

## PORTRAITURE

Portraiture is an important branch of painting. Portraiture painting is to capture the resemblance of a person in terms of line and colour in a picture. It is to portray the character, and unique attributes of the model, and viewers can easily recognize the person in a portrait.

Indian epics like the Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas have many references to realistic portraiture. The Kamasutra of Vatsyayan describes the rules of painting based on the six limbs of painting. (Shadanga)

The main feature of portraiture is the shape of the face. It could be round, oval, or rectangular. A face mainly has two eyes, two eyebrows, a nose, two ears and a mouth, but they are different in every person. Similarly, a person's face will also look different under different emotional circumstances. When viewed from different angles, a person will be depicted differently on a two-dimensional surface. Similarly, a portrait, will be seen differently when seen from different eye levels.



### OBJECTIVES

The learner will be able to:

- practice and draw the shape of the face;
- explain the ratio of the human face;
- describe how the face of one person is different from another person's face;
- describe how to depict the different expressions of the human face;
- draw the human face in different mediums like pencil, pastel colour, watercolour, oil colour etc.

**Materials required**

Drawing board, drawing sheet, handmade paper, pencils (HB, 4B, 6B), pastel colours, watercolours, oil colours, brushes (Nos. 2, 4, 6, 10, 12), half-inch flat brush, colour mixing palette.



**3.1 TECHNIQUE OF PORTRAITURE**

In portraiture, you should first observe the face of the model to decide the basic shape of the face. (See figure 3.1)



Fig. 3.1

If you observe the subject from different angles, her face will be seen differently, like frontal face, three-fourth visage or profile. (See figure 3.2)

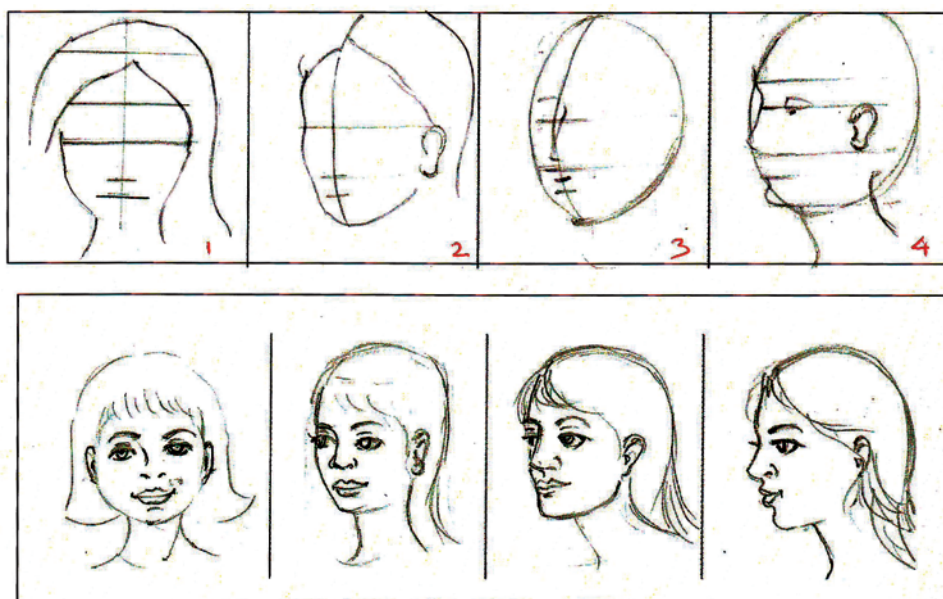


Fig. 3.2

Similarly, when a face is seen from different eye levels, it looks different. When the eye level is high, the model's hair is seen prominently. When the eye level is low, the facial expression appears prominently. When the model's face is at the same eye level as the painter, the face will show clearly. When the observer's

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eye level is lower than that of the model, the chin area is seen prominently, concealing the upper part of the head. Exercise portraiture following (See Fig. 3.3).

