Basic Human Head Proportions / Structure & Color

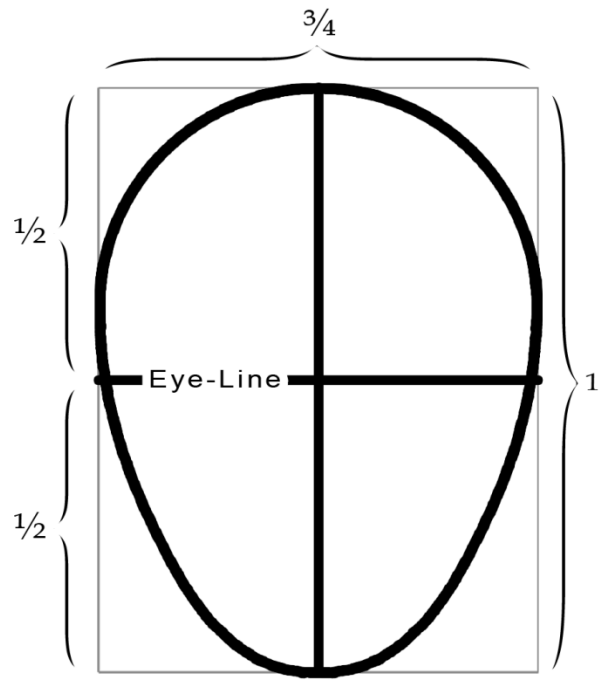
Prof. Stinely

The human head and human facial features are complex structures that present unique problems in Painting & Drawing. A basic understanding of the anatomical architecture of these structures should be achieved before attempting to render them representationally.

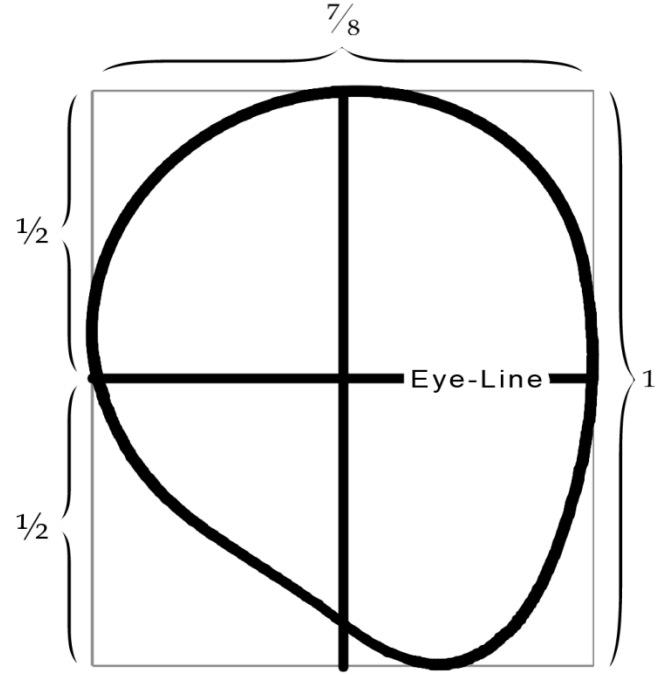
There are generic but universal proportions of the human head and face. Each person's features vary slightly from these proportions, but it is vital to understand these generalized laws of anatomy in order to find the variation within them.

*Eyes fall on the vertical half-way point of the human head when observing a frontal (or side) view.

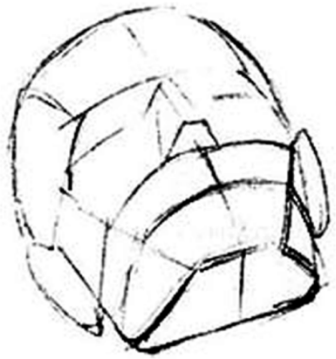
*This proportion may change depending on the angle of the subject's head in relation to your view. For instance, if you are observing the subject from a severe angle below or above them.

