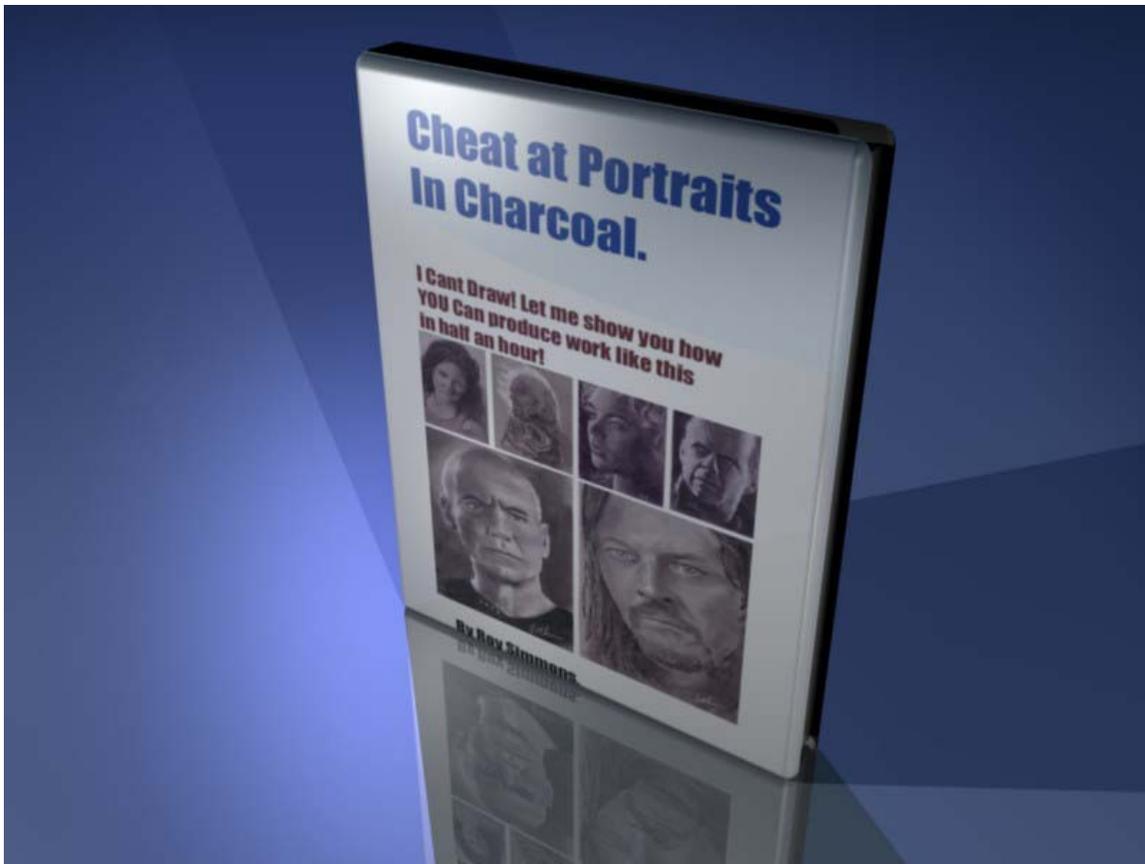


More Free Art Instruction From:

PastelPortraitSecrets.com



This e-book originally sold online for \$10.00 very successfully. I have decided to make it available free; to get the word out about my methods of creating great *Art Fast*.

Cheat at Portraits in Charcoal

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Is It Really Cheating?

Artists have always used any new technology in their work, when photography was invented, many artists started to use it as a reference tool. Photography influenced the work of Manet who copied its 'cropping' of people in scenes etc. He also used the camera as a sketching tool. Artists have never shouted about this (not surprisingly).

In the 21st Century we have a new tool to help us! The personal computer. We will use this tool to gather source images (for Celebrity Portraits). We will use our printer to make printed templates.

Of course you can use a digital camera to take photographs of family and friends as source images. We will discuss the type of pictures that work best later.

So, you are using this equipment to take away or significantly ease the things that have been obstacles, preventing you from realizing your artistic vision.

I hope you will become excited with the possibilities; when you make your first good charcoal portrait *quickly* you will feel empowered to keep at it, people really

love these portraits, even if your objective is never to sell them, you can make gifts for friends and family which will last a lifetime.

Oh, and when people admire you're work; which they will, don't say anything about 'cheating' they will simply see the hand made image, and that has a special power regardless of the techniques used.

Before we start, let me make you aware of a great device that can really allow anyone to draw like an expert; [SimmTrace](#). You can even get the software free and make your own!! It is a modern Camera lucida, using a webcam and software to easily draw from your digital photographs. Just another method I have invented to help the Artist in all of us!



So, to answer the question I posed in this section, no it's not cheating, its empowering! Lets get started, guilt free, and make those portraits!

What do I need?

For the actual drawing.

Willow Charcoal Sticks

White Pastel

White pastel Pencil

Sharp Graphite Pencil

Canson or Ingres pastel Paper. I use
Canson 'Dreadnaught Grey'. You can

use any good grey pastel paper, it needs to be a 'mid' grey half way between
black and white.

Fixative spray in aerosol form

Black Carbon Paper, as used for typewriters (remember those!) Or you can use
Graphite transfer paper available at art shops.

