



Strathmore 2020 ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES

HOW TO DRAW PORTRAITS

with Justin Maas

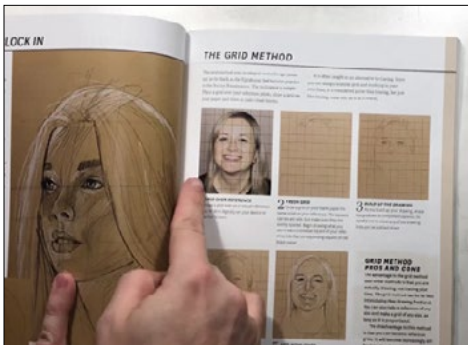
LESSON 2: The Block-In

In video 2 we will concentrate on the block-in. This is the framework of your drawing. Even though it is usually only a small percentage (10-20%) of the drawing time, this is probably the most crucial stage, much like the foundation and the framing of a house.

SUPPLIES:



- Strathmore 300 Series Bristol
- Graphite: B, HB, 4B, 8B
- Ruler
- Erasers
- Painters Tape
- Drawing Board / Easel
- Pencil Sharpener



BLOCK-IN TECHNIQUES:

I briefly explain (from my book *"Drawing Realistic Pencil Portraits Step by Step: Basic Techniques for the Head and Face"*) the main techniques of the block-in, including:

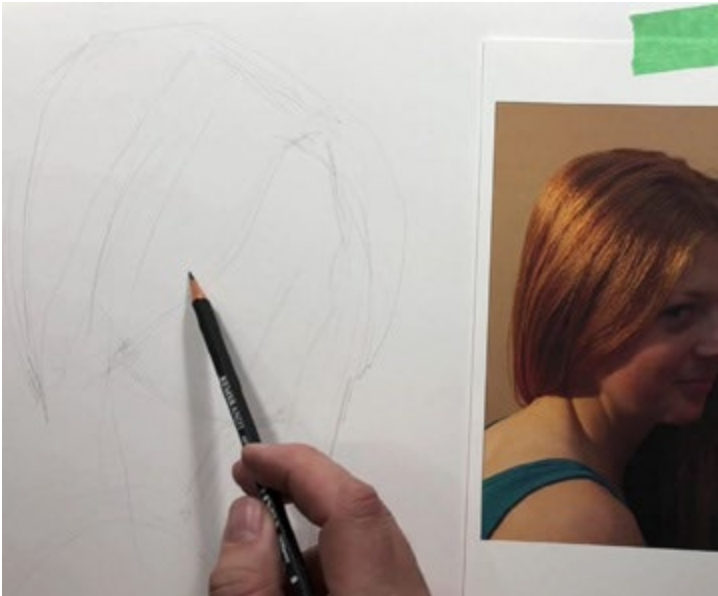
- The grid method
- Tracing (or using a projector/transfer paper)
- Freehand

I also touch briefly on the Loomis method & others but note that for most people the 'ultimate goal' is free-handing. Since this is daunting and intimidating, I developed my own method for my students called the Maas method.



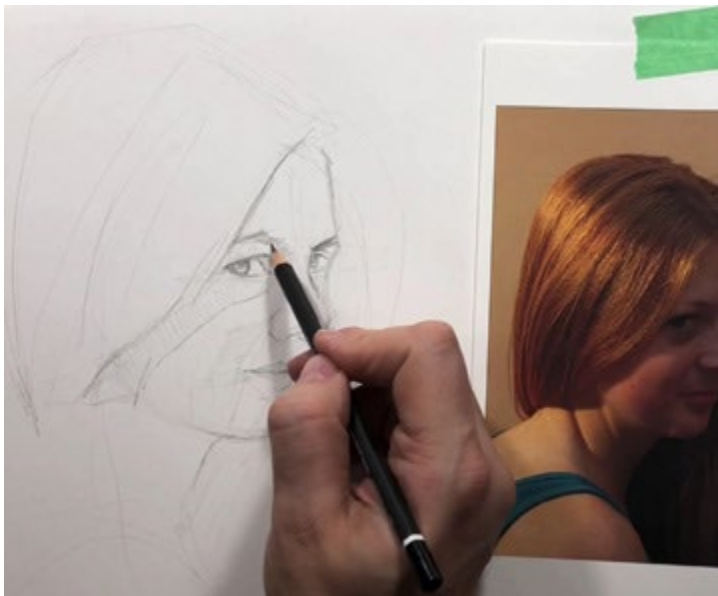
THE MAAS METHOD

The Maas Method is based on the principle of sight-size: where you create your artwork to be the same size as your reference. Unlike methods such as the grid or tracing, you build valuable experience and skills using the Maas method that can be applied to free-handing as your experience grows.