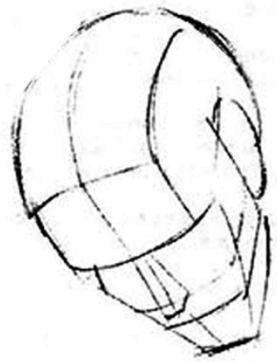


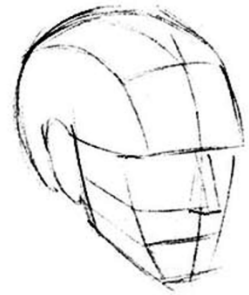
Frontal View

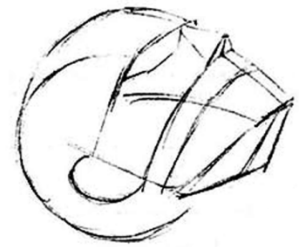


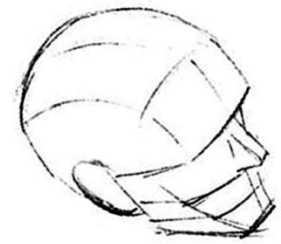
Side View



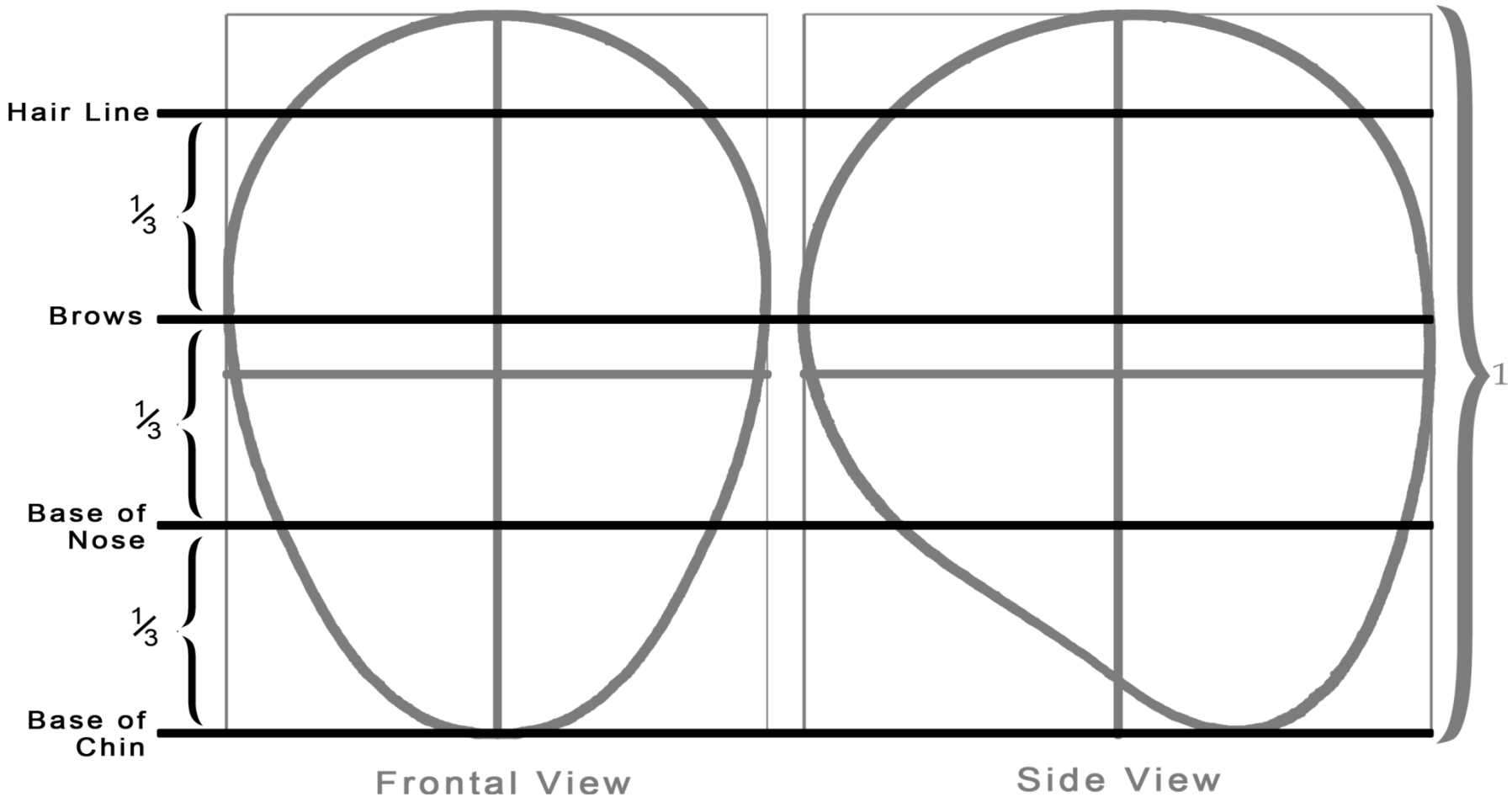


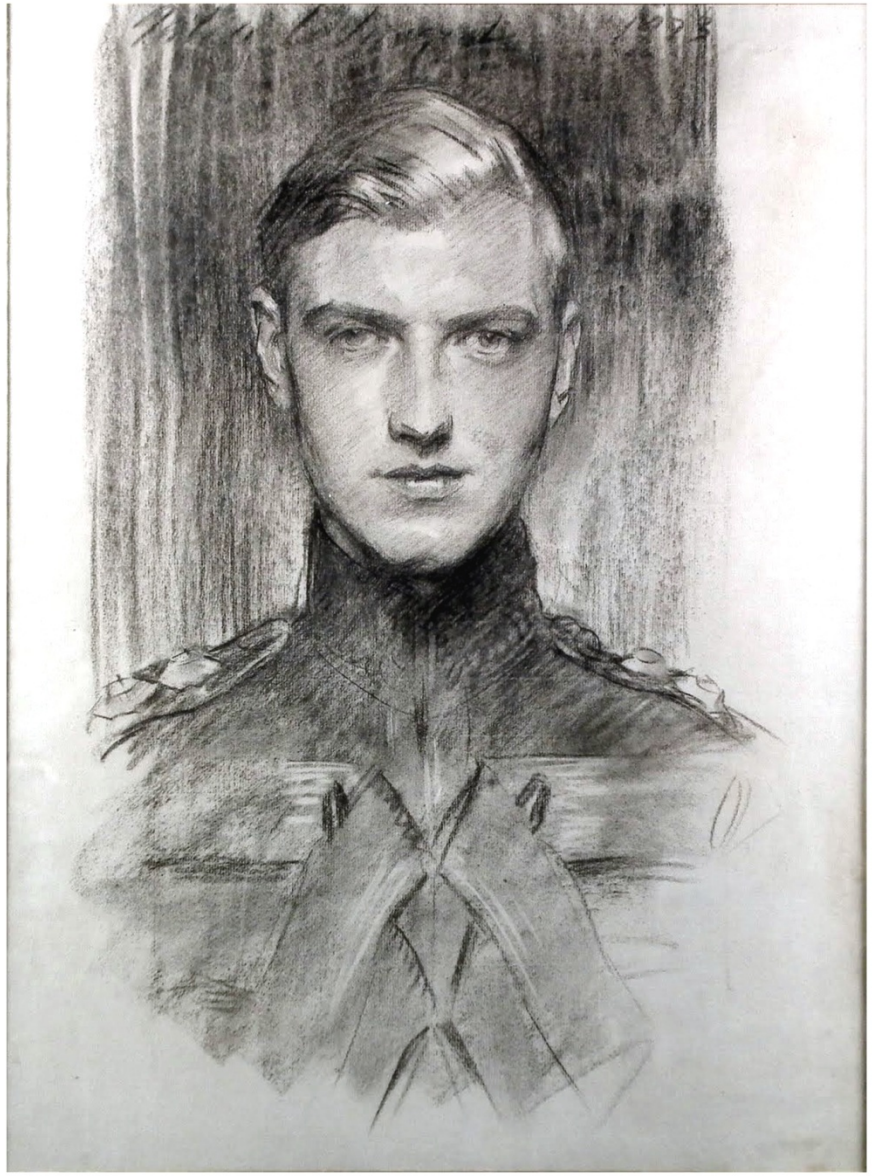


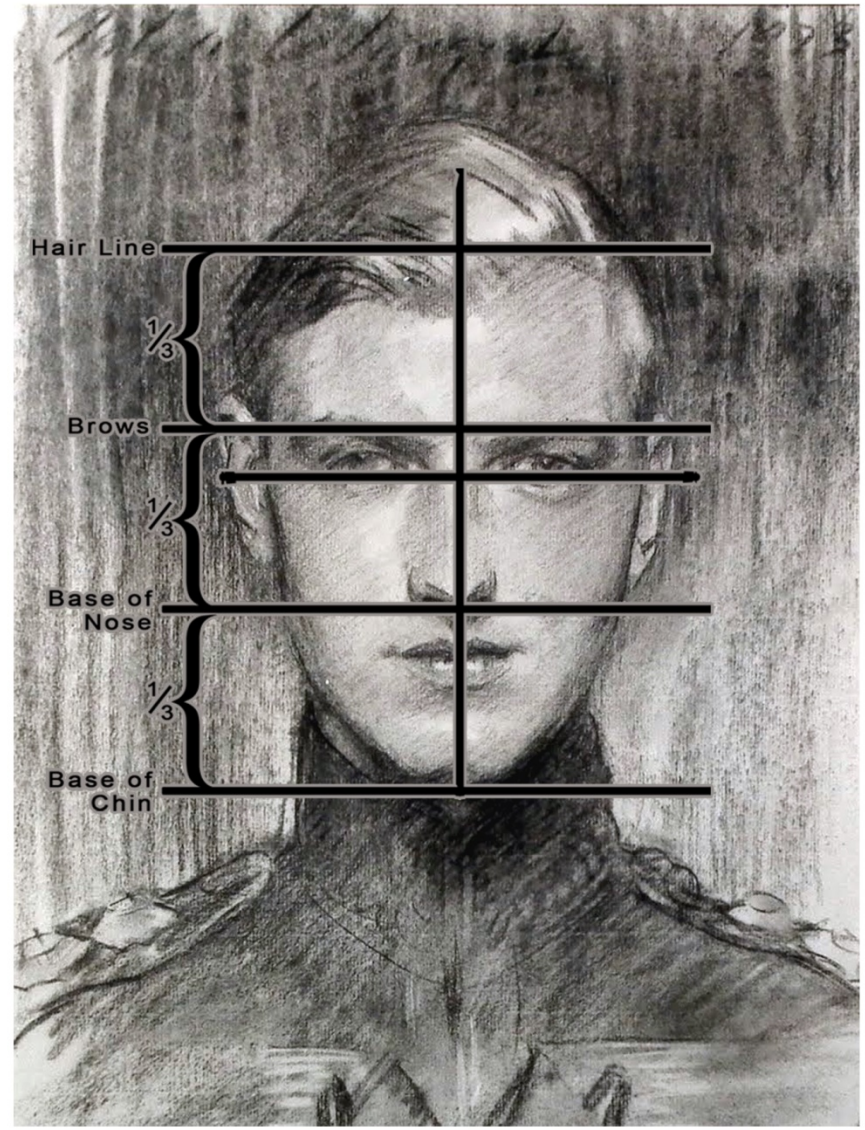




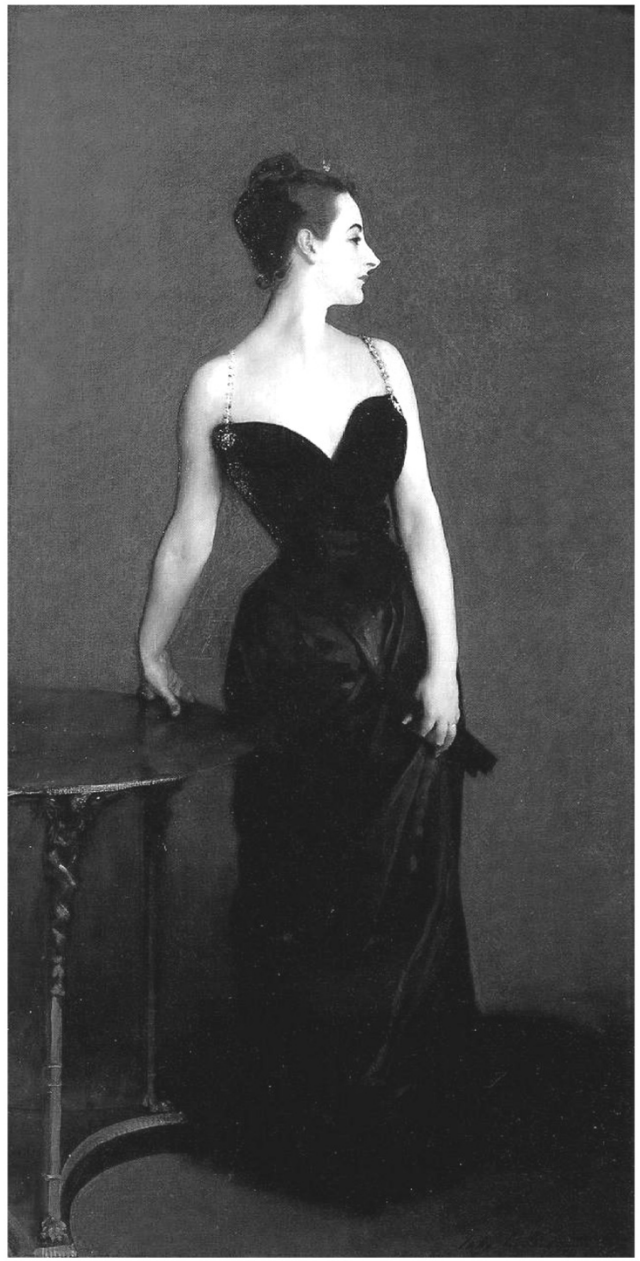
FACIAL FEATURES







JOHN SINGER SARGENT



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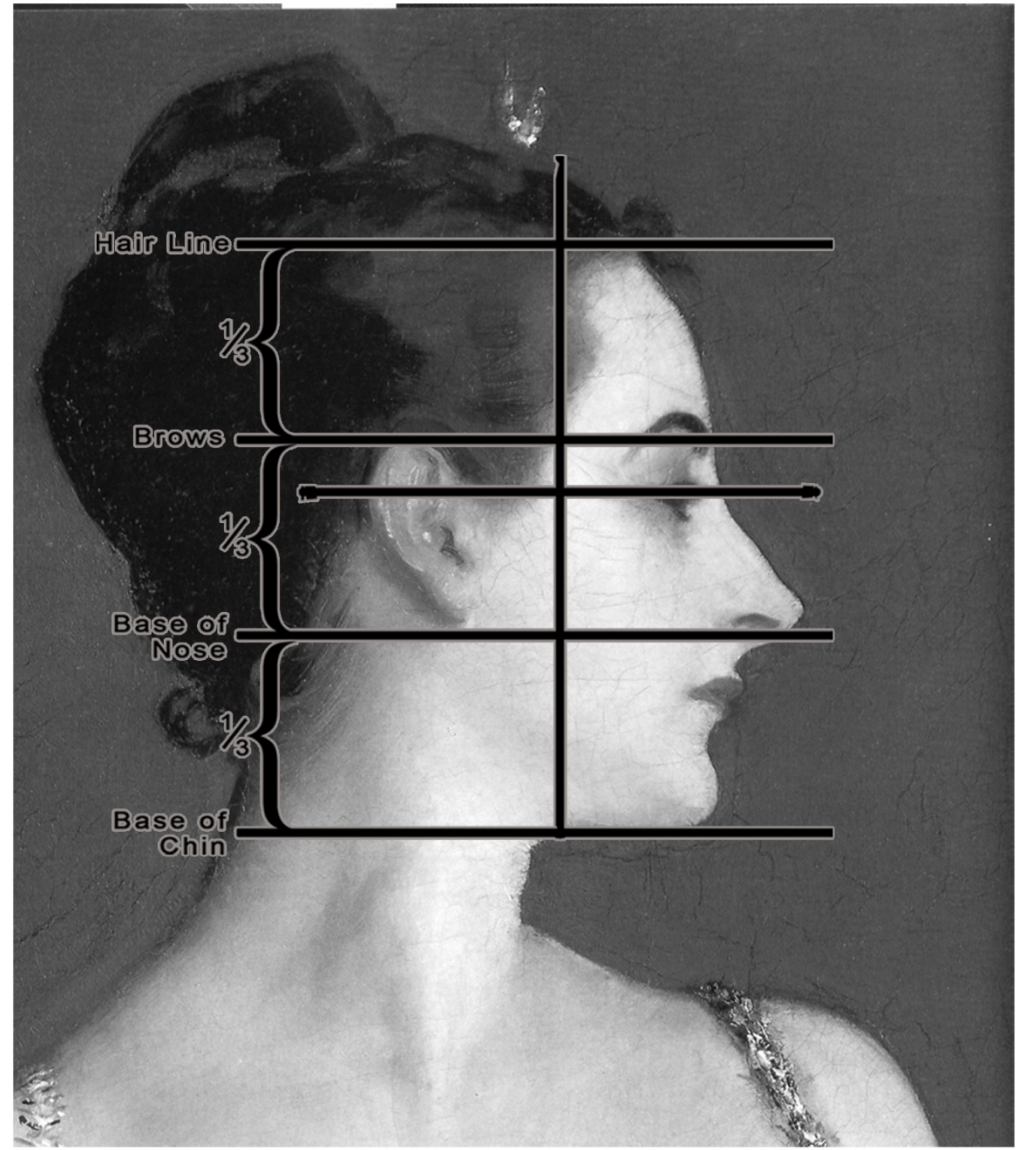
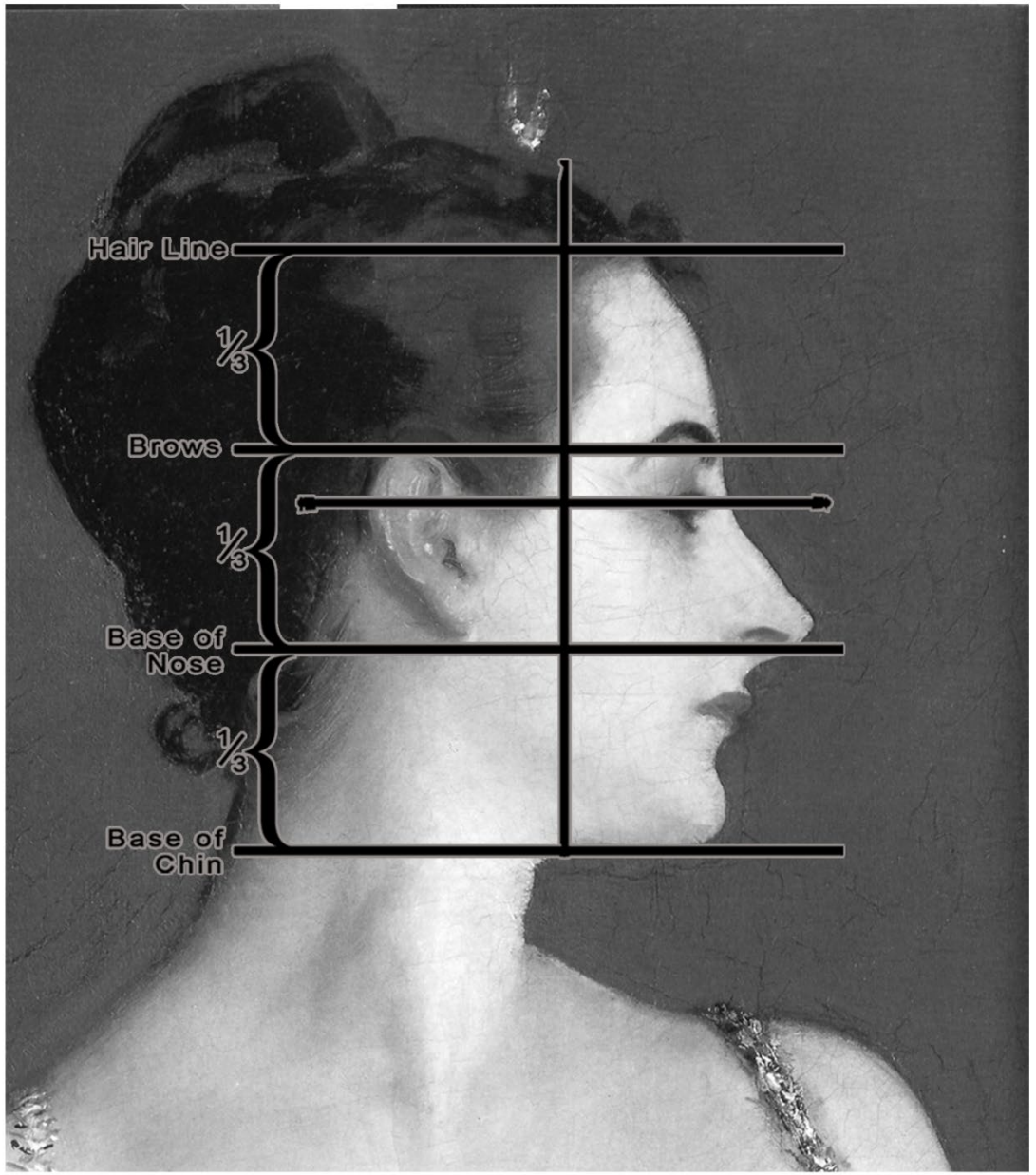


*Notice that the top attachment point of the ear to the head falls in line with the eyeline (midpoint of HEAD). The very top of the ear falls in line with the brow line. And the base of the ear falls somewhere near the base of the nose.