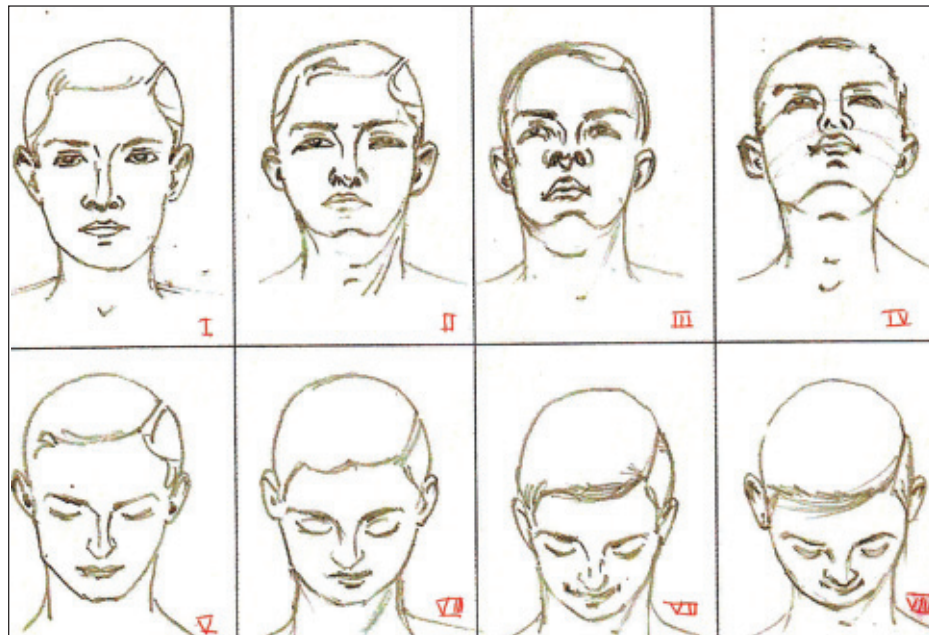


Fig. 3.3

- I. Face at the observer's eye level.
- II. Face at a level slightly higher than the observer's eye level.
- III. Face at a level higher than the observer's eye level- the model's hair is seen less, and the chin area is prominently visible.
- IV. Face at a level quite higher than the observer's eye level- the model's hair is not visible, and the chin area is prominently visible.
- V-VIII. Face at a level lower than the observer's eye level- the model's hair is more visible, and the chin area is less visible.

The greatest speciality of portraiture is the portrayal of the character, and unique attributes of the model. Different emotions effect the dynamics of facial muscles differently. As a result, experiencing different emotions, the face looks different- worried, happy, calm, amused. Fig. 3.4 shows faces experiencing the nine emotions.



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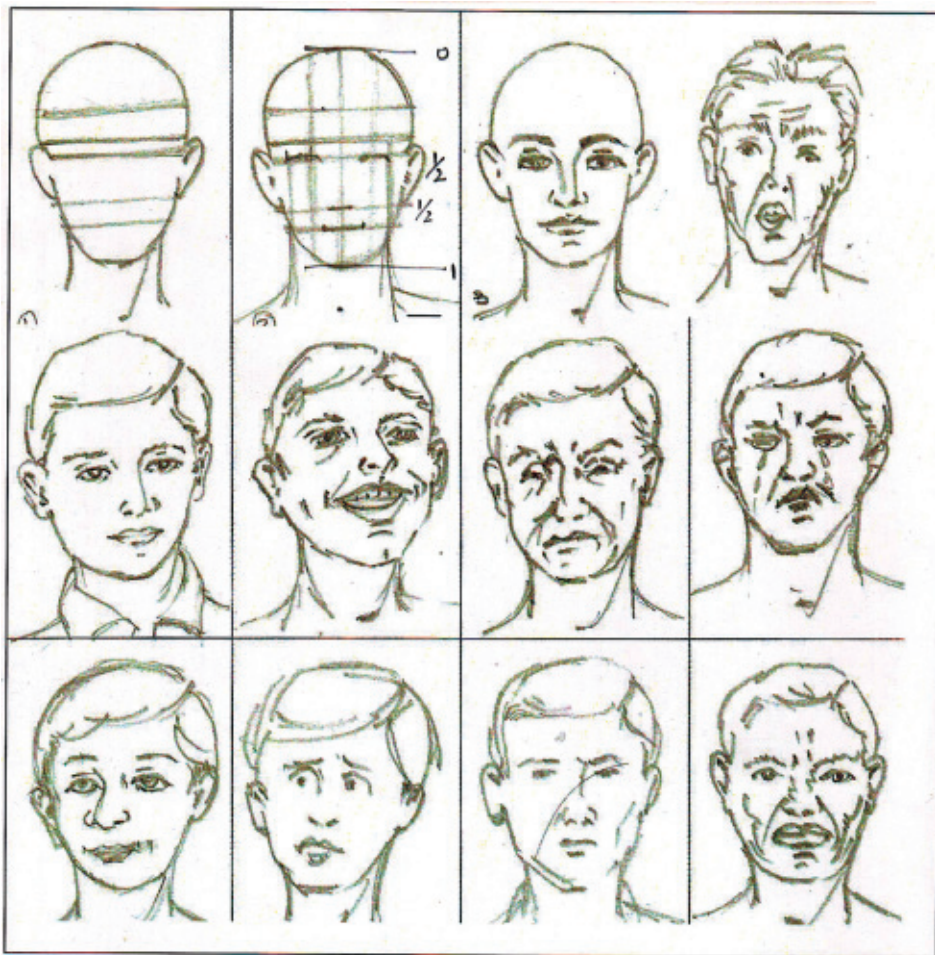


Fig. 3.4

While creating a portrait from memory, one must remember the character of the model. Each person has different characteristics and facial expressions [see Fig. 3.4(a)]. We recognize a person on the basis of these facial expressions [see Fig. 3.4(b)].