Additionally you can use 'smudge sticks' or small sections of rolled up newspaper
to blend with. I use my fingers!



Starting the half hour portrait.

Firstly, you need at least one reference image. I usually do a 'session' on the internet to find celebrity photographs I want to use. Use Google image search, you want the image to be large enough to see details well. Another tip, if you want actors from films, search for screen capture sites made by fans (screen caps) These are good for things like the Lord of the Rings characters or, as we are going to use in this demonstration, a well known Star-Trek Actor!

The best type of image has good lighting and strong contrast, this lends itself well to the type of charcoal portrait we will be doing.

Now, although you can print your photograph out in color, I strongly recommend converting it to black and white (monochrome). Some printers allow you to choose this in their settings, or you can do it in your software. I know that in Photoshop it is image menu, adjustments, desaturate. This solves the problem for you of visualizing tonal relationships.

The work area and Preparation.

The great thing about this method is you don't need a lot of expensive gear, nor do you need masses of space. However I would recommend you spend a few minutes when setting up to make sure you have sheets of old newspaper placed on your working table. Take care to avoid having overlapping sheets under your grey paper, as this could cause unwanted lines when you apply charcoal, the 'Brass rubbing' effect, yes, I have made that mistake!

A Discussion of the process.

The process can be broken down into 4 steps.

1. The drawing.
2. Apply Dark areas.
3. Apply Light areas.
4. Finishing.

There are some subtle (and not so subtle!) ‘tricks’ in all of these steps so look at the photographs but pay as much attention to the text descriptions.

We will now carry out those steps in detail.

Getting the Drawing down *Fast*

Place the carbon paper, or graphite transfer paper between the printed image and the grey pastel paper. Of course while doing this step you must be careful not to move the top sheet.

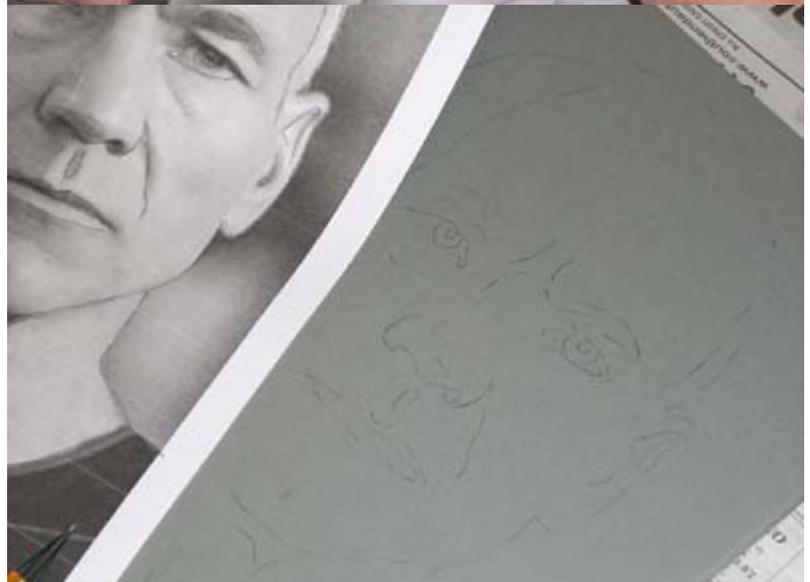
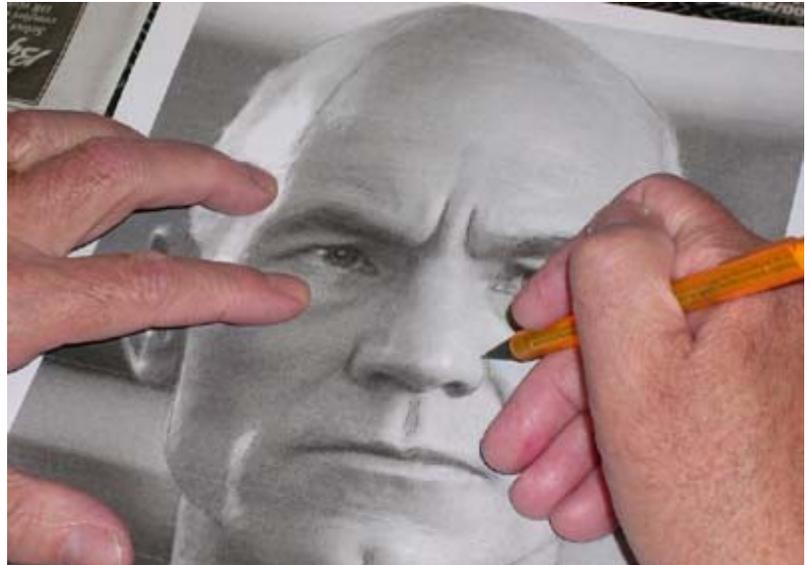


Then using a sharp pencil (I use a disposable retractable lead pencil, simply because I am too lazy to sharpen pencils!), start to quickly draw over your print out, see photograph below.

Don't press too hard at this stage, and practice using a 'loose' sketchy style, remember we are creating an illusion of a free sketch here. This should take no more than 3 minutes. Don't get fussy! The whole point of this method is to be *fast* .

You should be able to place the features accurately using this method, but all this will be shaded over in the next step!

Grey to Black.