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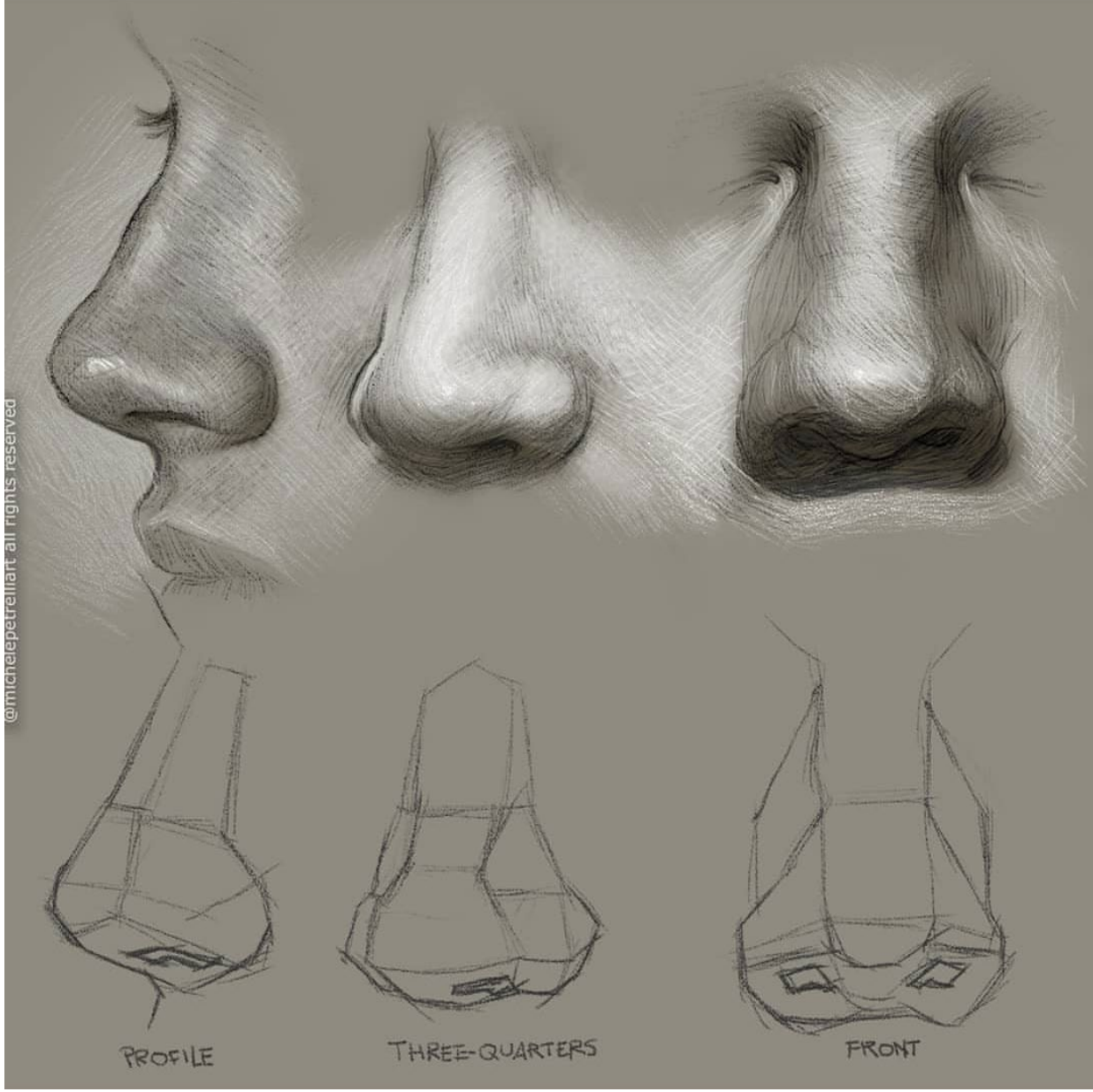
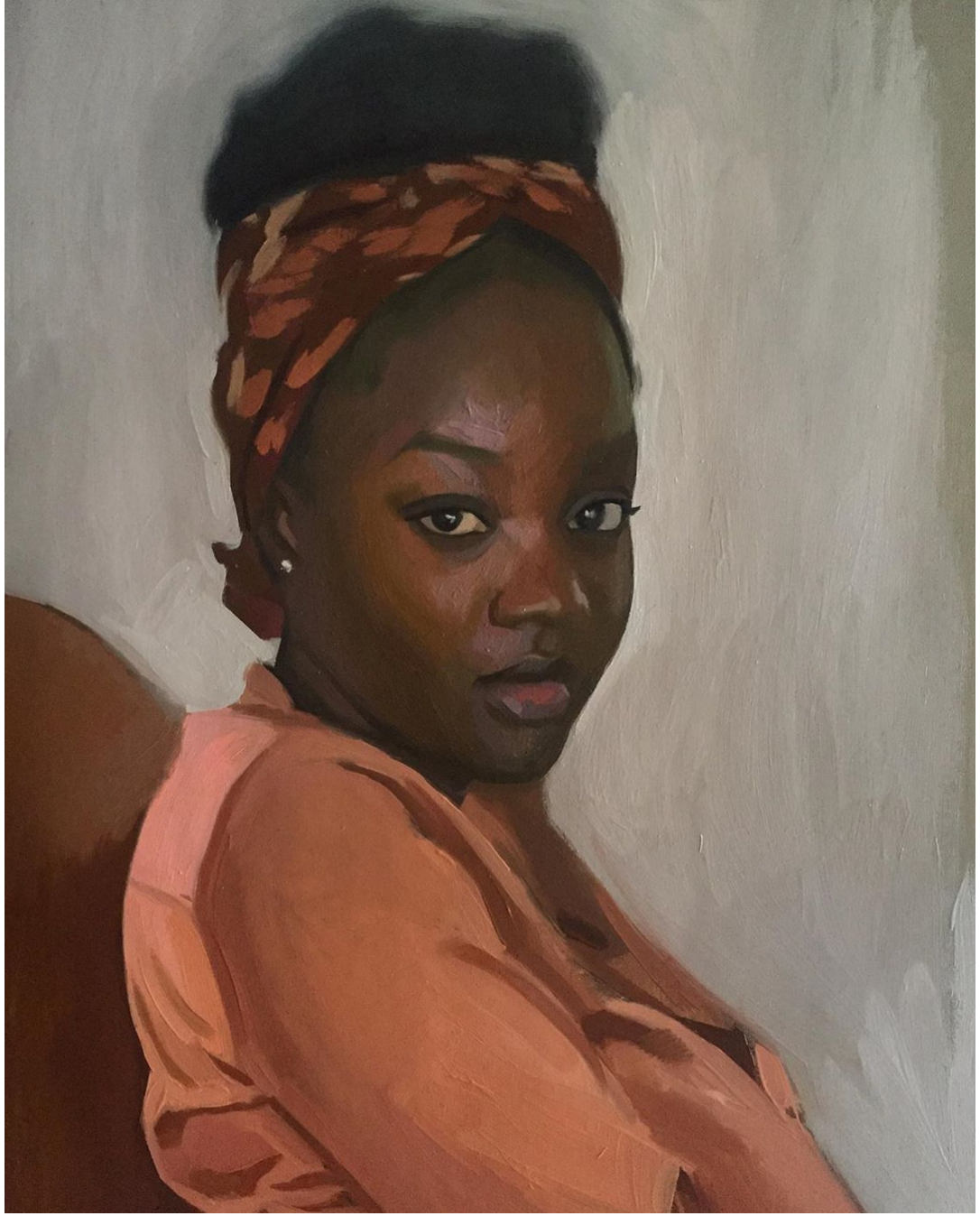


