

# Portrait Drawing

WITH MATTHEW ARCHAMBAULT

This PDF booklet compliments the video tutorials associated with *Portrait Drawing With Matthew Archambault*. It contains all of the video stills within the screencast tutorials. Plus a materials list and various extras.



DrawingTutorialsOnline



Welcome inside my studio. As you can see it's a bit messy. I love working with natural light. However it's best to have a soft light box right above your easel for those cloudy days.

In terms of my easel set up working at a forty-five degree seems to be best for my shoulder ergonomically speaking. I occasionally draw vertically. I save that for life drawing and warming up.

For my reference set up I like having one photo to the left of my drawing. I also like working from a monitor. It just gives you a better look into the darker shadow shapes.

The materials used for this tutorial are pretty straight forward.

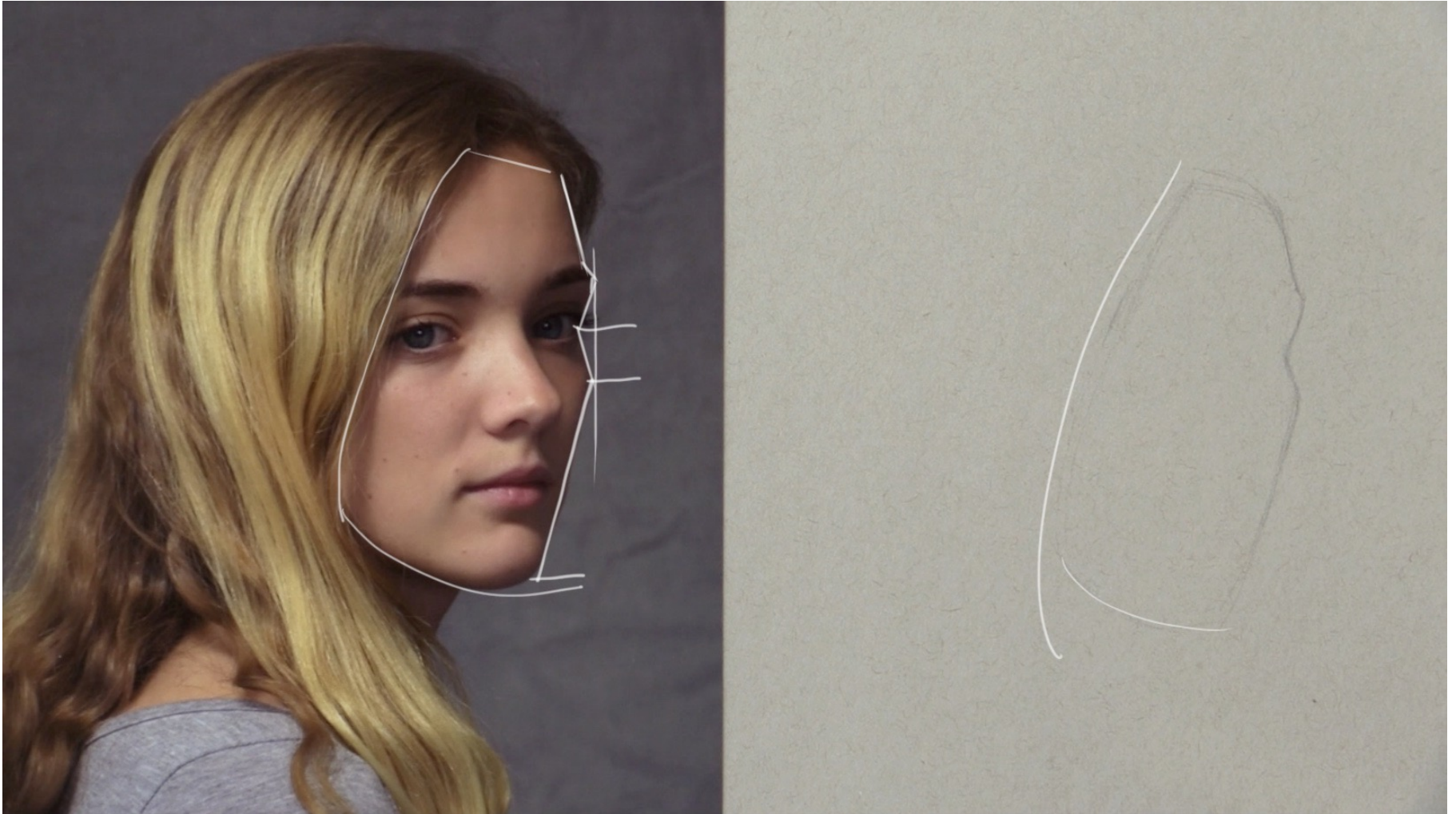
1. Prismacolor Col-erase pencils.
2. General's brand white charcoal pencils.
3. Strathmore's "Toned Gray" medium surface paper.
4. Various erasers including a kneaded eraser as well as a Faber-Castell dust-free eraser.
5. For blending various bristle canvas brushes were used.
6. A wooden bridge to prevent smudging.