Now begin applying charcoal, don't try to shade between the lines, go completely over the areas that are the darkest in the original, including the eyes, at this stage look at the eye socket as a whole, don't try to define anything, Except the broad areas of dark. Smudge and blend lightly with your fingers or smudge stick if that is what you are using. Half close your eyes, if it helps, to see the broad areas.

The 'Magic Lines'

You may have noticed by now that once you blend the charcoal lightly your drawing re-appears! You may already have figured out what is happening. The sharp pencil you used has caused tiny depressions to appear in the pastel paper. This is invisible until the powdery charcoal you are blending, settles in these 'grooves'. I think of it being a bit like looking for fingerprints. This means you can work on the drawing in multiple layers, and still have your guidelines to work from. The next few photographs show this in progress.



Here notice how dark the charcoal appears when first applied, it always seems to be too dark until lightly blended.



Here you see how it looks when blended. Also notice how visible the drawing is because of the 'magic line' effect.

Continue to loosely develop the dark areas





Once the basic dark areas are done, spray the fixative over the drawing. This means that you will not be able to smudge this 'layer' now.

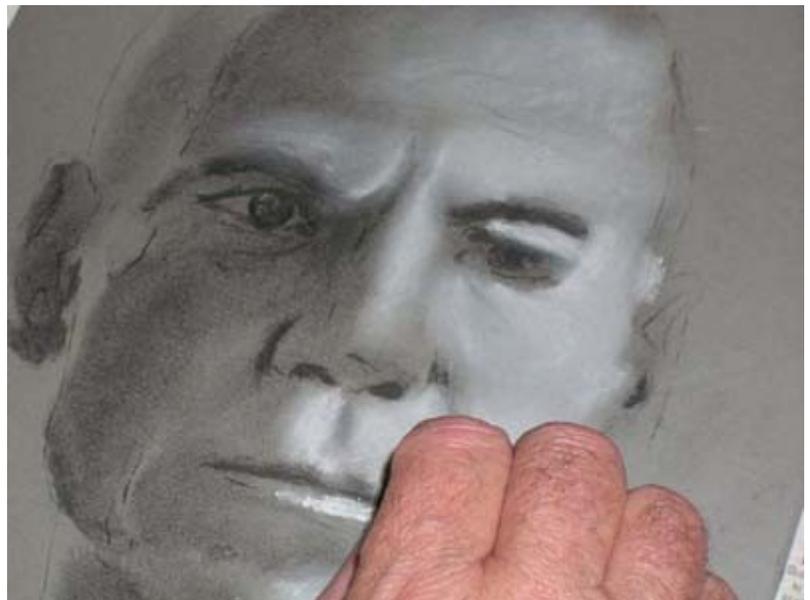
It is important to be aware of this as part of your process, also when you start to work over the fixed paper, you will notice that the charcoal goes darker, and is slightly harder to blend. You will become familiar with these characteristics.

Grey to White.

The next step is to start adding the lighter areas. This is the opposite of applying the darks! In that you work from mid grey tone of the paper, to white of the pastel. Again work fast, blending the white pastel as you go.



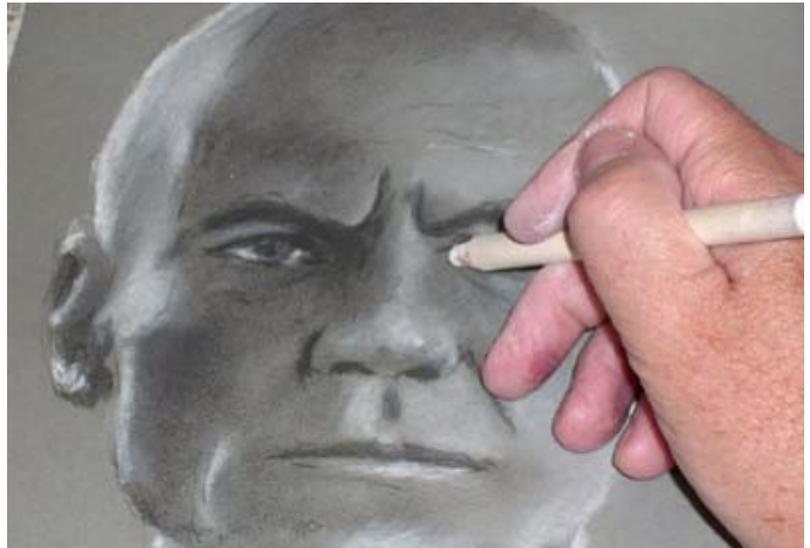
In this way you very quickly see your subject appearing. One of the most important things to get right are the eyes, in the next step we will look in some detail into creating expressive eyes.



Put in the whites of the eyes, don't worry about the rest of the eye at this stage, spray with fixative to create another layer.

The eyes have it.

Use the pastel pencil to put in details
Of the eyes, only hint at the lighter
area around the pupil, if necessary
use the charcoal again to darken the
pupil.



