

LET'S FACE IT 2020

Main Lesson by Juna Biagioni

Hello & Welcome!



Hello and welcome to my main lesson for Let's Face It 2020!

My name is Juna Biagioni and I'm a mixed media artist & online art teacher from Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

This is the fifth year that I'm a guest teacher in Let's Face it and I'm very excited to be part of this awesome course again this year!

For my main lesson in Let's Face It 2020 we're going to create a beautiful charcoal portrait with the face in a three-quarter position.

Charcoal is one of my most favorite art mediums because It has so many wonderful qualities! I love its versatility, the fact that it's a natural material, and that it's such a forgiving medium to work with.

In this PDF you will find the **list of supplies** for this lesson ([page 3](#)), a step-by-step overview of the **lesson process** itself ([page 4](#)), the final **image of my portrait** ([page 10](#)), and the **reference photos** that I've used for the lesson ([page 11](#) and [page 12](#)). On the last page ([page 13](#)) I'd like to say goodbye and show you **where you can find me and the classes that I offer**. I'd love to stay in touch! :-)

I really loved creating this portrait and I hope that you'll enjoy it too. Have fun, and I look forward to seeing your work in the Facebook group!

**Juna*

List of Supplies

- **Watercolor paper:** hot press (smooth) or another type of smooth paper that is suited for charcoal (such as Bristol paper).
- **Willow or vine charcoal:** one long thin piece (to use as a kind of pencil) and one or more thicker, shorter pieces.
- **Charcoal pencil:** I use an extra soft (6B) charcoal pencil.
- **Kneaded eraser.**
- (Optional) **Tombow Mono Zero eraser** or another type of thin, hard eraser (e.g. an eraser pencil).
- (Optional) **Paper stump** or Q-tips.
- **Paper towels** or rag.