This portrait drawing took me roughly two days to complete. Roughly six to eight hours. I definitely worked on the drawing after the filming was complete. I worked on the nose the most making it a touch wider. The drawing really didn't come together for me until the last hour. I weight what I should draw off camera. The tweaking of the nose would not have added much to the video tutorials.

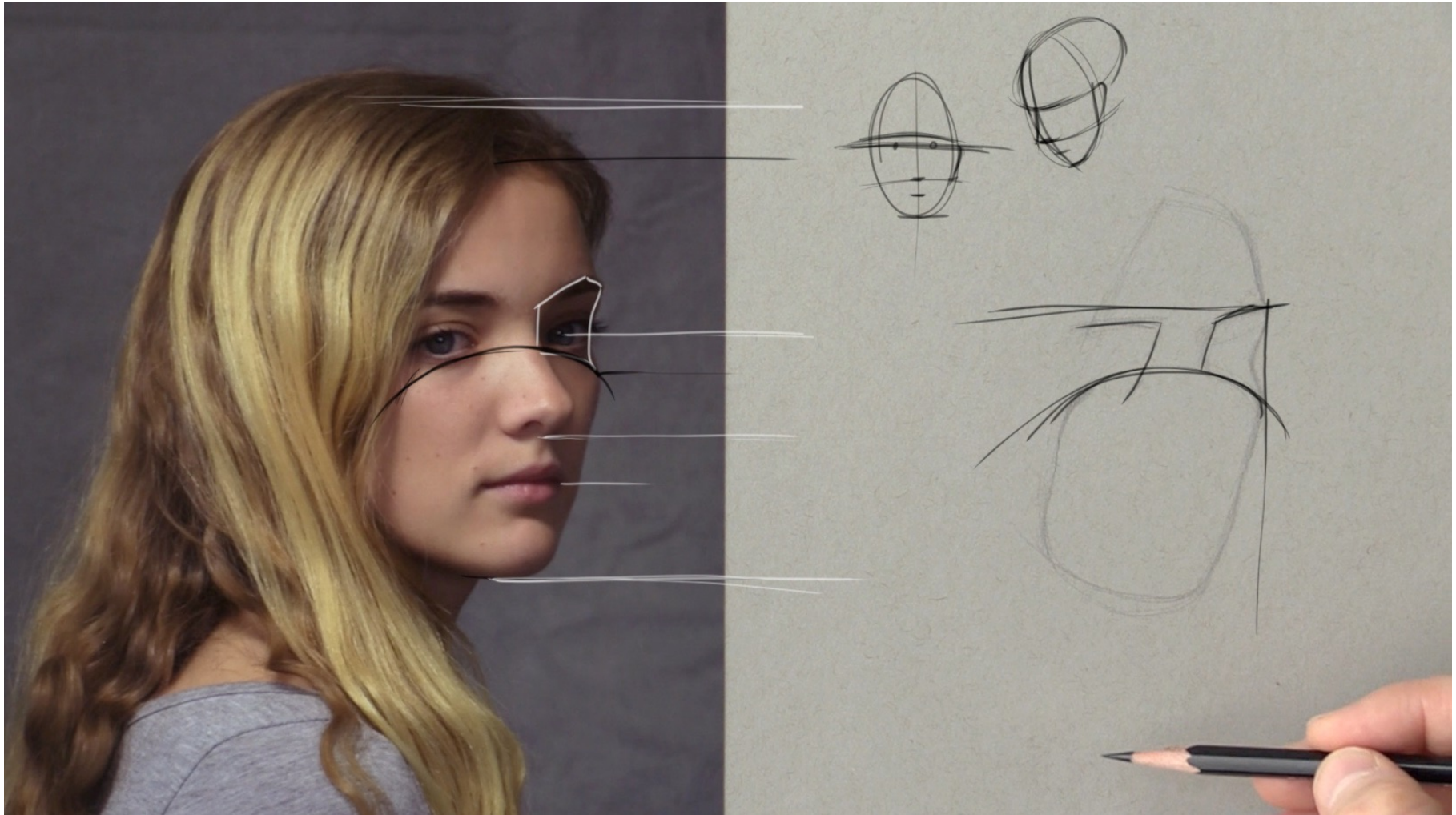
Sometimes you capture the likeness in the first twenty minutes, sometimes the likeness comes in the last twenty minutes. Each drawing has it's own vibe. Of course if you are drawing everyday things almost always come easier.

Thank you for watching this tutorial and downloading the PDF. I encourage you to post you own portrait drawing to our [Group Coaching Gallery](#) for a weekly critique.

A bigger version of the final drawing can be found on the webpages that hold the videos.



You want to start working on your portrait drawing with angles, measuring and gesture. Mapping out the shape of the face is step one.

