

Watercolor Self-Portraits

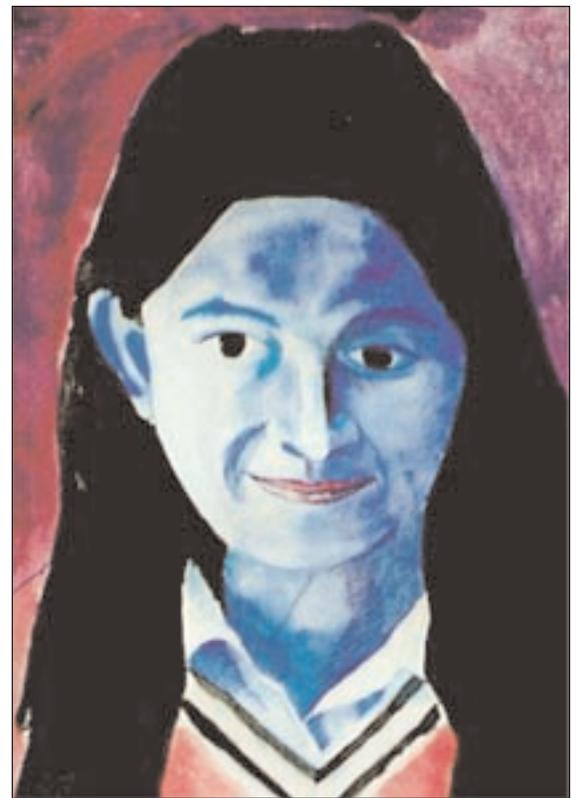
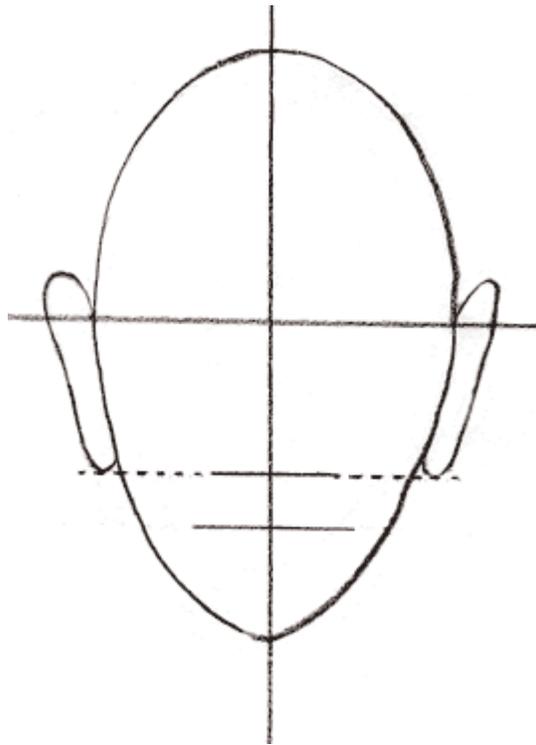
Drawing and painting the human face can present challenges to beginning art students. This project will allow for exploring facial proportion, practice working in transparent watercolors and a produce self-expressive portrait. The watercolor medium is used to convey expression and emotion with the use of color and value. If using photos for reference, the photo needs to be taken full face or looking into the camera. This view helps determine proportion. Use the rules of proportion only as a general guideline.

Grade Levels 9-12

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Process

1. Lightly sketch a large, slightly egg-shaped oval with the small side toward the bottom of the page. Tilt the shape if needed. Leave only enough room below the oval to later add the neck and shoulders. Leave room at the top of the paper for hair.
2. Draw a vertical line through the center of the oval. This is the center line.
3. Draw a horizontal line halfway between the top and the bottom of the oval. This is the eye line.
4. Draw a horizontal line halfway between the eye line and the bottom of the oval. This is the nose line.
5. Draw a horizontal line one-third of the distance below the nose line and the bottom of the oval. This is the mouth line.
6. The top of the ear on each side of the head is even with the eye line.
7. The bottom of the ears are even with the nose line.
8. After examining the photo, the students will begin to draw the lines that will form their self-portrait. Have them include areas where shadows appear. Point out to them that shadows form shapes and have color (not black). Since the portrait will be finished with transparent watercolor, lines should not be too dark.



