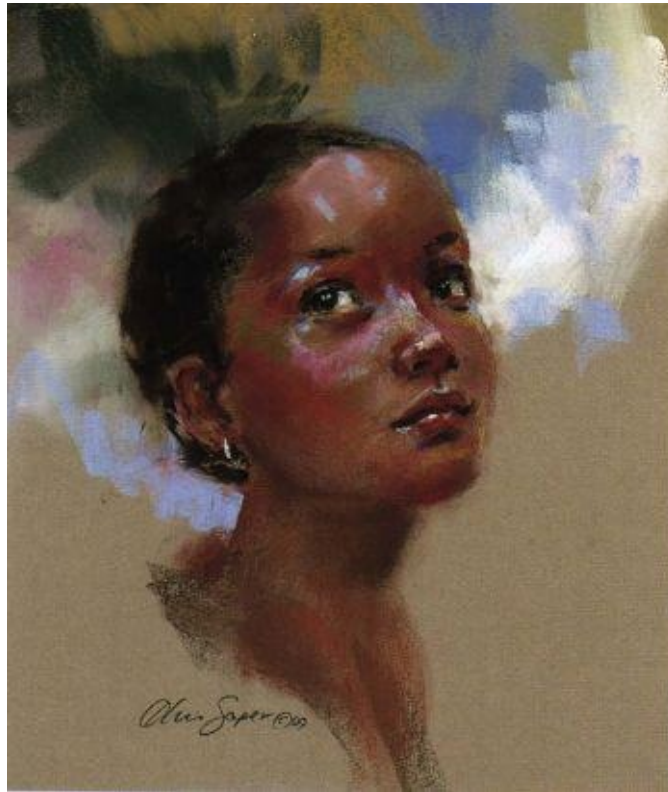
PAIGE

Pastel on Canson paper

16" × 12" (41cm × 30cm)

Collection of Kathi Mansell

too.



Lifted Faces Catch Clear Blue Light

SKYWARD

Pastel on Canson paper

16" × 12" (41cm × 30cm)

Collection of Ms. Victoria Gordon

Cool Reflected Light Silvers Skin Tones



Strike a Balance Between Local Color and the Color of Light

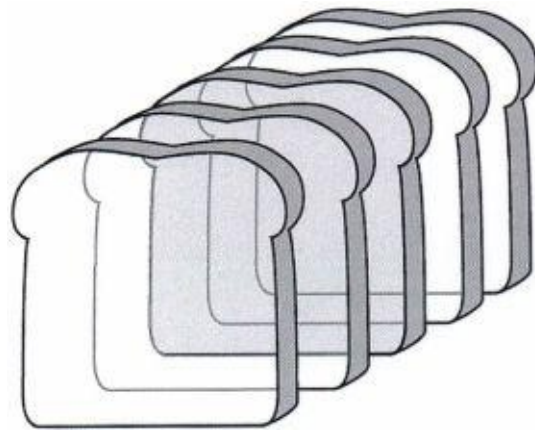
MICHÂEL ANN

Pastel on La Carte sanded paper
23" × 17" (58cm × 43cm)

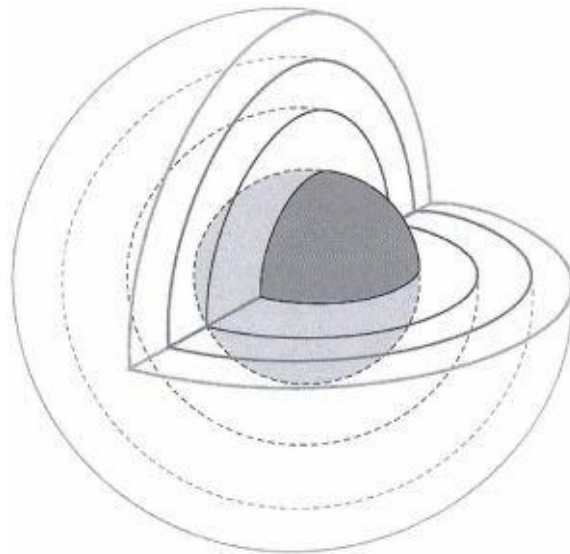
Private collection

Breaking the Chains of Photo Slavery

DEPTH OF FIELD: THE FOCAL LIE



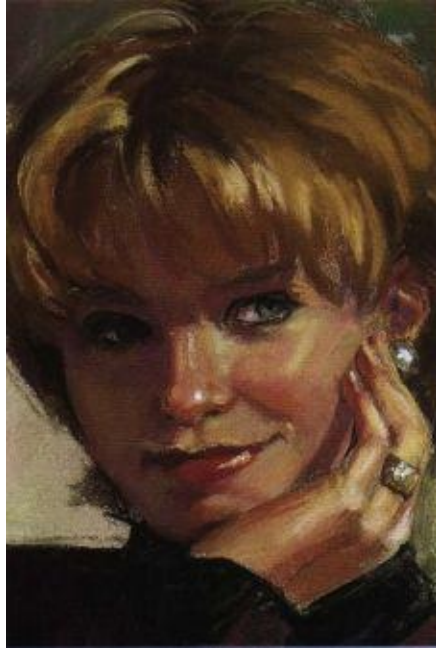
How the Camera Sees. . .



. . . and How We See



Reference Photo
(Photo by Linda Tracey Brandon)



Detail of the Finished Portrait



Ignore False Darks in Photo Resources

BRUSH BREAK: A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

Pastel on La Carte sanded paper

22" × 16" (56cm × 41cm)

Collection of the artist

COLOR DISTORTION

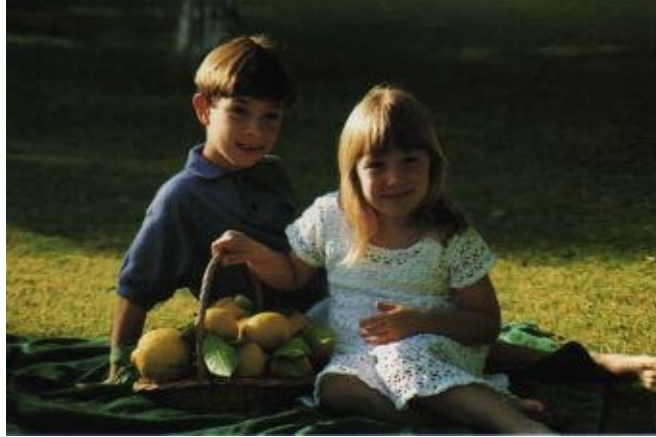


Backlight Your Photos

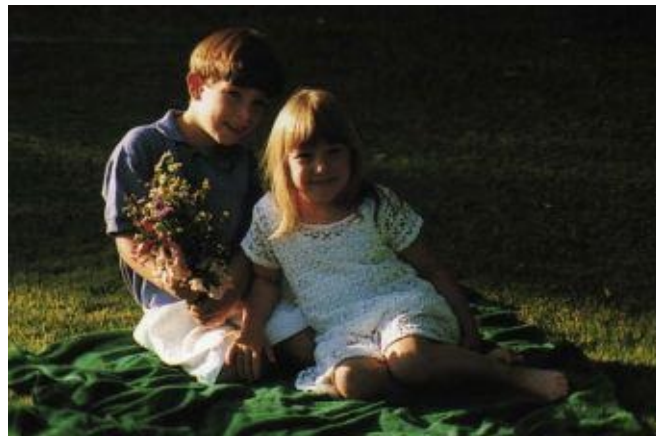


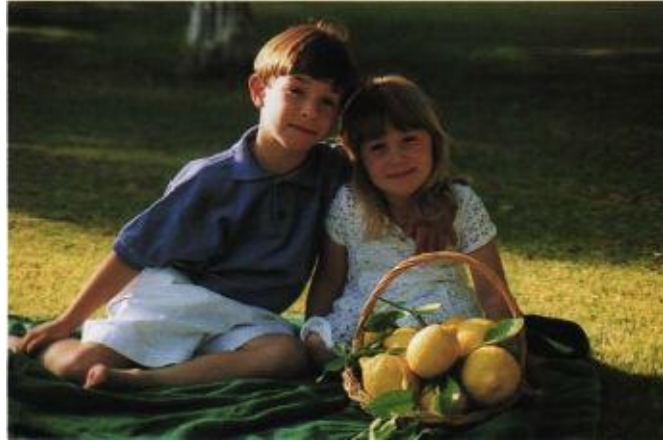
Constructing Sensible Composites

PHOTO GUIDELINES



Give Yourself Options





Select the Pose You Desire



Create the Composition You Want

THE LEMON GATHERERS

Pastel on Wallis paper

18" × 32" (46cm × 81cm)

Private collection

Painting From Life vs. Painting From Photographs



5 ORGANIZE YOUR PAINTING IN THREE EASY STAGES

JESSIE'S BRAIDS (DETAIL)

Pastel on Wallis paper

16" × 18" (41cm × 46cm)

Collection of the artist **MINI-DEMONSTRATION 1: CAUCASIAN GROUP, OIL**

Using a Three-Value Thumbnail Sketch

Materials List

Alizarin Crimson
Phthalo Green
Ivory Black

Ultramarine Blue
Titanium White



Finished Painting



1 | Create a Three-Value Thumbnail Sketch



MIDDLE DECISIONS: THE PAINTING PROCESS



3 | Draw the Portrait

Locating the, Center



4 | Paint Skin Tones in Light

The Drawing Stage



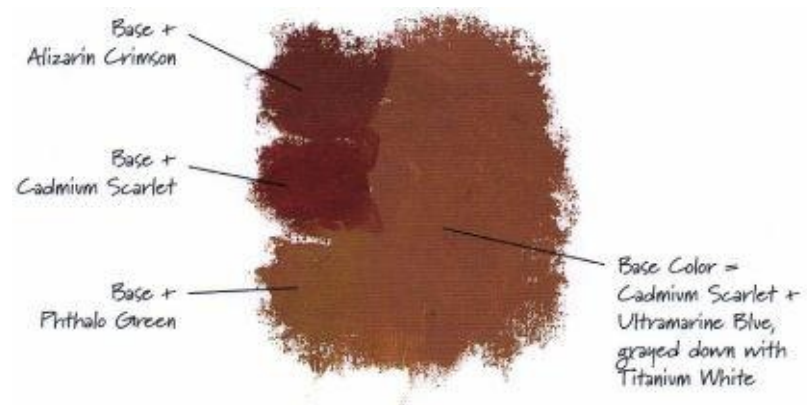
Basic Light Colors



5 | Paint Skin Tones in Shadow

Colors in shadow will be warmer than those in light. Create a comparable menu

ott.