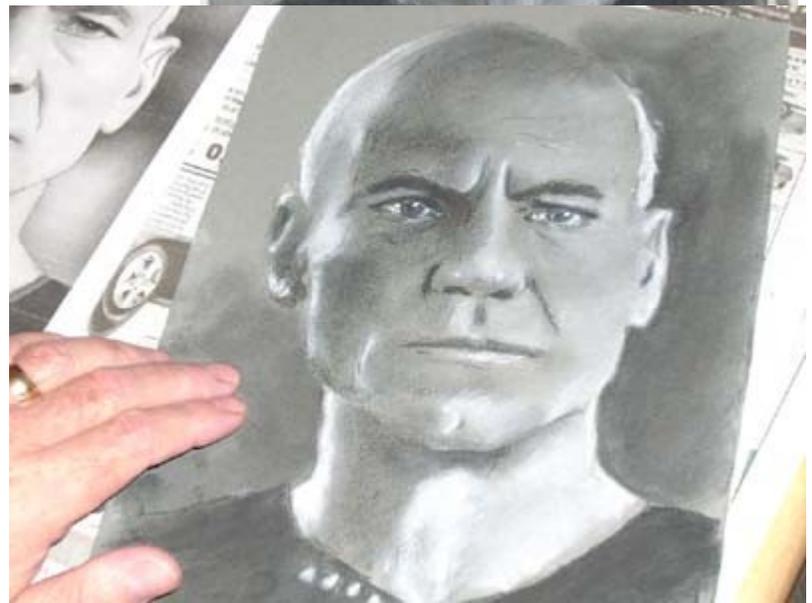
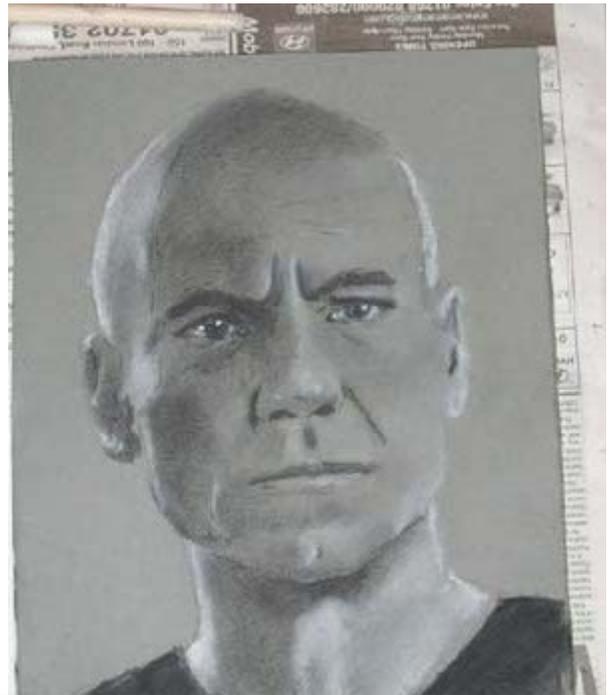
Finally use the white pastel to put in
bright highlights on the pupil, and



possibly on the white of the eye as you see here. Even if you can't see highlights like this in your source print, put them in anyway, as it really brings the portrait to life.

Finishing off.

You can leave the background just as it is, or you can blend in a dark, or light area depending on the dominant tones in the portrait. Look at the examples in the next section, to see some variations..



Here I have decided to blend in some dark charcoal, to create a slightly misty background.

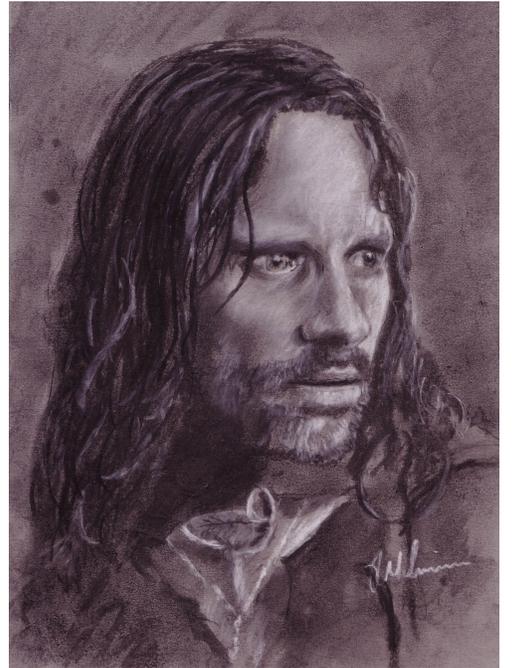
Protecting your work.

All that remains to do is protect your work from damage by storing it in a clear plastic wallet. These are available from stationary stores.

