Drawing an Expressive Portrait

Online drawing workshop with Jody Graham.

Learn to draw unique expressive portraits.

Easy to follow techniques to develop drawing skills.

For beginners and intermediate students.

Expected duration of workshop 3 – 6hours

Image Jody Graham *Resolute* charcoal on paper 76 x 56cm Photo credit Graeme Wienand

For beginners watch all videos, starting at **Before you Begin**, through to **Step 1 - 6**, use the knowledge gained in these videos to assist you with the **Drawing Project Series** in this course.

For intermediate students who already understand the basics of drawing a portrait, use the **Drawing Project Series** as a starting point to develop a suite of sensitive expressive drawings.

Workshop duration – this online workshop can be done at your own pace. The minimum suggested time requirement is 3 hours. It's recommended to take longer to repeat, enjoy and fine tune drawing techniques showcases here.

Materials
2B, 4B or 6B pencil
A4 Paper
Eraser
Sharpening knife and or sharpener.
Optional – other pencils, pens, charcoals or similar to draw with and other supports, including larger scale paper or similar.

Tips to remember throughout the course

- These videos are a guide only, modify to suit your approach, style and subject.
- **Videos in this course are made under 1 minute for uploading efficiency. It's not necessary to be as quick as demonstrated, take your time and enjoy.**
- Work loosely.
- It can help to imagine what's under the skin, the structure of the skull.
- Work big shapes first before you get to the details.
- Common mistakes can be made by placing eyes higher on the head, with eye and neck spacing too close, thin or wide.
- Previous line work will add a history of mark making to a drawing.
- Different tooth papers give different results. Practice on a few different paper surfaces to discover what appeals to you.

Instructions for detailing a portrait to further assist you in Step 1 – 6 and the Drawing Project Series.

Eyebrows & Eyes
Look at the eyebrow shape and how they sit on the face and use the guideline to draw them on. Repeat this with the eyes, keep the eyes simple, make the lashes, iris and pupil dark and block in as one. Keep the lower lid lighter.

Nose
Draw the nostrils and shadow under the nose to indicate nose shape.
Slightly suggest sides of the nose to show nose shape and width.

Mouth
Follow the centre guideline of head shape and indicate a 'v' at top of the mouth under nose shadow line.
The centreline of the lips is where the top and bottom lip meet. Look at the shape of this line on your sitter and place on your lip guideline, under 'v' mark.
The bottom lip is best defined using a shadow under it.

Chin and Jawline
It's easy to underestimate the size of the chin, look carefully below the bottom lip line at the distance to the bottom of the chin, mark new line over your existing chin construction lines.
Place shadow under the chin to separate chin from neck.
Look either side of the chin to determine shape and size of the jaw relative to the rest of the face and neck.

Ears
Keep the ears simple, like all other facial features in early stages of drawing.
The ears should sit between the eye and bottom of the nose.

Neck

Look at your portrait and put neck lines in. Be careful not to make the neck more narrow or thicker than it is. Mark the neck and shoulder lines in as they connect with the head and face. Look at where neck and shoulder lines are in relation to the chin, jaw and mouth.

Hair

It's often better to understand hair as a big mass or none at all, if your sitter is bald. Look at the borders of the hair, the hairline and how the hair sits around the face. Mark these points on your portrait.

Tips on getting a likeness to your portrait sitter.

If your portrait is not like your sitter go back and look at the basics again. Compare your drawing to the face you see. Look at key features, have you over emphasised or played down the shape of them. It's important to know little details on a person's face are significant. For example, does their mouth turn up at the corners, do they have frown lines, does their hair take up a lot of their face?

Image – Jody Graham self-portrait pen and ink on paper (straight lines only, non-dominate hand) Photo credit – Graeme Wienand.

Before you Begin

Sharpening, holding and making marks with a pencil.

Video – jgraham_sharpening_and_using_pencil

To put yourself in a good position to follow these videos, sharpen your pencils and practice making marks.
Make large expressive marks by holding the pencil loosely at the back and move your whole arm back and forth to achieve big broad lines.
Experiment with line pressure and the position you hold the pencil, notice how tone changes with different amounts of pressure and the position you hold the pencil.
Practice moving the pencil around and up and down, use it on the side and the tip.
Its important to find out what your pencil can do and worth spending 5 to 10 minutes or more to discover how many varied marks you can make.

Step 1 - 6
Loose expressive guide to drawing a portrait face on.

Step 1 Basic guideline to drawing a portrait front facing.