Michele Petrelli

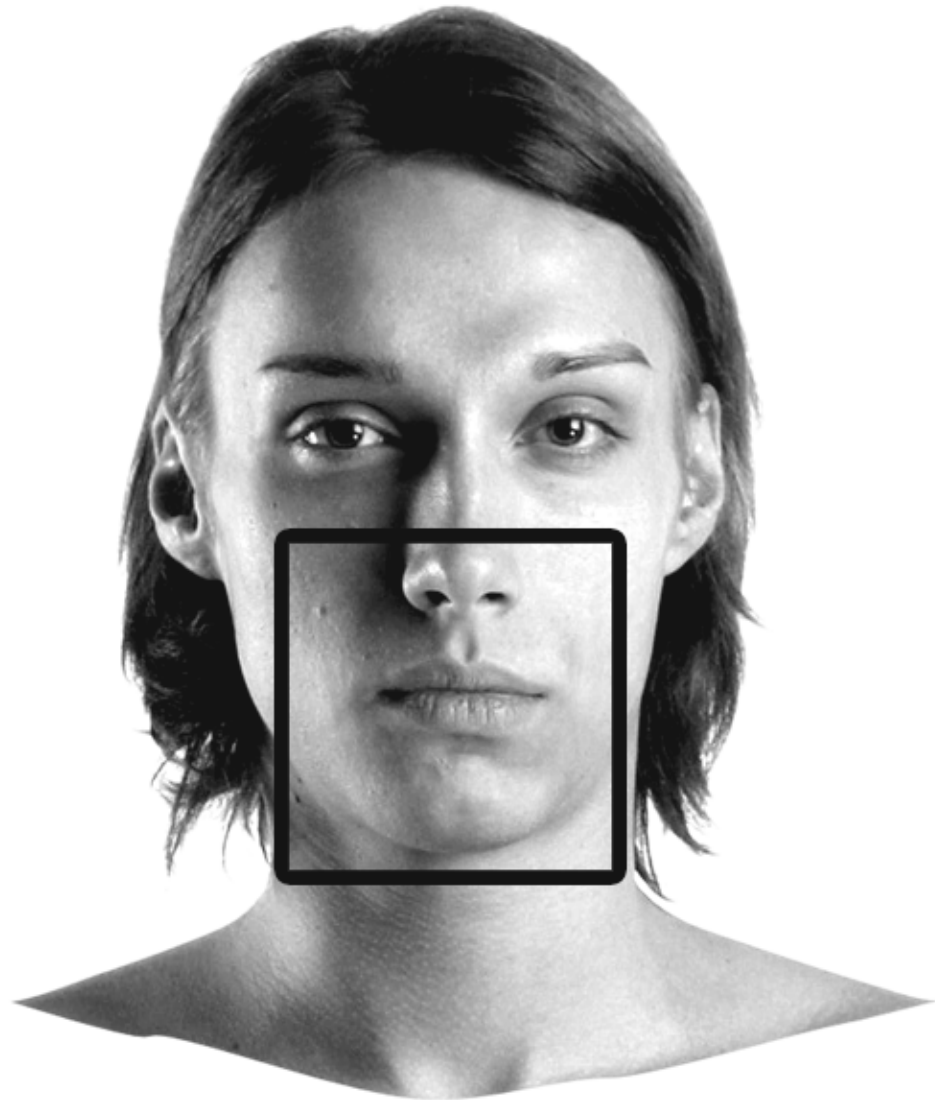


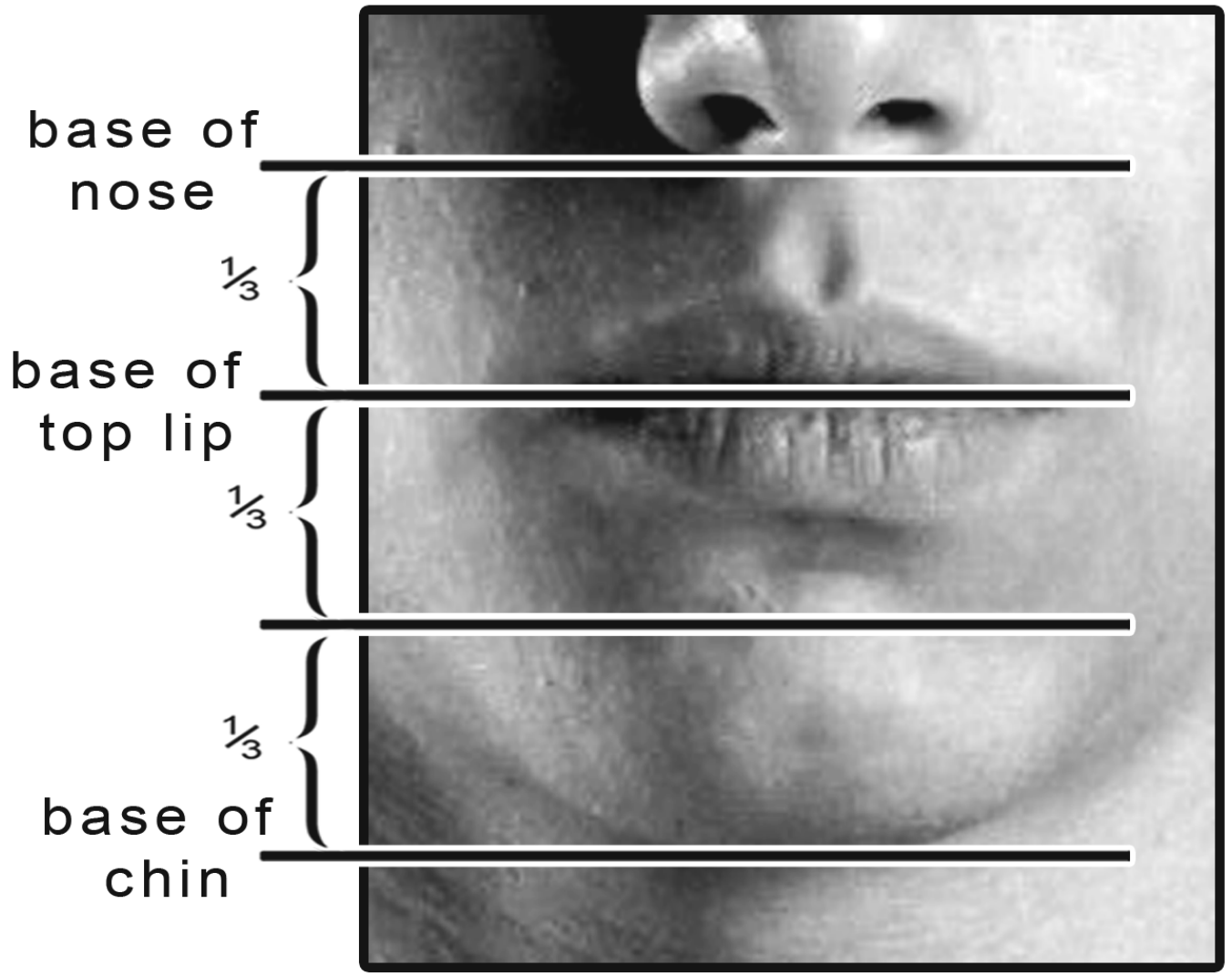
Jas Knight

Hollis Dunlap

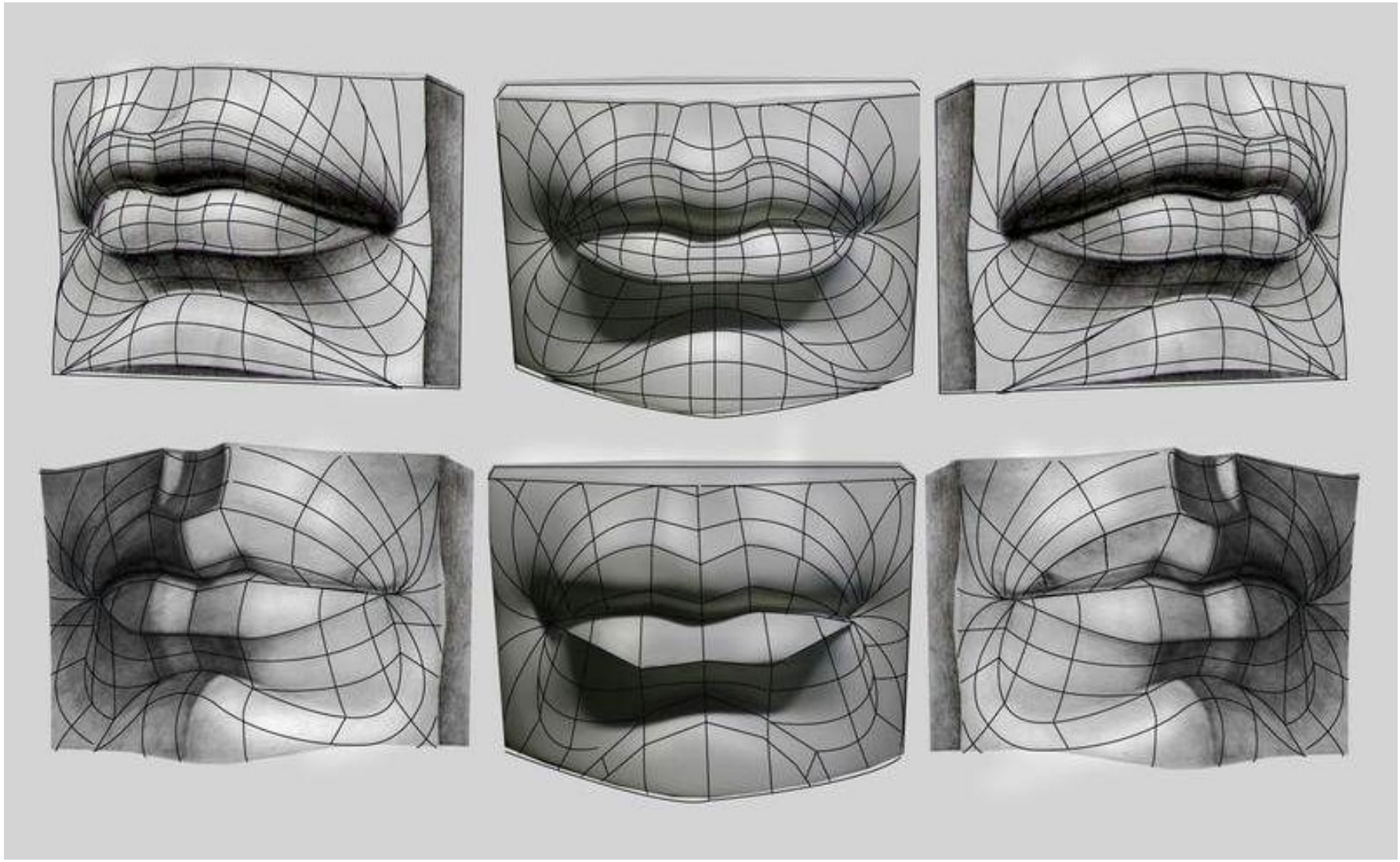
Diego Velázquez

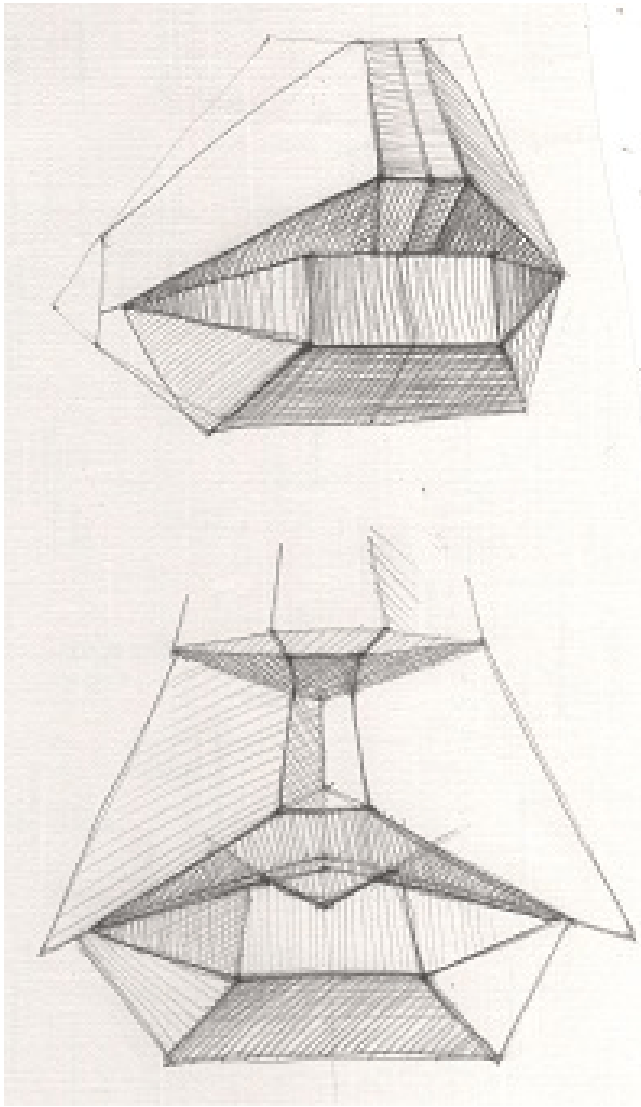
A CLOSER LOOK



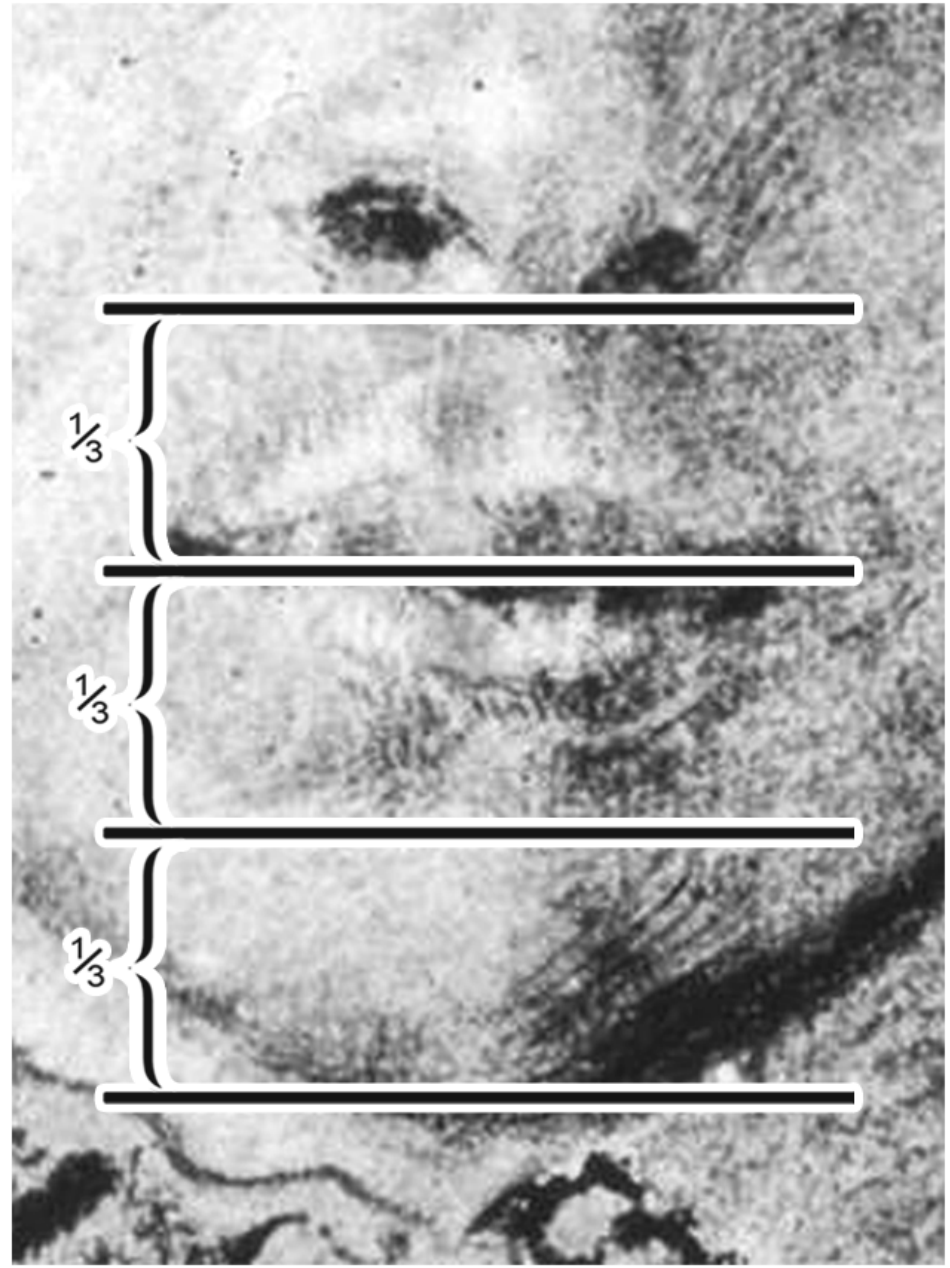


*If you divide the space between the base of the nose and the