Basic Shadow Colors

6 | Place the Darkest Darks



7 | Complete the Painting



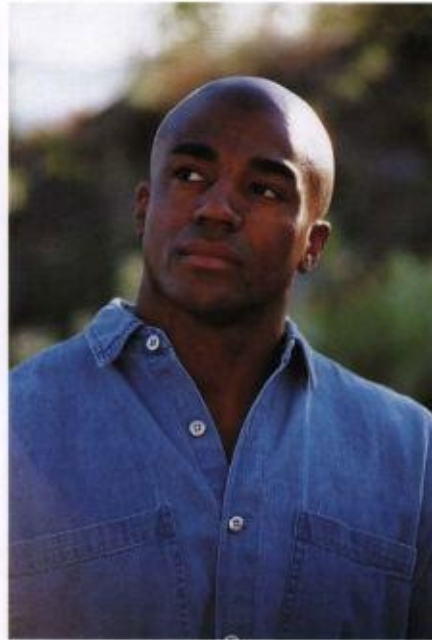
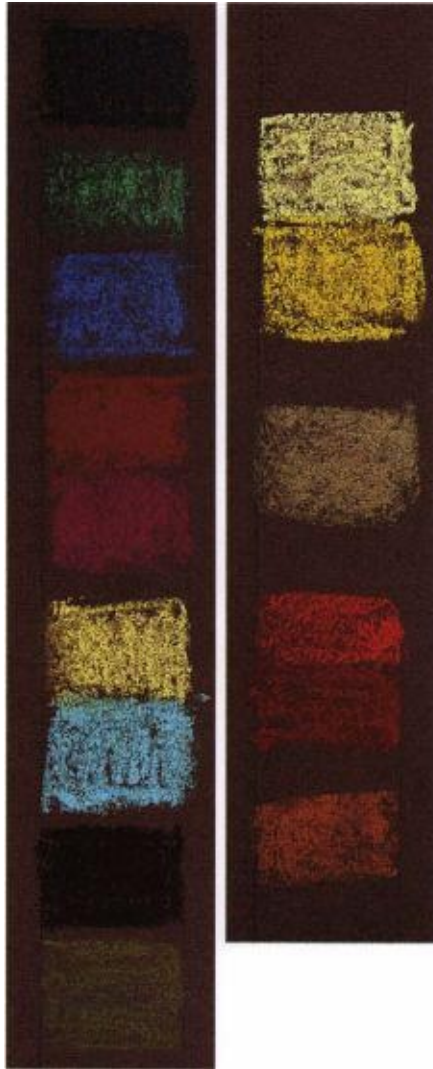


8 | Proofread Your Work and Finish

ISABEL

Oil on canvas

12" × 16" (30cm × 41cm)

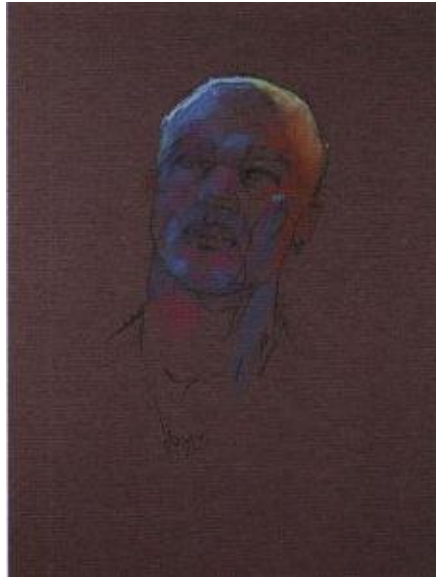


Reference Photo

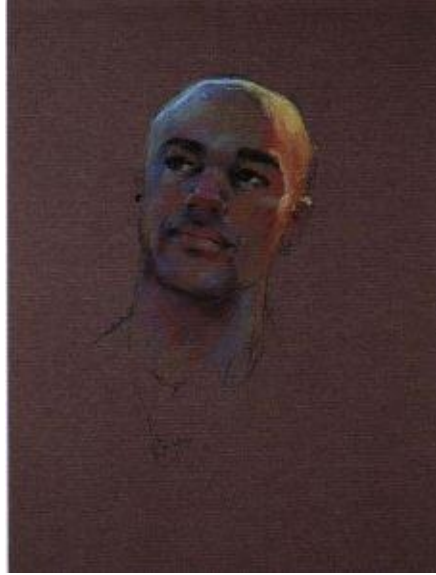
Reference Photo

EARLY DECISIONS: THINK BEFORE YOU PAINT

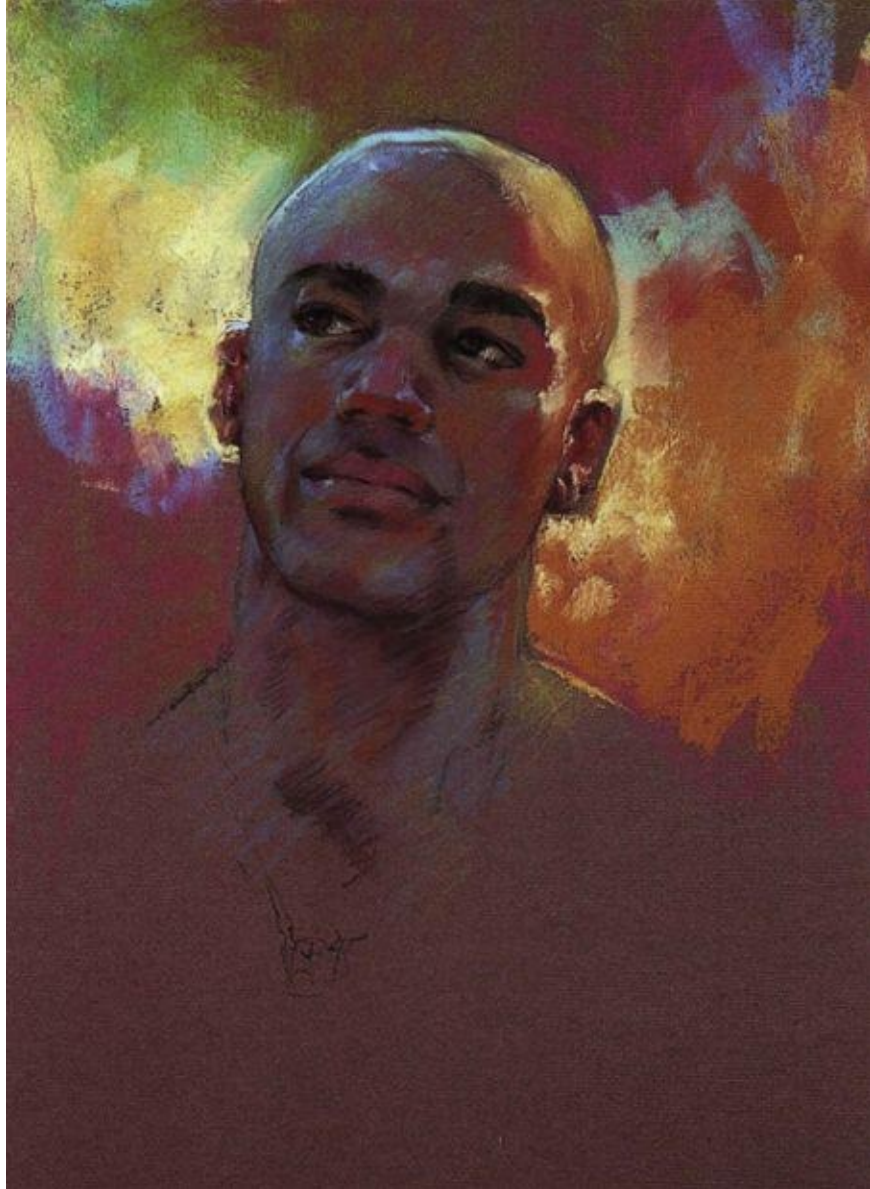
1 | Work the Likeness



2 | Model the Head with Colors of Light and Shadow



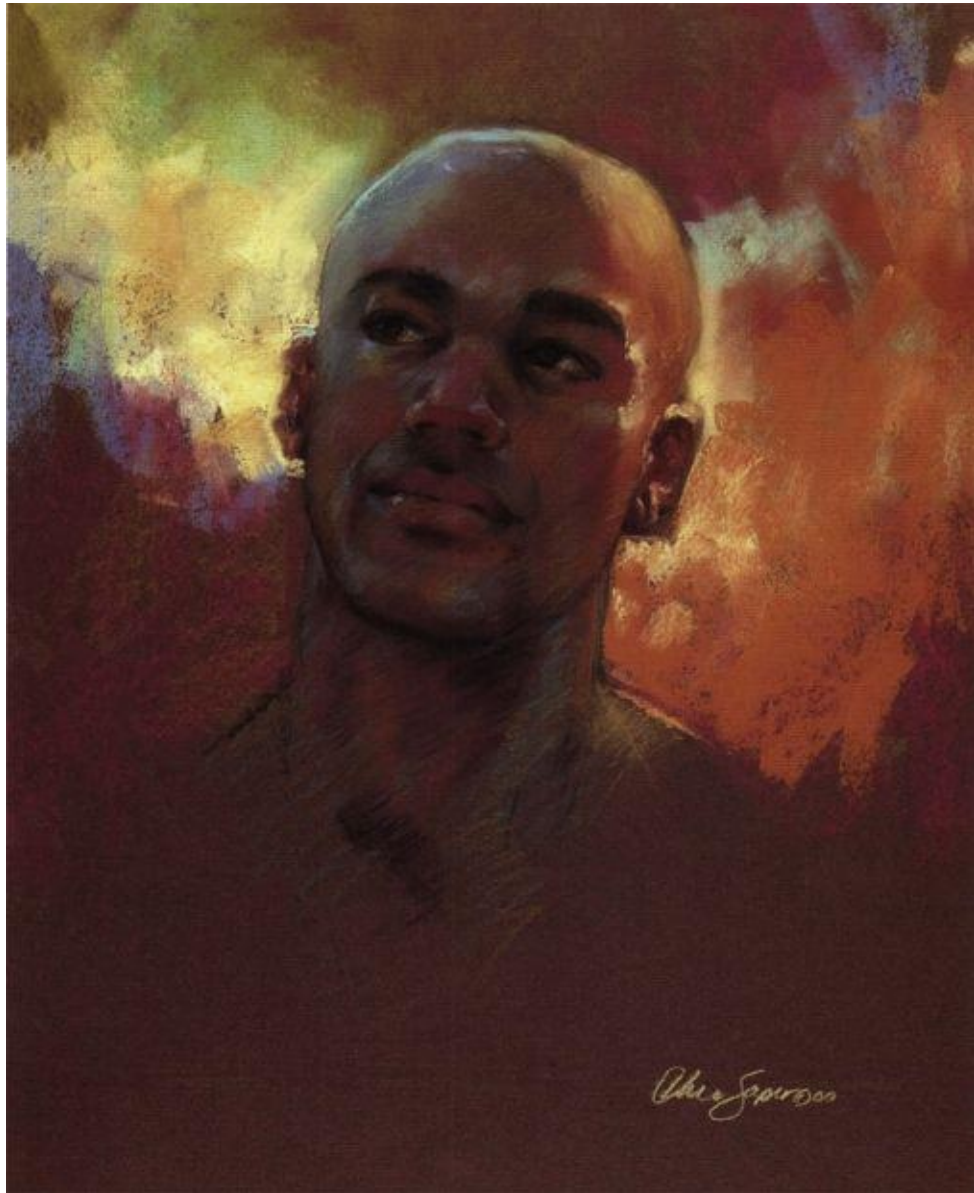
3 | Model the Features



4 | Strengthen the Design by Painting the Background

Establish Background Early

shadow, and (3) keep cool and warm areas distinct.



