

**METHODOLOGY FOR TEACHING STUDENTS TO CREATE A FEMALE
PORTRAIT IN DECORATIVE BACKGROUND USING HAND-PAINTED
TECHNIQUES**

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Abstract: This article reveals the rules and content of color painting art for university students and art enthusiasts. It emphasizes the principles of creating realistic human figures, especially in hand-painted female portraits with decorative backgrounds, focusing on color harmony, form, and artistic expression.

Keywords: symmetry, asymmetry, rhythm, color gamut, hue, brushwork, reflection, grisaille, drapery.

Painting the human figure is one of the most challenging tasks in fine arts. Human skin, particularly under clothing and sunlight, exhibits subtle shades and tones, making it difficult to replicate color and hue accurately. Representing different poses and positions of the human body requires a thorough understanding of anatomy and structural proportions.

Whether the subject is young or elderly, the structural anatomy of the body should first be studied through pencil sketches. Students should practice small sketches and color studies to analyze the relationship between form and color. Once confident, they can begin the final composition on paper, carefully considering the positioning of the body within the frame.

When painting in color, **overall shape and color harmony** must be carefully considered. Proportions should be accurately represented, with each body part reflecting subtle color variations and the interplay of light and shadow. The modeling of the body begins with rendering **shadows, highlights, and half-tones**, which help convey volume and three-dimensionality. The use of nuanced color transitions is particularly important in complex areas such as the abdomen and waist, where delicate shifts in tone create realism.

If the figure is clothed, the folds of the fabric must be depicted accurately to reflect the underlying body structure. Without proper attention to drapery, the figure loses its plasticity and volume. Therefore, prior practice with still-life studies and fabric folds is recommended before attempting the final portrait.

The **head, face, and neck** should be depicted in harmony with the body, maintaining anatomical continuity. Special attention is required to integrate these elements plastically and structurally.

The **hands** play a crucial role in conveying the posture, movement, and overall expression of the figure. Well-rendered hands enhance the balance and attention to detail in the portrait, making it appear more complete and expressive. Hand gestures not only define the character and movement of the body but also contribute to the narrative and emotional expression of the figure. In summary, creating a hand-painted female portrait in a decorative background requires systematic practice in **anatomical sketching, color studies, drapery, and compositional planning**. Mastery of these techniques enables students to depict the human figure realistically while maintaining aesthetic harmony and artistic expressiveness.



In a clothed portrait, the depiction of the **hands** is often referred to as a person's "second face," and for good reason. Through hands, an artist can emphasize a person's mood and inner emotional state. Therefore, hands should be treated as a second portrait: just as careful attention is given to painting the face, the same level of precision and observation should be applied to the hands.

One of the subtle aspects of color painting is the **representation of various surfaces and materials**. Whether painting a still life or a human figure, it is crucial to convey the material qualities of objects. The material of an object is primarily expressed through the interplay of light, shadow, half-tones, and reflections. Different materials have unique surface properties: for example, a cylindrical object is characterized by smooth transitions between highlights, shadows, and reflected light. In contrast, a glass vessel with rounded forms may have less distinct shadow boundaries, and its shape is revealed mainly through highlights and reflections. Similar phenomena can be observed in metallic objects.

If these characteristics are accurately depicted using pencil or color, the viewer can immediately recognize the material — whether metal, glass, wood, plaster, or other substances. The type of material is also indicated by **tone, color intensity, and hue**. When faithfully rendered from life and in correct proportions, the depicted objects acquire realism and material authenticity.

When painting the human figure — including the head, hands, legs, and other parts — it is especially important that clothing, headwear, and other surface details are represented in terms of their **color and texture**. The human body is one of the most complex subjects in art; therefore, it requires special attention and the application of various technical methods. For example, the skin on the face may appear rougher, whereas the neck or waist areas are subtler in tone and color. Each area must be depicted accordingly.