base of the chin in half (as opposed to thirds, as the top image illustrates) you would be sighting the base of the bottom lip.

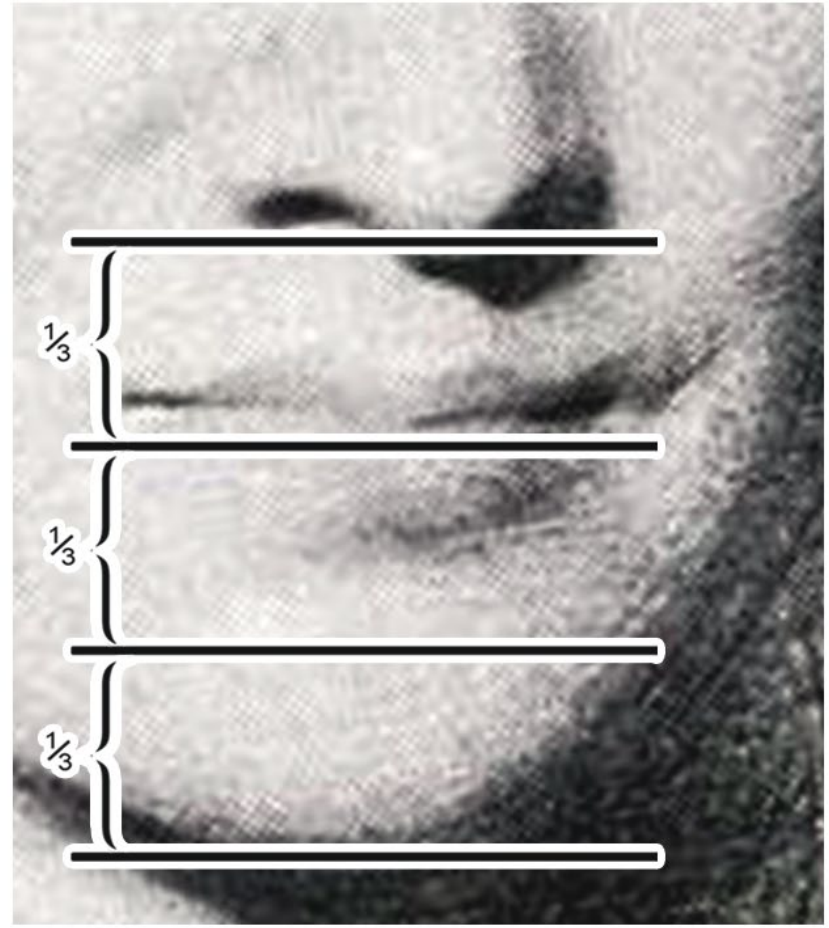




Unknown Artists



ANNIBALE CARRACCI

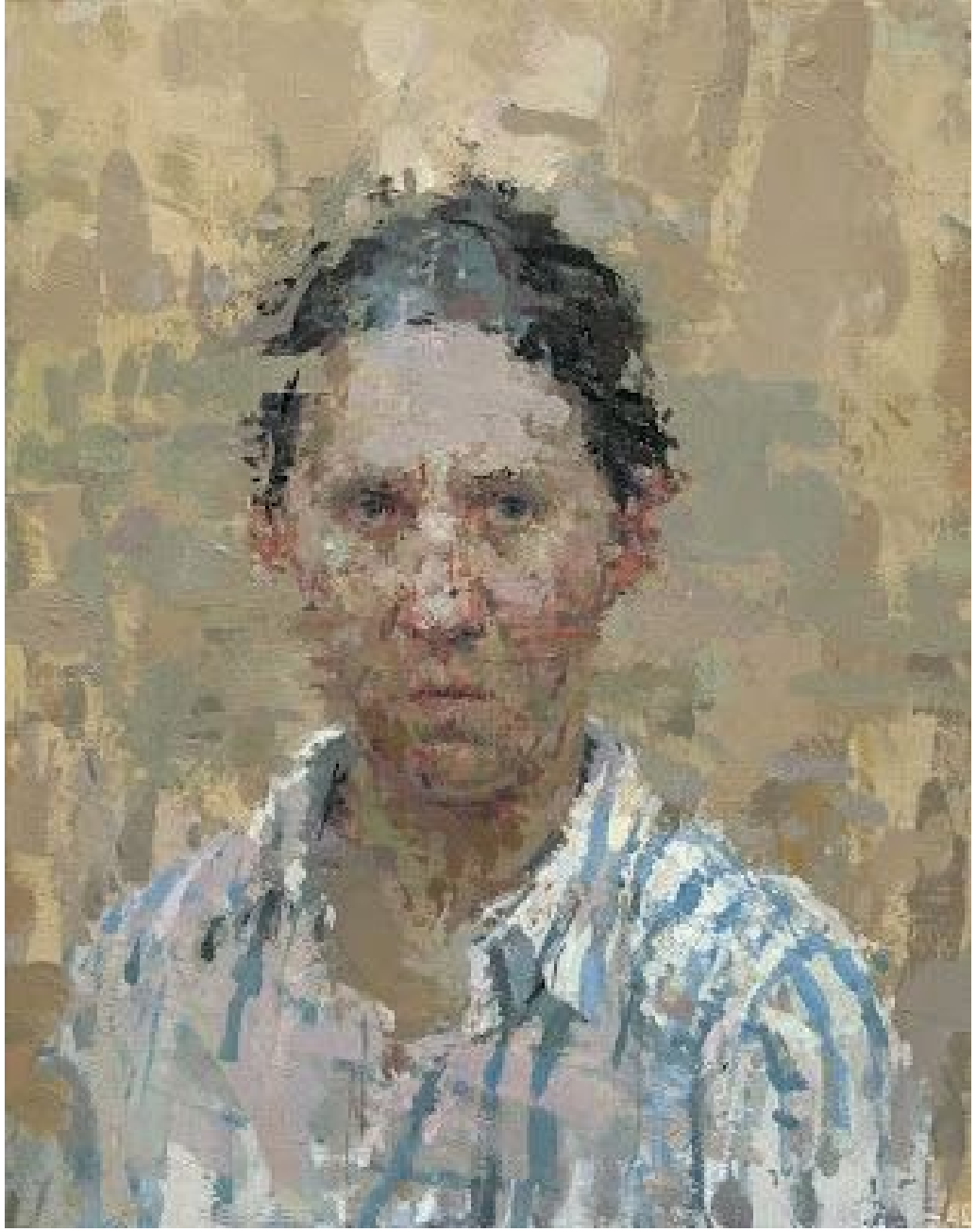


*Slight smile creates deviation from the 1/3rd rule. Lips are lifted above the denoted line.