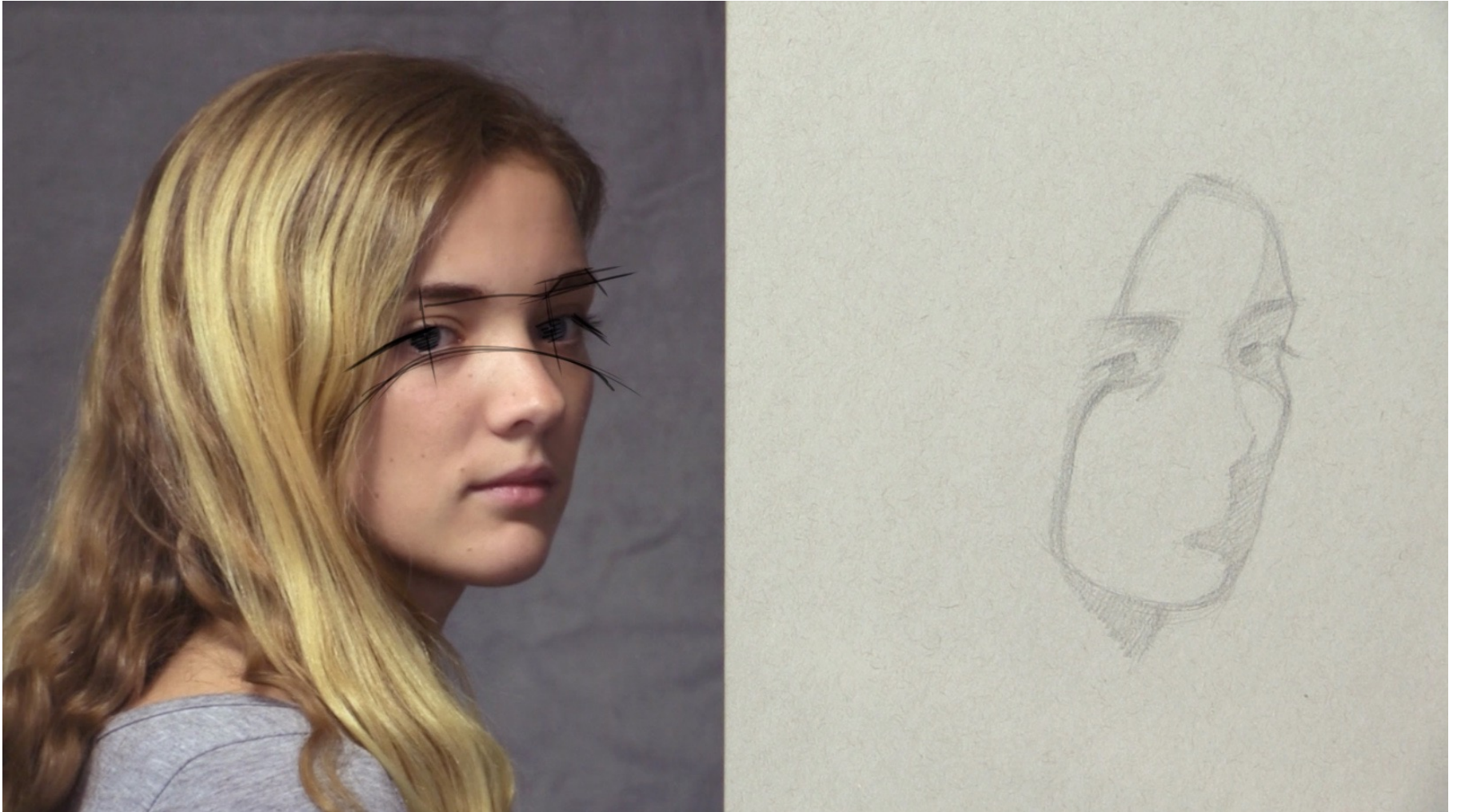


Do your best to take as many measurements as possible in the beginning of the portrait drawing process. Best practices include finding the middle of the portrait. Also take one or two vertical measurements early on. Connecting shadow shapes with gesture line takes the stiffness out of the process.

