
Portraiture

Getting a likeness in drawing and painting

Measuring and tips from Jane



This portrait by the artist David Hockney, of his mum, is one of a series. He was very fond of his mum and his paintings and photo montages show her character and his

Did he get a likeness of her? Without seeing the photograph it is difficult to say but we feel as if there is a likeness, she has been painted in great detail.

So it is detail that makes a portrait likeness? To a degree, it has a lot to do with acute observation and placement of lines, shapes and colour. When you truly “see” and not just look you are starting to realise how complex portraits are. Sit and observe for a long time before starting to paint. When you start ask yourself questions all of the time! Where do I place this line? Where does the corner of the mouth go? Endless questions.....

1. Where to start? Artists have different starting points. I lightly pencil in the larger shapes such as

- head shape
- hair shape
- neck
- shoulders
- clothing

First up shape:

Hockney’s mum’s head has a slightly squarish shape (looking at the face, without the neck area). The hair is also quite squarish on one side and offset with curves on the other. Notice how her eyes are also quite squarish.

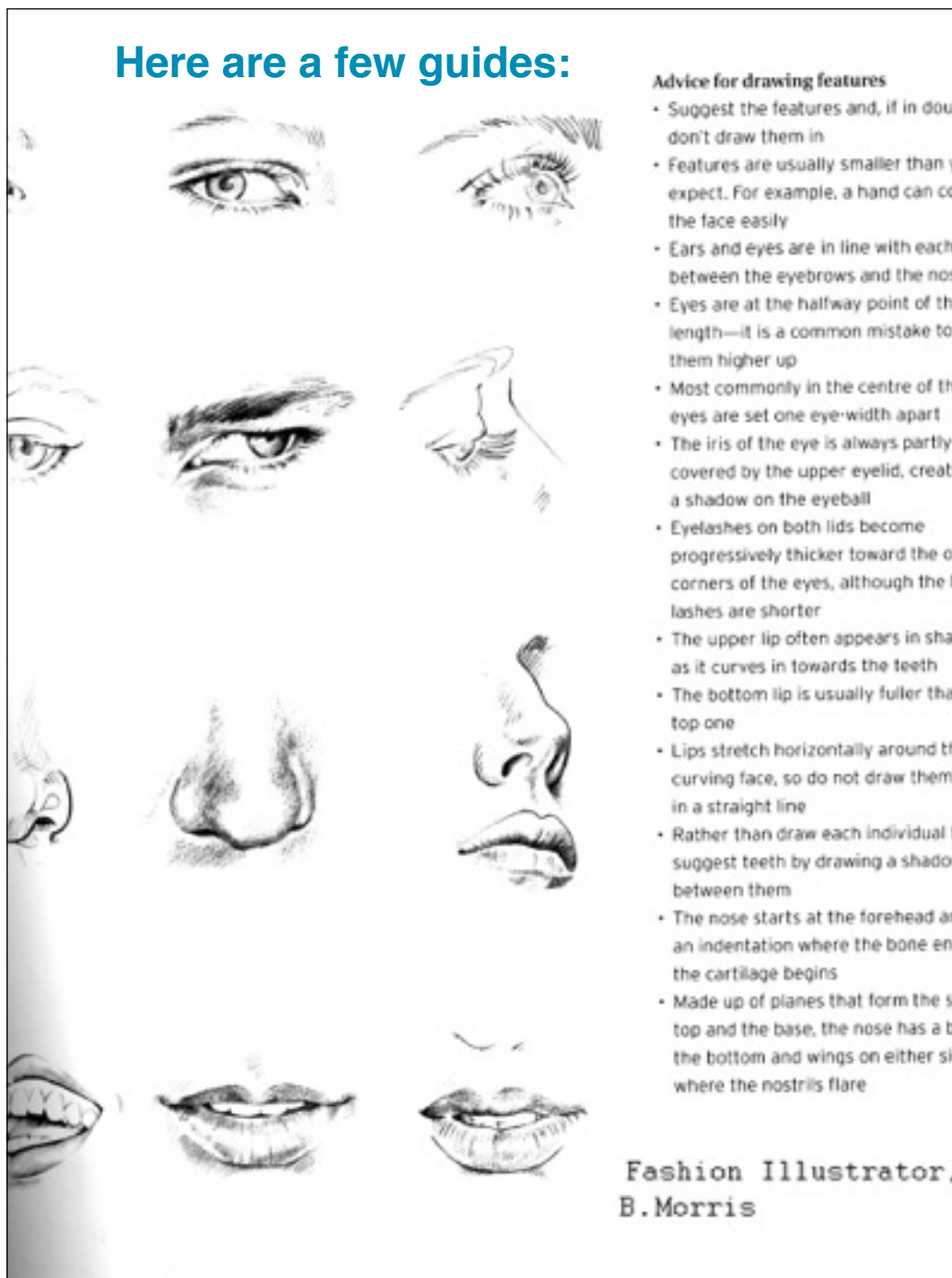
Look for lines: straight and curved. These all add to the personality of the sitter. It is easier to do a portrait face on rather than with the head tilted, you can progress towards this.

2. Then:

- place lightly the eye sockets (no detail)
- look for key points on the nose
- look for corners of mouth, lining up with the eyes

This website is very succinct in these points,

<http://theportraitplace.co.uk/arttech likeness.php>



Measurement guides but use *your* observation or your portraits will be comic like!

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DRAW COMICS WITH DICK GIORDANO

head views **FRONT VIEW**

There are differences between males and females, but not in the preliminary drawing steps you use to get to the finished drawing. The differences are in the details. After more than fifty years in the business, I still always use these layout methods (which I learned in school) for drawing heads.

1 Draw a circle and then add the "jaw" at the bottom, forming an egg shape.

2 Bisect the egg-shape both vertically and horizontally.

3 Lightly block in areas where features will be located: eyes on the horizontal middle line (spaced an eye's width apart); the bottom of the nose located halfway between the eye line and the bottom of the jaw; the lips located about halfway between the nose and the jaw; and end left and right at points directly below the center of each eye; ears extend from the eye line to the nose line. General locations of features may vary somewhat from character to character.



4 Add the features and head details.

Females are likely to have:

- fuller, more voluptuous lips
- slightly larger eyes
- more pronounced eyelids

Males are likely to have:

- more angular lines defining the head shape
- a slightly longer chin



Lastly: if you only use line you will end up with a type of illustration

Therefore you will need to use shading.

Shading

- shading is used for skin this includes the mouth, eyes, neck and anywhere else
- if using pencil shade lightly and then get progressively darker
- if using colour add colours to white for light tints and then progressively add more
- think about the surface you are shading, the bumps the undulations, small curves, crevices. How can your shading describe this?

This subject was tackled in the drop-in class, for more class notes see the website

