



Portrait Painting Atelier: Old Master Techniques and Contemporary Applications

Suzanne Brooker

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The art of portraiture approached its apex during the sixteenth century in Europe with the discovery of oil painting when the old masters developed and refined techniques that remain unsurpassed to this day. The ascendancy of nonrepresentational art in the middle of the twentieth century displaced these venerable skills, especially in academic art circles. Fortunately for aspiring artists today who wish to learn the methods that allowed the Old Masters to achieve the luminous color and subtle tonalities so characteristic of their work, this knowledge has been preserved in hundreds of small traditional painting ateliers that persevered in the old ways in this country and throughout the world.

Coming out of this dedicated movement, *Portrait Painting Atelier* is an essential resource for an art community still recovering from a time when solid instruction in art technique was unavailable in our schools. Of particular value here is a demonstration of the Old Masters' technique of layering paint over a toned-ground surface, a process that builds from the transparent dark areas to the more densely painted lights. This method unifies the entire painting, creating a beautiful glow that illuminates skin tones and softly blends all the color tones. Readers will also find valuable instruction in paint mediums from classic oil-based to alkyd-based, the interactive principles of composition and photograph-based composition, and the anatomy of the human face and the key relationships among its features.

Richly illustrated with the work of preeminent masters such as Millet, Géricault, and van Gogh, as well as some of today's leading portrait artists—and featuring seven detailed step-by-step portrait demonstrations—*Portrait Painting Atelier* is the first book in many years to so comprehensively cover the concepts and techniques of traditional portraiture.

From the Hardcover edition.



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