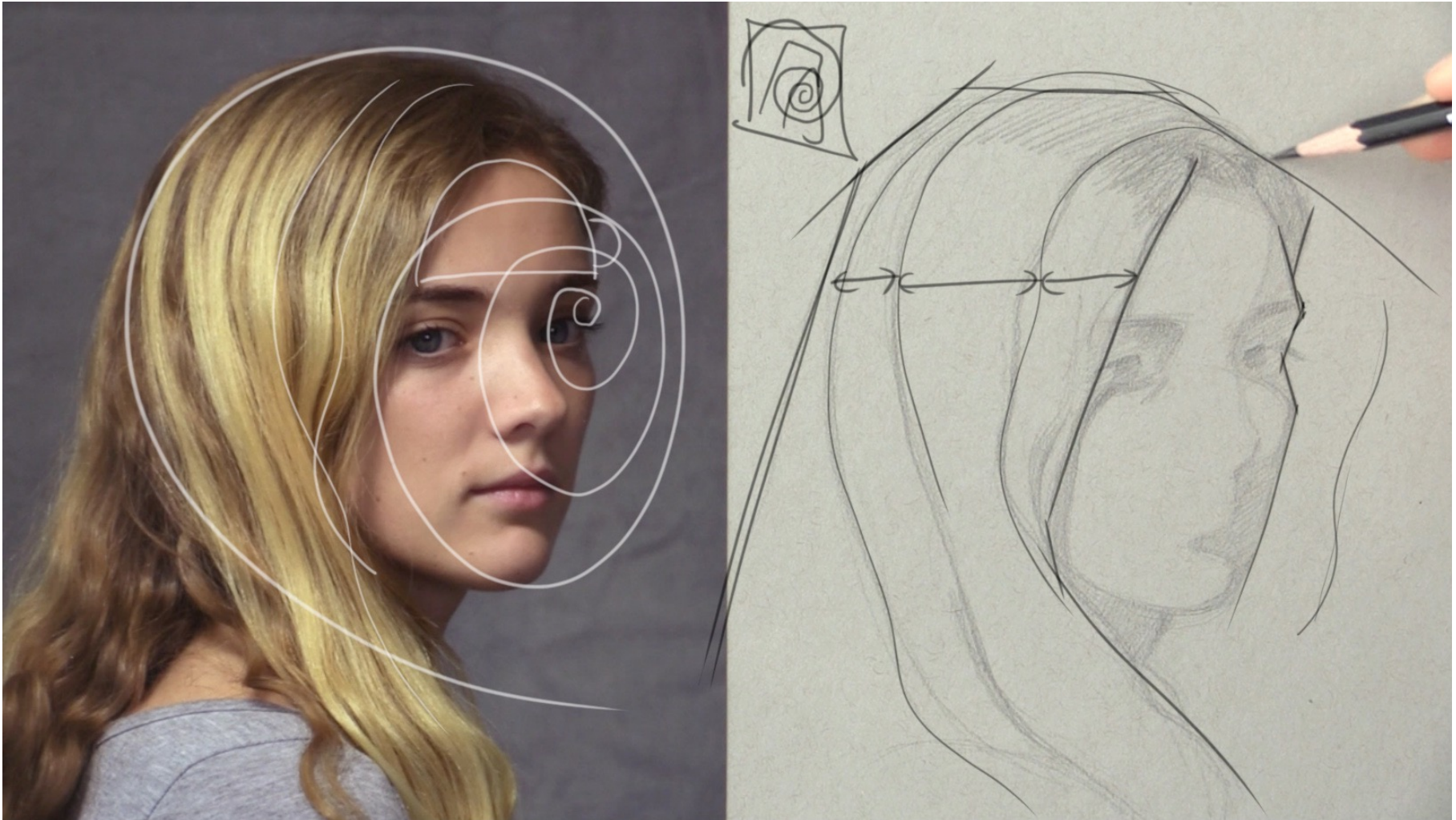


Understanding from the beginning where the light is coming from is super important. That will dictate where the shadow shapes are primarily located. Shade in some preliminary shadow shapes very early on in the process. This will provide you with a ghost like impression of the model.

Think top to bottom with your shadow shapes. Don't get stuck drawing in just one area.



