

Course Description: Painting portraits Of Children with Linda Tracey Brandon

Part One: Discuss general principles of painting children.

Present overview of visual differences between children and adults

Familiarize artists with characteristics of children. Observe attitudes, gesture and body language of children (i.e., more supple, less self conscious than adults). Bring sketchbook (not camera) to playgrounds, beaches, airports.

Overview of differences in body proportions between adults and children (i.e., child's larger head in relation to body than adult; narrow shoulders and neck, etc.)

The child's portrait head

Structural changes from infancy to teenagers (eyes appear lower in skull; lower part of face grows as child ages. Nose more snubbed, ears are proportionally larger and lower). See Andrew Loomis handout.

Color and skin aspects – eye sclera is bluish in very young children, more moisture in eyes, pupils larger; color frequently fresher and livelier than in adults. Fewer visible veins and tendons; reserve of fat under skin which we lose as we age.

Discuss concerns regarding sitting for a portrait

Talk to the child before set up and determine mood or character: calm, energetic, serious, very physical, etc. Do NOT badger or harass the child – try using bribes instead.

Make sure child is very comfortable in his/her position (use pillows, do not let feet dangle).

Depending on age of child and interest, try: Ipods, audiobooks, DVD players. Be careful of child having a “stupefied” look on face and slumping issues. Try putting a mirror behind you as you work so that child can watch progress of painting. Many children think of themselves as artists. Encourage them! It may be that your mission on earth is to encourage a particular child to grow to his/her artistic greatness.

Make sure clothing reflects the mood of your portrait.

Lighting issues: I try to light children with less shadow than adults, more frontal lighting (handout on frontal lighting). I also try to avoid being too-dark in value shadows. Front lighting minimizes value but accentuates color, since it lights more of the head than do other types of lighting. Half tones are very important to show rounded forms – emphasize color. In general, there is less tenebrism in children's portraits than there is in adult portraits. Tenebrism is the play of shadow across the face. When shadows are present in children they are generally not as

dark in value as they are in adult portraits. Study the history of painting children over the past few hundred years and you will see many examples of this.

Part Two: Structure of the Workshop

The painting process and the “road map”

First morning: I will demonstrate a three hour head on the first day of class. (Possibly, at some point, a powerpoint presentation to show the way masters have painted children.)

First afternoon: I will show students how to draw the ‘road map’ several times until they get the hang of it. The ‘road map’ is a mostly line drawing – separate from the working canvas - showing the position of eyes, ears, angles, etc. which we do not cover up in paint and can refer to throughout the painting if the child moves and the artist gets “lost”. We will take our places at our easels around the model and draw in charcoal on paper the ‘road map’ of the child’s face. If there is time we will also work on oil sketches of the model, changing easel positions if necessary.

Second day: we paint; one child in morning session, another child in the afternoon.

Third day: same as second day.

Materials List

Oil Paints: Titanium White, Yellow Ochre, Cad Yellow Light (or Cad Yellow Lemon), Cad Orange, Cad Red Light (or Vermillion - I use Vermillion), Alizarin Crimson (or Quinacrinone Red or Rembrandt Red Violet), Cobalt Blue, Ultramarine Blue, Viridian, Transparent Oxide Red, Raw Umber, Ivory Black

Odorless Turpentine Substitute in a locking canister

Oil Painting Medium (if you use one)

Canvases: at least 3 stretched canvases (linen is best) or prepared panels, either 20" x 16" or 18" x 14"

Brushes: assortment of filberts, flats and small sables. I also like Rosemary Masters Mongoose (see www.rosemaryandco.com)or Trekell brushes (www.trekell.com)

Prepared hand held palette or other table palette, if that is your preference

Apron or smock

Rags or paper towels

Charcoal: sticks of soft willow charcoal

Drawing paper, at least 20" x 16" or 18" x 20" (same size as your painting canvas)

Drawing board with clamps to which to clamp your paper

Drawing and painting tools: plumb line, hand held mirror, knitting needle - whatever helps you to check accuracy

Please contact me if you have never painted in oils before! I will help you with supplies.