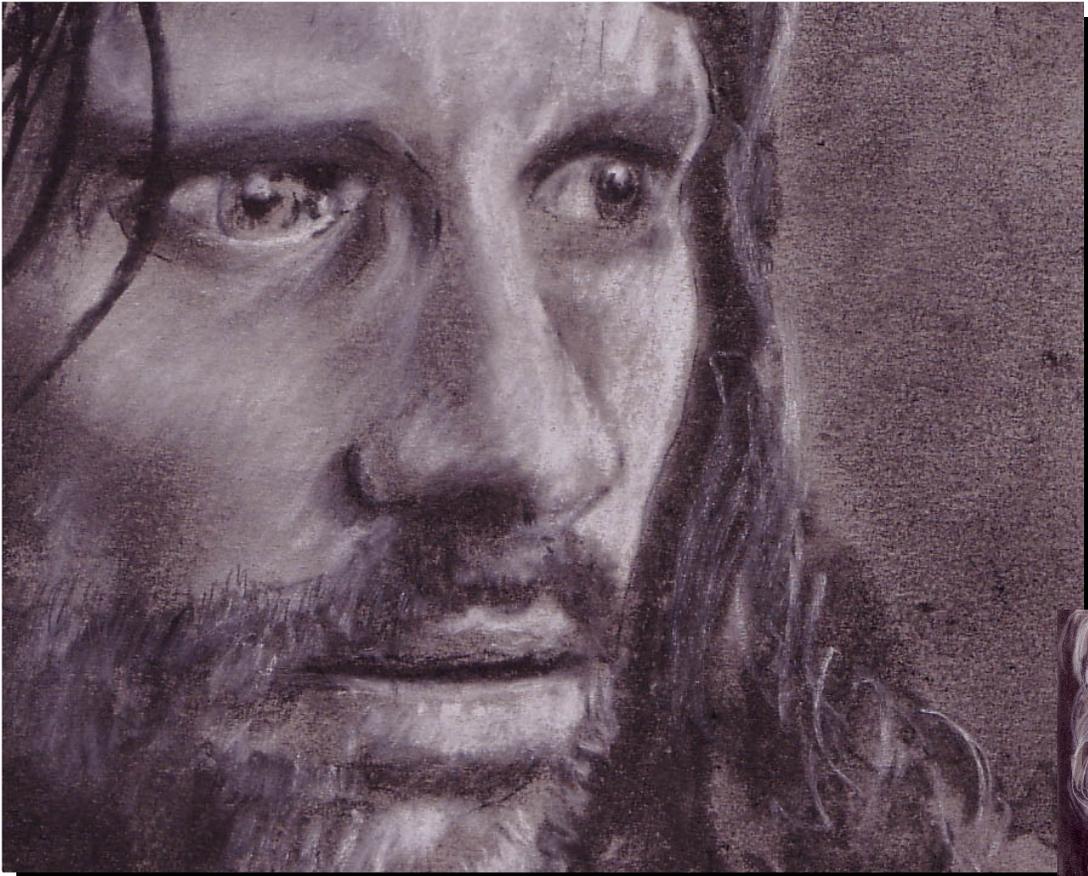


Don't forget to sign your name!!

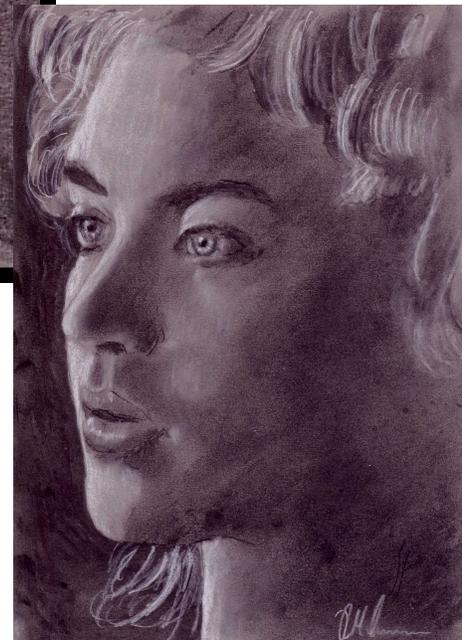
Examples for Discussion.