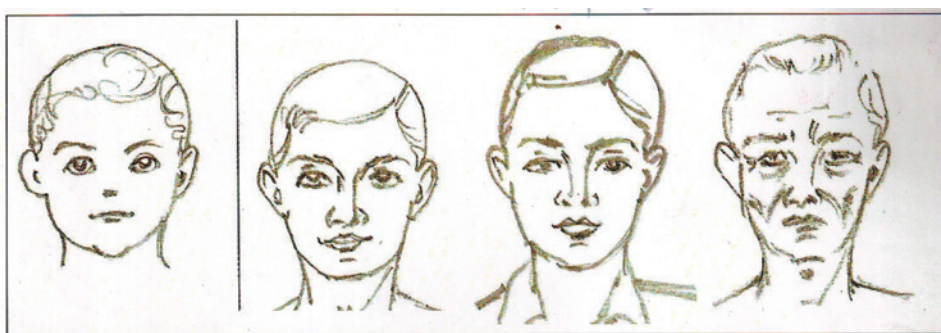


Fig. 3.4(a)

# MODULE - 1

Nature and Object Study

Portraiture



Notes



Fig. 3.4(b)

Before embarking on full-fledged portraiture, students ought to practice sketching the different parts of a face from different eye level (as shown in Fig. 3.5). Similarly, they must also practice rendering faces from different angles (as shown in Fig. 3.6).

