

Mont Marte

How to paint a portrait in acrylic and oils



I can create

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Materials List

CMMD7575	Professional Double Thick Canvas 76.2x76.2cm
MCG0022	Tear off Palette Pad
MPB0102	75mm Taklon Abstract Expression Brush
MPB0056	Artist Brush Taklon Flat Wide 75mm
MCG0117	Artist Brush Taklon Filbert 2
MPB0065	Artist Brush Oil Taklon Bright 2
MPB0068	Artist Brush Oil Taklon Bright 16
MPB0069	Artist Brush Oil Taklon Bright 24
PMDA0035	Dimension Acrylic 75mls Red Ochre
PMSA0024	Silver Series Acrylic 100ml Tube Yellow Pink
PMSA0005	Silver Series Acrylic 100ml Tube Yellow Ochre
PMSA0018	Silver Series Acrylic 100ml Tube Paynes Grey
PMSA0011	Silver Series Acrylic 100ml Tube Lamp Black
PMSA0010	Silver Series Acrylic 100ml Tube Titanium White
PMFL0005	Fluro Acrylic Paint 75ml Tube Pink
MPO0001	Oil Paint 100mls Titanium White
MPO0029	Oil Paint 100mls Raw Umber
MPO0045	Oil Paint 100mls Red Ochre
MPO0008	Oil Paint 100mls Brilliant Red
MPO0037	Oil Paint 100mls Carmine
MPO0016	Oil Paint 100mls Ultramarine Blue
MOMD1206	Refined Linseed Oil 125ml
MAXX0024	Leafing Size 60ml
MAXX0022	Imitation Gold Leaf

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1. Tinting the canvas and transferring the image.

The strategy for this painting is to start with an acrylic under painting. I am using a selection of Mont Marte Satin, Dimension and Fluro Acrylic paints.

To begin it helps to lay down a ground colour. This knocks back the otherwise confronting stark white of the canvas – I have decided on a mid toned neutral grey created with Titanium White and a touch of Paynes Grey. Apply with a 75mm Abstract Expression Brush.

A mid grey like this will help later when it comes to judging the skin tones. It will also help to unify the finished painting as I plan to let some of the base layer show through.

Once that's dry I first draw the face and figure with an HB pencil, and follow that with an outline of Lamp Black. The style of this portrait will have areas which are impressionistic and other areas where the detail is far more realistic. And while a black outline like this may not be a traditional approach, it can find its place in more experimental styles like this.



Acrylic paint is great for under painting as it dries quickly so you can get started on the next layers sooner.

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2. Blocking in the first colours.

The next step involves some Fluorescent Pink Acrylic and also Titanium White. I am going to apply some big bold, gestural marks to the canvas with a wide brush. These marks are intended to give the final painting a really dynamic impact. It's also a very helpful way to loosen up before beginning the portrait.

Using the acrylic paints laid out earlier begin to block in the various dark, mid and light tones on the face. I am using a number 24 Oil Taklon Bright brush. Using a 1 inch wide stiff bristled brush like this forces you to make bigger, bolder marks when laying down the basic tones. Remember, this is just the first layer of paint and a portrait can take many layers to get the subject looking right. Avoid looking at detail in the face at this stage. A good tip is to squint your eyes to blur your perception of the subject or reference image and force yourself to just see the tones as blocks.

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3. Adding the oil paint.

We are going to move on to layers in oil paint now. Oil paint is much slower drying and will allow more time to blend areas of the portrait.

With a large oil taklon brush and some thickened linseed oil we can start to mix our key skin tones. The linseed oil will help to give more 'flow' to the mix.

The key mixes include Red Ochre and Brilliant Red with a touch of the other colours here and there when needed .

The highlights involve White and Brilliant Red.

The shadows and eyes are a grey mix of Raw Umber and Ultramarine Blue, tinted with White.

Apply a glaze to the areas of darker tones.

Block in the lips and nose roughly.



A glaze is a translucent mix of oil paint made by adding some linseed oil.

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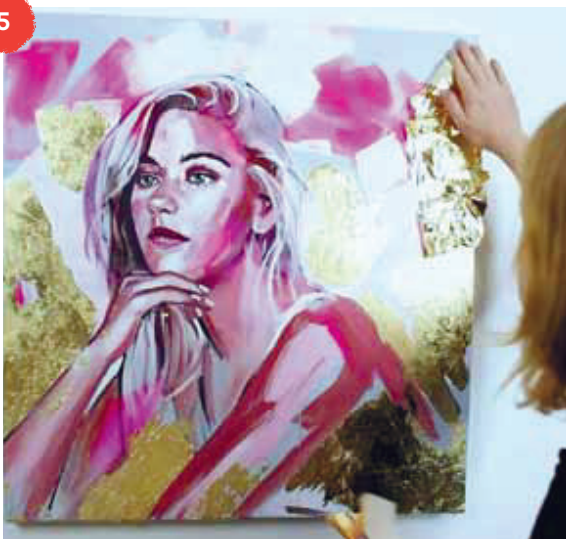


4. Detailing the face.

Proceed to work your way across the face. Working from a reference photograph is ideal when you are learning portraiture as it's tricky to have a subject sit for you for hours at a time. Look for an image or take your own photo. Try to avoid having multiple light sources as this can confuse things, and aim for some stark contrast between the shadows and highlight as this can allow for some great depth.

As you get closer to the final layers, reduce the size of your brush steadily until you reach a number 2 or a detailer for those really fine details.

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5. Adding the gold leaf.

Once you feel happy with the portrait you can add some extra wow factor with gold leaf. I am applying the leafing size very roughly as I want it to integrate with the brush marks we made earlier in the background.

Tip

Make sure all the paint is dry before you apply the gold leaf.

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