5 | Adjust Negative Spaces by Cropping Carefully

Develop an Edge Plan to Make Your Point **Materials List**

- Paper: Arches 140-lb. (300gsm) cold-press
- Brushes: 1-inch (25mm) flat sable, no. 8 round sable
- Standard watercolor palette, including these Winsor & Newton colors:

Rose Madder Genuine Cobalt Blue

Alizarin Crimson Viridian

Raw Sienna Burnt Sienna

Aureolin



Finished Painting

EARLY DECISIONS: THINK BEFORE YOU PAINT





2 | Paint Basic Skin Tones in Light

Color: 100% Yellow, 100% Red, 100% Blue



3 | Paint Skin Tones in Shadow



4 | Place Secondary Edges as You Model the Features

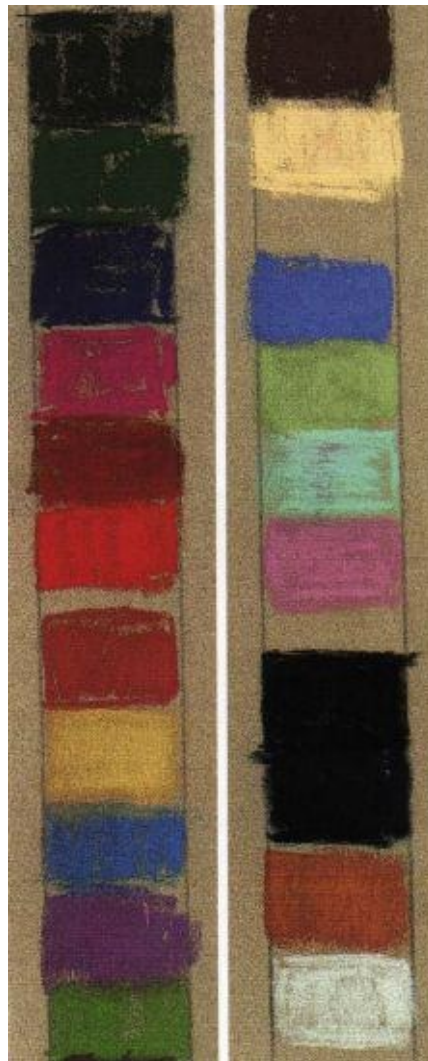


5 | Complete the Hair and Proofread Your Work

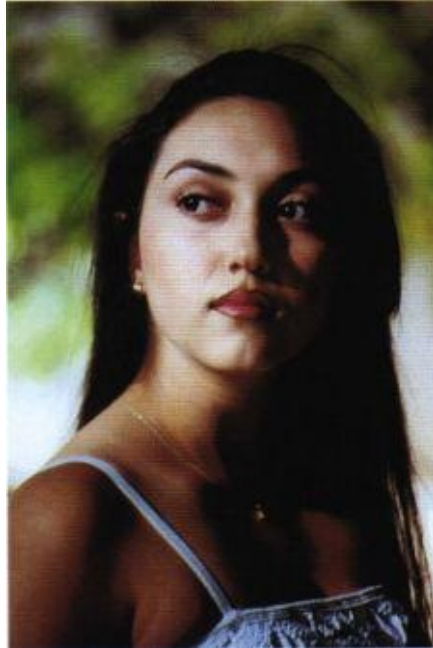


6 | Correct the Portrait

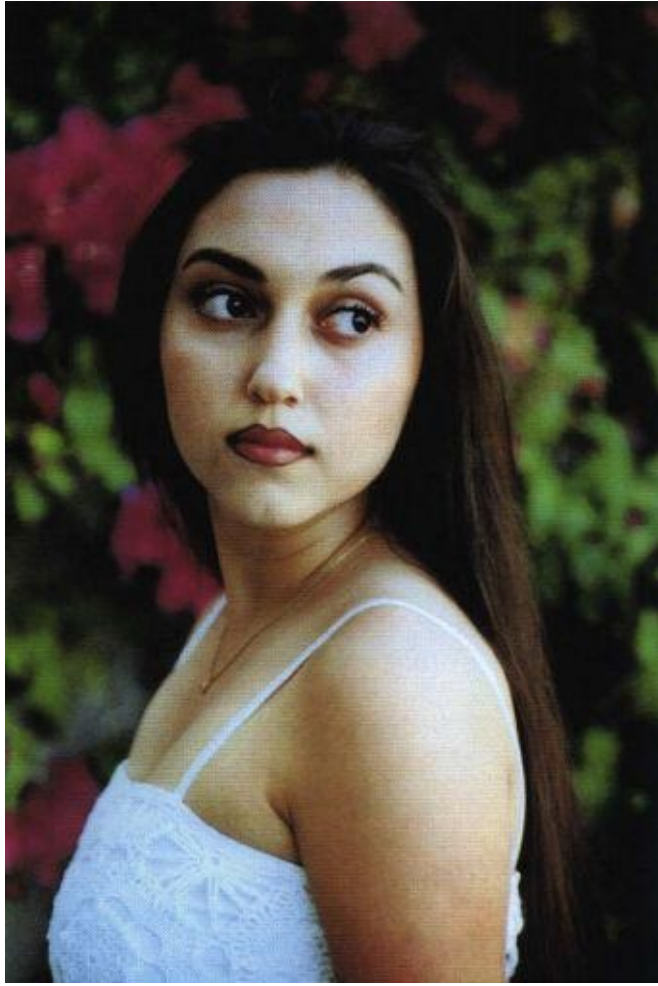
- Paper: La Carte sanded paper, light gray
- 6B charcoal pencil
- Kneaded eraser
- Soft pastels, 21 sticks (see color reference)