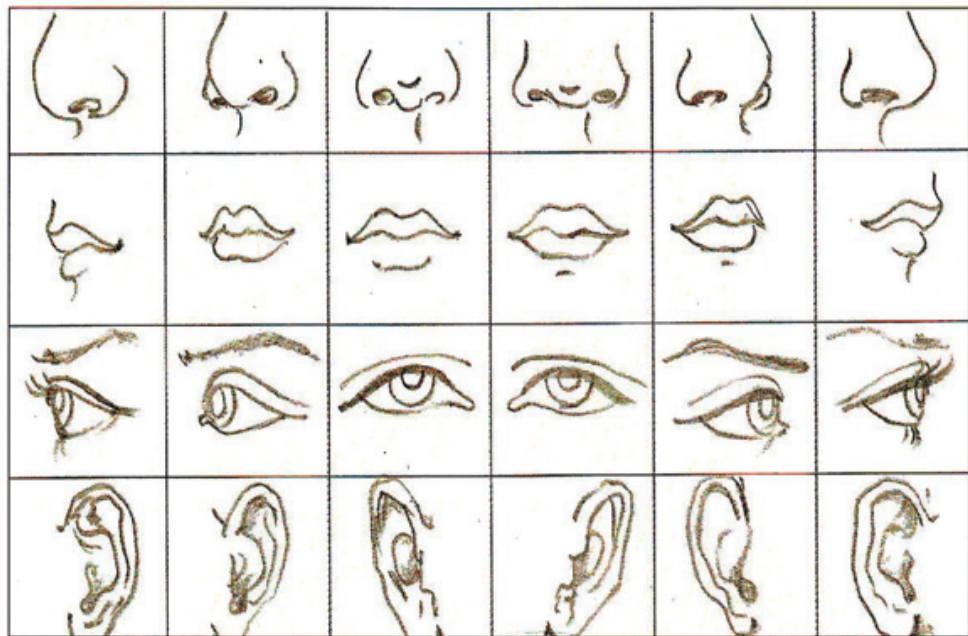


Fig. 3.5

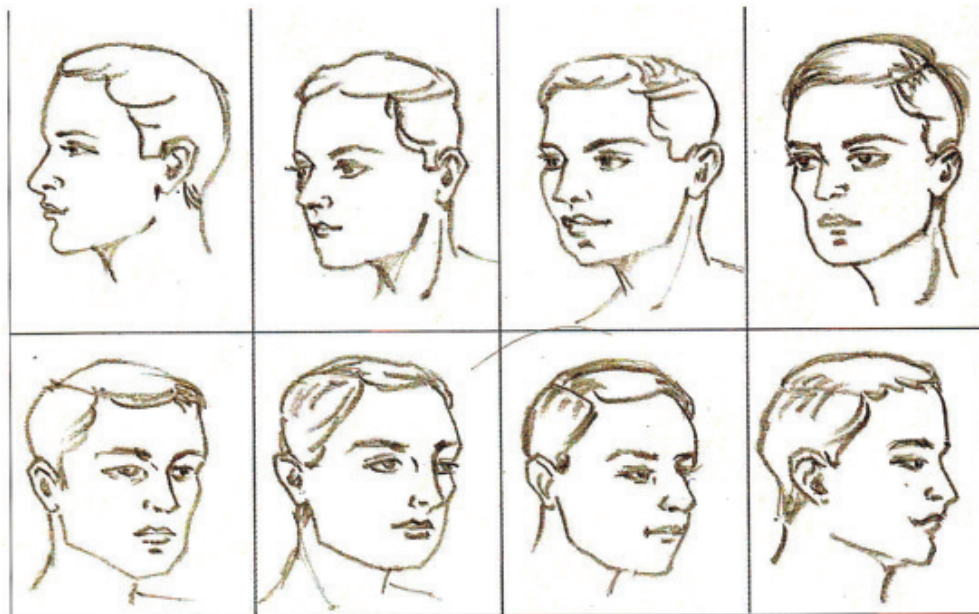


Fig. 3.6



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### Proportions of the Human face

The different parts of a human body are generally in certain proportions to each other. For example, if you take the human head as one unit, the body normally consists of 7.5 such units. Similarly, in a face, too, features like the eye, the nose and the ears are in a certain proportion to each other. While rendering a general or model face, you draw its outline first, which could be round, oval, rectangular, square or pentagonal. Then draw the eyes and the nose. Further, divide the lower and upper halves into two equal parts. The lower portions of the nose and the ears will fall into the lower half. The mass of hair is located in the upper half. Divide the area below the nose in two equal parts again. Above this dividing line, draw the lower lip. Divide the area between the line of the eyes and the line above it. Draw the eyebrows here. In frontal portraits, line number 3, which is in the middle of the contour, is divided into five equal segments. The second and third segments define the breadth of the eye. The third and fourth segments are the space between the two eyes. The fourth and fifth segments define the breadth of the other eye. In the center of each eye, draw a round iris. Next, draw a perpendicular line downwards. At the point this line intersects the contour, draw the lines of the neck. From the midpoint of the neck, draw a line the length of one unit to the left. Now draw a similar line to the right, and you have the breadth of the shoulders. You have created a model visage.

**EXERCISE 1**

**Portrait in pencil colours**

**First step**

This visage is two-dimensional. You could impart light and shade effects with 2B and 4B pencils and turn it three-dimensional. Start with light tones and move on to darker tones.

**Second step**

While working with pencil colours, we start with light tones and move on to darker ones. A portrait in pencil colours must render the skin complexion and hair colour exactly so the viewer may easily recognize the subject. Fig. 3.7 is a middle-aged person's portrait in pencil colours.



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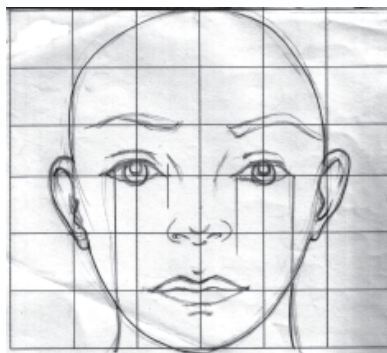


Fig. 3.7

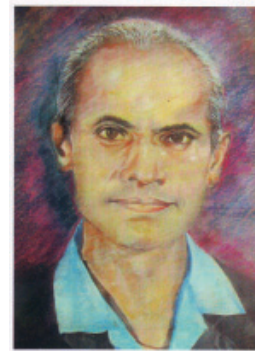


Fig. 3.7(a)

**Third step**

Slanting strokes have been used to create light and shade effect Fig. 3.7(a) is an old aged person's portrait in pencil and watercolour.

