

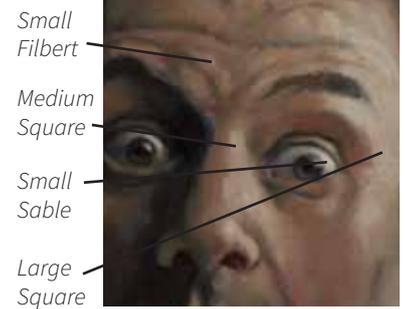
We are now ready to begin over painting with oils. In this tutorial I will cover process, shadow glazing, and building the flesh tones to the penultimate stage.

Using brushes

Choosing the right brushes is a matter of personal preference and style, however it is always advisable to have a selection of sizes - the brushes I use are in a previous tutorial.

Using the same size brush throughout will create a 'samey' picture lacking in defined shapes and contours.

Use appropriate size brush strokes that are the right size for the shape you want to paint. Working with a small brush throughout will not create the sculpture and shapes either. Would you ladies use a tiny brush to apply your foundation and rouge? In the diagram you can see the size and shapes of the brush marks.



Dark to light

Dark paint pulls the eye inward, hence the phrase 'peering into shadows'. Think of shadows as a veil over whatever is real underneath. Thin dark and ethereal rather than solid, hinting at what lurks beneath. Take a typical Carravaggio, with faces painted with deep shadows and contrasting lights. The shadows are thinner paint pulling the eye in, the lightest areas are thicker paint that is coming out of the picture towards you, and the mid tones are halfway between in terms of paint consistency. This is the technique used by old masters to create such 3D illusions in their work. Go to a gallery and it will be obvious.

Paint in layers

It is important to note that the process above is repeated a number of times, painting over the dry paint of the previous work until the desired level of contrast is achieved. Trying to achieve this in one session, particularly when painting dark veil like shadows, is impossible. The paint needs to be thin and therefore will not create the depth of darkness in one go. Be patient and you will get spectacular results.



Grey tone (grisaille) underpainting in acrylics - see previous tutorial. Note the thin darks and thicker highlights to create movement and sculpture in the face.



Stage 1

Having let the grisaille dry, I paint an oil glaze of raw umber and permanent rose over the painting. Although I want a warmer tone, especially for the shadows, I add the raw umber to temper the red.

I then use a cotton, lint free cloth to wipe out the highlights, rubbing gently at first to remove a small amount of glaze and then harder to create the lightest areas.

This leaves some grittiness (in look rather than texture) to the face, as I don't want a smooth finish to the painting. Some of the grey underpainting just shows through which is fine. I then lightly paint some flesh tones into the shapes on the face as a good base for the next stage. By using this technique I can learn more about the sculpture of the face and muscle direction which I can replicate with my fingers. I don't always use this stage, sometimes going straight to the skin tones, but in this case, the lumpiness of my own face (yes it is me) can be explored! I then add more raw umber and permanent rose to the darker shadow areas of the face, blending slightly with a fan brush, and leave the picture overnight to dry.

Note: I have painted flesh tone into the eyes and where the beard will be to provide a good base to paint upon later.

Stage 2

I mix a range of flesh tones as shown in the earlier tutorial. Using raw umber and permanent rose, I strengthen the shadows with a glaze, only this time it is a little heavier than before to give the shadows more body.

Using my darkest flesh tone, I lightly paint in the lightest shadow areas. I don't use medium because the glaze underneath creates some flow. With a mid tone flesh I paint in the rest following my earlier wiped off shapes, and leaving the under glaze showing through.

I add white with raw umber and a touch of flesh tone to scrub in the beard and into the eyes, adding subtle highlights. I will glaze over the eyes and repaint them later.

Using the same colours I lightly scrub in the darker areas of hair and gradually lighten the mix with white for the lighter areas. I paint the hair in shapes to establish the flow and direction, ready for adding detail later in the painting.

Finally I mix black and raw umber for the shirt, to which I then add white and yellow ochre for the background, which I paint a flat with just enough medium to get some flow. Add black to the mix, I paint the darker background shadows. I leave the painting to dry for several days.

In my next tutorial I will show the final stage of this portrait, along with a technique for painting softer skin tones and texture.

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