

# Digital Portraits: Capturing Personality on the Screen

## Welcome, Sandra!

Hello Sandra! I'm excited to dive into the wonderful world of digital portraits with you today. This lesson is all about exploring how we can use digital tools to capture not just a likeness, but the personality and essence of a person. Since you're interested in this fascinating art form, we'll start with the basics and get you creating your very own digital sketch.

## Materials You'll Need:

- A computer with internet access
- Digital drawing software (e.g., Krita - free, GIMP - free, Procreate, Clip Studio Paint, Adobe Photoshop). We can discuss which one you have or plan to use.
- A drawing tablet (e.g., Wacom, Huion) or an iPad with Apple Pencil.
- A clear reference photo (a selfie, a photo of someone you know, or even a high-quality stock photo).
- Optional: A notebook and pen for any thoughts or tips you want to jot down.

## Learning Goals for Today:

- Understand the basic principles that make a good digital portrait.
- Get familiar with key tools in your chosen digital drawing software for portraiture.
- Practice basic digital sketching and color blocking techniques.
- Start your first simple digital portrait using your reference photo!
- Spark your creativity and see the amazing possibilities with digital art.

## Lesson Activities:

### Part 1: What Makes a Digital Portrait Pop? (15 minutes)

Before we jump into drawing, let's talk about what makes a digital portrait engaging. We'll look at a few examples (I can share my screen or send you links) and discuss:

- **Likeness vs. Style:** How artists balance capturing a person's features with their own artistic style.
- **Expression and Mood:** How facial features, lighting, and color can convey emotion.
- **Composition:** How the subject is placed and framed within the canvas.
- **Light and Shadow:** The importance of understanding how light shapes the face.

*Think about a digital portrait you admire. What draws you to it?*

### Part 2: Getting to Know Your Tools (20 minutes)

Let's open up your chosen digital drawing software. We'll focus on a few essential tools for portrait work:

- **Canvas Setup:** Choosing appropriate dimensions and resolution for a portrait.
- **Brushes:** Exploring different brush types for sketching, lining, and basic coloring. We'll find a

good sketching brush to start.

- **Layers:** Why layers are your best friend! We'll cover creating new layers for sketching, line art, and color.
- **Eraser Tool:** For corrections and refinements.
- **Color Picker:** How to select base colors.
- **Zoom and Pan:** Navigating your canvas effectively.

*Activity: Let's practice creating a new document, selecting a sketching brush, and drawing some simple shapes on different layers. Try adjusting brush size and opacity.*

### **Part 3: Sketching Your Portrait - The Foundation (45 minutes)**

Now for the fun part – starting your portrait! Grab your reference photo.

1. **Import Reference (Optional):** You can import your reference photo onto a separate layer in your software, or have it open beside your drawing window.
2. **Basic Shapes and Proportions:** We'll start by lightly sketching the basic head shape (often an oval or egg shape). Then, we'll block in guidelines for the eyes, nose, and mouth. Don't worry about perfection; this is about getting the placement right. We can use common facial proportion guides (e.g., eyes are halfway down the head).
3. **Defining Features:** Gradually refine the shapes of the eyes, nose, mouth, and jawline. Focus on the main forms and don't get bogged down in tiny details yet.
4. **Hair Outline:** Sketch the general shape and flow of the hair.
5. **Keep it Loose:** Remember, this is a sketch. It's okay if it's a bit messy! The goal is to capture the essence and placement.

*I'll be here to guide you, answer questions, and offer tips as you sketch. We can share screens if that's helpful.*

### **Part 4: Introduction to Color Blocking (Optional - if time permits, or as a next step) (20 minutes)**

If your sketch is looking good and we have time, we can introduce basic color blocking.

- Create a new layer underneath your sketch layer.
- Using a larger brush, block in the main flat colors for the skin, hair, and background. Don't worry about blending or details yet – just flat areas of color. This helps establish the overall color harmony.

### **Wrap-up and Next Steps (10 minutes)**

Great work today, Sandra! You've taken your first steps into digital portraiture.

- **Review:** What did you enjoy most? What was most challenging?
- **Self-Critique:** Look at your sketch. What are you proud of? What would you like to improve or explore next time?
- **Moving Forward:** For next time, you can continue refining your sketch, focusing on adding more details, or we can dive deeper into shading, color blending, and adding highlights to bring your portrait to life. There are many wonderful tutorials online as well if you feel inspired to explore between our sessions!

Remember, practice is key in digital art. The more you experiment and draw, the more comfortable and

skilled you'll become. I'm looking forward to seeing your portrait develop!