

Zara's Guide to Capturing Character: The Art of the Portrait

Unmask the masterpiece within: Look beyond the face and paint the story!

- Why do artists focus on the 'rule of thirds' when positioning eyes on a face to ensure accurate proportion?
- How can the use of light and shadow (chiaroscuro) change the mood or atmosphere of a portrait?
- In what ways do facial expressions act as a visual language to communicate emotion to the viewer?
- How does the choice of medium—such as charcoal, watercolour, or oil paint—alter the texture and realism of a subject's skin?
- What is the significance of the background in a portrait, and how does it provide context for the subject's identity?

Did you know? Did you know? Before the invention of photography in the 19th century, portraits were the primary way to document what a person looked like. Artists often included 'attributes'—small objects surrounding the subject—to hint at their profession, status, or hobbies, turning a simple picture into a biography!

Key vocabulary: Proportion · Expression · Medium · Composition · Feature · Sketch · Tone · Perspective