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Theoretical and practical methodology of portrait work in the professional training of future fine arts teachers

Abstract. This article examines the methodology of teaching the portrait genre to future teachers of fine arts within the system of higher pedagogical education. The relevance of the topic stems from the persistent gap between students' theoretical knowledge of drawing principles and their practical ability to apply that knowledge when working from a live model, a gap that becomes especially apparent in the demanding genre of portraiture. Drawing on classroom pedagogical practice and a review of the historical development of portrait painting from Renaissance masters through Russian and Uzbek national traditions, the article proposes a structured four-stage instructional sequence for developing portrait skills: rendering the figure using the single-color grisaille technique, depicting the face under natural daylight conditions, depicting the face under artificial lighting, and conducting portrait work outdoors (*en plein air*). Particular attention is given to the pedagogical value of the grisaille method for developing tonal perception and an understanding of form before the introduction of color, to practical guidance for depicting individual facial features such as the eyes and lips while maintaining the integrity of the whole portrait, and to the role of short-term color studies in developing students' color perception and brushwork skills. The discussion indicates that a staged progression from monochrome to full-color work, combined with disciplined independent practice and continuous comparison of each detail with the overall composition, produces more coherent and psychologically expressive student portraits than unstructured, color-first instruction. The article concludes with recommendations for incorporating this instructional sequence into curricula for the professional training of future teachers of fine arts.

Keywords: portrait painting, grisaille technique, drawing pedagogy, color perception, composition, perspective reduction, fine arts education. технологиялар.

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Introduction

Modern educational policy in Uzbekistan is oriented toward shaping independent-minded young specialists who possess up-to-date professional knowledge and a firm civic position (Mirziyoyev, 2017). Within this broad task, fine-arts disciplines — pencil drawing, painting, and composition — occupy a central place in preparing future teachers who are artistically literate, loyal to their homeland, and grounded in national artistic tradition. Consequently, the special subjects taught at art faculties of higher educational institutions and at specialized schools must be substantive and methodologically well-founded, which places considerable demands on pedagogues responsible for this training.

Practical observation shows that mastering the theoretical rules of drawing from life does not automatically translate into the ability to apply that knowledge in practice. Many students who understand and can recite the basic principles of drawing nevertheless find themselves unable to use this knowledge confidently at the easel. A future artist-teacher therefore needs, alongside conceptual understanding, well-developed performing and technical skills; unresolved technical difficulties during studio exercises prevent a student from concentrating on genuinely creative tasks. Free and confident command of technique allows a student to devote full attention to creative development and to grow into a highly qualified artist-teacher, whereas a student who has only superficially absorbed drawing technique cannot work freely and, as a result, cannot fully express ideas and feelings through the image. This problem is especially acute in drawing, which forms the technical foundation of all fine arts disciplines (Boymetov, 2006).

Historically, academic art schools placed enormous emphasis on technique. Master painters introduced their students to the craft primarily by having them copy the works of recognized masters, with correct technical execution treated as the central object of instruction. This historical approach remains pedagogically relevant: encouraging a young teacher-artist to study how established painters built their skill, and showing different artistic interpretations of comparable subjects, draws students into active creative engagement - something that classroom instruction alone does not always achieve. Homework assignments built around copying outstanding works complement studio exercises, training students to render images more expressively while also revealing, in practical terms, the visual methods that master painters relied upon.

Within this broader pedagogical problem, the portrait genre deserves particular attention, since it more than any other genre exposes the gap between technical competence and genuine artistic insight. An inexperienced student typically assumes that portrait painting is straightforward: a pencil sketch is made from life, an approximate local color is selected and applied, and the result, while perhaps bearing some outward resemblance to the sitter, falls short of constituting a complete portrait. Producing a convincing likeness requires the student to draw on the full range of

acquired knowledge and skill in order to capture the sitter's specific psychological state, a task that cannot be accomplished through technical facility alone (Talipov, 2023).

