

Step by Step Portraits

1 Draw subject on **140# Arches Cold Press** paper using an HB pencil on a quarter sheet (11"x15") size paper. Be sure you are on the front of the paper. Draw only facial shapes - no shadows. Trace using transfer or carbon paper. Keep the head size to about 8" from the chin to the top of the head. An equation for enlarging your photo is to measure the head, let's say it's 3 inches, then take 8 (what you want it to be) divided by 3 (what it is) and you get a 2.66 or a 266% enlargement.

2 Prepare a mother wash of skin tone. Colors I like for a Caucasian person are Aureolin yellow or raw sienna for the yellow choice. Quinacridone coral or permanent (Quinacridone) rose for the red choice. Mix a red and yellow into an orange tone. Wet the paper and tone all the skin areas with this skin tone, including the eyes and teeth. **Use synthetic brushes to lift out the color.** Lift out color, using the thirsty brush technique, on areas that need to be white. Continue to lift out until the paper remains stable. Add warm colors in the background on the sun side and cool colors on the shadow side. Allow to dry.

Mix a shadow color that is 40 % darker than your skin tone

3 in a cup. This shadow color will identify all the shadows. **Edge control is very important.** I like Burnt Sienna or Quinacridone Burnt Orange mixed with Quinacridone Coral. This mixture will be used to make the shadows. The color is applied to dry paper. Select only a small area or shadow, like one eye. Add the color and then immediately wash out your brush, take out most of the moisture and keeping the brush at right angles, soften the areas that are lost edges. When you identify a crisp edge, keep that edge crisp. Continue until all the shadows have been identified. You may go over shadow areas that need a second coat to make them darker. Charge in additional color if you feel it needs it. Sometimes I add red in a cheek or cobalt blue in the eye shadow on the shadow side of the head.

Hair is almost always painted wet into wet. Wet the hair



4 and start with the highlights. For example, a brown haired person would start with Quinacridone gold, then Quinacridone burnt orange and the QBO mixed with cobalt for the dark highlights. A blond haired person would start with Winsor yellow, then Quinacridone gold and then Quinacridone gold mixed with permanent magenta for the darks. Have a 1/2 inch flat brush ready to light the highlights from the hair while it is still wet.

5 Eye are best if the dark centers are painted in first and allowed to dry. Then a layer of the eye color is added. The final trick is to snap out a small highlight with a razor to catch the white light bouncing on the eye.

6 Lips and cheeks often need more color. Simply add the color on the dry paper and have your brush clean and ready to soften the edges.

7 The background should complement the subject. Plan to add darks against the lights and lights against the darks.

8 The final darks are the "crevice darks". These are the darks in the eyes, the lip line, the corners of the lip, the nose holes, etc. QBO and cobalt blue are a perfect crevice dark. When dry, these colors will lift easily with a stiff brush if too dark.