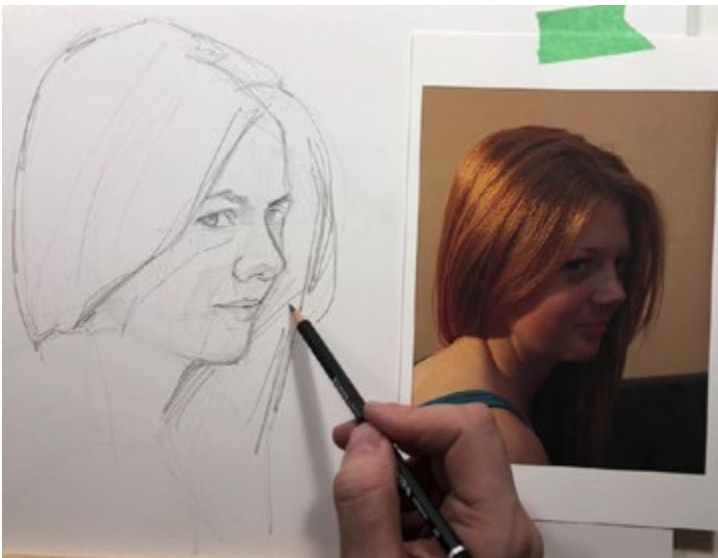


SAMPLE FREEHAND

I do a brief, real-time freehand drawing explaining how I measure and make relationships between shapes.



Remember that everything - not just features - can be used to measure your shapes. Shadow lines, highlights etc. Stop thinking "I am drawing a nose" and focus on the shapes of objects - all objects - in the reference.



An effective block-in is one that has the proportions right and ready to take the rendering section of the drawing.

THE MAAS METHOD



A method I've been teaching for years, this is the first time I have ever done a video about it.

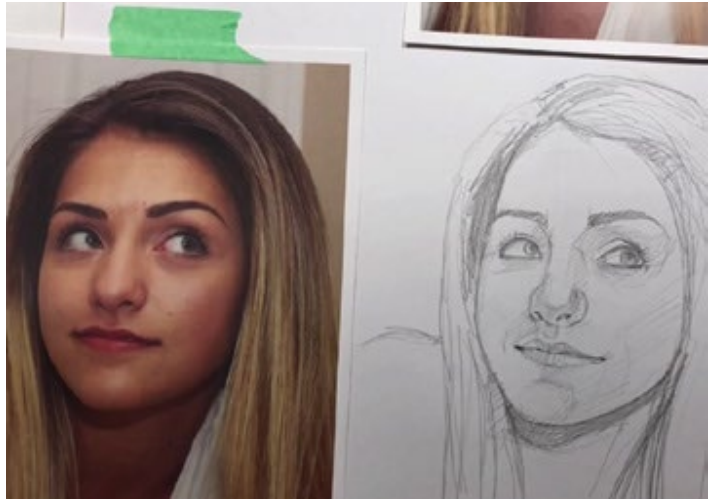


The theory is that you get your reference (ideally 2 if you can make copies) and tape them in place next to your work surface.



You begin by measuring out lines - as many as you want/need to get all of the key points of your reference.

If you're already a moderately proficient free-hander, this can act as an aid for you, allowing you to double check some of your measurements.



If you're just new to free-handing, this method helps build important visual cues that will help you measure & learn with every drawing you do.

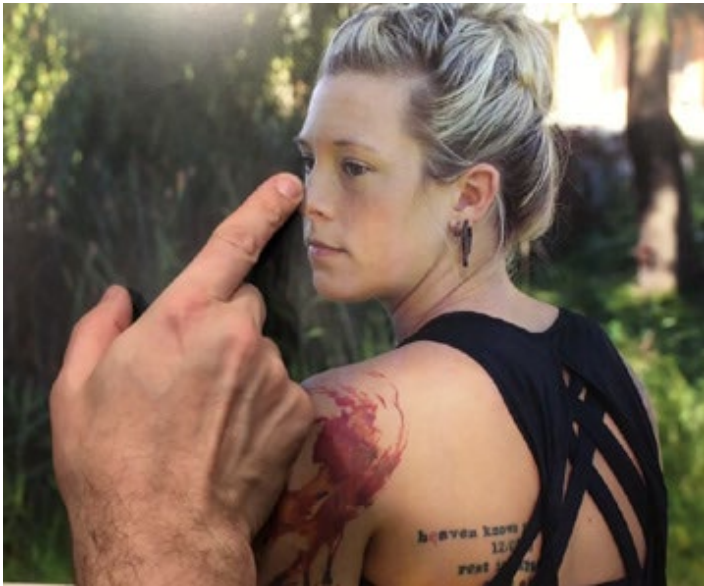
PICKING YOUR REFERENCE PHOTO(S):



I briefly explain how I chose the reference photos that I used to create this pastel painting, Shelter from the Storm.



By looking at a number of different photos from my shoot, I decided certain elements that I wanted to use.



Things like the way the light hits the subject, the expression, the mood - are all things that helped me decide which image(s) to use for this painting.



Even something as simple as a pronounced hair-wisp in one photo made me base the theme of the work around that shot.