This article therefore addresses the methodological problem of organizing portrait instruction for future fine-arts teachers. It reviews the historical and theoretical foundations of the portrait genre as a resource for teaching and proposes a structured sequence of practical exercises — built primarily around the grisaille technique — intended to develop students' ability to construct a likeness by moving from the general form toward particular detail while preserving the integrity of the image as a whole. The relevance of this task is reinforced by recent empirical work showing that structured portrait-drawing programs can produce measurable cognitive and socio-emotional effects in students, which underlines the pedagogical value of a carefully sequenced instructional method rather than unstructured practice (Kastner et al., 2021).

Materials and Methods

Effective instruction in the portrait genre rests on an individualized pedagogical approach: each student requires tailored guidance suited to his or her own manner of drawing, and only by accounting for these individual characteristics can a teacher achieve substantial progress in developing a student's creative abilities. The skill of a teacher is measured precisely by the ability to give each student instructions matched to that student's own technique, to draw widely on established educational methods, and to correct mistakes without discouraging the student's enthusiasm. Careful, ongoing observation of student work, a measured and timely correction of errors, and a balance of encouragement and demanding feedback all support sustained creative engagement — provided that praise genuinely corresponds to the student's effort, will, and self-assessment, since encouragement detached from real progress loses its pedagogical value. Students who are dissatisfied with an unsuccessful result often expect clear, concrete instruction from the teacher at exactly this point, and a teacher who identifies the specific mistake and explains how to correct it helps the student complete the assigned task step by step while reinforcing motivation for further work.

The wider pedagogical task here is to reorganize and modernize the teaching of fine arts in higher education, refining both its content and its method, with the portrait genre given particular weight, since providing students with a genuine artistic education through portraiture remains an urgent and as yet incompletely solved task. This broader task of modernization is consistent with recent findings on contextual learning technologies in art-teacher training, which show that a structured, staged

reorganization of artistic disciplines measurably improves future teachers' subject competence compared with traditional lecture-seminar instruction (Krasovska et. al., 2020). In working on a portrait, students must engage actively with the underlying laws of the genre — correct compositional placement, perspective reduction, point of view, and color and tonal relationships — mastering these simultaneously in theory and in supervised practice, rather than treating theory and practice as separate stages of instruction (Abdirasilov et. al., 2006).

Building competence in figure work demands accumulated theoretical and practical experience and presupposes a solid grounding in still-life drawing; without this foundation, satisfactory results in figure and portrait work cannot reasonably be expected, since the human figure poses far more demanding constructive and tonal problems than a still life does. The instructional sequence proposed here divides work with the human figure into four interrelated stages, each building on the skills developed in the one before: (1) rendering the figure using the grisaille technique; (2) depicting the face under natural daylight conditions; (3) depicting the face under artificial lighting; (4) portrait work conducted outdoors, en plein air.

The grisaille, or single-color, stage functions as the foundation for everything that follows, since accurately reading lightness and saturation, and developing a feel for the volume of the form, are skills the single-color method trains directly and unambiguously; at this stage, color nuance and local hue are deliberately treated as secondary considerations, to be addressed once the underlying tonal structure is secure. Work typically proceeds from a careful analysis of the sitter's individual features, through brief pencil sketches and several short color studies executed in a brownish, «Mars»-black mixture combined with white, toward establishing the overall mass of the figure, the relationship between saturation and lightness, the visual unity of figure and background, and the placement of the principal forms relative to one another. Only once this preparatory groundwork is complete does work move on to the detailed, long-form image, in which every smaller element is given individual attention (Abdirasilov & Tolipov, 2019).

Brushwork itself should be made to follow the direction of the form being depicted, since strokes applied along the structure of a surface help to articulate that surface's underlying shape rather than obscuring it. The background plays a substantial compositional role in this process, since the sitter will read as either lighter or darker than the background depending on the lighting arrangement and is, in an important sense, perceived in silhouette against it; practicing the same pose against both a light and a dark ground is therefore a particularly productive classroom exercise. When the model is lit directly or from the side, individual details become considerably more legible once the larger tonal relationships of the figure have first been unified across the whole form; under artificial lighting in particular, the grisaille method

tends to yield an especially clear sense of volume, and it is generally most effective to establish the figure's overall silhouette together with its principal masses of shadow and light before turning to the refinement of smaller elements (Hasanov, 2009).