Mustafa Ozel

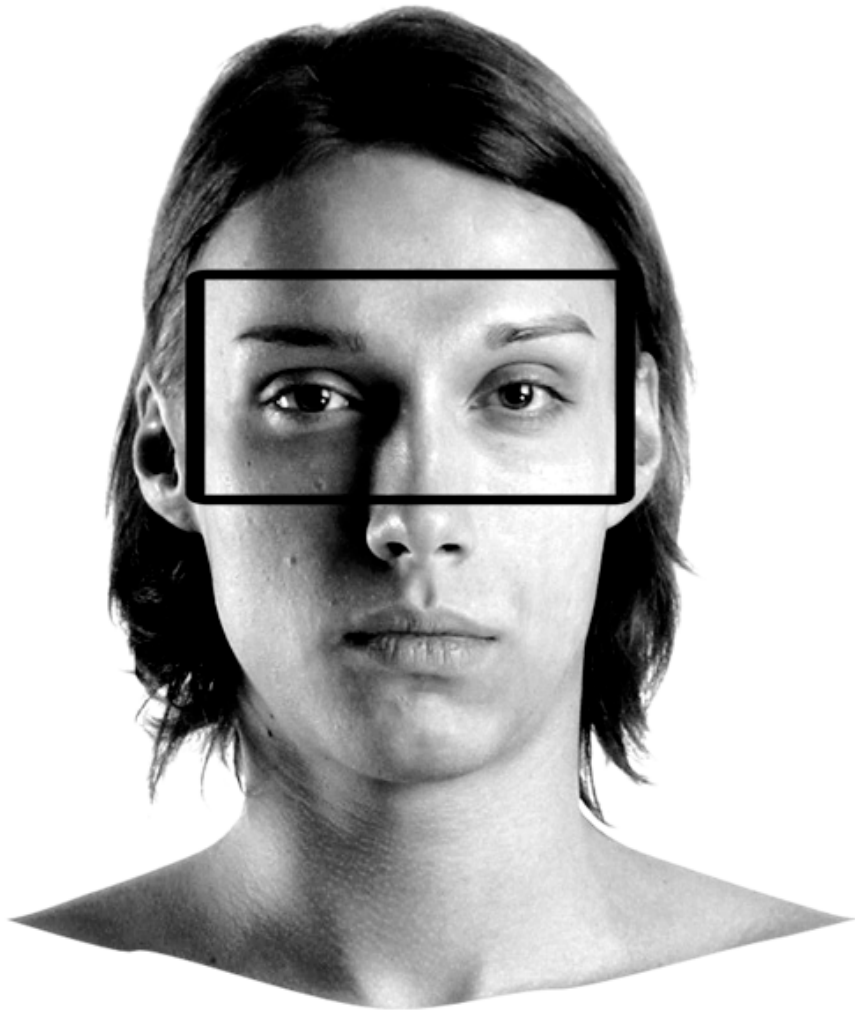
Sean Cheetham

Kerry Dunn

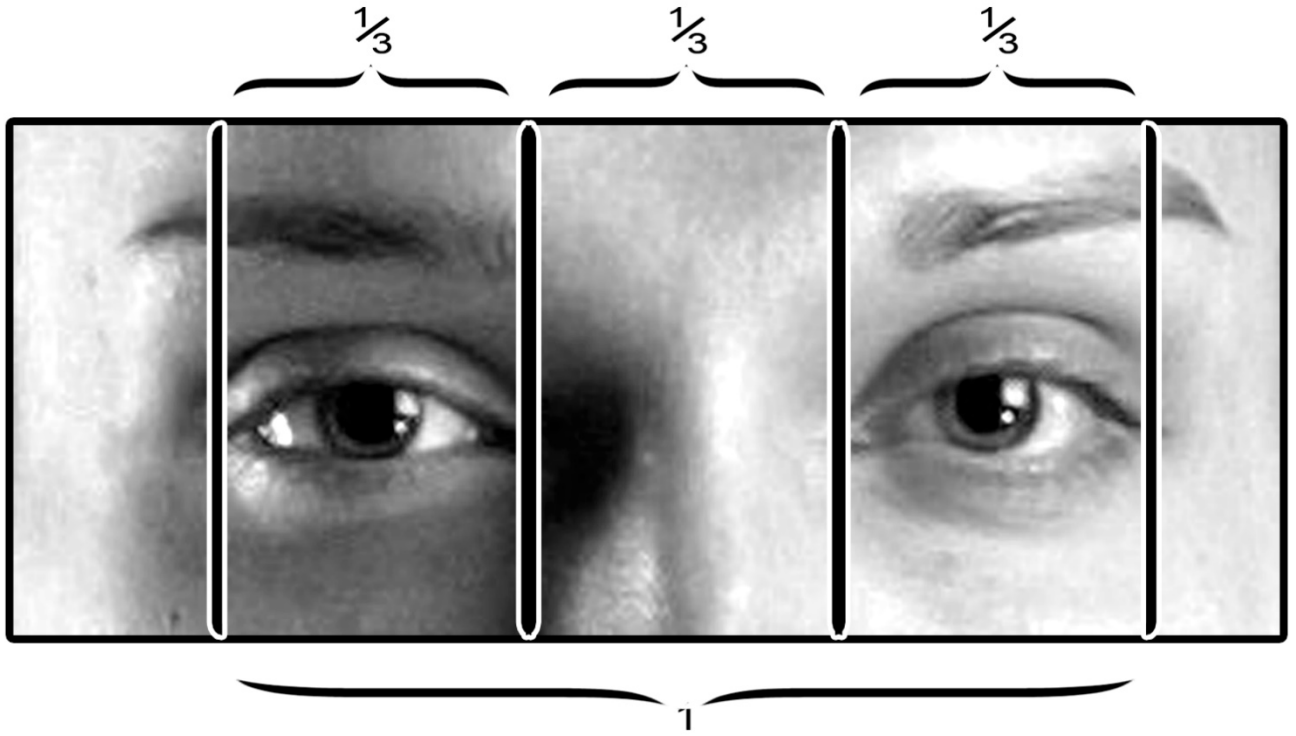


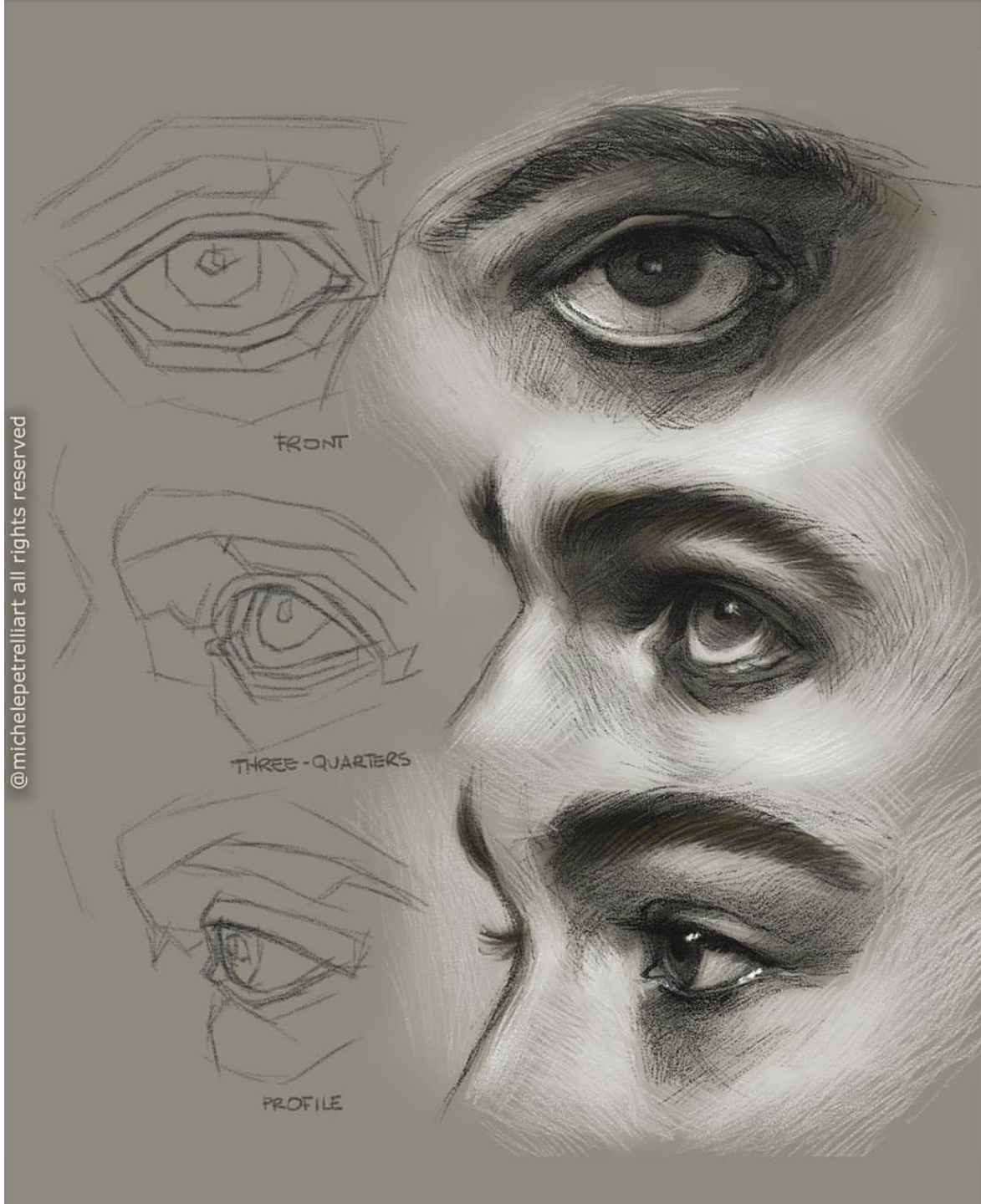
Ann Gale

A CLOSER LOOK



The space between the eyes is equal to the width of one eye.