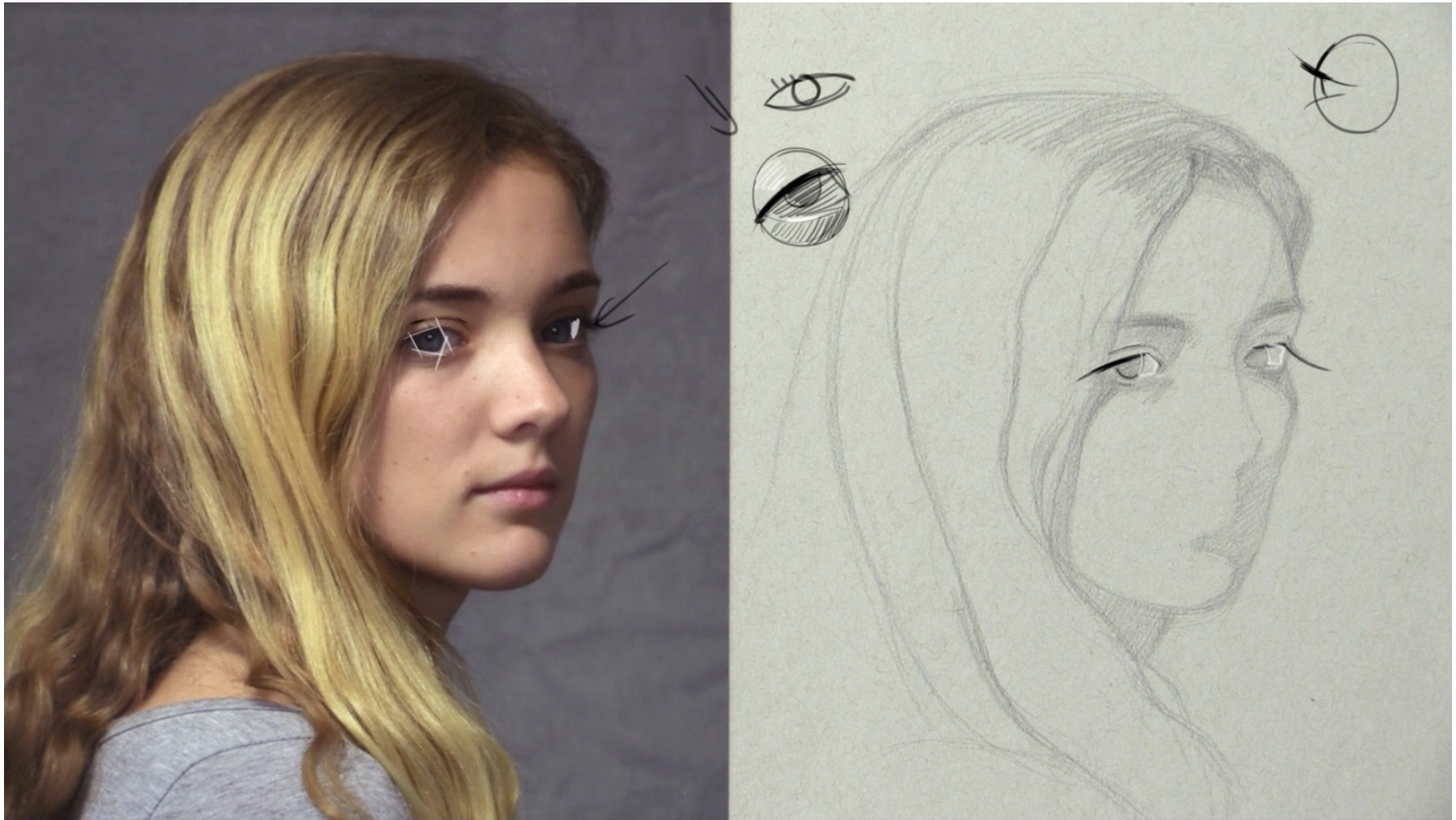
Mapping out the eyes in a soft way first is something you must try. Look at the distance between the pupils. This helps big time when trying to draw a likeness of the model. Remember eye socket shadow shapes are most important. The eyes are housed within those eye socket shapes.



After taking the time to get a ghost like impression of the face immediately tackle drawing in the shape of the hair. Draw the contour of the hair using big macro angles. Then dive into the interior of the hair mapping out some contrasting landmarks with flowing gesture lines.

Gradually spiral out from where you originally started.