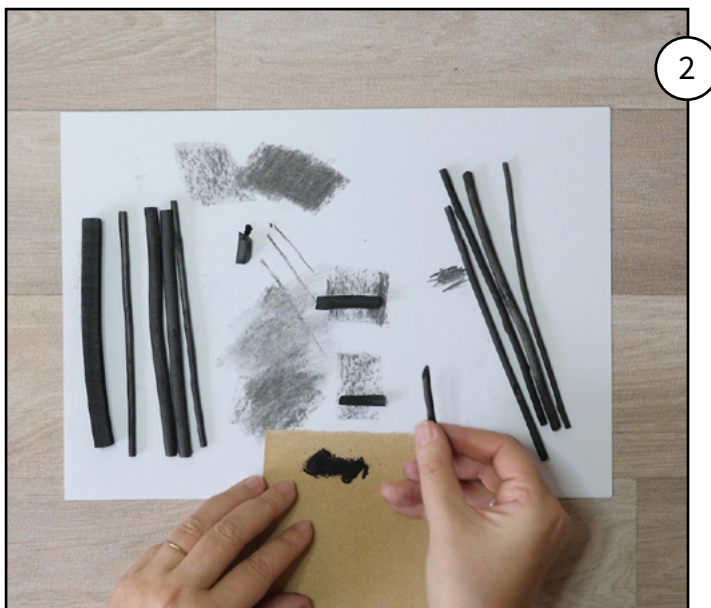


The Process

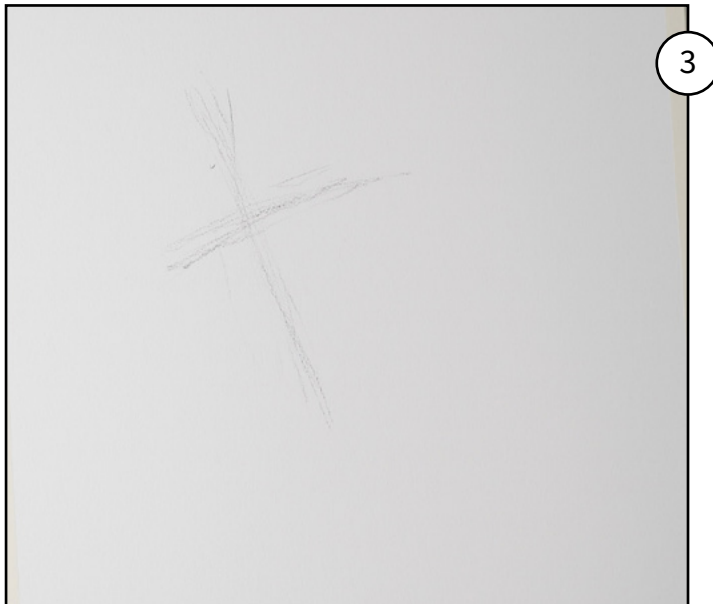


1. For this lesson I suggest to use hot press watercolor paper (I work on smooth acrylic paper, which is comparable to watercolor paper) or Bristol paper.

I would not use cold press watercolor paper, as that has a stronger texture than hot press which may dominate your drawing too much. However, even the hot press watercolor paper may have a bit of visible texture (my paper does too) and if you prefer less texture than that, you could try working on Bristol paper.



2. I start by sketching out the head using a long, thin piece of willow charcoal (vine charcoal is fine as well). I've sharpened the tip of the charcoal piece by rubbing it over some sandpaper, so it has a sharper tip at one side. That way I can use it as a kind of pencil, which is easy to erase and to smooth out.



3. The first step is to draw a simple cross to help determine the proportions of the three-quarter head direction, the tilt of the head, and the placement on the paper (composition).

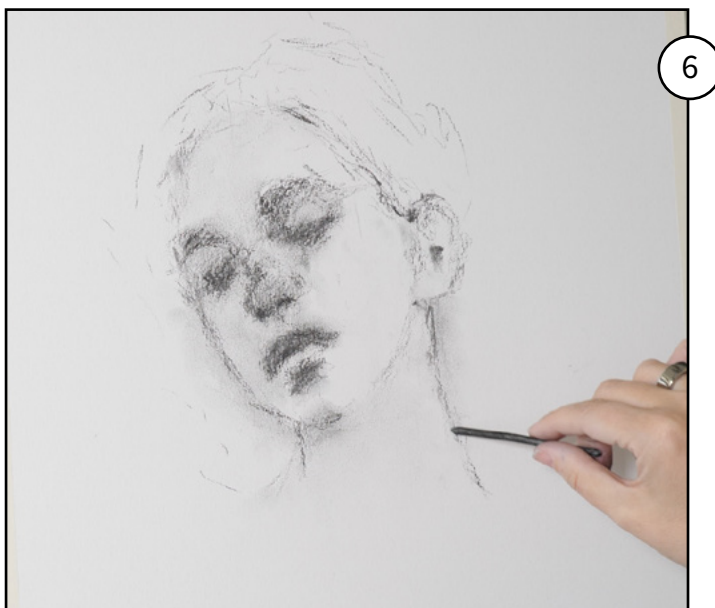


4. Then I continue drawing the face, focusing on the larger dark value shapes.

I use my piece of willow charcoal to check the proportions and angles. I hold it in front of the reference photo to see what the angle of a specific part is, and then I move my hand to the paper keeping the charcoal piece in the same angle.



5. Every now and then I smooth out the charcoal using my finger (you can use a paper towel or rag instead). By smoothing out the charcoal, the texture of the paper becomes less visible. It also helps to work the charcoal further into the paper, so I can add more layers on top of each other.