Video – 1jgraham_step1_portrait

- Mark top and bottom of the head
- Loosely draw a head shape
- Mark halfway on the head shape, then halfway again in lower half of head, then halfway again and put a centreline down the middle.
- Loosely put in position of the eyes on the first halfway mark. They are approximately an eyes width apart.
- Mark in semi-circle to indicate the bottom of the nose and a 'V' below the end of the nose for the top of the lips.
- At this point you can put a simple line to suggest in-between the lips and approximate bottom point of the chin.
- Add the position of the ears, the ears usually sit from eye level down to just under the nose.
- Loosely mark in the hair shape, width of neck and shoulders

Step 2 – Add facial features

Video – 2jgraham_step2_add_facial_features
- Loosely mark in position of the eyebrows, pupils, iris and eyelashes.
- The iris usually lines up with the corners of the mouth.
- Tip, the direction of the corners of the mouth can help determine the mood of your portrait, Such as happy, sad, cross, indifferent.
- Mark in the top lip line and suggest line between lips and under bottom lip.
- Imagine the ball of the chin to help you determine the shape and bottom of the chin.
- Add in marks to suggest the shape of the sides of the face and jawline.
- Add some more guidelines for the lip and nose. Usually the inner corners of the eyes line up with the edges of the nose.

Step 3 – Adding tone

Video– 3jgraham_step3_adding_tone

- Loosely block in hair shape.
- Add some tone to other parts of the face that usually have shadow. Under the chin, nose, bottom lip, eyes. Tip – add tone lightly to face and gradually build up with more observation to the face you are drawing.
- Darken eyebrows, eyelashes, eyes, bottom of the nose and lips

Step 4 – Adding more tone

Video – 4jgraham_step4_adding_more_tone

- Start to define the lip shape
- Adding more tone
- Adding smaller details – this is the time to incorporate smaller details, such as earrings or piercings.

Step 5 – Adding more detail

Video – 5jgraham_step5_adding_more_tone

- Add more detail to the overall work
- Add garments
- Check proportions with image or mirror

Step 6 – Keep checking proportions, adding and erasing

Video – 6jgraham_step6_checking_adding_erasing

- Recheck proportions and shape of head, hair and face features.
- t's okay to use to eraser to rub out and reposition features if needed.
- Your choice how much previous line work you leave or take away. Previous line work will add a history of marks in a drawing.

Images – Jody Graham continuous scribble line portraits. Photo credit Graeme Wienand

ART @HOME

Drawing Projects Series

A drawing series to inspire students to loosen up and create expressive drawings.

Before you Begin Drawing Projects
Consider Composition

Video –jgraham_portrait_composition_thumbnails

Its important to think about the format, such as portrait, landscape, square or other as well as the surface you are using and where you are going to place your drawing. For the following series of drawings consider changing the placement of the head on the page. The placement of your head can tell a story. For example, if the head is closer to the bottom of the drawing it can appear like the figure is coming to you or walking away from something.

Line Pressure – it's possible to say a lot with line.

Video – jgraham_potrait_pressure_continuous_line_

Look at what you are going to draw, find a starting point and begin to draw a continuous line with line pressure as the goal. As you draw the line around, push harder at points where there is shadow, for example the eyes, under the nose and chin and take the pressure back to lighter marks where light is hitting your subject. If you want to travel to a different point on your drawing to draw, try not to take the pencil off the paper, but move the continuous line with less pressure to where you want to continue to draw.

Tone Only

Video – jgraham_portrait_tone_only

Use a pencil or charcoal on the side to make bigger broader marks. Start using less pressure and increase pressure as the drawing continues. Aim to embrace a broad range of tone from very light to very dark. This tone variation is achieved through pressure applied when drawing and cross hatching techniques.

Varied Scribble Continuous Line Drawing

Use a pencil or biro to make a variety of continuous line scribble marks. Start using less pressure and increase pressure as the drawing continues. Aim to embrace a broad range of line tone from very light to very dark. This line tone variation is achieved through pressure applied when drawing and the overlaying of scribble marks. Start this drawing with bigger shapes of the head and face in mind, build up to the details as the drawing moves along. Use your peripheral vision to transverse over the face and head as you draw.

Straight lines only

Using straight lines only is a wonderful way to start a drawing because it forces you to look at the big shapes first. This technique can help you not get bogged down in one area too soon and keep working the overall drawing until it arrives at points where more attention to detail is required.

This drawing project can work well with minimal lines as well as a labyrinth of many lines

Glossary for this workshop.

Big shapes first
Look at and draw the big shapes first. For example, the overall head shape, neck, size of the cheeks, nose, outline of hair shape and so on.
Continuous line
A continuous line is a single, unbroken line used to create a drawing.
Cross hatching
Parallel lines drawn closely together and over the top of each other in a different direction to create the illusion of shade or texture.
Expressive
Emotions and ideas can be expressed in expressive drawing. Expressive artwork may capture energy, movement and feeling.
Format – Including portrait and Landscape format
The two most often formats referred to in two-dimensional artwork, are landscape which is a horizontal rectangle shape and portrait which is a vertical rectangle known as portrait. Other formats can include square, circle.
Labyrinth
Complicated irregular network of lines.
Line pressure/ line weight/ line tone
Or line weight s the light or darkness and width of a line
Sitter/ Subject
The subject of a portrait is frequently called a "sitter", because sometimes people would sit in front of an artist to have their portrait created.
Supports – surface to draw on.
Thumbnails – initial small quick sketches to work out format and composition.