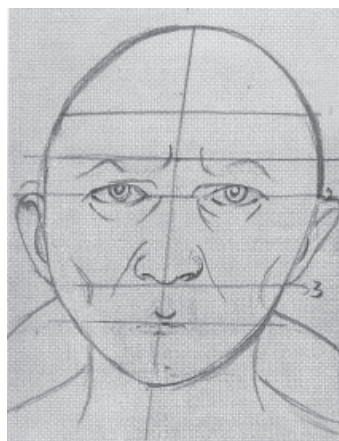


Fig. 3.8



Fig. 3.8(a)

The technique of portraiture in pastel colours is similar to the technique of portraiture in pencil colours. The only difference is, as in oil colour, light tones could be applied on top of dark tones to show a sharply lighted area. An example of this is the four-year-old's portrait of a boy. The glowing smile on the child's face is beautifully juxtaposed with the mischievous twinkle in his eyes (see Fig. 3.9).



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Fig. 3.9

## EXERCISE 2

### Portrait in watercolour

We begin by sketching with a pencil. The pencil lines are dimmed with an eraser before colouring because watercolours are transparent, and the lines might show otherwise. In this technique, too, we start with light tones and gradually move on to the darker tones.

#### First step

You must always remember that while working in watercolour, never ever use the colour white. Not even to create a lighter tone of colour. Because when you add a white colour to another watercolour, it makes the tone opaque and imparts a tempera effect to the work. So, leave the drawing sheet plain, when you need to render areas of intense light. The white of the eye around the iris is left uncoloured too.





## Notes



**Fig. 3.10**

Fig. 3.10 is a fine example of a portrait in watercolour. The young labourer's face has a thick beard and mustache, and his hair is unkempt. Deft use of tone imparts strength and toughness to his visage. Areas of intense light have been left unpainted.

### Second step

Fig. 3.10(a) is another example of a portrait in watercolour. It has been done on silk instead of paper.



**Fig. 3.10(a)**

**EXERCISE 3**

**Portrait in oil colour**

Contrary to the practice in oil colour, we move from darker to lighter tones. We apply the darkest tones first and gradually move on to the lighter ones. Areas of intense light are painted in white or a mix of white and very light yellow. Fig. 3.11 is Van Gogh's self-portrait in oil colour. The background is very dark; created by mixing green and black pigments. The very expressive face has tones in various shades of yellow. His eyes highlight his emotional turmoil.



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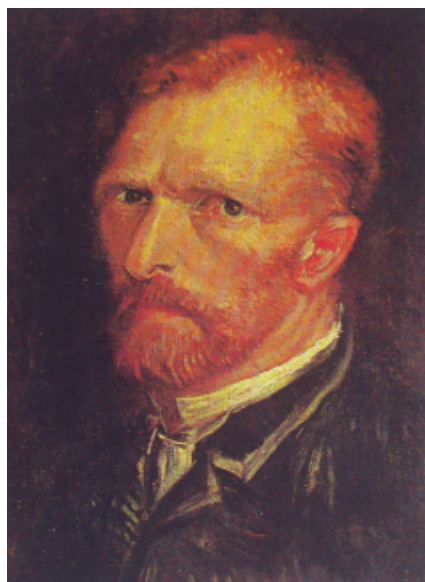
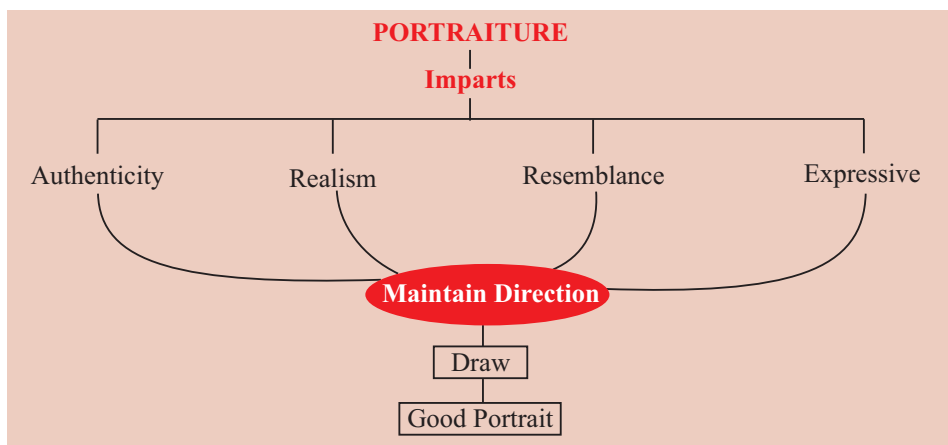


Fig. 3.11



**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**





### TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Following the technique described in this lesson, practice drawing the nose, ears, eyes and lips etc., from different angles.
2. Sketch a visage.
3. Sketch a visage and complete it with pencil shading.
4. Make a portrait of one of your a friend or family member.
5. Make a portrait of some great man in pencil colours.

### GLOSSARY

Realistic: Life-like

Profile: the side view of a head.



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