For these exercises, a darker, warmer pigment is generally preferable to cooler alternatives — natural umber or Mars brown combined with white — since admixtures of black or blue tend to produce a cold result that conflicts with the natural warmth of human skin tones. Preparatory color studies of this kind, undertaken before a full watercolor portrait is attempted, help the student settle on an overall color solution in advance; it is worth noting that brushwork articulates form differently from pencil work, since in pencil drawing form is established primarily through linear construction, with color treated only conventionally, whereas in painting form and background must be developed together as a single visual unit. A male model with a clearly legible anatomical structure is recommended for introductory exercises of this kind, since a child's facial structure is comparatively smooth and its underlying constructive logic is correspondingly more difficult for a beginner to read.

Lighting the model from the side or from above against a neutral-toned fabric background is recommended, arranged so that the illuminated portion of the head reads distinctly lighter than the background while the shadowed portion reads correspondingly darker than it. Compositional placement should be planned deliberately, in relation to the chosen viewpoint and the scale of the figure within the picture plane: a support of roughly 30 by 40 centimeters is recommended for head studies of this kind, since an oversized support tends to encourage inexperienced students to enlarge the image well beyond the model's actual proportions, producing a characteristic and easily avoidable error. Initial work should establish the head's overall construction and proportional relationships rather than attempting to resolve light, shadow, and volume in every detail at once; finer modeling is properly developed only afterward, once the general form has been secured, and the underlying pencil construction must remain legible and correct throughout the entire process.

Charcoal is recommended in preference to pencil for preparatory work directly on fabric, since it more readily registers the distinction between local color and the underlying light-shadow relationships and can also be lifted cleanly from the surface when corrections are needed. However, once paint has been applied, excessive erasing of the underdrawing should be avoided, since this risks damaging the fabric's prepared ground layer; the finished underdrawing should instead be fixed in place before painting proper begins.

The recommended working procedure for the painting stage begins with close, sustained observation of the model: the illuminated and shadowed portions of the head are compared directly against the background, and the lightest and darkest values present in the composition are identified mentally before any paint is mixed.

A single mixed color is prepared for the average value of the light masses and another for the shadow masses; work then begins with a large brush in the shadow areas — since shadow characteristically reads especially dark against white fabric — and the background is established immediately afterward for the same reason, before the artist proceeds to the illuminated side of the figure. Paint should be applied broadly and with confidence at this stage, comparing each new passage against both the shadow and the background rather than dwelling prematurely on individual details. A more liquid application of paint in the first pass, followed by progressively denser applications in subsequent passes, together with the selective removal of unsuccessful passages using a palette knife, allows the student to correct the developing image without losing the momentum of the work. Only once the overall construction of the head has been secured through careful comparison of its shadow and light masses should work proceed to the more exact rendering of individual details, using progressively smaller brushes as the work advances.

Results and Discussion

The history of world fine art offers an instructive body of reference material for teaching the portrait genre, and acquaintance with it forms an important part of a future teacher-artist's preparation. Renaissance masters — Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Titian, and Tintoretto — remain admired for their ability to convey complex human emotion through refined, psychologically penetrating portraiture, while the Flemish painters Rubens and Van Dyck, together with the Dutch masters Hals and Rembrandt, produced strikingly individual likenesses of prominent contemporaries that continue to define the genre's possibilities. The seventeenth-century Spanish painter Ribera is particularly notable for the psychological depth and painterly conviction of his portraits, while the nineteenth- and twentieth-century French painters Renoir and Cézanne brought genuinely new ideas and an original color language to portrait work, expanding the genre well beyond its earlier conventions. Among Russian painters, Repin, Surikov, Serov, and Vrubel assembled an invaluable gallery of portraits of their contemporaries, achieving works in which not only the sitter's outward likeness but also an inner psychological world — intellect, feeling, nobility of character — were rendered through highly individual and recognizably distinct artistic means.