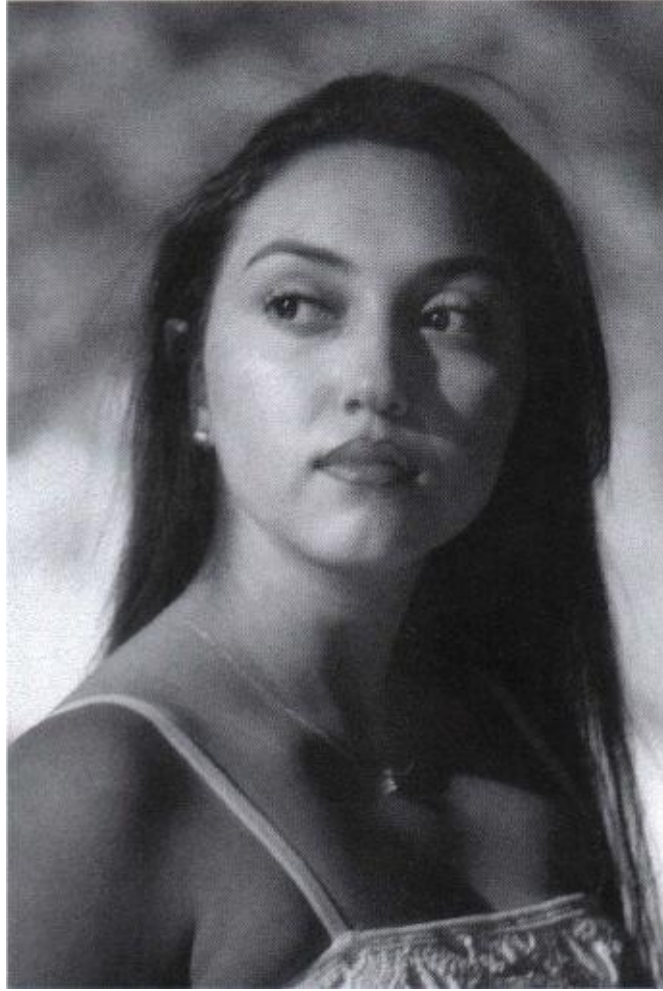
EARLY DECISIONS: THINK BEFORE YOU PAINT



1 | Pose Your Subject



2 | Add Items of Interest

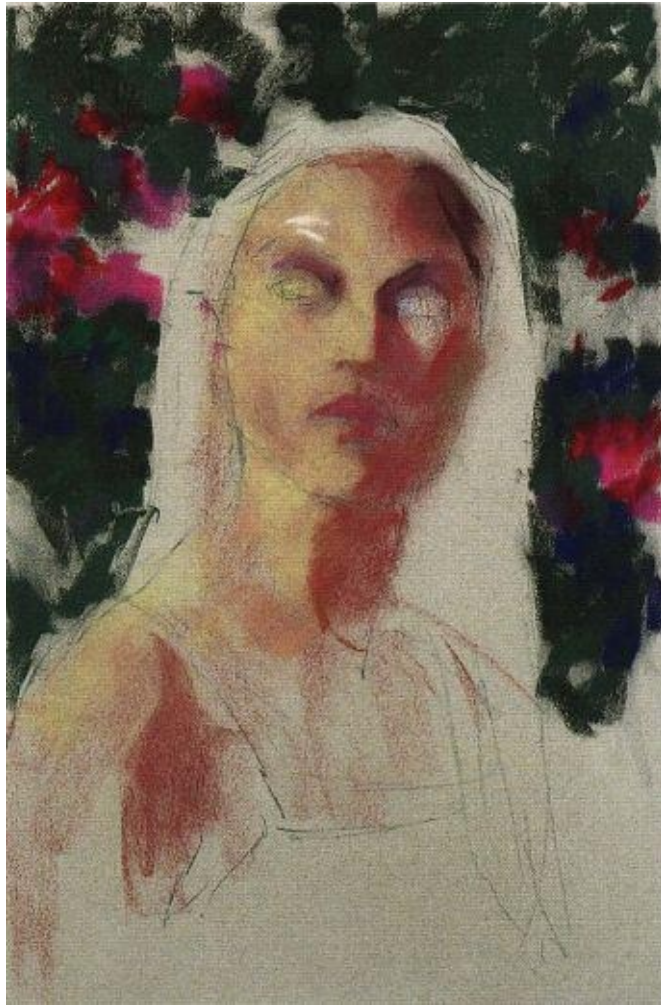


3 | Determine the Values of Your Colors

MIDDLE DECISIONS: THE PAINTING PROCESS



4 | State Your Color Harmony Up Front

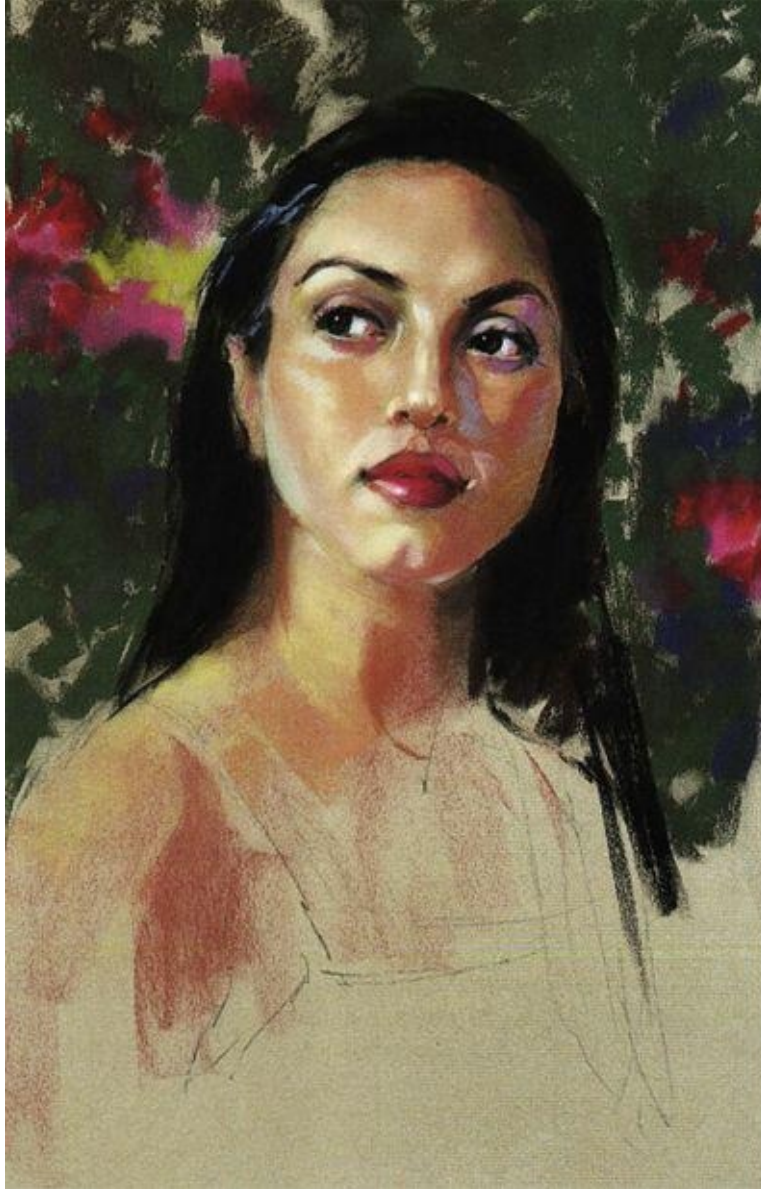


5 | Paint the Light and Shadow Patterns of the Face

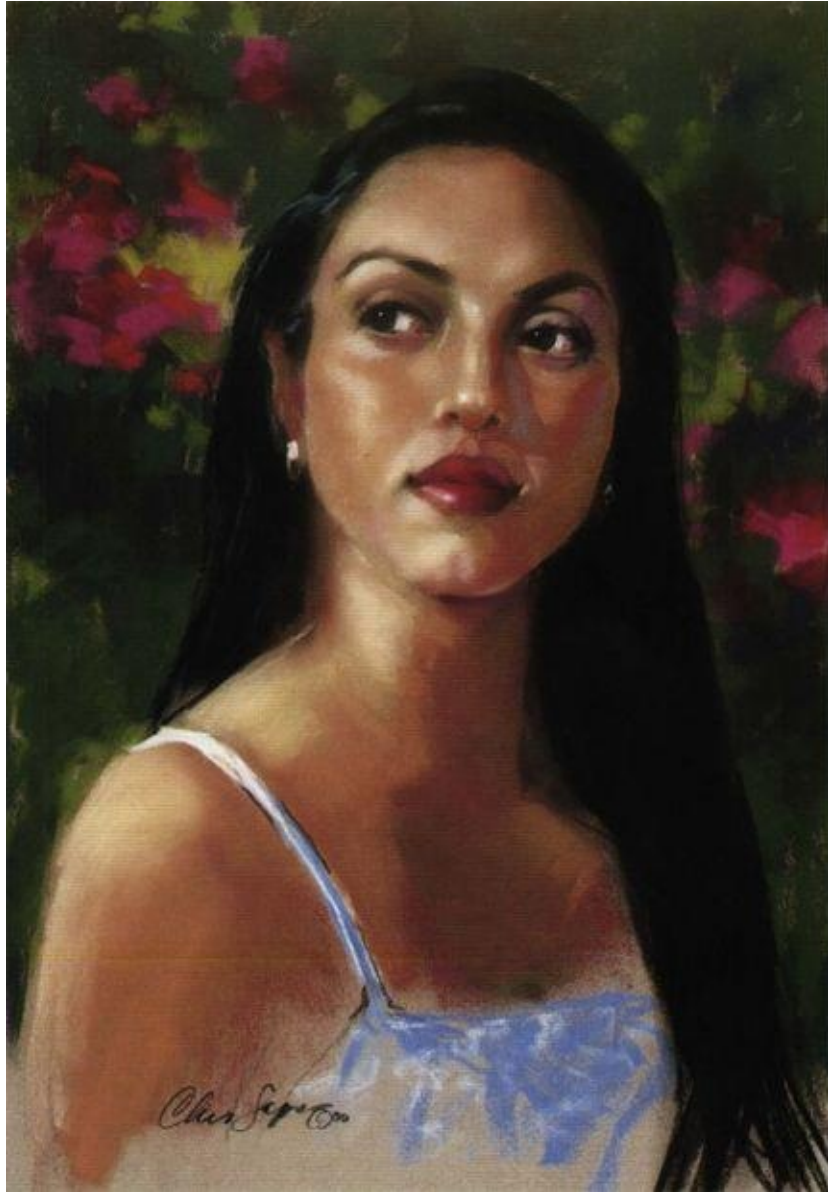


6 | Place the Darkest Darks

7 | Model the Features



FINAL DECISIONS: PROOFREADING YOUR PAINTING



8 | Complete the Portrait

EUNICE

Pastel on La Carte

sanded paper 18" × 14" (46cm × 36cm)

Collection

of

the

artist



6 PAINTING DEMONSTRATIONS STEP BY STEP

KATHARINE

Watercolor on Arches 140-lb. (300gsm) paper

15" × 10" (38cm × 25cm)

Collection of the artist **DEMONSTRATION 1: PASTEL PORTRAIT**

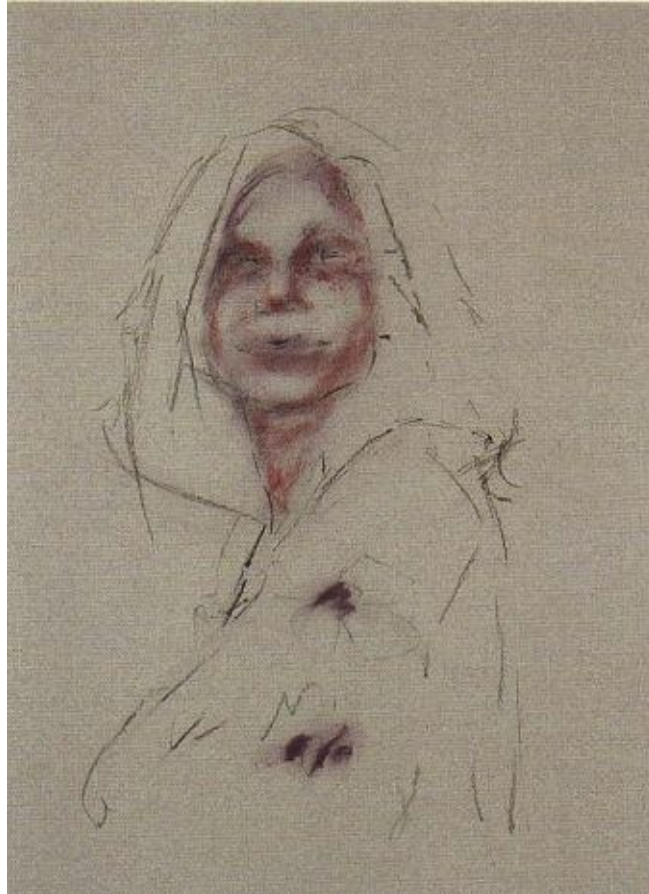
Skin Tone, Indian Subcontinent (Asian) Materials List



EARLY DECISIONS: THINK BEFORE YOU PAINT



Finished Painting



1| Place the Head and Declare the Coolest and Darkest Areas of Skin



2| Paint the Local Color of Skin and the Darkest Darks



3| **Develop the Skin Tones**

Begin the skin tones by adding lighter values to the stained base. Select two



4| Model the Eyes



a | Set Up the Eye

Figure 1: Eye Setup



b | Set Up the Iris



c | Paint the Iris



d | Light the Iris



e | Paint the White of the Eye

eye.



f | Complete the Eye

Gettng the Likeness Right



g | Complete the Right Eye (detail)



5 | Model the Nose (detail)

6 | Model the Mouth (detail)



7 | Paint the Hair



a| Paint the Three Values in the Hair



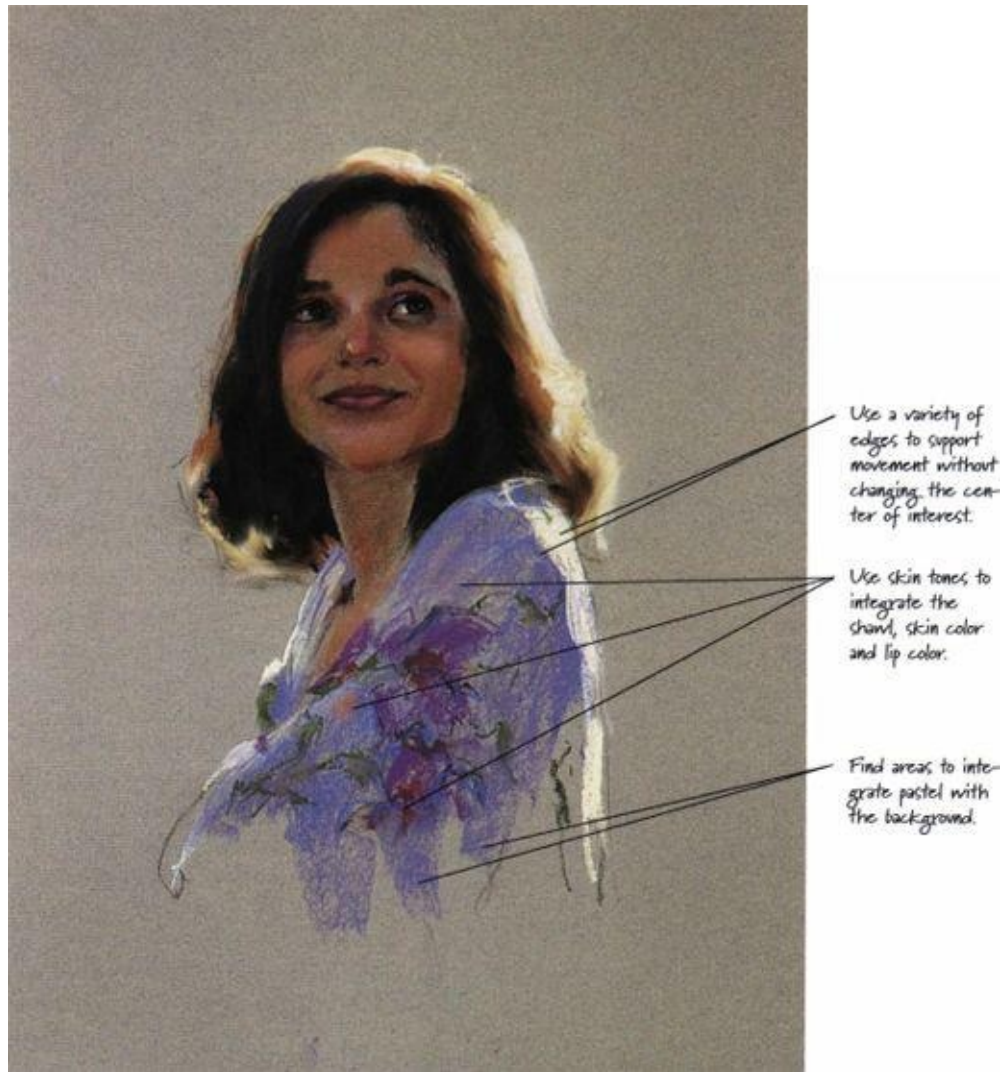
b | Create Texture by Controlling Edges



c | Add Pastel and Finish Texturizing



The Finished Result



8 | Paint the Shawl With the Color of Light

FINAL DECISIONS: PROOFREADING YOUR PORTRAIT



9| The Finishing Touches

MANISHA

Pastel on Canson paper

22" × 16" (56cm × 41cm)

Collection of the artist **DEMONSTRATION 2: OIL PORTRAIT**

Skin Tone, Hispanic Materials List

- Surface: 18" × 14" (46cm × 36cm) Belgian linen canvas
- 6B charcoal pencil
- Brushes: variety of bristle filberts, nos. 2 through 12; sable brushes for blending, any size
- Turpenoid
- Standard oil palette (see [MINI-DEMONSTRATION 1: CAUCASIAN GROUP, OIL](#))



Compose the Portrait With a Three-Value Thumbnail Sketch

Use a value plan to work out light, middle and dark shapes, size and subject placement. When you work on a surface with a fixed size, it's essential to place your subject correctly at the start. Remember that the rabbet (rebate) will cover $\frac{3}{8}$ " (10mm) all around, so avoid tangents in the corners and sides, and be careful not to crowd the head at the top of the canvas. Be sure that your value sketch is proportional to the canvas, and mark the center.