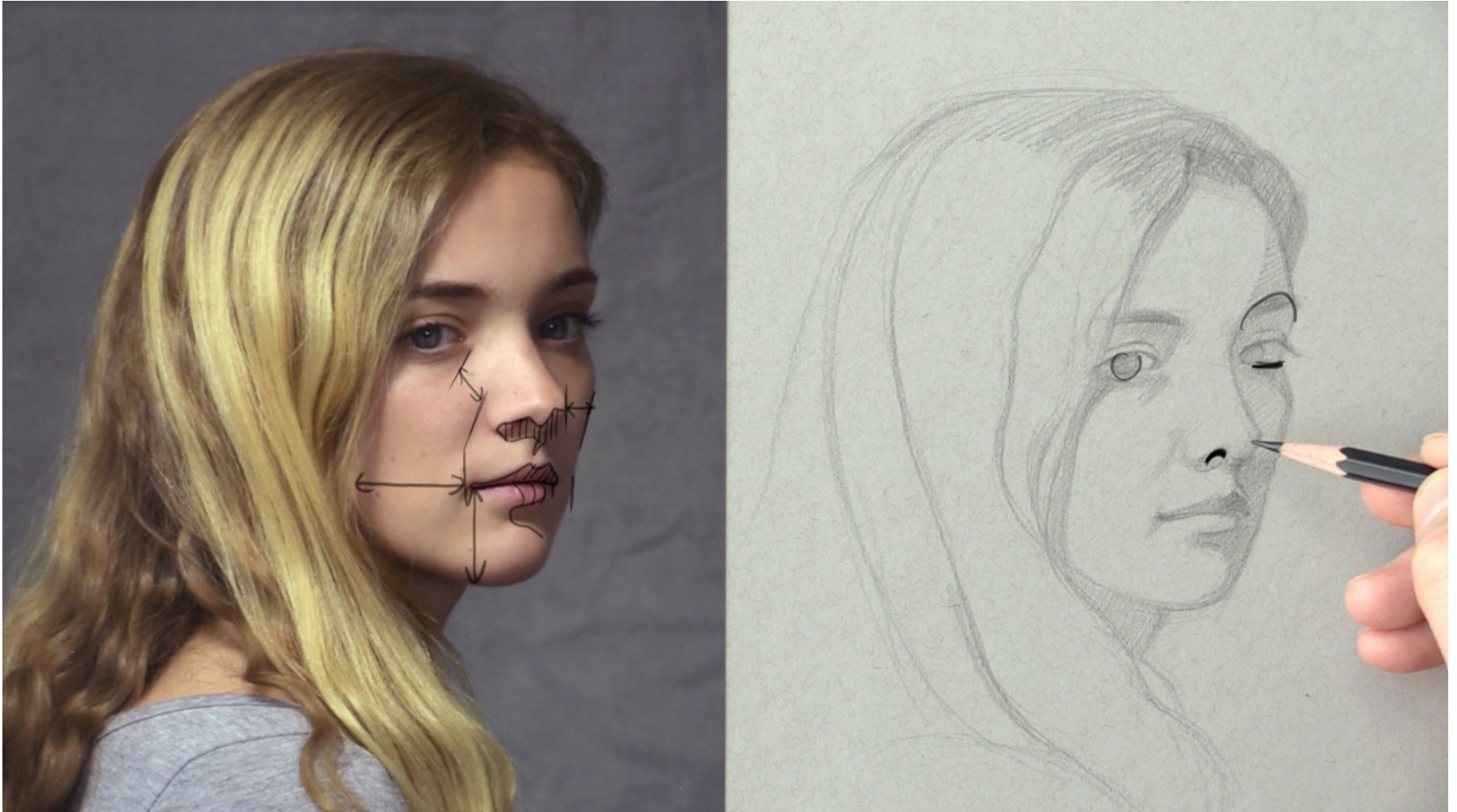




When drawing eyes try to avoid the very common simplistic almond shape. Instead focus on drawing the iris's with angles. Capturing the opposing angles of the outer eye lashes can immediately get the character of your model.

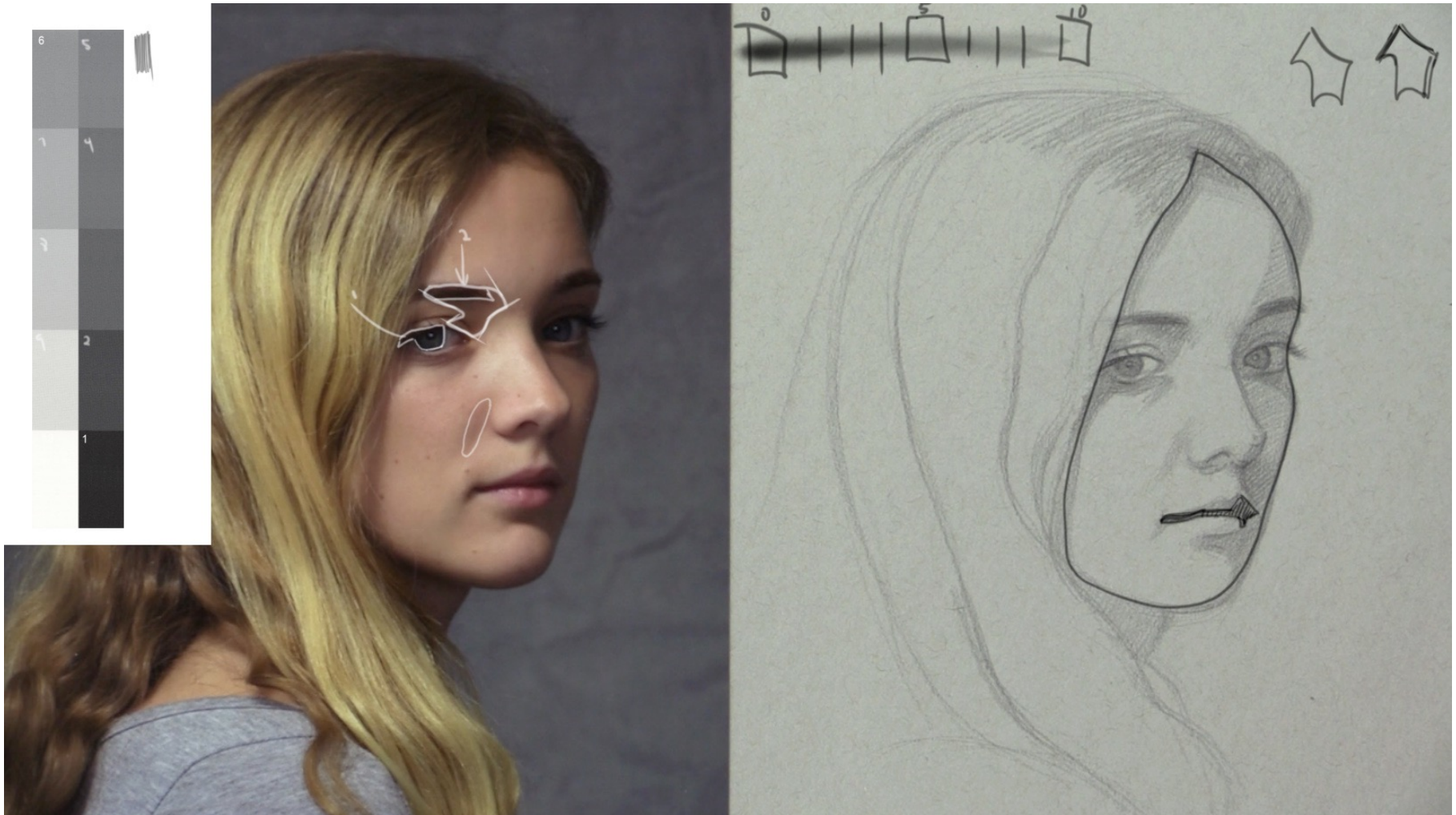
Of course form is paramount. Think eye sphere. Where is the light hitting the sphere? Unless the model is looking up or into a light the whites of the eyes are mostly bathed in shadow.

