

Create a Portrait

WITH ARCHER DAVIES

About Archer

Archer Davies is a Melbourne-based artist. He has a strong interest in portraiture and often paints his friends, family and the people around him. Archer chiefly paints in oils and gouache to create portraits that highlight the individuality of his subjects. When painting, Archer prefers to work directly from life as he believes it enables him to capture the person's character, gestures and movements.

Use this guide, a few pieces of paper and a soft lead pencil to draw a subject's face from life. You may choose to draw a friend or use a mirror to create a self-portrait.



Archer Davies
Tulle Blue 2020

Spend time observing and find angles

Observe the subject and pay attention to the shapes, lines and angles that interest you. You may like to walk around your subject, turn your head slightly or tilt your face from side to side.

Use line

Think about the style of line you will use to shape your portrait. A continuous line drawing will give a different effect to using your pencil to sculpt the shadows and contours of the face using short, sharp strokes.

Keep in mind

- Symmetry helps create a convincing face, but remember that faces are not symmetrical. The closer you look at yours or your subject's face, the more asymmetry you will find. Drawing these differences will make your portrait interesting to look at.
- Use the rule of thirds to guide your composition. For visual interest, avoid placing the face in the centre. Try shifting it to the side or drawing your subject in profile.

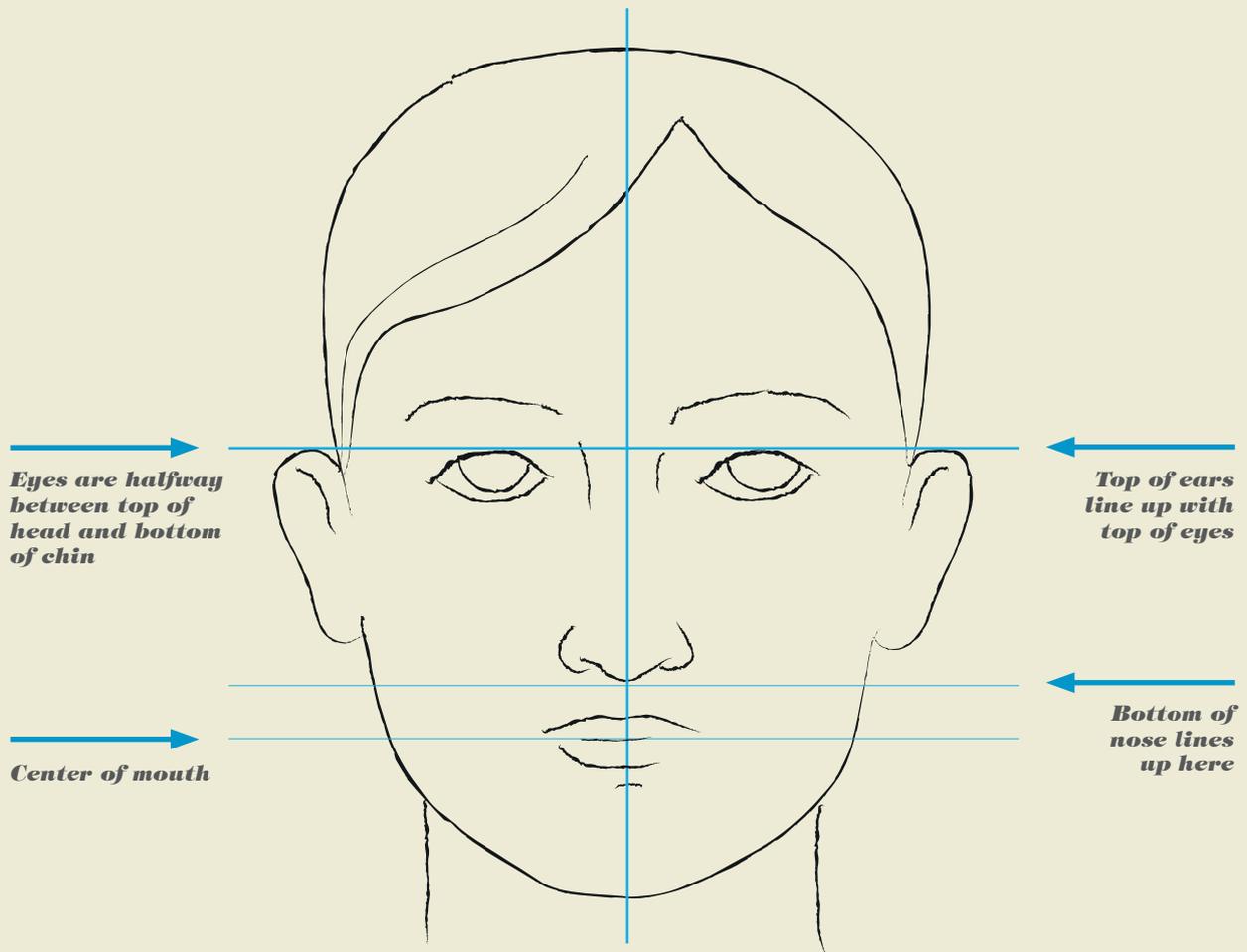
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Make a sketch

- Create a rough sketch of your subject's face by softly drawing an upside-down egg shape. Next draw a vertical and horizontal line through the centre of the face shape. Be sure to spend time looking at your subject in order to capture their features.
- Observe your subject's face, noticing where each feature begins and ends as well as the distance in between. Notice the way light falls across the face.
- Add facial features using the diagram below to assist you with proportions.
- Gently erase the vertical and horizontal lines.

Tips to map the face on the page



Polish your portrait

You may find the first drawing you create is more of a 'study' or an experiment rather than a polished portrait. Now that you have the technique, you may like to begin again with a fresh piece of paper.