EARLY DECISIONS: THINK BEFORE YOU PAINT

the lightest and darkest

by

SS



Flat Light: The Artist's Choice

Where light and shadow are close in value and temperature, you can make a conscious choice to pick a color temperature for the light source. This pair of resource photos, shot in quick succession, allows the best facial expression and body language to be combined.

MIDDLE DECISIONS: THE PAINTING PROCESS

1 | Prepare the Canvas and Draw the Portrait

Tone the canvas with Terre Verte thinned down with Turpenoid. Mark the center with a 6B charcoal pencil to correspond to the center of the thumbnail sketch.

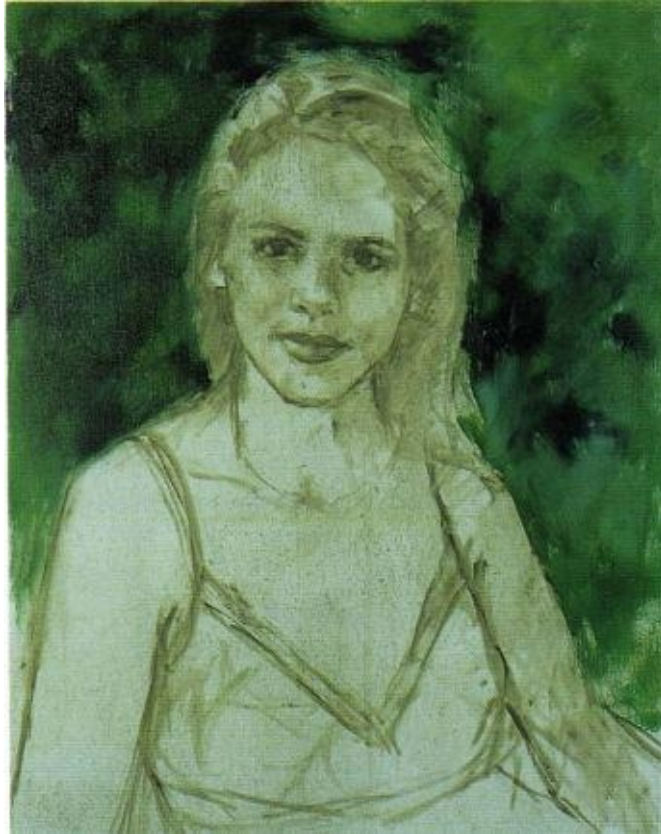
Next, use a no. 2 bristle filbert brush to draw the portrait with Terre Verte, following the placement worked out in the thumbnail.

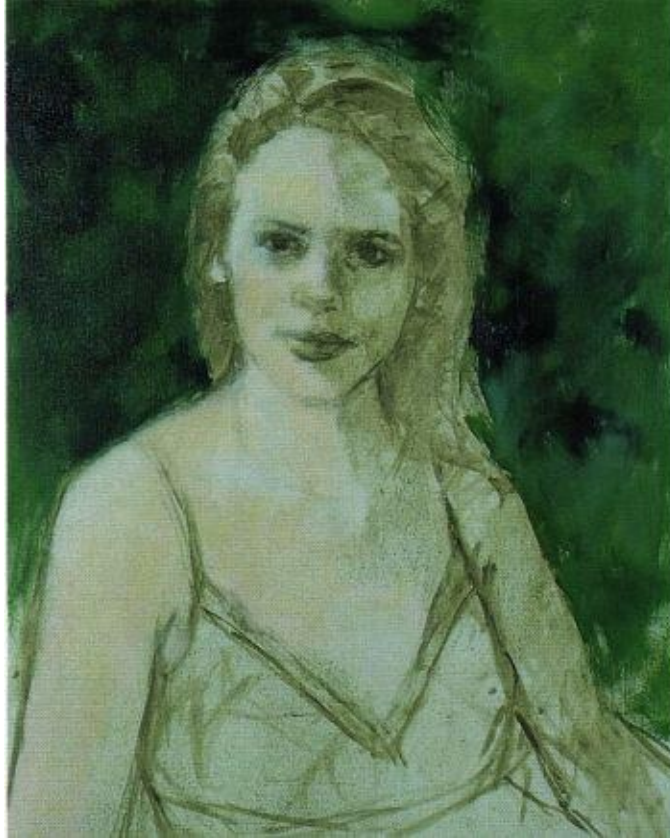


2 | Commit to the Background

Loosely placed greens, yellow-greens and blue-greens create the impression of foliage. Getting the background placed early is important to the painting because it establishes a value against which other values can be judged, and a color against which other colors, especially skin tones, can be judged.

Mix some dark to middle-value greens from Cadmium Lemon, Phthalo Green, Ultramarine Blue and Titanium White. Neutralize some of them with Alizarin Crimson. Move some background color into the edges of the hair for soft transitions later on. Notice how Phthalo Green changes dramatically with even tiny additions of Titanium White, so add it sparingly.

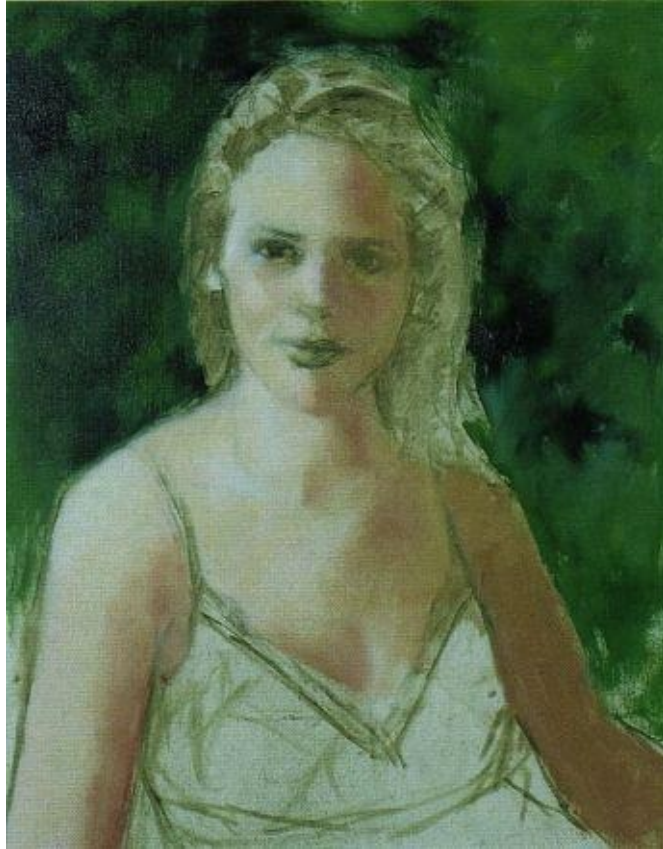




3 | Paint the Skin Tones in Light

Lightly scrub in lights with a no. 4 bristle filbert, following your cool light source assumption. Upward-facing planes will pick up ambient blue from the sky; sideward-facing planes will reflect green from the foliage; and downward-facing planes will be a little warmer, influenced by the dress, the earth and, of course, the cool light source.

Mix several hues and temperatures to represent the average color and value of skin in light. Neutralize a base of Titanium White and Permanent Rose with Phthalo Green and Cadmium Lemon. Add Cadmium Scarlet.



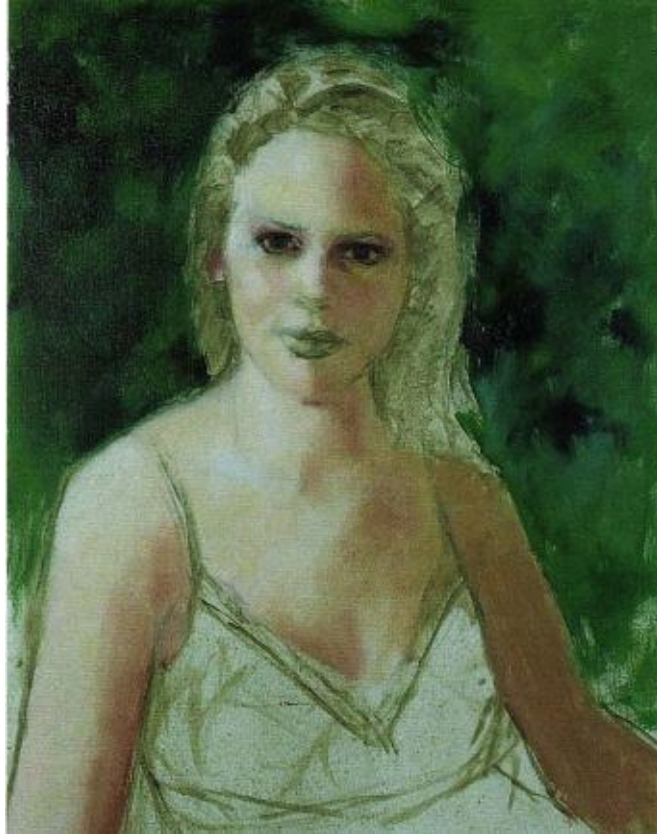
4 | Paint the Skin in Shadow

Lightly paint in the shadow pattern. The transition from light to shadow is most subtle in the forehead. Use a dry sable brush to blend the edges while they're still wet.

Mix several warmer, grayed-down hues to approximate the average color and value of the skin in shadow.

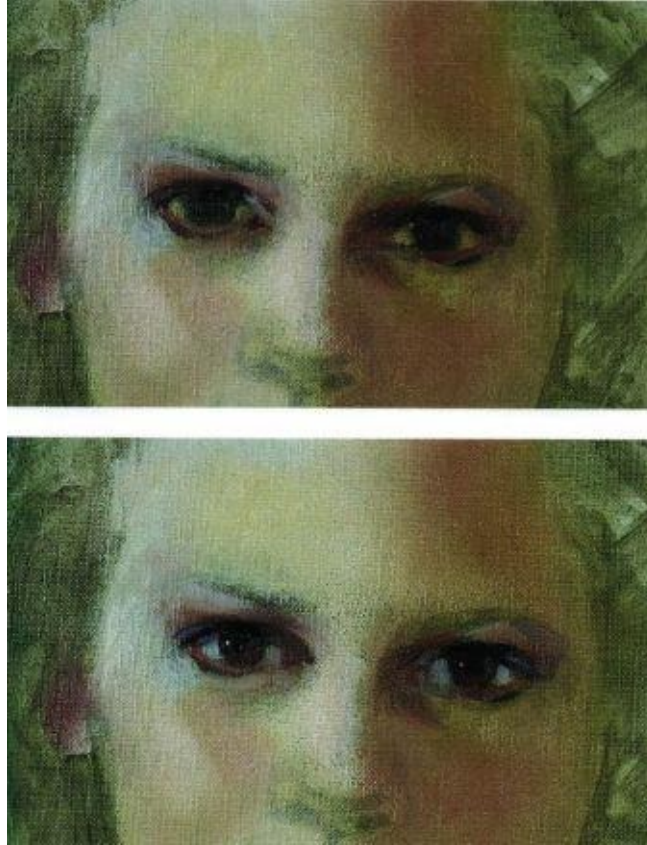
Drawing the Portrait in Oil

Take the drawing as far as necessary to feel comfortable moving into color. It's often helpful to make a more complete drawing when your resource photos are flat, as in this case. The Terre Verte drawing, easy to erase with Turpenoid, helps you explore the structure of the face that is not readily apparent from the photographs. Although the likeness will be lost many times throughout the painting process, this visual dress rehearsal makes it easier to regain it. This thin drawing can sit for hours or days, and gives you a chance to find errors that you can correct once you begin using color.