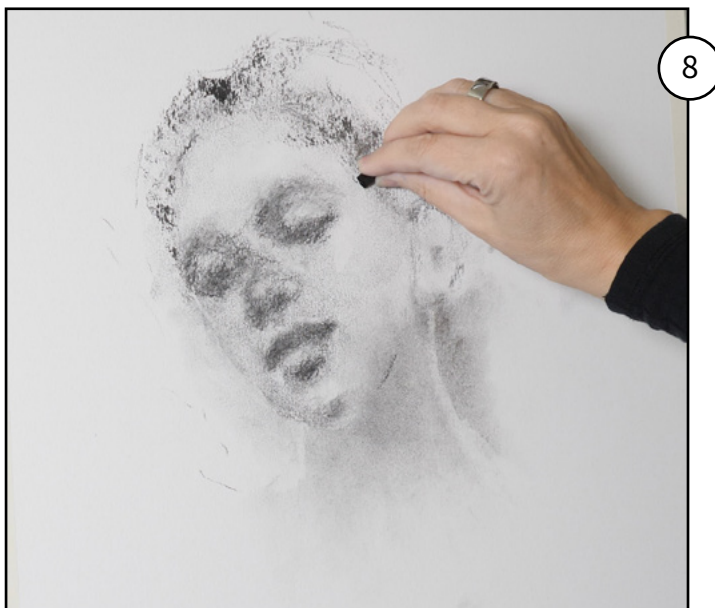


6. I continue drawing the face, head and neck this way: using my long piece of willow charcoal to draw the large value shapes and then smoothing parts out with my finger.

In this stage I focus only on the larger value shapes, using my dark reference photo. The details will come later.



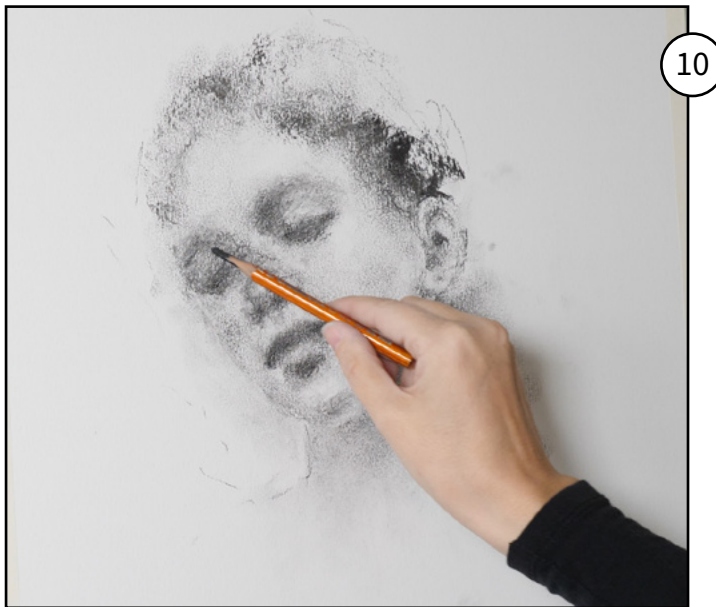
7. I use a paper stump to smooth out smaller parts of the drawing. If you don't have a paper stump you can use Q-tips instead.



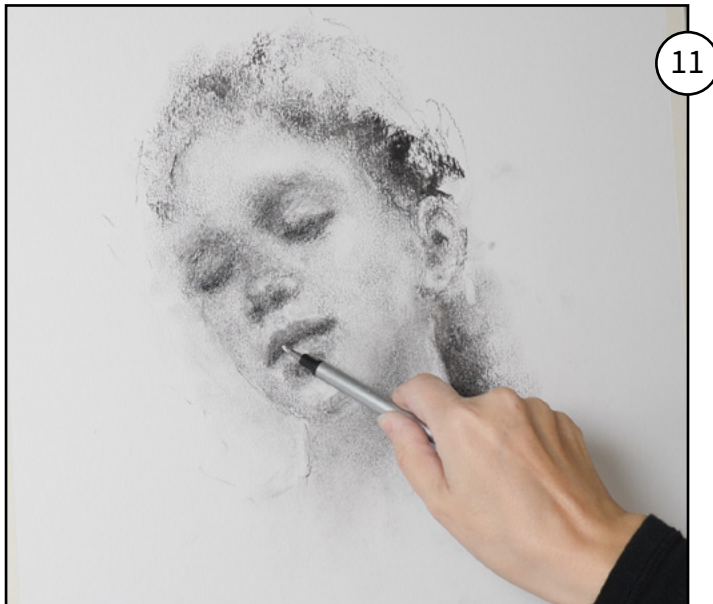
8. I use my thicker piece of willow charcoal to create the biggest and darkest parts of the drawing, where I also want some more texture (mainly in the hair and neck). This piece of charcoal is a bit thicker and shorter than the piece that I started the drawing with, and I hold it on its side to create this specific look.