It is recommended to start each work with **composition planning**, followed by preliminary sketches and rapid color studies. This preparatory work helps determine the final composition, proportions, and color solutions for the human figure. After detailing individual elements, they are synthesized into a cohesive whole, emphasizing key features and eliminating unnecessary details. At this stage, focus is placed on **unity, integrity, and harmony**.

An essential aspect of figure painting is the **depiction of materials and textures** in each detail. After completing the work, attention must be given to whether the overall color solution is maintained, whether character is expressed, and whether the form of the figure is conveyed clearly.

When creating a student still life (natyurmort) setup, certain rules should be followed: each still life must have a **clear purpose and objective** as outlined in the painting program. We should

envision exactly what theoretical knowledge and practical skills students are expected to acquire while painting from life. Beyond instructional tasks, the still life must meet **aesthetic requirements**: objects should correspond to the theme, be meaningful and expressive, and convey a certain idea or concept.

The analysis of student works during practical exercises in hand-painted female portraits on decorative backgrounds reveals several significant findings regarding the development of technical skills, aesthetic perception, and creative expression.

Analysis

1. **Understanding of Form and Anatomy:** Students demonstrate improved understanding of human anatomy and the constructive structure of the body. Preliminary pencil sketches help learners accurately place the head, torso, and limbs, establishing proper proportions before adding color. Observations show that students who practiced smaller sketches and color studies performed more successfully in final compositions.
2. **Application of Color and Tone:** The exercises show that students develop the ability to distinguish subtle tonal shifts in skin, clothing, and accessories. They learn to work with half-tones, shadows, highlights, and reflections, which are critical for rendering realistic material properties. The use of nuanced color (“nuances”) allows learners to convey the delicate transitions of the human form and the interplay of light on surfaces.
3. **Integration of Hands and Gestures:** Hands, considered the “second face” of the figure, emerged as a key element in expressing mood and inner emotional states. Students who paid careful attention to hands produced more expressive and balanced portraits. The depiction of gestures also enhanced the sense of movement and liveliness in the figure.
4. **Attention to Materials and Textures:** Students learned to represent various materials realistically, including fabric folds, glass, and metallic objects. Proper rendering of surface textures reinforced the illusion of three-dimensionality and material authenticity. Observations indicate that students who focused on the specific characteristics of materials achieved higher overall compositional quality.
5. **Compositional Planning and Harmony:** Preliminary sketches and rapid color studies contributed to the successful placement of figures within the decorative background. Students who considered **composition, proportion, and color harmony** in advance produced more coherent and aesthetically pleasing works.

Results

1. **Technical Skills Improvement:** After completing the exercises, students exhibited notable progress in anatomical accuracy, proportional representation, and mastery of color techniques. They were able to depict skin tones, clothing folds, and material textures with increased realism.
2. **Enhanced Aesthetic Perception:** Students developed a more refined sense of aesthetic judgment, noticing subtle color relationships, light effects, and compositional balance. They were able to evaluate and adjust their work to achieve visual harmony.
3. **Creative Expression:** The exercises fostered creativity, allowing students to experiment with decorative backgrounds, color combinations, and expressive gestures. The portraits reflected individual artistic interpretation while maintaining structural and material accuracy.
4. **Confidence and Independence:** Students became more confident in tackling complex tasks such as figure painting and the depiction of expressive hands. They demonstrated increased independence in making compositional and color decisions.
5. **Practical Applicability:** The methodology proved effective in both academic settings and broader art education contexts. It can be applied to teaching fine arts in higher education, as well as in workshops and studios for art enthusiasts.

The practical exercises confirm that systematic training in **preparatory sketches, color studies, material observation, and compositional planning** significantly improves students' technical proficiency, aesthetic awareness, and creative expression. The depiction of the human figure with attention to subtle color nuances, hand gestures, and material textures results in more expressive, realistic, and aesthetically harmonious portraits.

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