Mastering the Art of the Portrait with Zara

Learning objective: To develop drawing skills by observing facial proportions and capturing expression in a portrait.

Follow the steps below to create a portrait of a friend, family member, or a self-portrait. Use a mirror or a photograph to observe the symmetry and features of the face.

Draw: Create a portrait of a person showing a distinct emotion. Start by drawing a light vertical axis line to help with symmetry. Sketch the eyes exactly halfway down the head. Focus on the 'contours' of the face—the bridge of the nose, the curve of the lips, and the structure of the ears. Use shading to create a light source coming from the top-left, ensuring you leave 'highlights' on the forehead and nose. Finish by adding fine details like hair texture and skin tone using cross-hatching or blending techniques.

Label words: Symmetry · Proportion · Feature · Shading · Contour · Expression · Perspective · Tone

Steps:

1. Step 1: Lightly sketch an oval shape to represent the head. Where should you position the eyes in relation to the vertical centre of the head? Explain why this is important for accurate proportion.

2. Step 2: When drawing the nose and mouth, how do you determine their placement to ensure the portrait looks realistic?

3. Step 3: Define the 'Contour' of the jawline. Why is it essential to observe the specific shape of the chin rather than drawing a perfect circle?

4. Step 4: Label the 'Symmetry' line on your sketch. If you were to draw a face from a side profile, how would this line change?

5. Step 5: Apply shading to create 'Tone'. Justify your choice of light source direction—how does this affect the depth of the portrait?

6. Step 6: Add 'Expression' to your portrait. Compare and contrast how the positioning of the eyebrows can change the mood of your subject.