5 | Paint the Eye Sockets

Mix warm and cool dark browns from Cadmium Scarlet and Ultramarine Blue. Use a small bristle filbert (no. 2 or 4) to first model the shape of the eye socket, loosely placing the irises. You can correct the gaze later. Model both eyes at the same time.



6 | Complete the Eyes (detail)

Paint the whites of the eyes in a grayed-down neutral mixed from Titanium White, Ultramarine Blue, Phthalo Green and Cadmium Lemon. The whites of the eyes get a small cast shadow under the upper lashes that is mixed from Ultramarine Blue and Titanium White. Paint the irises from three o'clock to six o'clock with a warmer, lighter brown; the pupil is a spot of black, mixed from Phthalo Green and Alizarin Crimson. Place tiny catch lights at ten o'clock, keeping them small. Keep focused on the eyes as your center of interest, with sharper edges, greater contrast and saturated color.

Be Cautious with Phthalo Green

Typically, this is where you'd want to place your darkest darks, which would include the hair. Since there's so much Phthalo Green in the background, give it a few hours to set up a little before painting into it. Otherwise, it's easy to accidentally pickup and transfer Phthalo Green into other undesirable places. The eyes can adequately describe the darkest dark. If you have trouble controlling the Phthalo Green, try Viridian instead.



7 | I Model the Nose, Place the Brows (detail)

Paint the nose with variations of colors you've already mixed— cooler where the light strikes most directly; warmer and darker at the shadow's core. Compare the turning edge of the nose to the softer turn of the forehead and the sharper edges in the eyes. A fleck of Alizarin Crimson places the nostrils. The edge at the top of the nostril is sharper than the edge at the bottom.

It's often easier to place the eyebrows, which are so important to likeness, after you have painted the nose. Then you have both corners of the eyes as well as the wings of the nose as helpful landmarks.

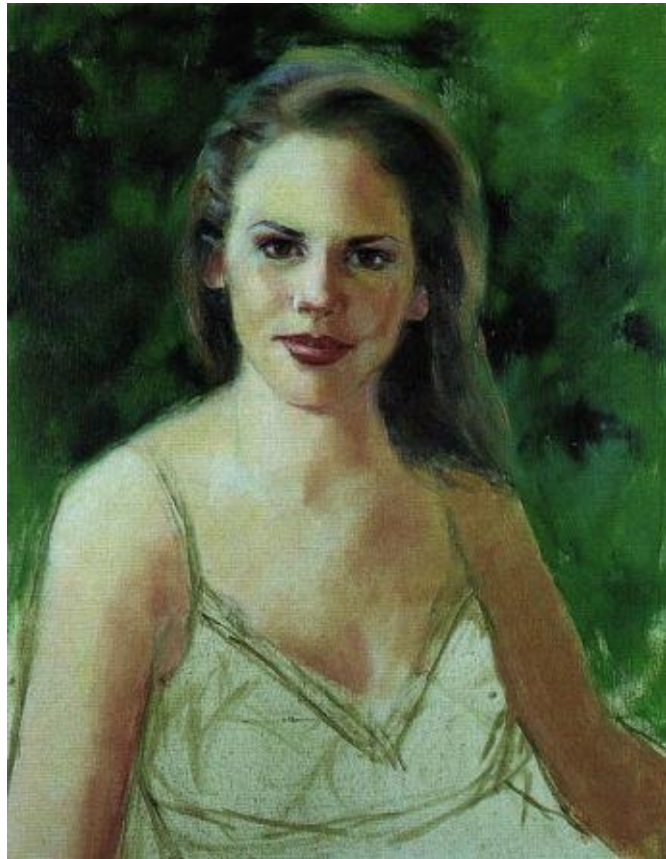


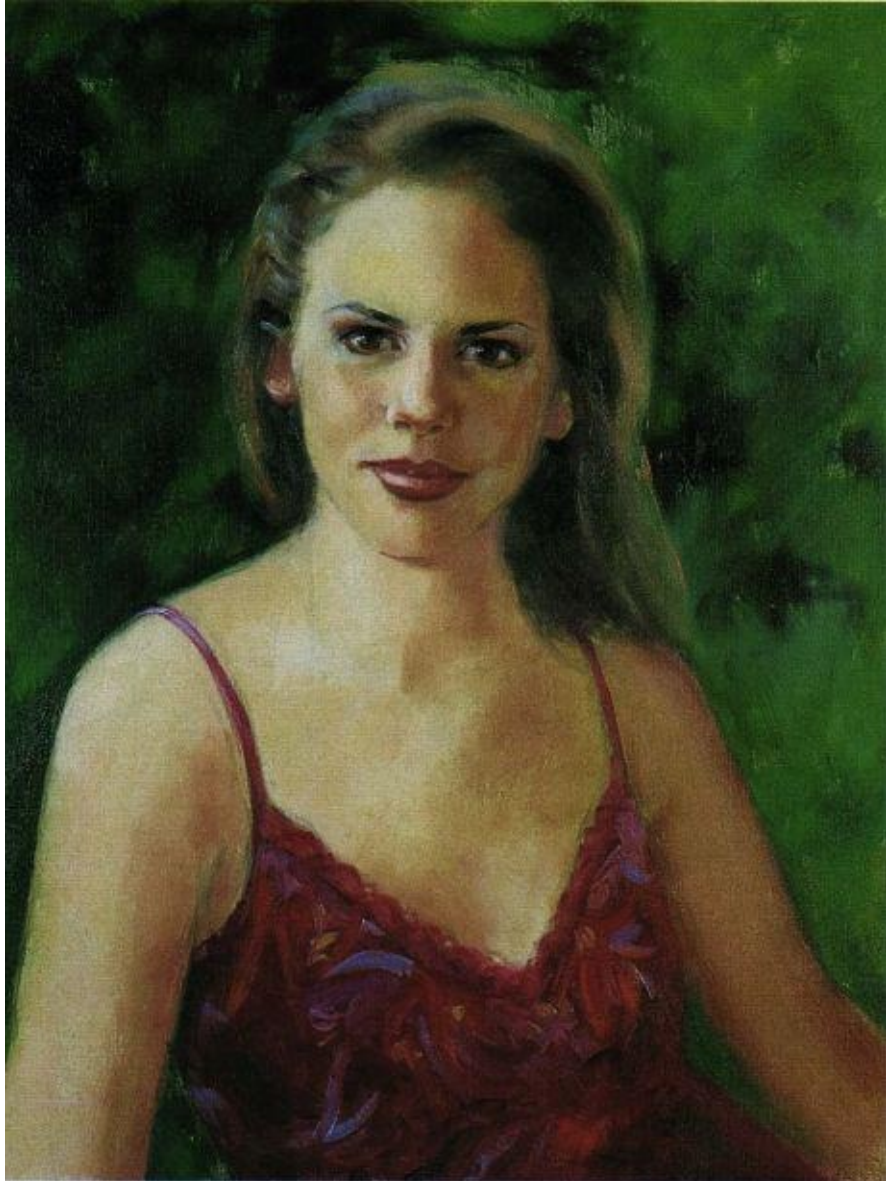
8 | Model the Mouth (detail)

Use a variety of reds, red-oranges and red-violets to paint the mouth. Touch the corners with Alizarin Crimson, and paint the highlight in a light cool red. The placement and shape of the light on the lower lip will define the shape of the mouth, so it must be considered carefully.

9 | Paint the Hair

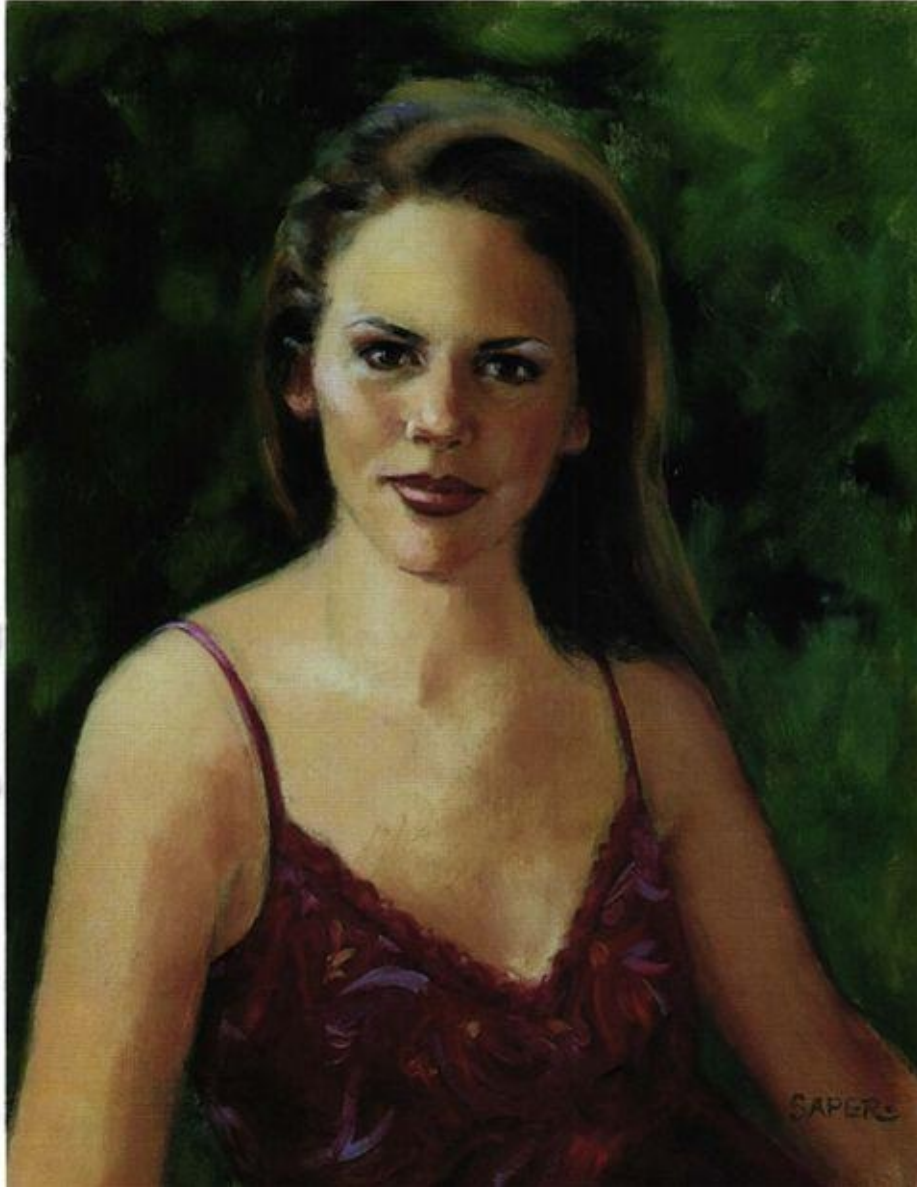
Squint at the hair to find its three basic values, just as you'd approach the three-value thumbnail sketch. Use the same browns you mixed for the eyes, painting the general shapes. Keep the hairline very soft where it meets the skin. Use large, loose strokes to integrate lost and found edges where the hair meets the background. Exaggerate temperatures if you'd like—after all, this is a painting, not a photograph! Use grayed-down blues and blue-violets to paint the areas of hair in light.