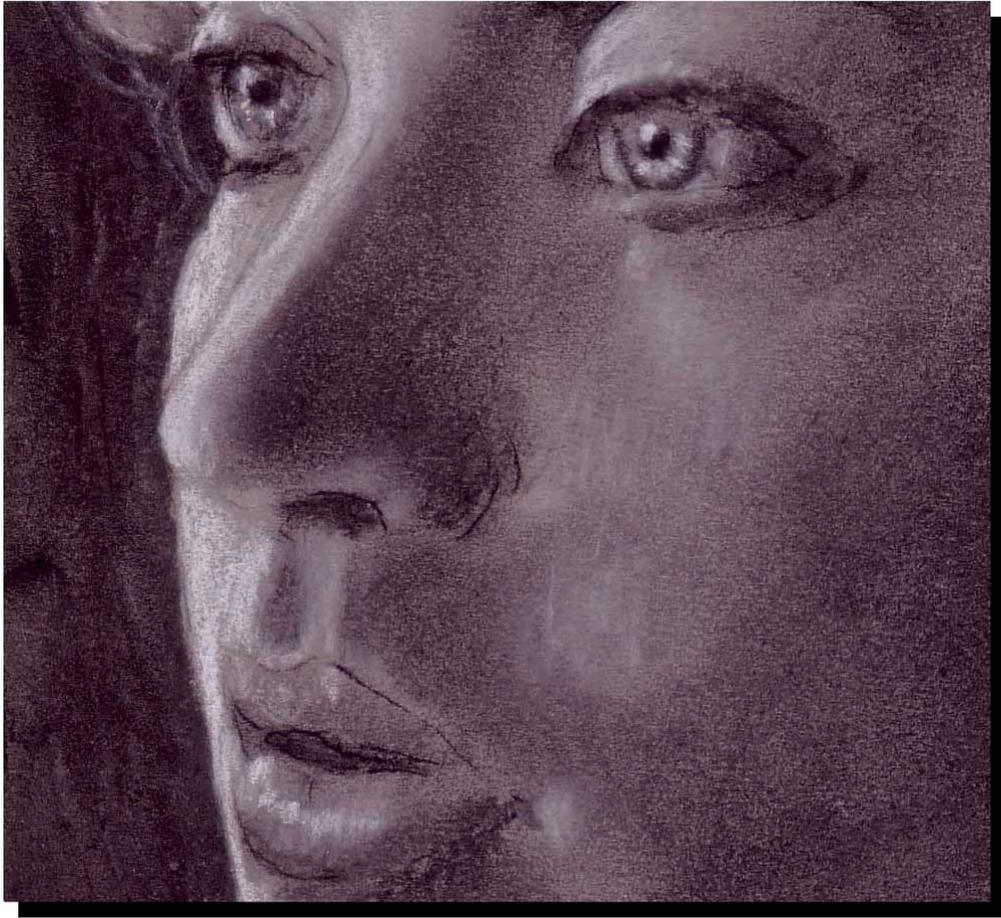


In this portrait, note how the hair has been drawn. I apply the dark areas first, exactly as we do for the face, then after fixing apply the lighter strands using the pastel pencil.

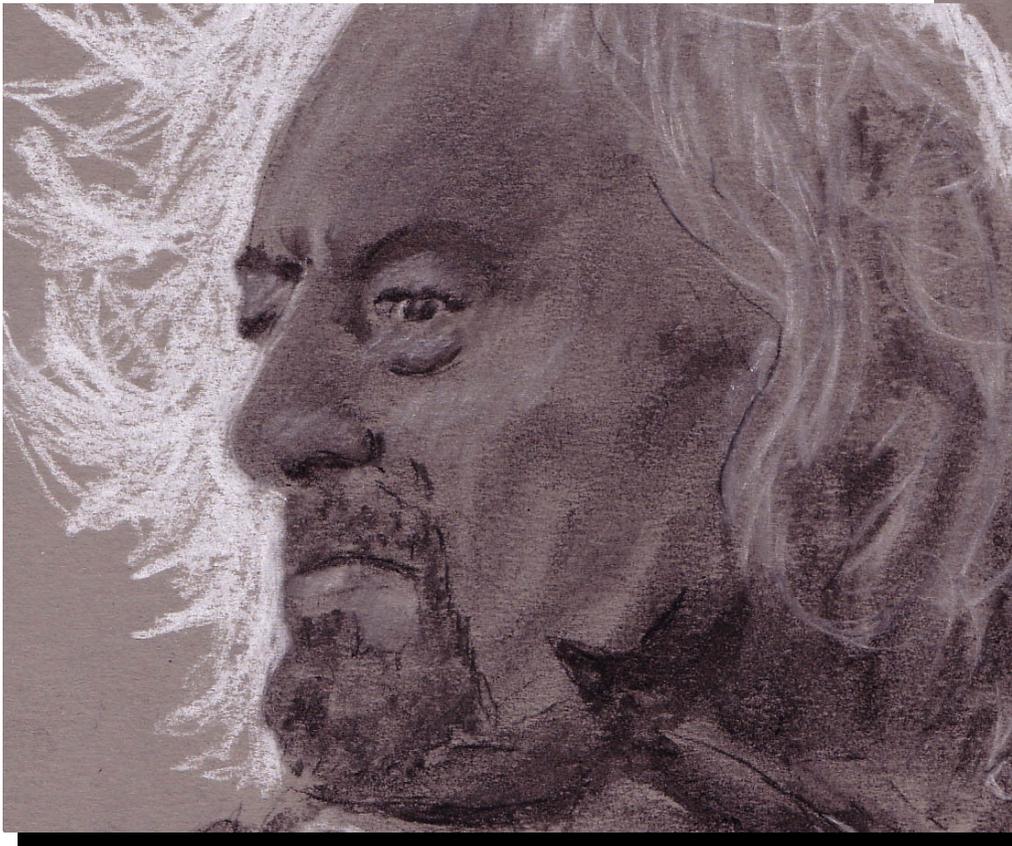
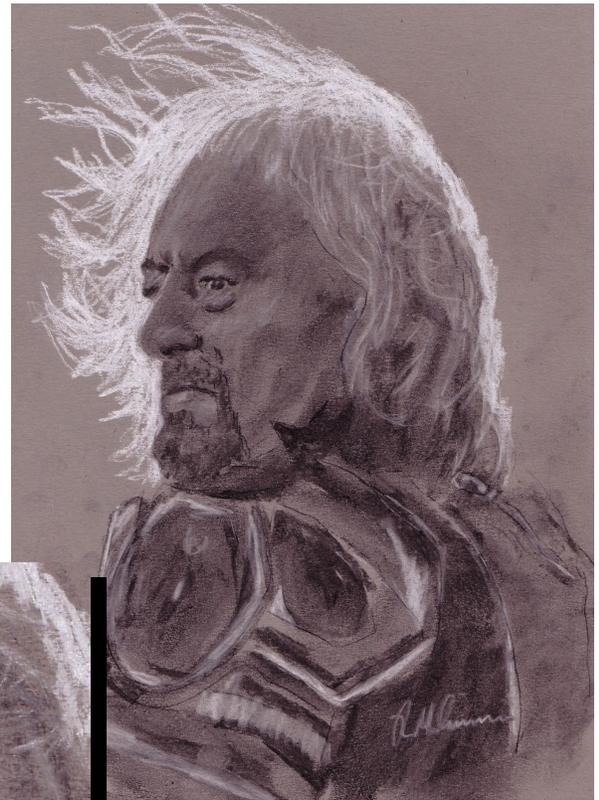


This one of Kate Winslett is a good example of eyes. Also note how I have used the Pastel pencil to highlight the lips, often lips can give you trouble if you forget the rules, look at the dark areas first and then add the highlights.