Materials

[Blick Watercolor Paper](#) (10008-1018) 15" x 22" 140-lb, one sheet per student

[Blick Economy Graphite Pencils](#) (20302-2009) package of 12, need one per student

[Dynasty® Fine Ruby Synthetic Brushes](#) (05198-0729) share one 72-brush set across classroom

[Blick Bamboo Brush](#) size 6 (05409-1006), need one per student

[Round Plastic 10-Well Tray](#) (03041-1010) share one tray between two students

[Blick Liquid Watercolor](#), 10-color set (00369-1109) share one set across classroom

Paper Towels

Clear Water Cup or Jar, one per student

9. Eyes

- Carefully study the photo. Concentrate on the shapes formed by the various parts. For example, the eyes do not form horizontal ovals. They are more opposing curves, one defining the top of the eye and the other giving shape to the bottom.
- The center of the iris is above the corners of the mouth.
- The iris is half the width of the eye.
- The tear duct is rounded and does not come to a point
- The lower eye lid disappears behind the upper.
- Wrinkles are created when the eyes are open.
- The width of the eye is the same as the space between the eyes.
- Eye lashes usually are not seen until the outside edge of the upper eye lid.

Nose

- The bridge of the nose goes to the eyebrow.
- Nostrils are narrower than the tip of the nose.

Lips

- The upper lip is usually narrower than the lower.
- The line separating the lips is never straight but should be darker than the outline. A dark outline makes the mouth look like it is stuck on the face.

Hair

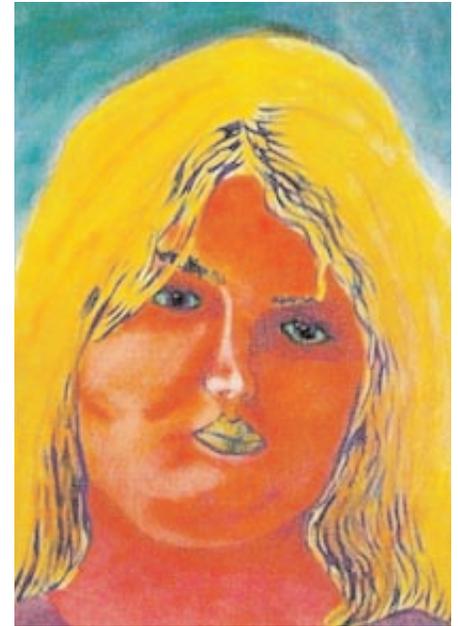
- The hair never lays flat against the head.
- Everyone's hair is different. Hair is shiny, straight, curly, long, short and many colors.

Neck

- The neck begins at the point where the bottom of the ear joins the side of the head, at the bottom of the ear lobes.
- The neck may curve slightly as it joins the shoulders.

Jaw

- The lower jaw and chin will not always form a perfectly curved line.
- The jaw line begins slightly below the ear lobes and can be angular or softly curved.
- The chin line can be smooth, nearly pointed, or it may have a slight negative curve at the bottom.



10. The brushes listed are an excellent variety for watercolor. Use the bamboo brush to introduce students to a new technique. The Blick watercolor is vivid and blends well to create fantastic color. Use a small amount of each color in the ten wells. The trays can dry and the watercolor reactivated with a wet brush or more liquid watercolor. Paint sparingly and add more paint to intensify color a little at a time. Watercolor paintings are often not completely painted to the edge of the paper.

Hints

- Always use a white palette when working with transparent watercolor so that the color is more easily seen.
- Dirty water should be changed regularly to keep the watercolor bright. Clear water cups are best for monitoring the condition of your water.

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JG **National Standards**

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

- 9-12** Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

- 9-12** Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems

Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

- 9-12** Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works