Michele Petrelli

EGON SCHIELE

JIM DINE

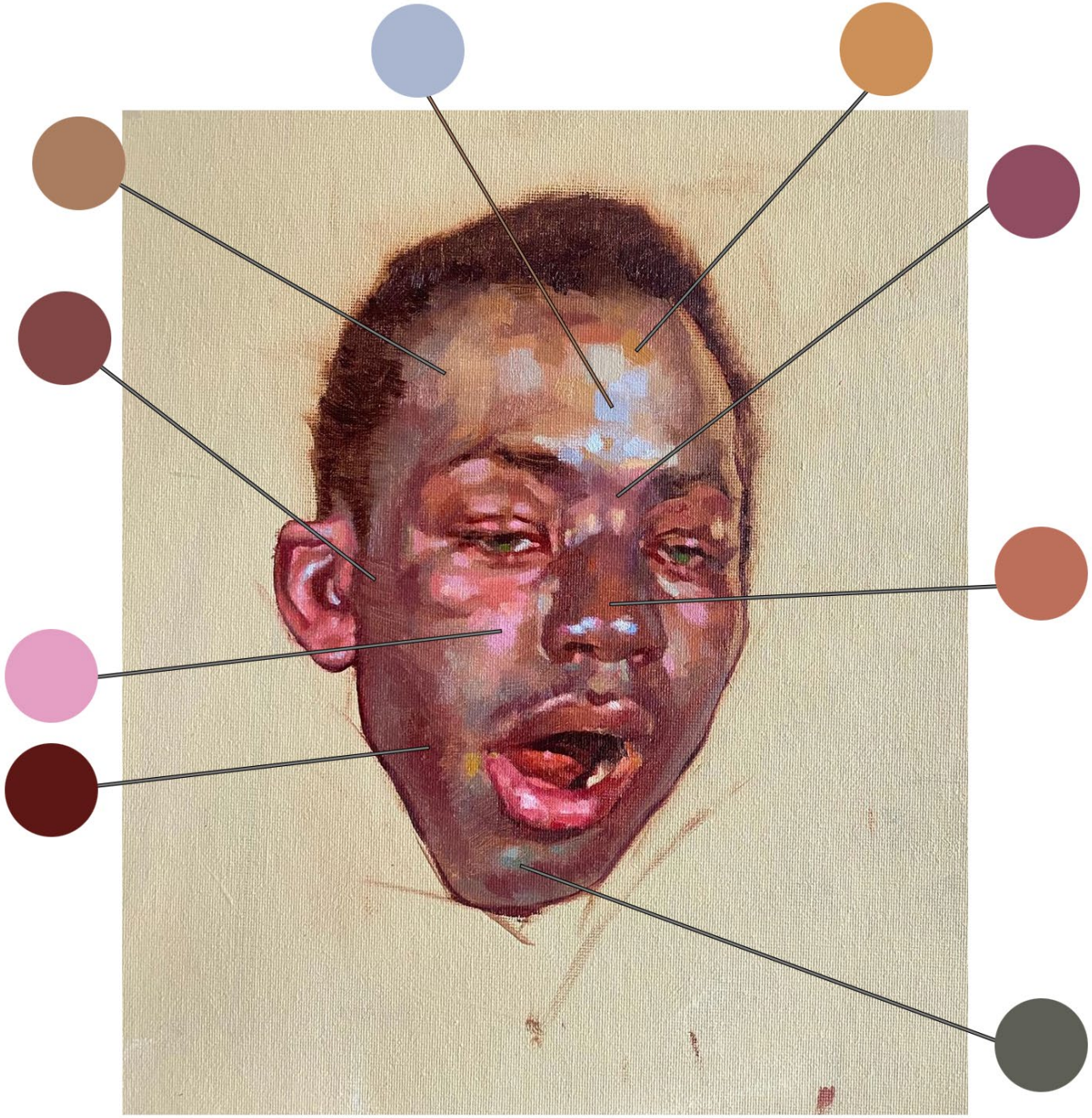
Barkley Hendricks

Susanna Coffey

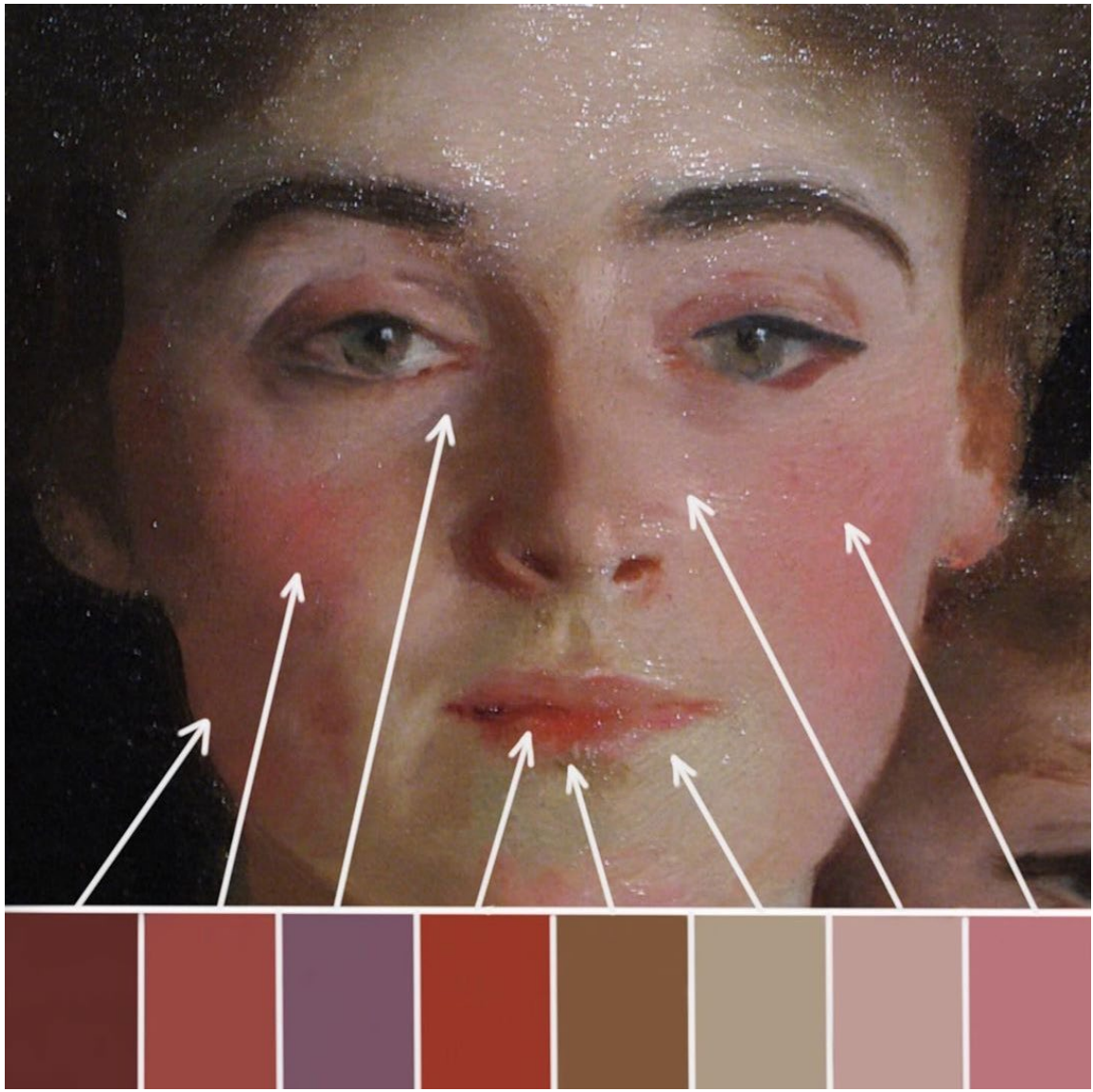
Visual Notes on Color

Lee Chen Dao

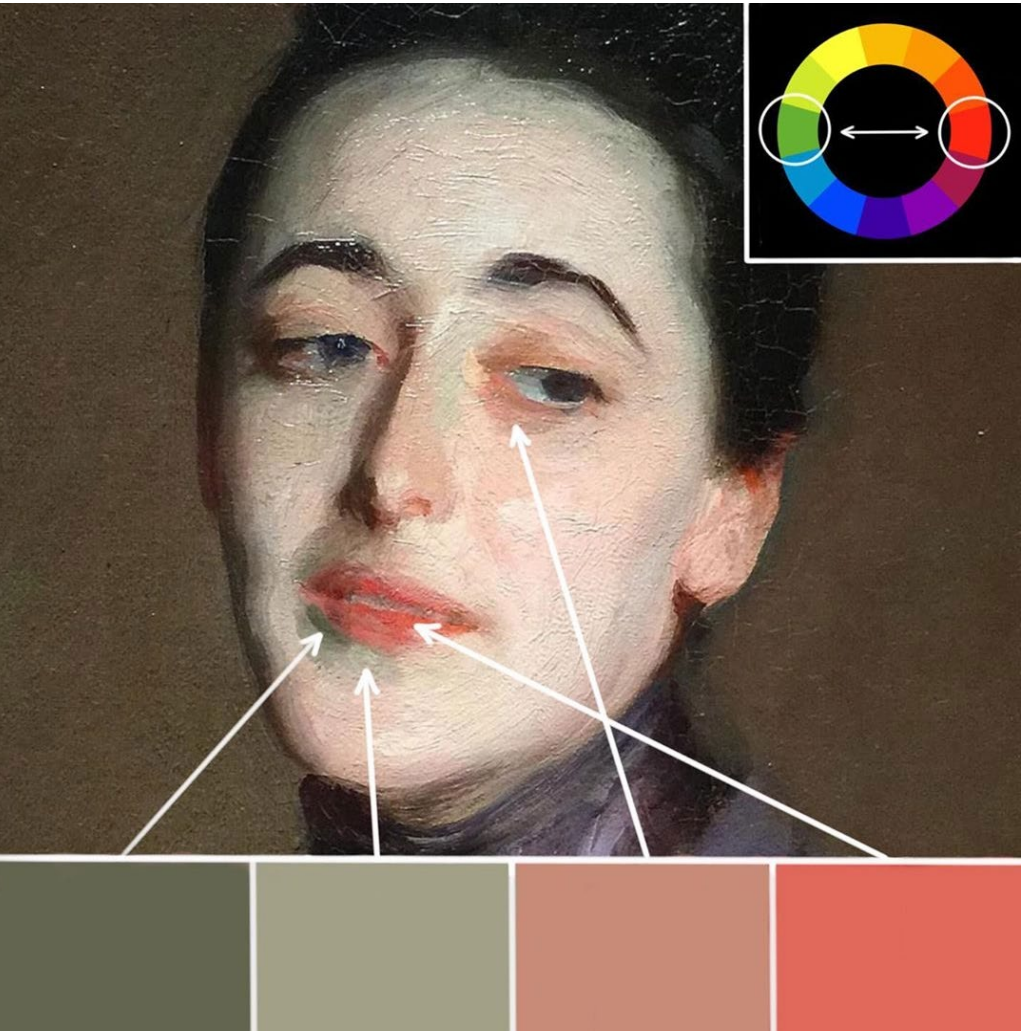
Steven Assael



Kerry Dunn



John Singer Sargent



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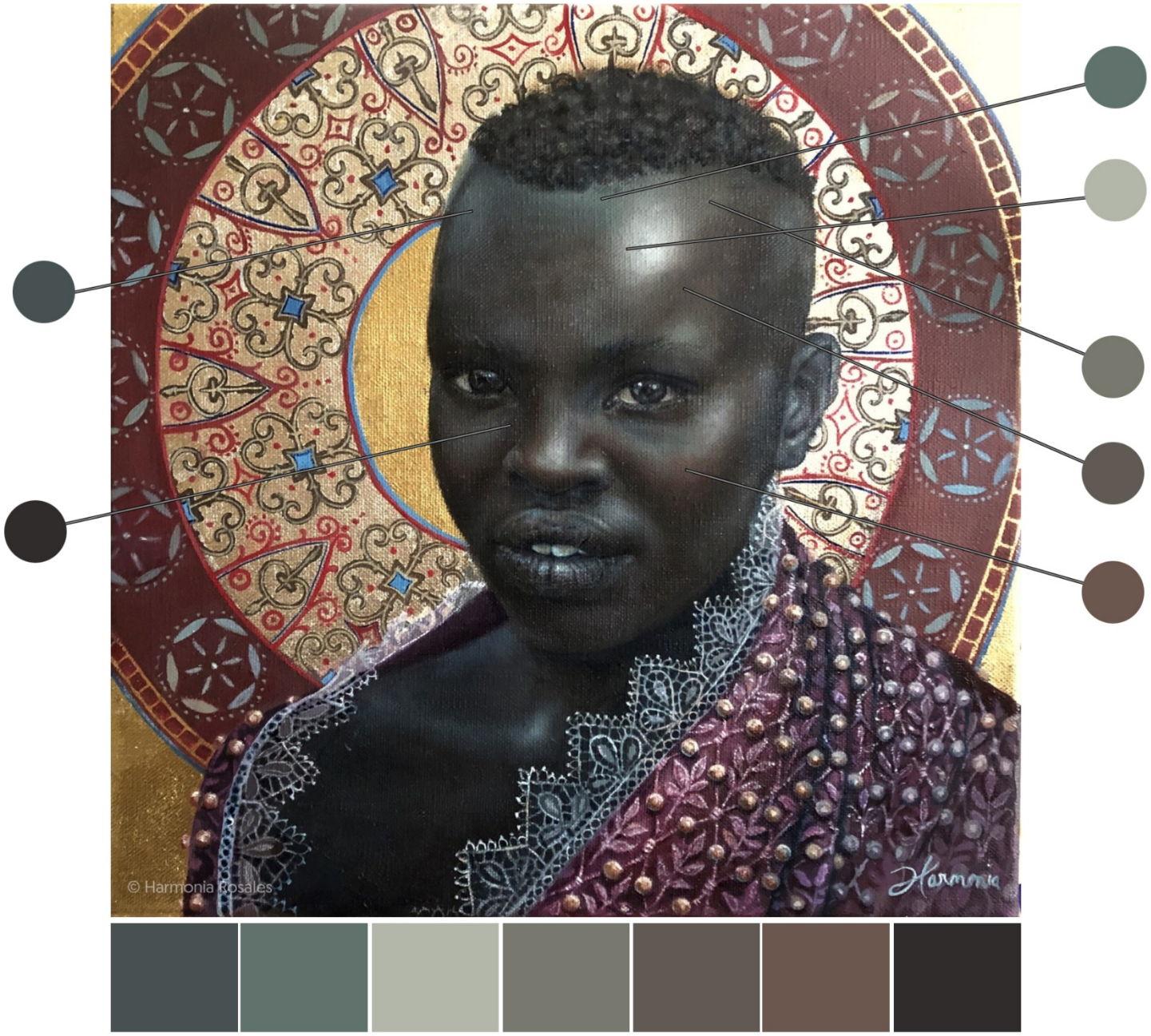
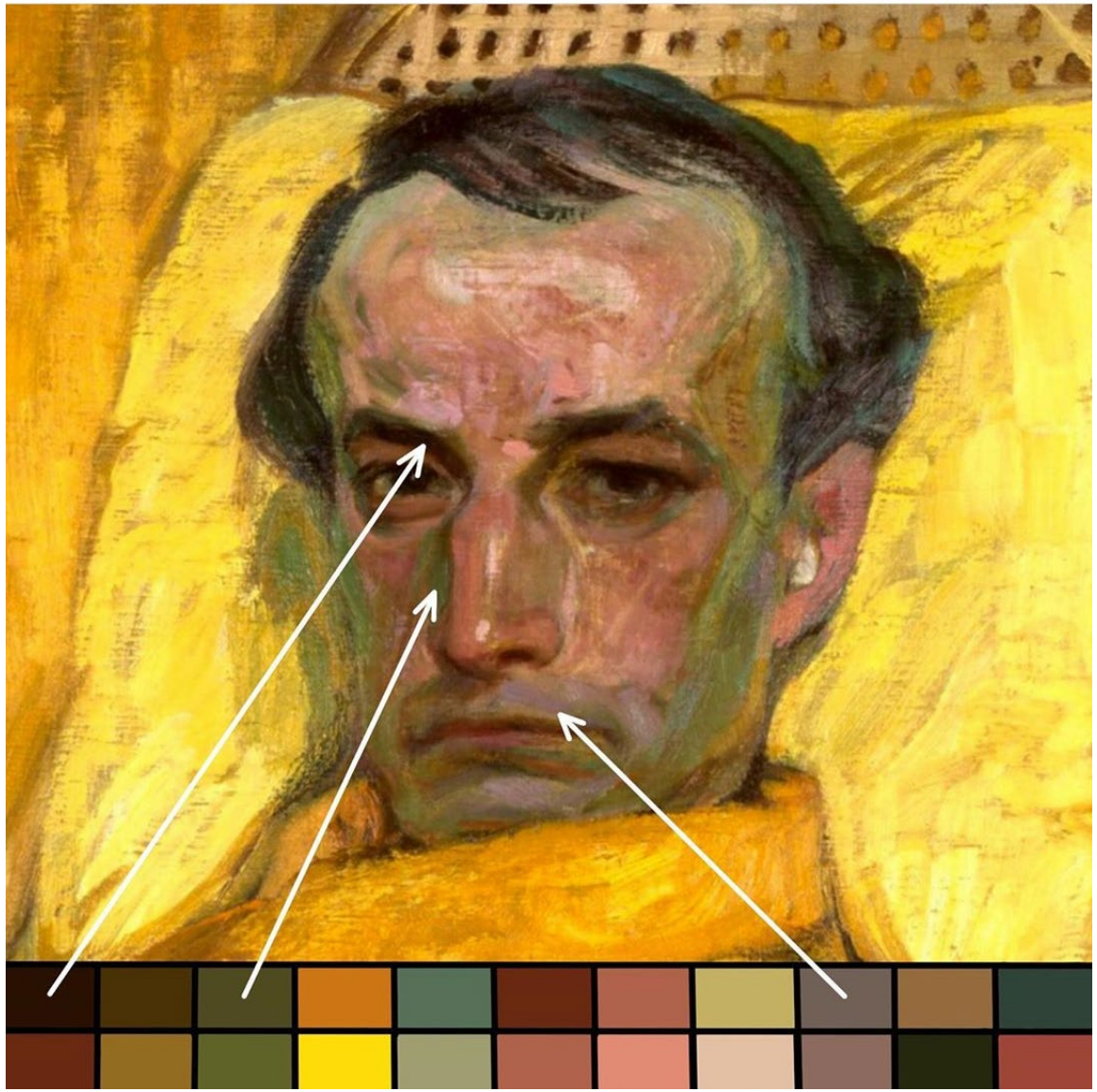
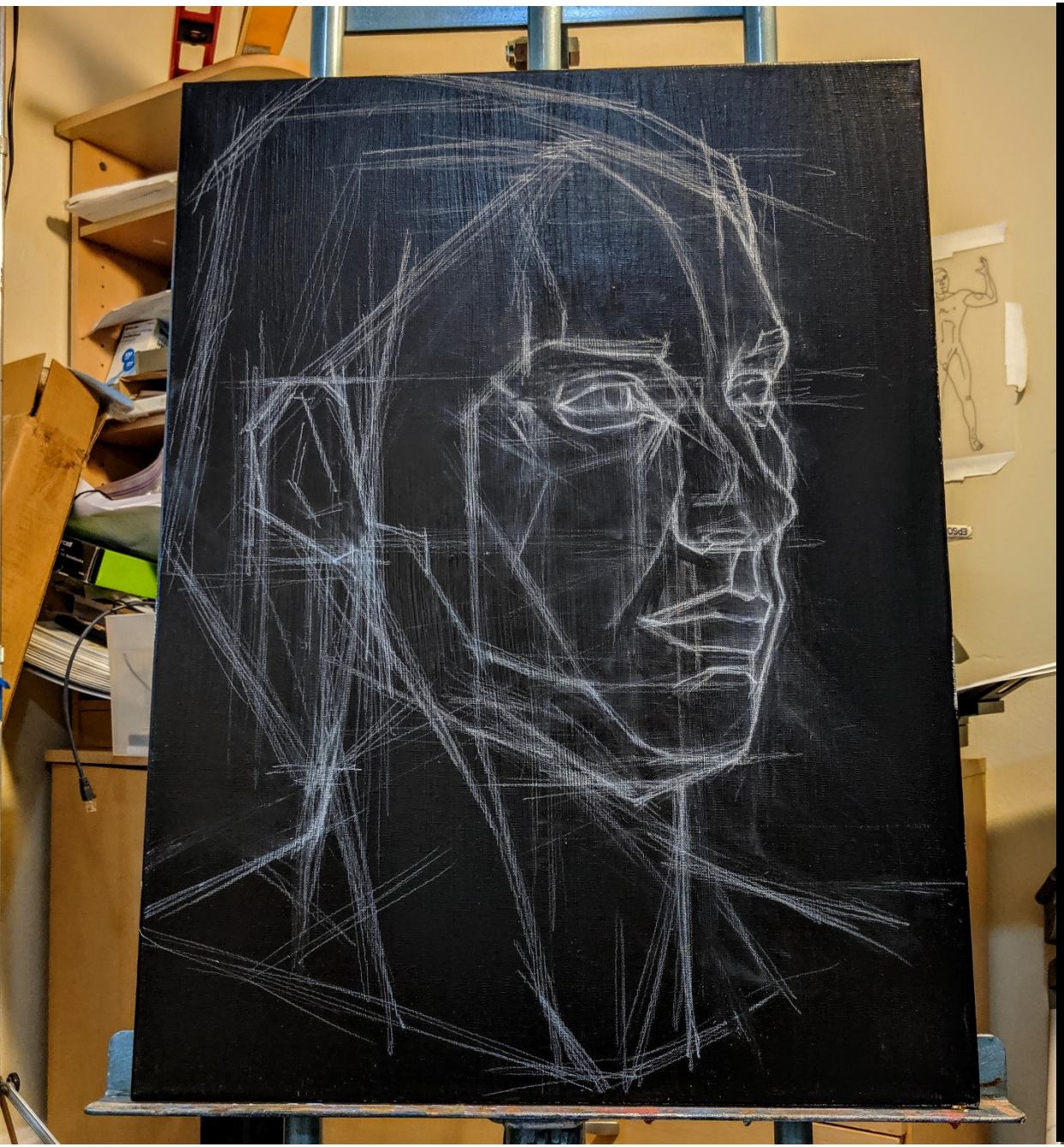