Sometimes it is the light in a picture that attracts you to make the portrait, here it was the backlight in the hair and the leather armour that attracted me.



In this one, the bright sunlight on the face contrasted to the shadow under the hat creates

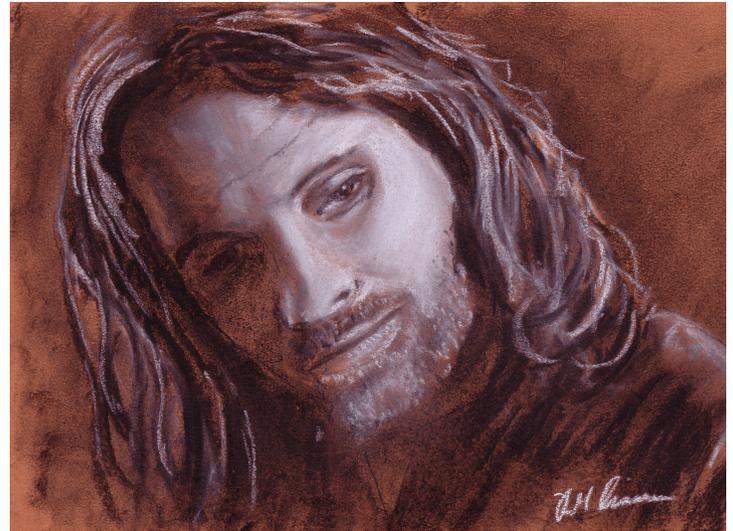


a pleasing composition, half close your eyes to see the strong tonal values, and the balance this creates in the picture.

Notice in the enlarged image below how a few curved flecks with the pastel pencil creates the impression of the light in his beard.



By choosing a different color of pastel paper you can create color without color! Make sure to use a sepia brown or a warm orange like this. The techniques are the same, yet often a different mood can be achieved.



Selling your Work

It may be that you only intend to draw for your own pleasure, or for gifts for family and friends. This short discussion is for those wishing to sell their work for an additional income.

There are two main ways to sell, online or via traditional methods. Let's look at these options

Traditional ways to sell Art.

Let's be honest, that posh art gallery in your town may not be interested in your portraits, however it is still worth taking a portfolio of your work to them.

Personally I have found better response from specialist shops that focus on memorabilia for a niche market. For example sci-fi shops that sell collectable items may be interested in characters of that genre. Shops that sell celebrity autographs may like to have a portrait of the celebrity. The difficulty with approaching these shops is finding who can make purchasing decisions, so be prepared to be referred to the owner who 'only comes in on Wednesdays' etc. Don't give up easily, because the best prices may be obtained from this type of strategy. Another point to bear in mind is that you will need to mount and frame your work, and offer a 'sale or return' policy. If you do this, take a photo of the framed item, and get the shop owner to sign for the item. They should not object.

Online selling.

In many ways this is the easiest way to sell your work. I have had most volume sales from ebay, via auctions. A detailed discussion of ebay itself is outside the scope of this book, however in the next section I will describe how I describe and list my portraits.

The title of your listing should contain the name of the celebrity (I assume you will be selling a celebrity portrait as I suspect Auntie Joan may not be of interest to the rest of the world!)

So an example would be 'Original charcoal portrait xxxx star trek'

Note xxxx could be character name e.g. Jean-Luc Picard; or the actor, Patrick Stewart. What you use depends on who the celebrity is. Our example using Picard may guarantee more 'hits'.

I always produce two photographs or, preferably, scans. In this way you can show the whole image, and close up detail so the customer can see your technique close up. If your photo is small and not sharp, you will find it harder to sell.

In the item description, specify the size, make it clear that the item is un-framed. I also enclose a 'certificate of authenticity'. This can simply be your own blank

document with space for the name of the artwork and your signature. Also invite the customer to contact you with any questions.

I also state that the materials used are Artist quality and will last a lifetime (All true, I use Artist quality paper.)

Be friendly and helpful, if it's the first time someone has bought from you, think how you would like to be approached. You will find that people want to have a good experience. In this sector, the type of person who is buying artwork is unlikely to want to give you trouble. I have had no problems at all, and many customers have added me to their 'preferred seller' list, so they get notified when I list new work!

When it comes to packaging I tend to put the item in a plastic wallet, and enclose that in a padded envelope, with a strong piece of card to prevent bending.

In the package along with the certificate of authenticity, I also place a printed slip with the following message. 'Original Charcoal and Pastel, fixed to limit smudging, please mount under glass as soon as possible to guarantee many years of enjoyment'.

Of course, ebay is not the only way to sell online, but it does get a lot of exposure! So it may be worth doing a few of these first to boost your confidence, then possibly branch out.

Another option is one of the on line art galleries, I have had a look at these, and some are growing it seems. I have not yet used these myself but I would think it is worth investigating. The standard seems to be to list for free, and take a commission.

I have noticed some artists offering a portrait service from their own website. This is where the customer sends in a photo, and you create a portrait from it. I haven't done this myself, simply because I like doing the celebrity pictures. However I can see that this could be quite profitable!

An area that I think is still under represented is in sporting portraits.