National tradition offers equally instructive examples for classroom use. Uzbek miniature painters such as Kamoliddin Behzod and Mahmud Muzahhib left a lasting imprint on the country's fine art, and later generations of painters — among them M. Nabiev, A. Abdullaev, R. Akhmedov, M. Saidov, M. Oganegov, N. Kuzyboev, and Ch. Akhmarov — made significant and well-documented contributions to the portrait

genre specifically. What unites this diverse body of work, across very different periods and national traditions, is a sense of completeness arising from the integrity and expressiveness of the finished image. These historical examples should not, however, be presented to students as fixed recipes to be reproduced mechanically; rather, they function pedagogically as guidance that helps a student avoid the principal errors common in portrait work, since the genre ultimately demands a considerable degree of talent, technical skill, and accumulated experience in order to convincingly reveal a sitter's inner psychological state on the basis of theoretical knowledge alone (Abdirasilov et al., 2010).

Within the instructional sequence proposed in this article, work on individual facial features illustrates concretely how detailed modeling should proceed without losing sight of the whole — a principle that proved, in classroom application, to be the single most difficult habit for students to internalize. When working on the eyes, for example, it is unproductive to render the eyelids immediately with a small brush; the eye's general location should first be blocked in with an approximate color, checked carefully against the other already-developed areas of the head, and only then should its precise shape and individual character be drawn, with both eyes developed together rather than one being finished in detail before the other has even been begun. The lips likewise should not be reduced to a single contour line, since their form is in fact built from several distinct planes, and brush strokes should follow this underlying structure rather than tracing an outline. Once the lips have been carefully modeled with the brush, the student must verify that the overall expression of the face has not been lost in the process, because careful, attentive work on individual parts can still leave their relationship to one another effectively unresolved. This is a problem that students do not always notice independently, even though it is immediately visible to an experienced outside observer, and it is generally caused by the artist working out fine detail too early, at the expense of an overview of the whole. The corrective is constant comparison between the part currently being developed and the overall state of the image, ensuring that each new detail harmonizes with its neighbors rather than disrupting the picture's overall coherence and unity (Abdirasilov and Talipov, 2008).

This observation points toward a broader methodological conclusion that the present study treats as central: the single most important capacity an artist-teacher must cultivate, and must in turn instill in students, is the ability to perceive nature holistically rather than as a sequence of isolated parts. Concentrating too narrowly on a single feature — the nose, for instance, with its own distinct borders of light, shadow, penumbra, and reflected color — risks the characteristic and easily-made error of forgetting that this feature exists only as part of the larger structure of the head as a whole. Avoiding this error requires sustained vigilance on the part of the student:

after working briefly on any given detail, the student must immediately compare that detail against the whole, periodically stepping back to assess the developing image as a unified composition, a discipline that constitutes a distinct and necessary third stage of the working process. At this stage, broader passages of the painting are reworked freely with a larger brush, with particular care taken that the lightest and darkest values of the composition are not inadvertently repeated elsewhere in the picture, and that areas intended to read as shadow remain visually distinct from areas of half-tone. It is also worth noting that completing a composition does not require uniformly opaque paint application throughout its surface: transparent and semi-transparent glazes, applied in a liquid-painting method, can be used effectively to finish selected areas of the work as well.

Sustained, repeated practice in the grisaille method develops the student's ability to construct form through brush strokes rather than through linear outline alone, and trains a working discipline of moving methodically from the whole toward the detail while preserving the integrity of the image at every stage — a discipline that, once genuinely established, transfers naturally into subsequent full-color exercises. Comprehensive study of color is considerably aided, in the present author's classroom experience, by working outdoors under plein-air conditions, and by independent homework assignments that allow students to accumulate practical experience well beyond the limits of scheduled class time. Before undertaking a long-term portrait painting, typically requiring some eighteen to twenty academic hours, several short-term color studies are recommended in order to build a working feel for color relationships and to develop color vision more generally as a distinct, trainable skill.

Short, rapid studies of this kind are particularly effective for practicing the correct placement of the head within the picture plane, for testing color relationships under time pressure, and for grasping the overall structure of a composition quickly and confidently. Further practice along these lines also measurably improves a student's ability to render shadow convincingly, an aspect of portrait painting that is consistently among the more difficult for beginners, who tend to paint shadow at roughly the same saturation as the adjacent illuminated areas rather than recognizing shadow as a distinct color phenomenon with its own internal color life. Learning to genuinely see color — beyond simply distinguishing one hue from another, such as red from green or blue from yellow, a discrimination any person with normal vision can readily make in nature — is a separate and considerably more demanding skill that the artist must deliberately cultivate through attentive, repeated, and disciplined practice over time (Lyu et al., 2023). It is worth noting that this conclusion holds even as digital tools become more widely available in art education: recent research on digital drawing software shows that composition, color application, and detail rendering