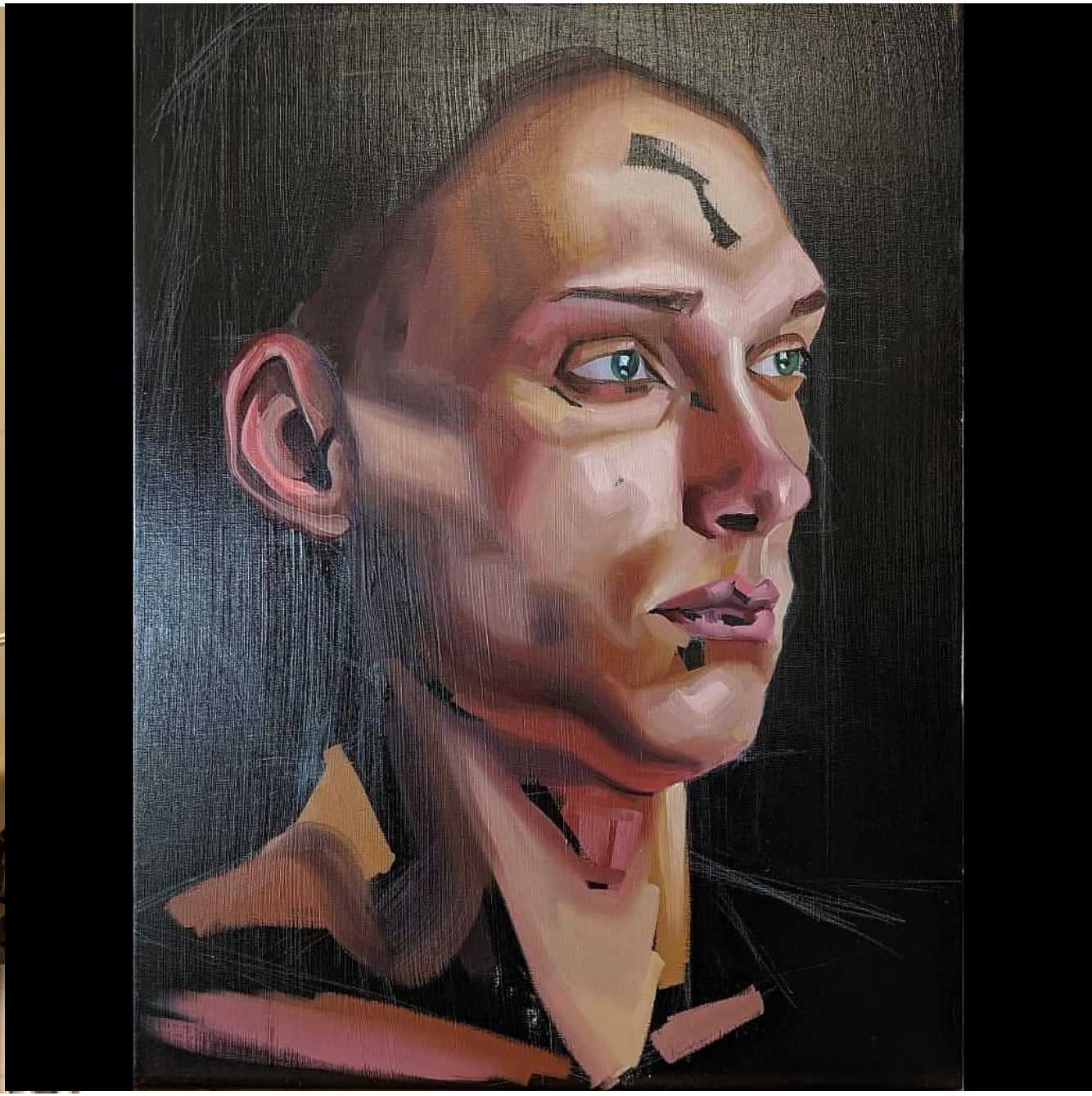
Harmonia Rosales



Frantisek Kupka

Carl Von Marr





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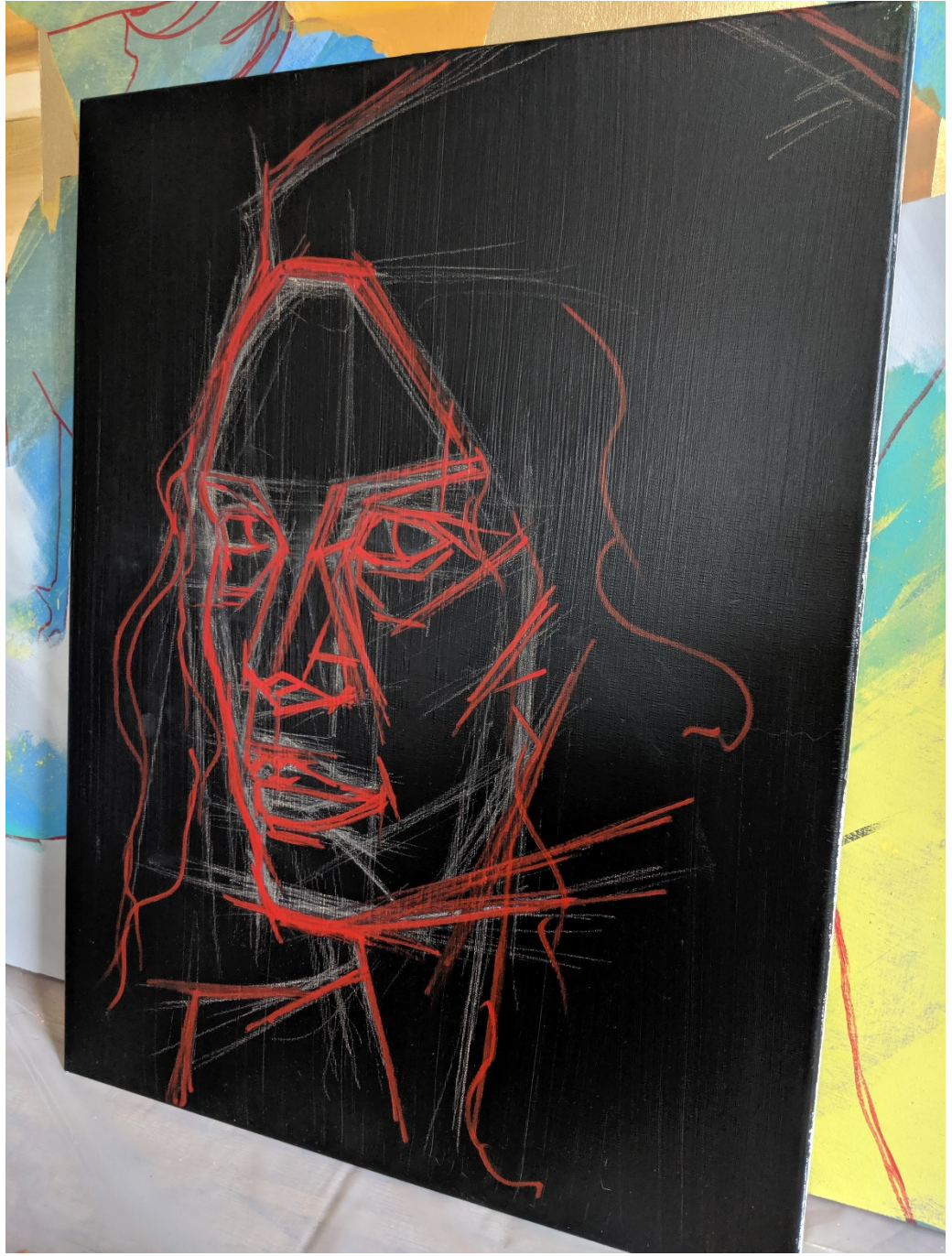

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