Avoid leaving the whites of the eyes pure white. Especially if you decide to work from this photo reference.



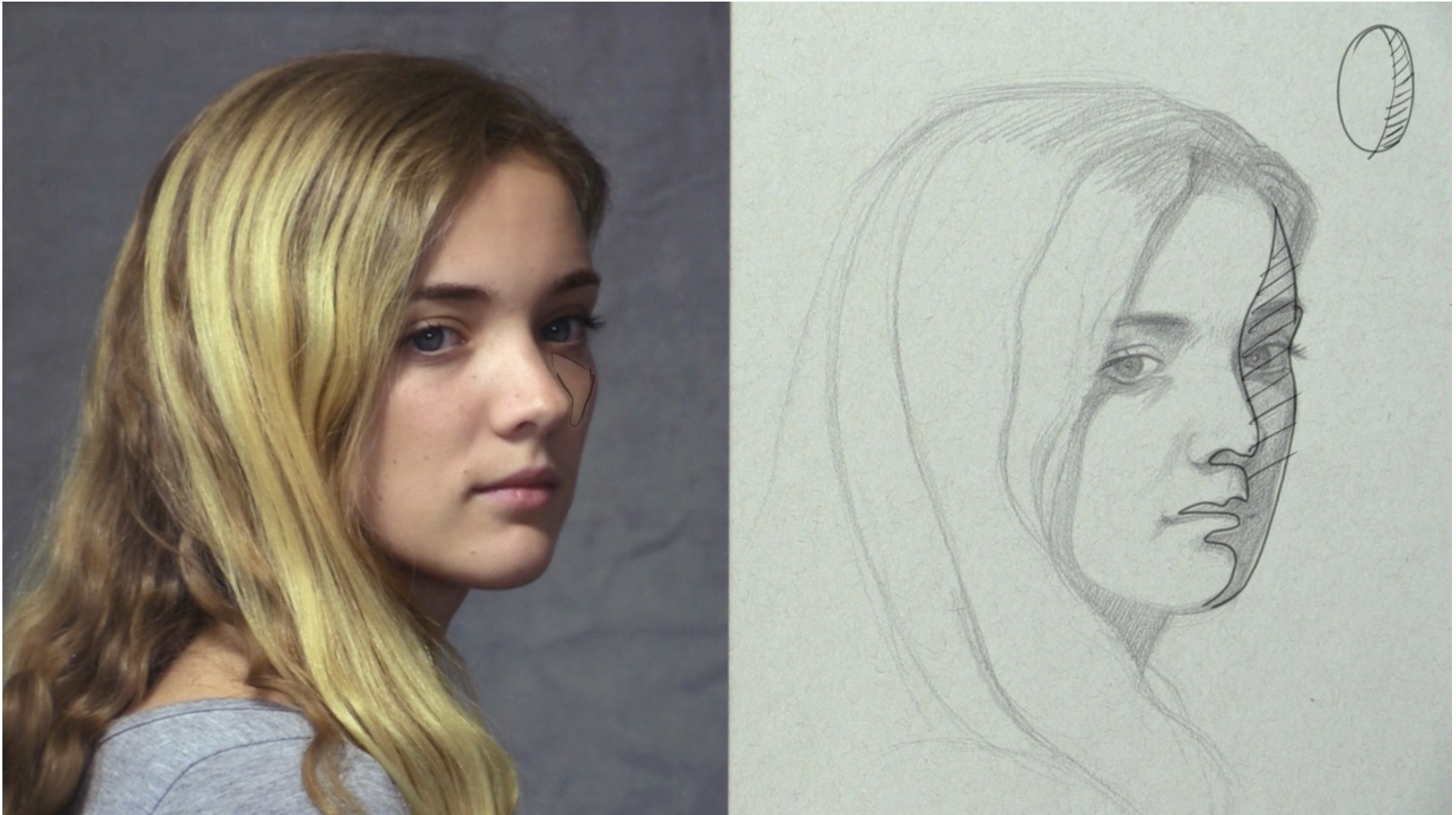
Did I say measure yet? A big part of drawing someone's likeness is getting correct measurements. Take your time, a few good measurements go a long way.

