



ARTS PLUS

Painted Paper Portraits

A fun Saturday workshop for adults

“Part Two: Drawing your Self Portrait in Line”

Time from start to finish = 30 minutes

You will need the following materials:

- **One sheet of heavy paper**, about 9” X 12” or larger (watercolor paper is great, but you can work on anything, even card stock or cardboard will do in a pinch)
- **Pencil**
- **Mirror** (or you can use the camera function on your laptop or tablet)
- **Sharpie** or other heavy permanent black marker.

Brief description:

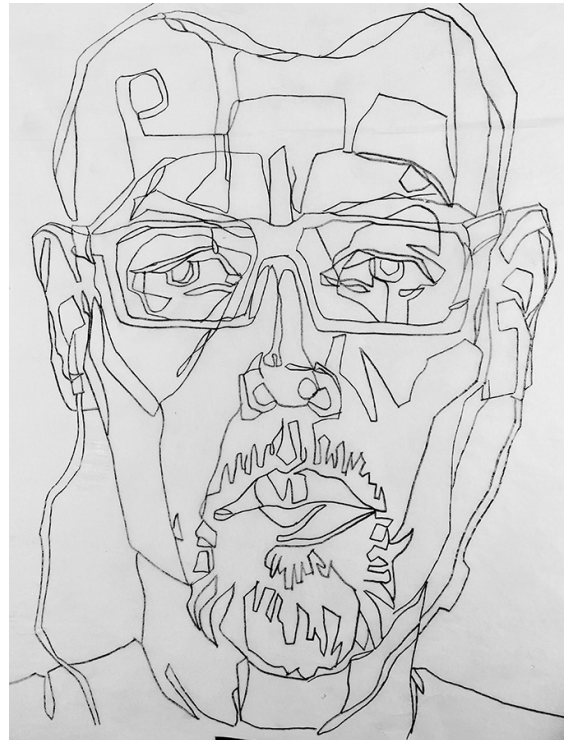
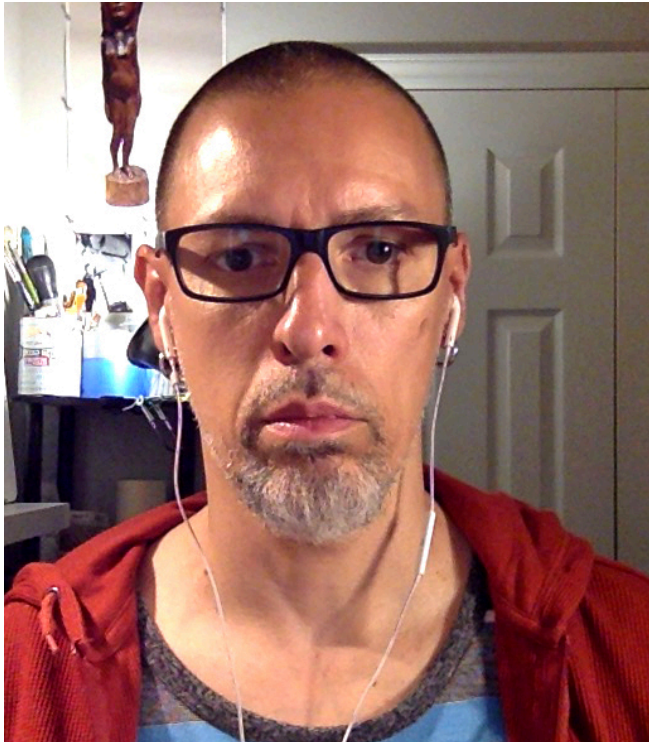
The next step in our process is to draw the “portrait” part of “Painted Paper Portraits”. For my example, I am making a modified blind contour drawing (which I will explain below...) but really any simple line drawing will do. The most important thing is that you want to break down the image of your face into distinct shapes. These are the shapes that you will later fill in with collage material in Part 3. So no shading or soft marks here, you want a drawing of a face made from solid shapes, described by consistent bold outlines. Also keep in mind, this drawing can be as simple or complex as you like! (My example is a bit on the complex side, so for a less involved project, draw your face in more basic geometric shapes.)

To start off, for those who are somewhat new to drawing instruction, here are a few helpful definitions:

- **Contour** refers to the perceived line that defines any shape against a background. Hold up an apple against a blank white wall, concentrate on the edge of the apple shape, trace this shape carefully with pencil on paper, and you have made a contour drawing.
- **Blind contour drawing** is an exercise in which we make contour drawings of observed shapes of real objects in real space, while keeping our eyes on your subject matter 100% of the time and never looking down at our paper. When you make a blind contour drawing, try to keep your line continuous, so plant your pencil on your paper and keep it there the entire time you are drawing (keeping “the train on the track” so to speak.) There is no erasing or correcting in a blind contour exercise, but you may double back over lines you have already made.
- **Modified blind contour drawing** is an exercise that builds off regular blind contour, but the “modified” part means that you are allowed to look at your paper to right yourself on the path of drawing outlines of shapes. However, you should **ONLY** look at your paper when you get lost or confused in the drawing process. Even in a modified blind contour drawing exercise, you should keep your eyes on your subject matter 75% of the time and only look at the page when you absolutely need to. Modified blind contours also keep to the “train on the track” principle.

Steps

• **#1: Set up your workspace so that you are looking into a mirror.** You can also look into the camera of your laptop or use a webcam to get a live video image, which will function the same as looking into a mirror. **Play with the lighting** in your work area so that you have both sufficient light on your drawing sheet and some dramatic lighting on your face. (Nothing too harsh, but enough light to create some bold shadows and highlights. I like to use two light sources, both at an angle, one from each side, and one slightly brighter than the other.)



Now take a deep breath, relax and start drawing.

If you've never tried it before, a modified blind contour drawing is a slightly different method of drawing than the free form sketching you may be used to. The top priority here is to make a drawing that is **continuous line, and that breaks your face down into a series of distinct shapes.** The dramatic lighting will help you see these shapes by breaking your face down into tonal values of highlight and shadow. If you are feeling trepidation here, try warming up by trying blind contour drawing on a sheet of scrap paper first, before you draw on your large sheet.

- **#2:** After you complete your graphite line drawing, you may want to cover your page in a **thin paint wash**. Paint washes can work with acrylic, watercolor, or any other water based paint that you can thin down to a semi-transparent level. Before you try the wash over your final drawing, test it on a scratch sheet of paper to make sure the wash is thin enough. (Remember, you are not painting over your drawing, and that **you still should be able to see the graphite lines** through the wash.)



- **#3:** Allow the wash to dry completely. (I normally let my washes dry overnight, but it should be completely dry in two or three hours.) Then **go over all your line work with a bold permanent marker**. I am using a black Posca paint marker, but a black fine point Sharpie will work just as well.