10 | Paint the Dress

Paint the dress in its dominant color and value: middle-value, slightly grayed-down red-violet. Darken and gray down areas of the dress in shadow by brushing background greens over the reds. Paint the pattern on top of the overall color.



11 | Make Proofreading Corrections

Correct the likeness by broadening the face at the cheekbones. Correct the values by darkening the shadowed side of the face. Enliven the hair with brushwork and dark accents. Sign the painting.

PORTRAIT OF TASHA DIXON

Oil on canvas

18" × 14" (46cm × 36cm)

Collection of the artist **FINAL DECISIONS: PROOFREADING YOUR PAINTING**

- Is the center of interest clear?

Yes.

- Is the composition effective? **Yes.**
- Are color temperatures unified in shadow and light? **Yes.**
- Is the color harmony effective? **Yes.**
- Are the edges stated effectively?

Not quite. While the edges support the center of interest, the hair is too uniformly soft to balance the pattern in the dress. Add dark, crisp accents to improve balance and add secondary edge interest.

- Is there an optimal place for the signature? **Yes.**

By making painting decisions at the right time, the finishing problems can all be easily dealt with. Even small likeness adjustments can be made at the end. Moving something just a smidgen can make an enormous difference in likeness.

DEMONSTRATION 3: WATERCOLOR PORTRAIT **Skin Tone, Caucasian Materials List**

- Paper: Arches 140-lb. (300gsm) cold-press, 16" × 12" (41cm × 30cm), stretched
- Brushes: 1-inch (25mm) flat sable; no. 8 round sable
- No. 2 pencil
- Kneaded eraser
- Standard watercolor palette (see [MINI-DEMONSTRATION 3: ASIAN GROUP, WATERCOLOR](#)), plus Cadmium Red
- Masking fluid
- Razor blade to lift out highlights

Painting Ashlee in watercolor was a delight. Watercolor is well suited to her translucent complexion, clear blue eyes and light blond hair. Her skin is orange, light to middle-light in value, and only very slightly grayed down with green.



Finished painting

EARLY DECISIONS: THINK BEFORE YOU PAINT

- **Identify the center of interest.** Ashlee's right eye (our left) catches the light and will be the point of greatest impact. Sharpest edges will be in this eye, with secondary edges in the background and shine of her hair.
- **Determine the compositional design.** In watercolor vignettes, you can let the clean white paper balance the image. This is a great opportunity to paint a high-key painting, where all of the values (except tiny accent areas) are middle-value or lighter, and you use temperature, saturation and edges to create dimension.
- **Determine the color of light.** Although the light is filtered and diffused, it's clearly warm, letting the shadows cool.
- **Determine the color harmony.** Ashlee's peaches-and-cream coloring would easily support an analogous orange color scheme accented with discords. However, a yellow-violet complementary color harmony would be more interesting, particularly since there will be a substantial amount of white left on the surface.



1 | Draw the Portrait

By using a no. 2 pencil to place the head centered left to right and slightly closer to the top than the bottom of the paper, you'll keep a little wiggle room for cropping when you're finished. Draw the portrait to the level of completion you prefer. Now, erase the drawing with a kneaded eraser, leaving just a ghost of the drawing.

The Importance of Drawing

Of the three mediums shown in this book, watercolor is the least amenable to being changed. Therefore, I recommend spending more time in the drawing phase than you might in the other two mediums. When you paint watercolor portraits from life, try using the entire first modeling session to get your likeness established. In painting from photos, take as much time as you'd like, but avoid the temptation to overwork the drawing!

MIDDLE DECISIONS: THE PAINTING PROCESS

During the process of painting, you'll be working on both likeness and color mixing. Since watercolor can be easily overworked, it's usually easier to establish your likeness before you begin to apply color.

To Mask or Not?

Using masking fluid is a highly personal choice. It's a lifesaver to escape that “painted around” look that is often characteristic of overworked or amateurish paintings. The downside is that it invariably leaves uniformly sharp edges once it's removed. Get the best of both worlds by limiting masking to areas that not only need to stay very light, but whose sharp edges you want to preserve. Experiment—after all, it's just a piece of paper!



2 | Apply Masking and First Wash

Preserve the white of the paper in the areas of highest value: the eye in light (including catch lights) areas of its socket, and the highlights on the nose, lower

lip and hair.

Use a 1-inch (25mm) flat sable brush to wash the skin areas in Raw Sienna. Allow the wash to move through the hair and into the background. Drop a small amount of Rose Madder Genuine into the cheek in the light. Let it dry. This wash's value should match the average value of the skin in light, but should be dark enough to easily see the masking.



3 | Paint the Skin in Shadow

Wash in the shadow shapes, starting at the forehead, with greens (Aureolin + Viridian) moving to red-violet (Rose Madder Genuine + Cobalt Blue) below the eyebrow. Drop a small amount of Rose Madder Genuine into the wet cheek area. Let it dry.



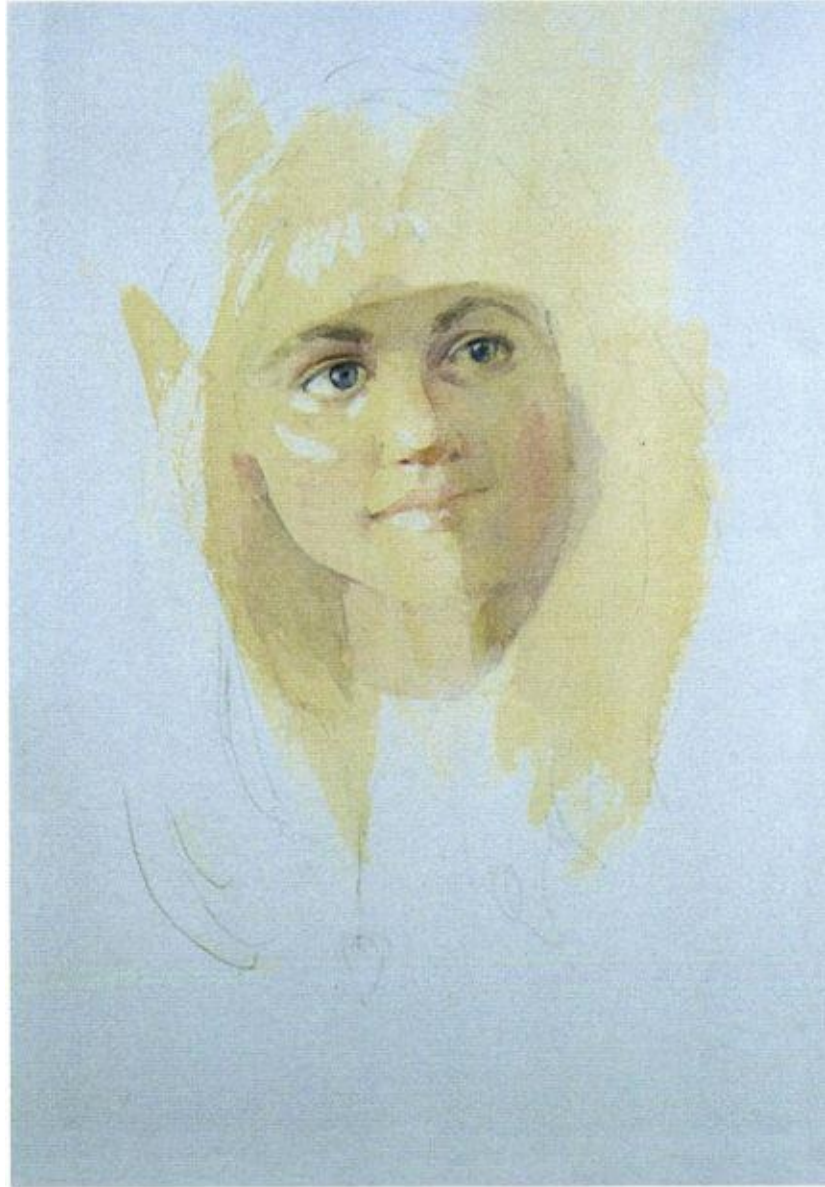
4 | Adjust the Value of the Skin in Shadow

Darken the skin in shadow with another wash of red-violet and red. Establish the jawline in shadow, keeping the edges soft.



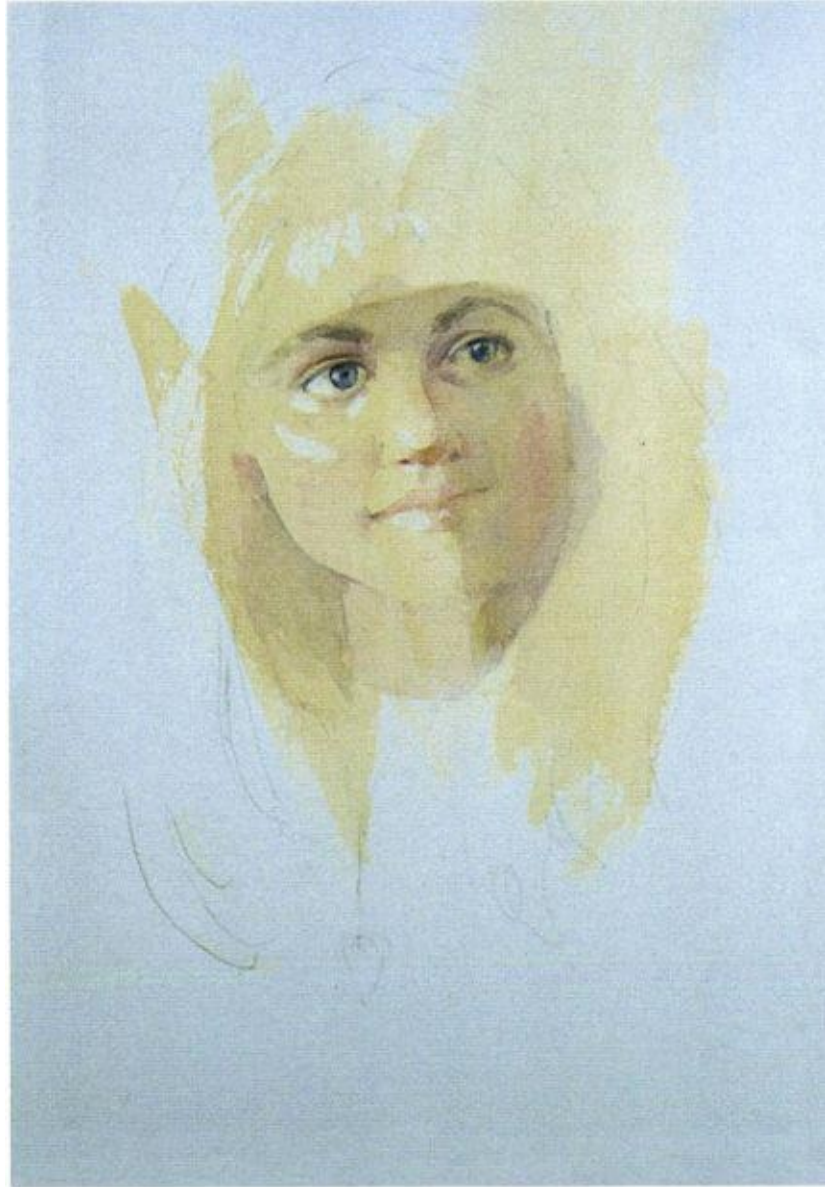
5 | Model the Structure of the Face in Light

Switch to the round sable brush. Wet the cheek in light, then apply a light wash of Rose Madder Genuine to the area of the cheek where it meets the wing of the nose, the lips and the turning plane where the lower eye socket meets the upper cheek. Soften the edges where needed while the paper is still wet. Let it dry.