Footballers/Golfers etc. It really depends on your own area of interest. If you are a keen football fan, you will naturally be drawn to these subjects. Go with your interest, you are far more likely to succeed.

I hope you have found these ideas useful, but it is not essential to sell your work!

I hope you find portrait drawing like this an enjoyable pastime. Please let me know how you get on using these techniques, you can contact me via my website

www.roytheartist.com

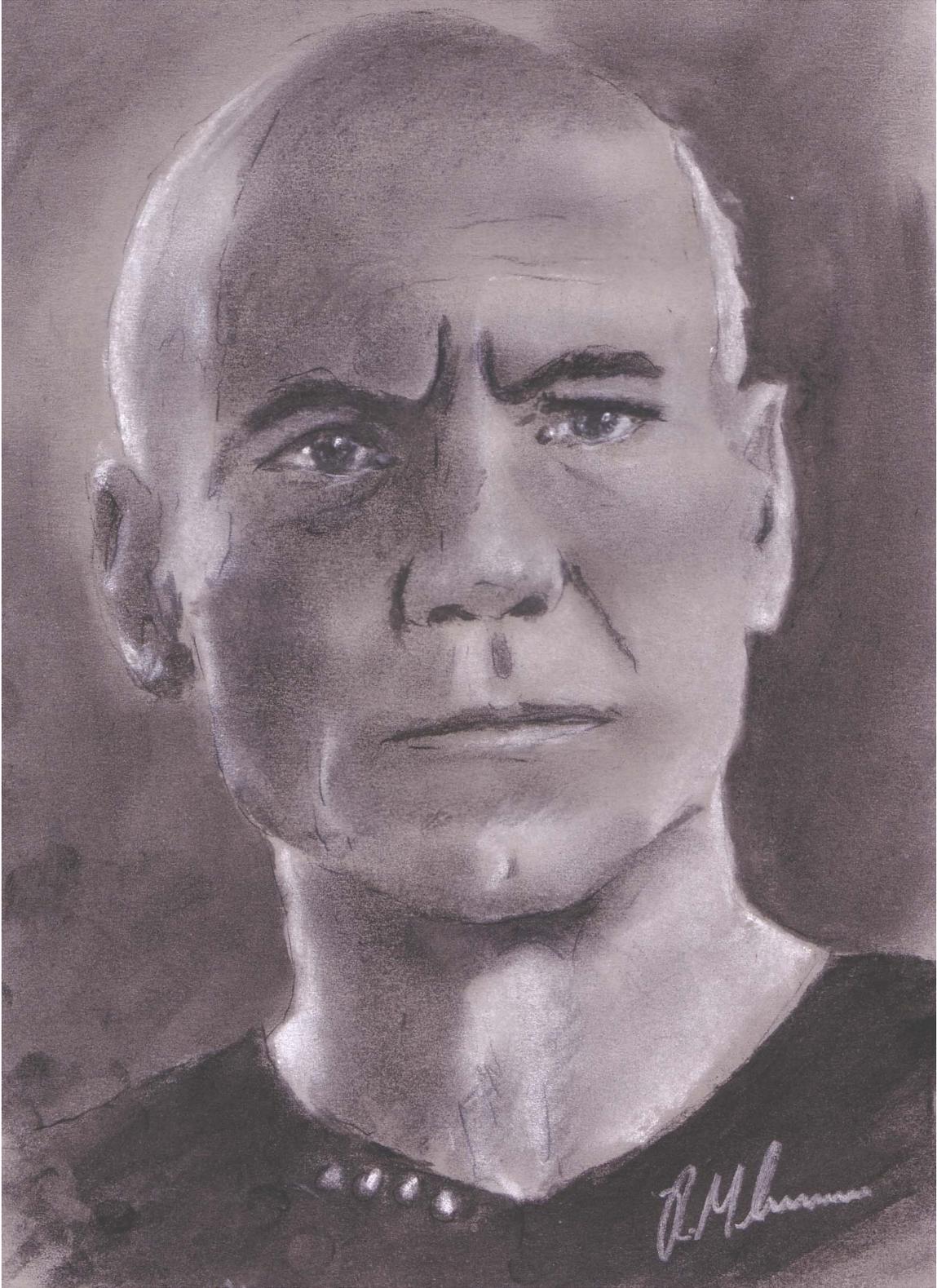
www.roughbrush.com

Well I hope you have enjoyed the process of creating great portraits easily! Keep practicing and you will get better and better. In fact another word of advice, the more you learn these steps without having to refer back to this book, the easier you will find the process. You are bound to want to move into color and other mediums. Pastels are a great way to go, you can use similar methods to those discussed here. I have had quite a lot of success with my cat pictures.

Watercolor is often said to be hard to get used too. Well now you know my philosophy of finding ways to overcome limitations you may be interested in a DVD I have made that teaches 'Rough Brush Watercolor'. I literally use 'rough brushes' ones bought from hardware stores and modified with special 'haircuts' !! Intrigued? Take a look! <http://www.roughbrush.com/home/rough-brush-dvd>

Here is a scan of the first painting I demonstrate from start to finish on the DVD





Finally, here is a scan of the portrait I made during the production of this book.

About the Author.

Roy Simmons has been making art for over 30 years, self taught, he has come up with many techniques to allow someone with limited ability but maximum enthusiasm to create great pictures!

Roy Lives in Essex UK with his Wife two Children and two Cats.
Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have
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