

## Procedures for Pencil Portrait Drawing - Drawing a Chin Supporting Hand Together with Shoulders

Including a hand in your portraits adds a significant measure of excitement but can quickly destroy an otherwise fine portrait if done badly. The goal is to integrate the hand so that it is not only proportionally and gestural correct, but is congruous in personality with the expression of the face. For example, an agreeable facial expression juxtaposed with a clenched fist may not yield the effect you want unless you intend to add an ironic twist to your portrait. On the other hand, a hand supporting the skull goes very well with a stern scowling expression. First, absolute beginners should not be attempting to sketch both the hand and portrait together. Things will quickly get muddled. The lesson for the absolute beginner here is to get a grasp of the significance of acquiring a solid foundation of your skill. In a view where a hand supports the skull there is a delicate forward tilt because the subject is a little bit hunched and leaning forward. For the artist, this situation translates into the presence of a delicately foreshortened and reclined portrait. In the hand/skull case this means that the chin is slightly receding relative to the forehead. As always, you should begin with the all encompassing arabesque, which in this case, includes the hand and the shoulder. If you first sketch the skull and then attach the hand to it you are really asking for problems. The hand and the skull will lack unity and will give the awkward impression that they are two distinct objects that are coincidentally juxtaposed. When drawing the complete arabesque be aware of the negative as well as the positive spaces. Also, do not pre-measure any aspects of the complete arabesque. It should be rendered with as much fluidity as possible without losing your sense of size. Strike first then verify. Further build upon the complete arabesque by locating the face, hand, and shoulder markers and proportions. The internal architecture of the complete arabesque is initiated by hatching-in the chiefdarks and painting out the lights with a kneaded eraser. What you are doing is to set the stage for articulating the facial features, the hand, and the shoulder. The hand must be placed and proportioned in accordance with the skull and the facial features. The compression of the jaw into the palm must also be reckoned with. Employing a sharp pencil you can now further develop the tone and form with blending, stumping down, and erasing. In this, you will be going back and forth hoping that you know when to stop. Rendering is about making decisions, i.e., knowing what to build up and, just as critical, knowing what to leave out. In the hand/skull case you have to be particularly careful how far you develop the hand. The hand should be seen as an extra element, that is, a supporting element that should not be part of the focus. Do not feel compelled to finish every element in your sketch. Everything in drawing is about balance and transferring your intent directly to the viewer's eye. In conclusion, it is essential to see the hand and the shoulder as parts of one whole. Starting your sketch with rendering the complete arabesque will help you greatly with maintaining this unity. Treat the hand and shoulder as supporting elements that surround the face. This means that you should sketch them in a subordinate role.

### About the Author

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