remain the specific skills that benefit most from deliberate, structured practice, regardless of whether the medium is traditional or digital, which supports treating color perception as a skill to be trained explicitly rather than assumed to develop on its own (Hu & Li, 2025). Comparable evidence from quasi-experimental studies of color-perception training in younger learners likewise shows that deliberately structured exercises in color recognition and matching produce measurable gains in painting performance compared with untrained practice, reinforcing the case for explicit, staged instruction at any age (Chen et. al., 2022).

These short studies are best planned for a single sitting of approximately one to two academic hours, executed on a support of roughly 20 by 15 or 30 by 20 centimeters, using fabric, cardboard, or heavy primed paper as available; a sketchbook for preliminary studies proved, in classroom use, to be indispensable rather than optional. In studies of this kind, brushwork is applied directly, without an underlying pencil drawing, establishing only the general form of the head without elaborating on fine detail that a brief session cannot in any case support. The purpose of these particular exercises is to train color perception specifically, to develop a working feel for the integrity of form, and to capture the model's individual character accurately within severe time constraints; sustained practice of exactly this kind is ultimately what allows a student to progress to a complete, long-term study of the head, examined and resolved in far greater depth than a short study permits. Even within an extended, long-term session, it proved useful for students to interrupt sustained work periodically with a brief study undertaken from a different viewpoint, in order to understand the model more fully before returning to the main task with renewed attention. Importantly, exercises of this kind should not be confined to scheduled classroom time alone: regular, disciplined completion of homework assignments emerged, across the classroom observations underlying this study, as a significant factor in the growth of a student's overall knowledge and practical experience.

Conclusion

Teaching the portrait genre to future fine-arts educators proves most effective when organized as a deliberately staged progression — from grisaille studies that train tonal judgment and a feel for volume, through controlled exercises conducted under natural and then artificial light, and finally to free, independent outdoor work — rather than as an unstructured sequence of loosely related assignments. Throughout this progression, the single most important habit to instill in students is holistic perception: the constant, disciplined comparison of any individually worked detail against the picture as a whole, since technical facility with isolated features, whether the eyes, the lips, or the modeling of a single plane of light, has genuine

artistic value only insofar as it serves the coherence of the entire image rather than detracting from it.

Historical and national examples of portrait painting function best, pedagogically, not as templates for students to imitate directly but as evidence of the considerable range of solutions the genre permits, helping students recognize and avoid the characteristic mistakes of beginners while still leaving ample room for individual artistic development and personal style. Equally, the present study suggests that short-term color studies, regular and disciplined independent homework, and a deliberate alternation between long-term and brief exercises together contribute measurably to a student's growth in color perception, in compositional judgment, and in overall confidence at the easel.

For methodology in higher art education more broadly, these findings suggest that curricula intended to train future drawing and painting teachers should formalize the grisaille-based sequence described in this article as a required preparatory stage preceding full-color portrait work, with explicit, dedicated attention given to teaching color vision as a distinct and trainable skill, rather than simply assuming that it develops automatically alongside general technical drawing ability. Further pedagogical research could usefully examine how adoption of this particular sequence affects measurable learning outcomes when compared against alternative approaches that introduce full-color portrait work earlier in the curriculum, and could also explore how the balance between classroom instruction and independent homework might be further optimized for students at different stages of training.

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С.Ф. Абдирасилов

Низомий атындағы Өзбекстан ұлттық педагогикалық университеті, Ташкент, Өзбекстан

Болашақ бейнелеу өнері мұғалімдерін кәсіби даярлаудағы портретпен жұмыс істеудің теориялық және практикалық әдістемесі

