



MPRESSIONISM 1









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Leah Krueger, grade twelve.

Spontaneous PORTRAITURE

Craig Huffman and Matt Young

few years ago, we were at a sticking point with our intro to digital painting project that involved painting portraits. We were stuck in the rut of "tell and do" art—tell students what to do and they do it. We had students search for portraits from the internet that had no connection to them, but were technically well-lit and crisp. The project was stale,

students were not succeeding, and we were struggling as teachers.

One big thing that caught our attention in the state and national standards was that in order to create artistically literate citizens, we need to have students create works that have personal meaning to them, make connections, and show personal expression. What were students doing in school and their

personal life already? They were taking selfies, then using some form of an app to change the color or mood of the image to express a feeling. Who do we know from art history who also did this? The Impressionists, of course.

Preparation

In preparation for this lesson, we introduced students to abstract expression-







Lane Wisler, grade nine.

Adam C., grade eleven.

ism and the idea of colors and lines expressing emotions. To do this, we created two matching sets of cards—five cards labeled with emotions, and five cards with drawings for each emotion.

We divided the class in half and had each group match up the picture cards with the labeled cards. When both

Adding the personal connection of students' images and removing the fear of painting realistically caused the digital paintings to pop off the screen.

groups were finished, we went through the cards and asked students to explain why they made their choices. In fifteen years, we have had one group not agree on one card. This demonstrates to them that abstract representations of emotions are possible. From here, we moved the conversation to how emotions can be portrayed with color. Students were now ready to create abstract selfies.

Capture the Moment

Most students have cell phones and can take photos of themselves or their friends. There needed to be a lead-in to this project, so we talked about the old-school Impressionists and how they captured light, time, a moment, or a feeling. We encouraged students to be silly, sad, fun, or happy, and to use a dramatic lighting angle. The object was to capture a moment. Then we discussed how colors and a color scheme can affect the mood of the viewer.

Digital Painting

While digital painting is becoming ever more popular, there is a learning curve to get from the traditional brush to the mouse. Alchemy is a web-based open drawing program with a canvas that intentionally reduces the level of functionality (no undo, no selecting, and no editing). You can also use Adobe Draw, an app that will allow teachers to achieve similar effects on a tablet, laptop, or smart phone.

The interaction focuses instead on the output of a great number of good, bad, strange, and beautiful shapes, colors, and styles. This requires students to paint with a more free brushstroke. They cannot paint a clean line. They must take risks with shape, line, and direction, paint fast, and capture the moment. We let students experiment with the tools, brushes, and colors. They could have as many canvases as needed.

We also tried to get them to focus on the line style and color more than painting realistically. There are many settings in these programs that "force" students to paint loosely.

The Results

Students became more engaged with this project. Many photos were taken, fun was had, emotions and colors discussed, but learning also occurred. Adding the personal connection of students' images and removing the fear of painting realistically caused the digital paintings to pop off the screen.

We found that some advanced students wanted to add more color and shapes to the background, adding even stronger personal embellishments to their portraits. Wings, sure! Headphones, great! You always wanted fur; give yourself some fur! Anything that brings the work closer to students' vision of themselves can become fair game.

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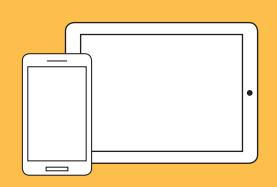
 $\frac{\textit{WEB LINK}}{al.chemy.org}$



PAINTING WITH

ADOBE DRAW

USING YOUR TABLET OR CELL PHONE

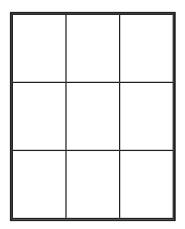


ADOBE DRAW itunes.apple.com/us/app/adobe-illustrator-draw/id911156590?mt=8

TAKING THE PICTURE

You may take a picture with your device or import an image using google drive. Make sure that you follow the photography rules for taking a good self portrait: Only NEED FROM THE SHOULDERS UP!

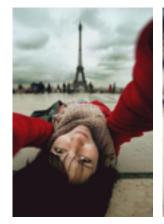
Composition. The eyes of the subject in a head and shoulders portrait should be located in the top third (approximately) of the frame.