6 | Model the Structure of the Face in Shadow

Use a darker version of the red-violet you've already mixed to place areas of darker shadow. Some of these shadows will go into the inner corner of the eye socket in light.



7 | Paint the Eyes in Three Stages

This is how the eyes should look when completed.



a | Place the Irises

Paint the irises and cast shadows under the upper lashes in Cobalt Blue. Placing the irises sets the gaze. If you're unsure about placement, work it out with your pencil first. Let it dry.



b | Complete the Irises

Adjust the value and hue of the irises with Cobalt Blue. Remember that the catch light (here, at ten o'clock) sits in the darkest part of the iris; the lightest part is opposite at about four o'clock. Although the entire eye on our right is in shadow, the value relationships at ten o'clock and four o'clock still hold. Let it dry.



c | Complete the Lids and Brows

Use a mix of Cobalt Blue and Burnt Sienna to paint the brows. To keep their inner corners soft, wet them first. Restate the creases in the upper lids, observing the three principles of shadow: lower contrast, lower saturation and softer edges. Let it dry.



8 | Model the Nose (detail)

Indicate the nostril with a tiny stroke of Alizarin Crimson. Wet and then paint where the nose turns under to meet the lip with a touch of Cadmium Red and Aureolin. This is now the warmest area of skin color on the paper. The nostril in shadow has cooler, less saturated color than in light and the edges are softer, too.



9 | Model the Mouth (detail)

Keep the upper and lower edges of the lips soft by wetting the edge before painting. Using Rose Madder Genuine, start on dry paper at the edge between the lips and let the color flow toward the outer edges. While the paper is still wet, cool the lip in shadow with Alizarin Crimson.



The Finished Result



10 | Paint the Hair and Background

Paint both in the same step so that you can work in some lost and found edges where the shapes meet. Paint the hair in light with different strengths of Raw Sienna. As the hair moves into shadow, gradually add Burnt Sienna. Where the hair is completely in shadow, neutralize the Burnt Sienna with Cobalt Blue and Viridian.

To unify color, paint the background with red-violets and blue-violets already used elsewhere. Let your edges vary to create supporting secondary edges and impart a lively sense to the surface.

Remove the masking before proofreading.

FINAL DECISIONS: PROOFREADING THE PAINTING

Is the center of interest clear? **Yes.**

Is the composition effective? **Yes.**

Are the color temperatures correct? **Yes.**

Are the edges well-stated?

No. The areas covered by masking are all the same white, and the edges are the same. Most need to be softened and colored. Also, the catch light in the shadowed eye is simply in the wrong place. It needs to be painted out and, once dry, repositioned with a scratch from a razor blade.

Is the signature needed? **Yes.**



11 | Make Final Corrections

Most of the remaining tasks involve correcting or mitigating masked areas. Place the signature with pencil.

ASHLEE

Watercolor on Arches cold-pressed watercolor paper

15" × 10" (38cm × 25cm)

Collection of the artist

CONCLUSION



GOLDEN EYES

Pastel on Canson paper

16" × 20" (41cm × 51cm)

Collection of the artist This is, in fact, the beginning. I hope the tools and lessons presented in this book will help you move forward from wherever you are today.

If the truth be known, some of the finest painters will tell you that their work is only about 15 percent a result of inborn talent; the larger part is a result of good training and practice, practice, practice. Michelangelos, Vermeers and Sargents come along once in a century. Will you paint like them? Probably not. Neither will I. Be inspired, not discouraged. Be the best painter you can be. There's no substitute for putting in the hours.

It's a beautiful world out there. Grab your brushes. Someone has to paint it, and it might as well be you.

APPENDIX A

Recommended Resources

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Analogous Color

Wheel—Hal Reed

Art Video Productions

P.O. Box 92343

Pasadena, California

91109

(888) 513-2187

www.artvideostore.com

BOOKS

Dobie, Jeanne. *Making Color Sing*. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1986.

Kreutz, Greg. *Problem Solving for Oil Painters*. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1986.

Quiller, Stephen. *Color Choices*. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1989.

Schmid, Richard. *Alla Prima: Everything I Know About Painting*. Longmont, Colorado: Stove Prairie Press, 1998. West Wind Fine Art & Antiques, (800) 939-9932.

Silverman, Burton. *Sight & Insight*. New York: Madison Square Press, 1998. Merrill-Johnson Gallery, (303) 333-1566.

VIDEOS

Greene, Daniel. *Pastel Portrait*. LeFranc & Bourgeois, 1989. (914) 669-5653.

Silverman, Burton. *Painting the Figure in Watercolor*, Signilar Art Video, 1996; *Portrait of a Young Girl: Jenny (oil)*, Signilar Art Video, 2000. (800) 205-4904.

**Wallis Archival
Sanded Pastel Paper**
(800) 760-7870

Quiller Color Wheel
Quiller Gallery
P.O. Box 160
Creede, Colorado 81130
(800) 876-5760

**The Michael Wilcox
School of Colour**
Gibbet Lane

Whitchurch
Bristol BS14 0BX
United Kingdom
Tel: 01275 835500
Fax: 01275 892659

www.schoolofcolor.com

Whitney, Richard. *Painting
the Visual Impression*.
1995. Minnesota River
School of Fine Art, 190
River Ridge Circle,
Burnsville, Minnesota
55337, (612) 890-4182.

APPENDIX B

Kelvin Temperatures for Portrait Painters

Natural Light		Artificial Light	
Clear Blue Sky	12000+	Xenon Arc	6420
Hazy Sky	7500	Camera Flash	5500
Noon Sunlight	6500	3200 Tungsten	3200
Sunlight at 10:00 am and 2:00 pm	5500	Halogen	3000
Sunrise and Sunset	2200	500 Watt Incandescent	2960
		100 Watt Incandescent	2865
		40 Watt Incandescent	2650
		Candlelight	1900

Unless artificial light is specifically rated, temperatures are approximate.

Sources: Kodak: www.kodak.com; Kodak Color Films & Papers for Professionals, 1996; The Photographer's Guide to Using Filters, Joseph Meehan, 1992.

APPENDIX C

Sample Color Charts

For each skin tone group, mix enough base color to add other modifying colors as suggested. Caucasian skin tones (blondes, redheads and brunettes) all use the same three colors as a starting point. Change proportions to match the skin color of any given individual.

CAUCASIAN SKIN TONE SAMPLES

Base	Cool Light	Warm Shadow	Warm Light	Cool Shadow
				
CS + CL + TW + PG	+ PR + UB + TW	+ CS + AC	+ PR	+ UB + AC
				
	+ PR + TW	+ CS + UB	+ CL	+ PG + CL + CS

Key

AC=Alizarin Crimson
CL=Cadmium Lemon
CS=Cadmium Scarlet
PG=Phthalo Green
PR=Permanent Rose
TW=Titanium White
UB=Ultramarine Blue
UV=Ultramarine Violet










ASIAN SKIN TONE SAMPLES

Base	Cool Light	Warm Shadow	Warm Light	Cool Shadow
				
CS + CL + TW + UB + CL	+ PG + CL + TW	+ PG + CL + PR + TW	+ CS + CL	+ UB + TW
				
	+ PG + CL + AC	+ CS + PG	+ CL	+ AC + UV

Key

AC=Alizarin Crimson
 CL=Cadmium Lemon
 CS=Cadmium Scarlet
 PG=Phthalo Green
 PR=Permanent Rose
 TW=Titanium White
 UB=Ultramarine Blue
 UV=Ultramarine Violet

HISPANIC SKIN TONE SAMPLES

Base	Cool Light	Warm Shadow	Warm Light	Cool Shadow
				
AC + CL + TW + UV	+ TW + AC	+ CS + PG	+ CL + TW	+ UV
				
	+ PG + CL + TW	+ PG + CL	+ CL + PG + CS	+ AC + UV

Key

AC=Alizarin Crimson

CL=Cadmium Lemon
 CS=Cadmium Scarlet
 PG=Phthalo Green
 PR= Permanent Rose
 TW=Titanium White
 UB=Ultramarine Blue
 UV=Ultramarine Violet

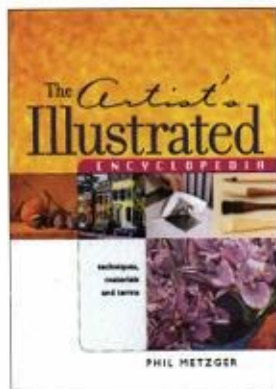
BLACK/AFRICAN-AMERICAN SKIN TONE SAMPLES



Key

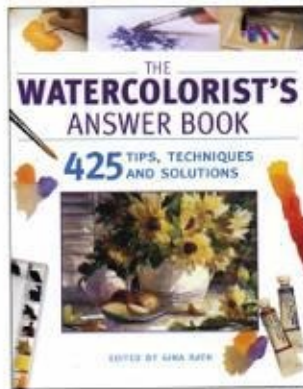
AC=Alizarin Crimson
 CL=Cadmium Lemon
 CS=Cadmium Scarlet
 IB=Ivory Black
 PG=Phthalo Green
 PR=Permanent Rose
 TW=Titanium White
 UB=Ultramarine Blue
 UV=Ultramarine Violet

Make Your Art the Best It Can Be!



From à la poupée to Zinc White, more than one thousand art-related definitions and descriptions are detailed here for your benefit. Including every term, technique and material used by the practicing artist, this unique reference is packed with hundreds of photographs, paintings, mini-demos, black-and-white diagrams and drawings for comprehensive explanation. You'll also find sidebars about specific entries and charts for a wealth of inter-related information in one convenient listing.

ISBN-13: 978-1-58180-023-4 (US ISBN),
ISBN-10: 1-58180-023-1 (US ISBN),
0-7153-1242-1 (UK ISBN);
paperback, 512 pages



The Watercolorist's Answer Book features 425 popular tips, techniques and solutions selected from North Light's industry-leading library of watercolor instruction books. This authoritative guide to the art of watercolor features the combined expertise of eight successful professional artists and includes coverage of watercolor fundamentals, in-depth discussion of advanced watercolor topics, and 20 step-by-step demonstrations covering a wide range of techniques.

ISBN-13: 978-1-58180-633-5 (US ISBN),
ISBN-10: 1-58180-633-7 (US ISBN),
1-58180-633-7 (UK ISBN);
paperback, 192 pages

Charles Reid is one of watercolor's best-loved teachers, a master painter whose signature style captures bright floral still-lives with a loose spontaneity that adds immeasurably to the whole composition. In this book, Reid provides the instruction and advice you need to paint fruits, vegetables and flowers that glow. Special "assignments" and step-by-step exercises help you master techniques for wild daffodils, roses, mums, sunflowers, lilacs, tomatoes, avocados, oranges, strawberries and more!

ISBN-13: 978-1-58180-027-2 (US ISBN),
ISBN-10: 1-58180-027-4 (US ISBN),
0-7153-1208-1 (UK ISBN);
hardcover, 144 pages



Using a few brushes, some rice paper and a small number of inks and paints, you can explore new realms of artistic expression in your watercolors. Author and artist Lian Quan Zhen shows you how, providing you with the clear, practical instruction you need to master every element of this intriguing style—from holding a bamboo brush to applying Chinese composition techniques.

ISBN-13: 978-1-58180-000-5 (US ISBN),
ISBN-10: 1-58180-000-2 (US ISBN),
0-7153-1159-X (UK ISBN);
hardcover, 144 pages

These books and other fine titles
are available from your local art
and craft retailer, bookstore or
online supplier.