Андатпа. Бұл мақалада жоғары педагогикалық білім беру жүйесінде болашақ бейнелеу өнері мұғалімдеріне портрет жанрын оқыту әдістемесі қарастырылады. Тақырыптың өзектілігі студенттердің сурет салу ережелері туралы теориялық білімі мен оны табиғаттан, тірі модельден жұмыс істеу барысында тәжірибеде қолдана білу қабілеті арасындағы тұрақты алшақтықтан туындайды, бұл алшақтық портрет жанрында, оның күрделілігіне байланысты, әсіресе айқын байқалады. Сабак беру тәжірибесіне және портрет өнерінің Қайта өрлеу дәуірінің шеберлерінен бастап орыс және өзбек ұлттық дәстүрлеріне дейінгі тарихи дамуын талдауға сүйене отырып, мақалада портрет дағдыларын дамытудың құрылымдық төрт кезеңді оқыту тізбегі ұсынылады: фигураны бір түсті гризайль техникасымен бейнелеу, бетті табиғи күндізгі жарықта бейнелеу, бетті жасанды жарықтандыру жағдайында бейнелеу және портретпен ашық аспан астында, пленэрде жұмыс істеу. Түс енгізілгенге дейін тон сезімі мен көлем сезімін қалыптастырудағы гризайль әдісінің педагогикалық маңызына, көз бен ерін сияқты жеке бет бөлшектерімен тұтастықты жоғалтпай жұмыс істеудің практикалық нұсқауларына, сондай-ақ студенттердің түсті көру қабілеті мен қылқаламмен жұмыс істеудегі сенімділігін дамытудағы қысқа мерзімді түрлі-түсті этюдтердің рөліне ерекше назар аударылады. Талқылау нәтижелері монохромнан толық түске біртіндеп көшу тапсырмаларды дербес орындау тәртібімен және әрбір жасалған бөлшекті жалпы композициямен үнемі

салыстырумен ұштасқанда, реттелмеген, түспен бастайтын оқытуға қарағанда студенттердің біртұтас әрі психологиялық тұрғыдан сенімді портреттер жасауына әкелетінін көрсетеді. Алынған нәтижелер сурет және живопись пәндерін оқытушыларға бағдарлы тапсырмалар жүйесін құруда, сондай-ақ студенттердің өзіндік жұмысын ұйымдастыруда пайдалы болуы мүмкін. Мақала осы оқыту тізбегін болашақ бейнелеу өнері мұғалімдерін даярлаудың оқу бағдарламаларына енгізу бойынша ұсыныстармен қорытындыланады.

Түйін сөздер: портрет жанры, гризайль техникасы, сурет салу әдістемесі, түсті қабылдау, композиция, перспективалық қысқару, көркем білім беру.

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Теоретическая и практическая методика работы над портретом в профессиональной подготовке будущих учителей изобразительного искусства

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается методика преподавания портретного жанра будущим учителям изобразительного искусства в системе высшего педагогического образования. Актуальность темы обусловлена сохраняющимся разрывом между теоретическими знаниями студентов о принципах рисования и их практической способностью применять эти знания при работе с живой моделью, разрыв, который становится особенно очевидным в таком сложном жанре, как портретная живопись. Основываясь на аудиторной педагогической практике и обзоре исторического развития портретной живописи от мастеров эпохи Возрождения до русских и узбекских национальных традиций, авторы в статье предлагают структурированную четырехэтапную последовательность обучения для развития портретных навыков: визуализация фигуры в технике одноцветной гризайли, изображение лица при естественном дневном свете, изображение лица при искусственном освещении и выполнение портретной работы на открытом воздухе (на пленэре). Особое внимание уделяется педагогической ценности метода гризайли для развития тонального восприятия и понимания формы перед использованием цвета, практическим рекомендациям по изображению отдельных черт лица, таких как глаза и губы, при сохранении целостности всего портрета, а также роли краткосрочных исследований цвета в развитии цветовосприятия учащихся и навыков работы кистью. Обсуждение показало, что поэтапный переход от монохромной работы к полноцветной в сочетании с дисциплинированной

самостоятельной практикой и постоянным сопоставлением каждой детали с общей композицией позволяет создавать более целостные и психологически выразительные портреты учащихся, чем неструктурированное обучение с использованием цвета. В заключение статьи даются рекомендации по включению этой последовательности обучения в учебные планы профессиональной подготовки будущих учителей изобразительного искусства.

Ключевые слова: портретная живопись, техника гризайль, педагогика рисования, восприятие цвета, композиция, перспективное сокращение, образование в области изобразительного искусства.

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