Appropriate lighting. I don't mean lighting that one "should" achieve for all portraits, but instead, lighting that complements the specific portrait we're attempting to create. But no matter what...... good lights and darks.



Captivating expression. Good portraiture is all about expression. The technical part of a portrait could be perfectly executed, but if the expression on the subject is contrived, unnatural, or not believable, then the portrait won't "work".











START WITH A GOOD SELFIE

- Frozen Action
- Political Message
- Costumes/Props
- Strong Emotion

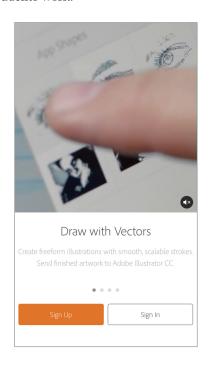




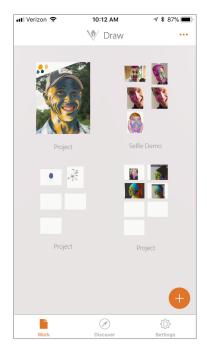


1. You will need to set up an Adobe Account to use Draw.

Must be at least 13 or older to create an account. Teachers may want to create a class account where you can keep track of all your students work.

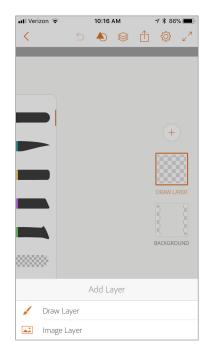


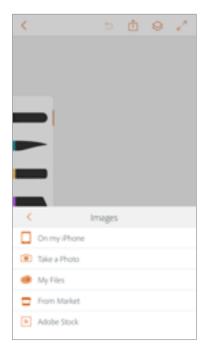
2. Create a new document based upon your device: iPhone, iPad, etc.





3. Open a image layer in Adobe Draw.

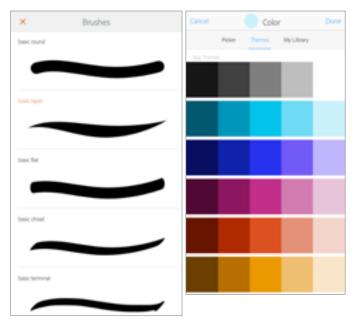






4. Set up your brushes and your color palette.

Use Taper Brush, 50% opacity, size 15 brush, and a light/medium/dark color palette. Make sure to have a least a couple shades of each color.



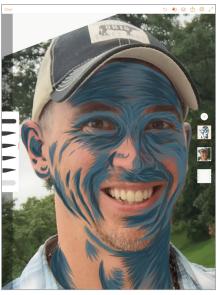


5. Paint in the most extreme light and dark areas of the skin first.

In this example, I've started with the pure darks and then followed up with a slightly lighter shade for stronger detail.

- Create a new Draw layer called "Darks"
- Make sure you use quick strokes with your finger, like the movement of a paint brush.
- Teach to follow Contour Lines when painting(another lesson hidden here)
- Your dark colors should be dark AND dull. There are NO intensely colored shadows!





6. Alright here is where the magic starts to happen!

You are now going to fill in the mid-tones. Using the same quick strokes you are going to use a blending action.

- Create a new Drawing layer called "Mid-Tones"
- Draw not only the mid-tones, but under the darks that you have created. This will create your "blending" effect.
- Try to use at least 2 shades of the mid-tones to create contrast.



7. Finally for the skin, add in the highlights.

This goes pretty fast since there should be hardly any real skin. If this process seems familiar to you, it is a lot like watercolor painting. Start with the darks and work toward whites.





8. Lips, teeth, and eyes are next.

I have had the best results using the color picker and painting them to look natural, but with the same impressionistic strokes. However you can encourage students can use whatever color they want to:

- Change eye color.
- · Change lip color.
- Whiten their teeth



10. Finally the clothes.

Here I would encourage use of local color.

- Sample the clothing item, choose a light and a dark shade and color away.
- Not all the detail is necessary. Most of the emphasis should be put on the face.



9. Now for hair.

Again, create a new layer called "Hair".

- I would encourage students to choose 1 color, plus a light and dark shade of that color.
- Start with the darks and work your way to the top with the lights.
- I tell the students to think of brushing their hair to simulate what the brushstrokes should look like. This includes the eyebrows and eyelashes.



