



Charcoal Portrait: 1 hour to 1.5 hours each drawing

Instructor: Ichiro Irie

STEP 1

Take several photographs of yourself (selfie) or someone you live with from unusual angles and preferably with facial expressions that demonstrate emotion. The emotions could range from anger, surprise, delirium, sadness, suspicion, irritation, joy etc. Choose expressions that would be very difficult to hold if you were working with a live model.

STEP 2

Select a few of your favorite photos. Drawings should be life-size or slightly smaller, but not much. The bigger it is, you will find that it is easier to deal with detail when working with charcoal. (please refer to the demo below).

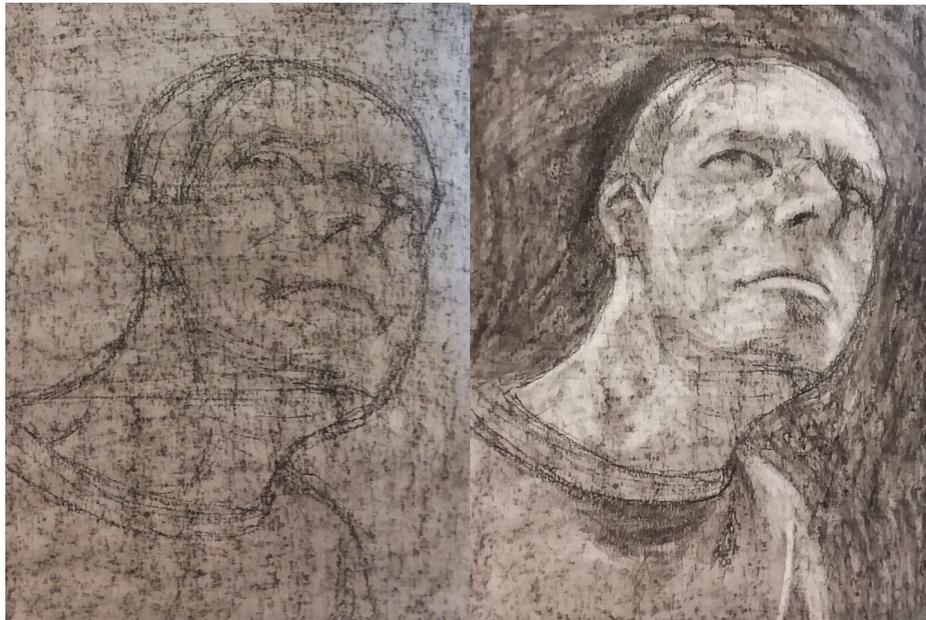
STEP 3

Begin with a neutral charcoal ground using your chamois and chalk pastel.



STEP 4

Using your charcoal pencil, establish general structure using line, circles and ellipses. Then draw in gestures and general contours being mindful of anatomical landmarks, proportions and angles. For example, in the image above, notice how close the tip of the nose is compared to the eyes. Notice how far the forehead extends beyond the shoulder. Notice where the ear is in relation to the nose and eyes, and also in relation to the center of the model's neck. The very light horizontal and vertical lines you see are helping me establish these landmarks. Finally, map out very lightly where you see major shifts in value to help you in the shading process for Step 5.



STEP 5

Using your kneaded eraser, bring out lighter areas. Leave medium areas alone for now. Theoretically, the neutral ground should provide that middle value. Add darker values to very dark areas. You don't have to be too specific with the contours yet. With charcoal you will have plenty of opportunity to add and subtract value as you go along. Fine-tune contours gradually. You will also notice I chose to make the background a little darker so the head stands out more.



STEP 5

Now work on one section at a time, paying attention to specifics such as to shifts in values and surface details using just your black charcoal materials, kneaded eraser, drawing stumps and chamois. When you've reached as far as you can go with just these materials, implement your white Conte crayon, white chalk or chalk pastel to bring out bright highlights, and add detail to smaller harder to access areas. Don't over-do it or over-blend with the white. The white should be used minimally and strategically. I used it mostly around the forehead, nose, the sides of his face, and just a little to bring out the highlights in the eyes and lower lip.

GOOD LUCK!