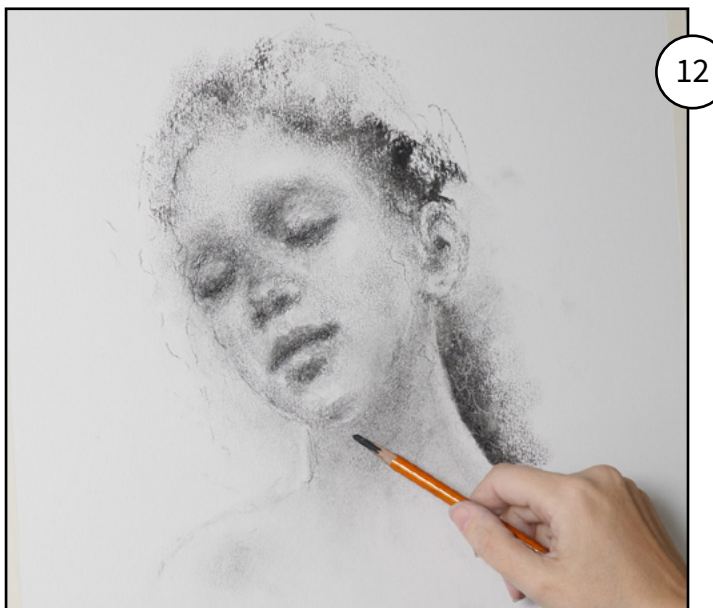
9. I create the bigger, light value shapes using my kneaded eraser. In order to do this, there first has to be a basic layer of charcoal for the shadows (the darker values) and then I can use my kneaded eraser to ‘carve out’ the light values. That’s why I start with the shadows first, so that I can then create the light.



10. When I’m happy with the general look of the face and head, I start working on the details using my charcoal pencil. I use a 6B pencil, which is soft and fairly dark. The charcoal pencil is harder to erase than regular willow (or vine) charcoal, so I only start using it when I think the main proportions and placement are okay.



11. I use my Tombow Mono Zero eraser to ‘draw’ light lines or to make detailed changes. You can use a pencil eraser instead.



12. I continue working this way, using my willow charcoal, charcoal pencil, kneaded eraser and Tombow eraser, until I’m happy with the result and the portrait is finished.

One last word regarding preservation: I don’t use any fixative to protect this portrait. I store it with a sheet of glassine paper on top of it, or I frame it behind glass. ●

Final Portrait



Reference Photo - Light



Reference Photo - Dark



Where to find me

Thank you so much for doing this lesson with me! I hope you enjoyed it and are inspired to try out these techniques for yourself.

If you have any questions, feel free to post a message in my Facebook group [Juna Biagioni's Art Atelier](#) or contact me via my [website](#) or social media (see below).

On my website you can also find the online art courses that I host, such as my in-depth mixed media portrait class [Drawing in the Soul](#).

You can also sign up for my newsletter, to keep in touch and to receive a [free downloadable charcoal portrait mini lesson](#).

On my YouTube channel I have several short portrait tutorials for you to watch and I love to connect with you on Facebook or other social media. :-)

junabiagioni.com