11. Now have some fun and add in extras to make your selfie have some personality!

- You can upload your image to Adobe Creative Cloud and manipulate it in Photoshop.
- Add a background with a filter in Photoshop.
- You can add a draw layer above your image and create your own background.
- Have fun, show off your style!

PAINTING WITH

AL.CHEMY

USING YOUR COMPUTER

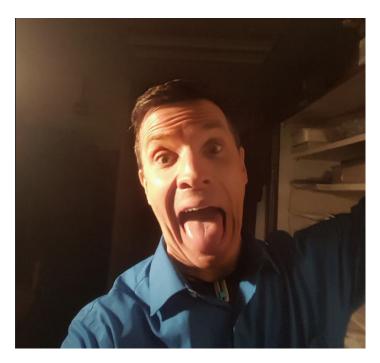




- **a.** Take or choose a portrait looking straight at the camera.
 - More advanced users can use any angle.
- **b.** The image MUST have: Strong lights and shadows
- **c.** Other ways to create a better image:
 - action
 - props
 - emotional expression
 - political message
- **d.** Drag your pic of choice to the desktop. Open with the image editing software of your choice.

2. Prepping your photo for Al.Chemy.

- a. Adjust the height to a bit less than that of your monitor. (A typical monitor = 1080 pixels.)
 Example: On a Mac: Go to Tools > Adjust Size > change height to 900. Save.
- **b.** Adjust your Brightness-Contrast to create strong lights and darks.
- **c.** If necessary, rotate the face so that it is perfectly vertical if you plan to create a mirror image. This is a good idea for most beginners.
- d. Name, and save as a .jpg file.
- **e.** Resolution of the image is determined by the resolution of your monitor. Because of this limitation, it's useful to use other software, like Photoshop or GIMP to 'upscale' the resolution later, or to add filters to smooth out pixilation.





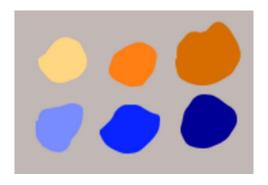


3. Opening your image in Al.Chemy

- a. Open Al.chemy
- **b.** Go to View > Load Background Image. (choose your image)
- c. SAVE THE IMAGE!
 - Go to File > Export > Save As
 - AT THE BOTTOM, CHANGE FORMAT TO JPG!
 - The only 'undo' that Al.chemy has is to clear your screen. Because of this, it's important to save the image immediately. Otherwise, your image will also go away, and you will need to reload it.

4. Getting ready to work.

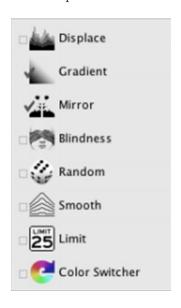
a. Choose a color scheme



b. Change your 'Style' to 'Shapes' (Looks like this)



- **c.** Draw in a bunch of circles of color along the sides. You should create a light, medium, and dark of each color.
- **d.** Export when done, just like in step 3!
- **e.** Goto 'Affect', check the 'Gradient' and 'Mirror' options.



- f. Click the exact center of your face to set the center point for 'Mirror'.
- **g.** If you're going to be using the 'Mirror' affect, use the side of your face with the best lights and darks. The more obvious the difference, the easier it is to paint!



5. Getting started on your image.

- **a.** Sampling from the color palette you created, paint in the darkest parts of your image, first.
- **b.** Switching between Over and Under, paint lighter accent colors under the dark colors to bring out the texture.





c. Now, paint in the lightest colors, then switching between Over and Under, paint darker accent colors under the light colors to bring out the texture.





6. Painting your image.

a. At this point, paint in any other areas, switching between over and under, and using contrasting colors.



b. You can drop the Transparency, allowing you to paint on subtle, translucent strokes, to enhance blending.





c. Since you can't undo, just paint over mistakes.



7. Filling in the background.

After saving your image, fill in the background with the other tools (Create) and modifiers (Affect). These can get out of control in a hurry, so save often. Spending a few class periods playing with possibilities is fun to do



8. The final product.

- a. When you're done, export as a .jpg.
- **b.** Increase the 'Percent' to 200, to decrease pixilation.



Final cropped image

c. You can open the .jpg in another program, like Photoshop, and play with filters to add other effects. I like the 'Oil Paint' filter in Photoshop for this.



Cropped image with oil filter