Also avoid at this early stage of the process putting in extreme darks. Gradually build up the darks. This will give your drawings a nice soft atmospheric quality.



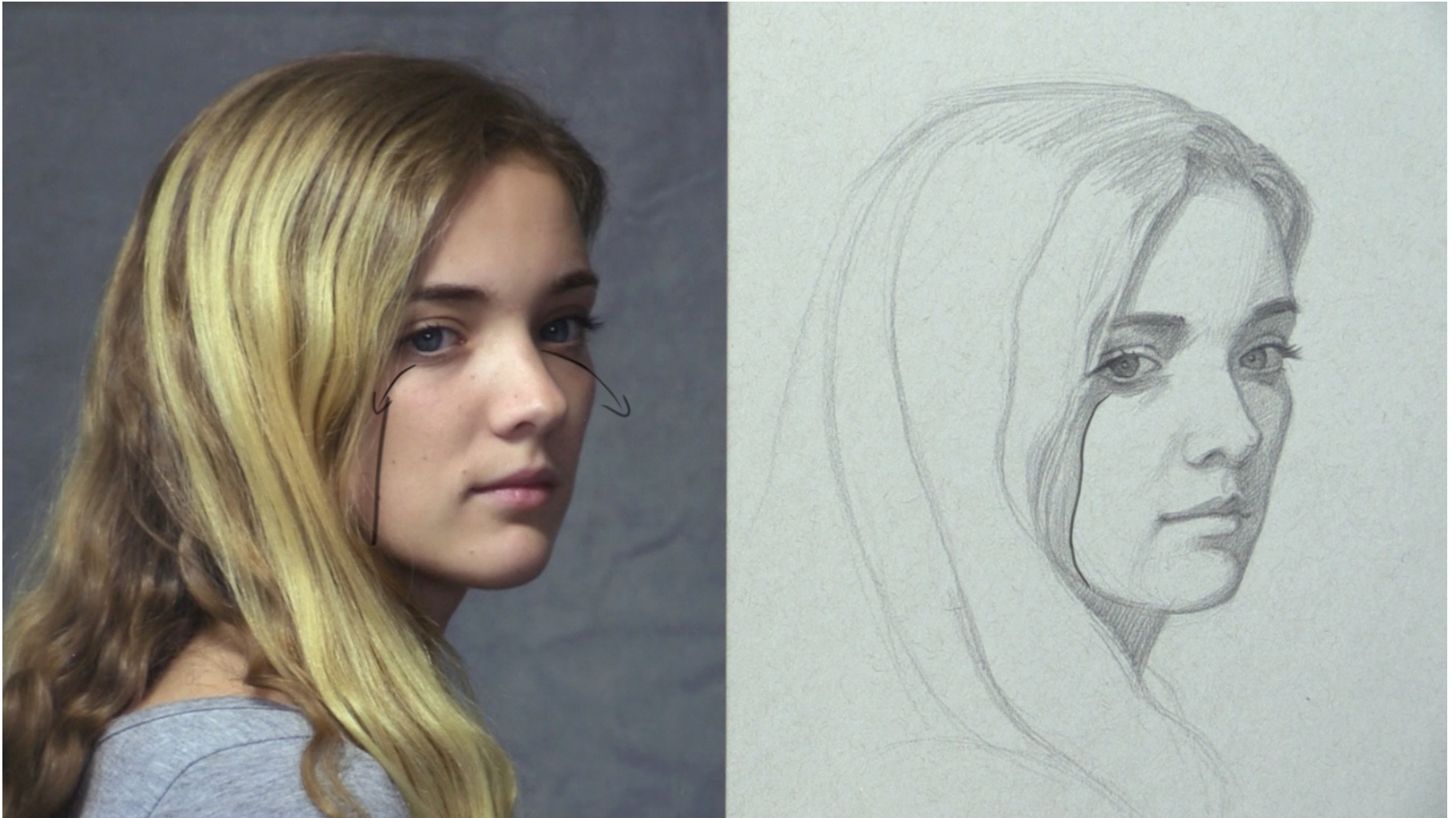
Coming from a painting background matching values is an extremely important aspect in this style of portrait drawing. If you can draw accurate shapes filling them with the proper value, you are on your way to being able to control your drawings. Not the other way around.

Take a few minutes each week to practice matching values. Practice matching shapes too!

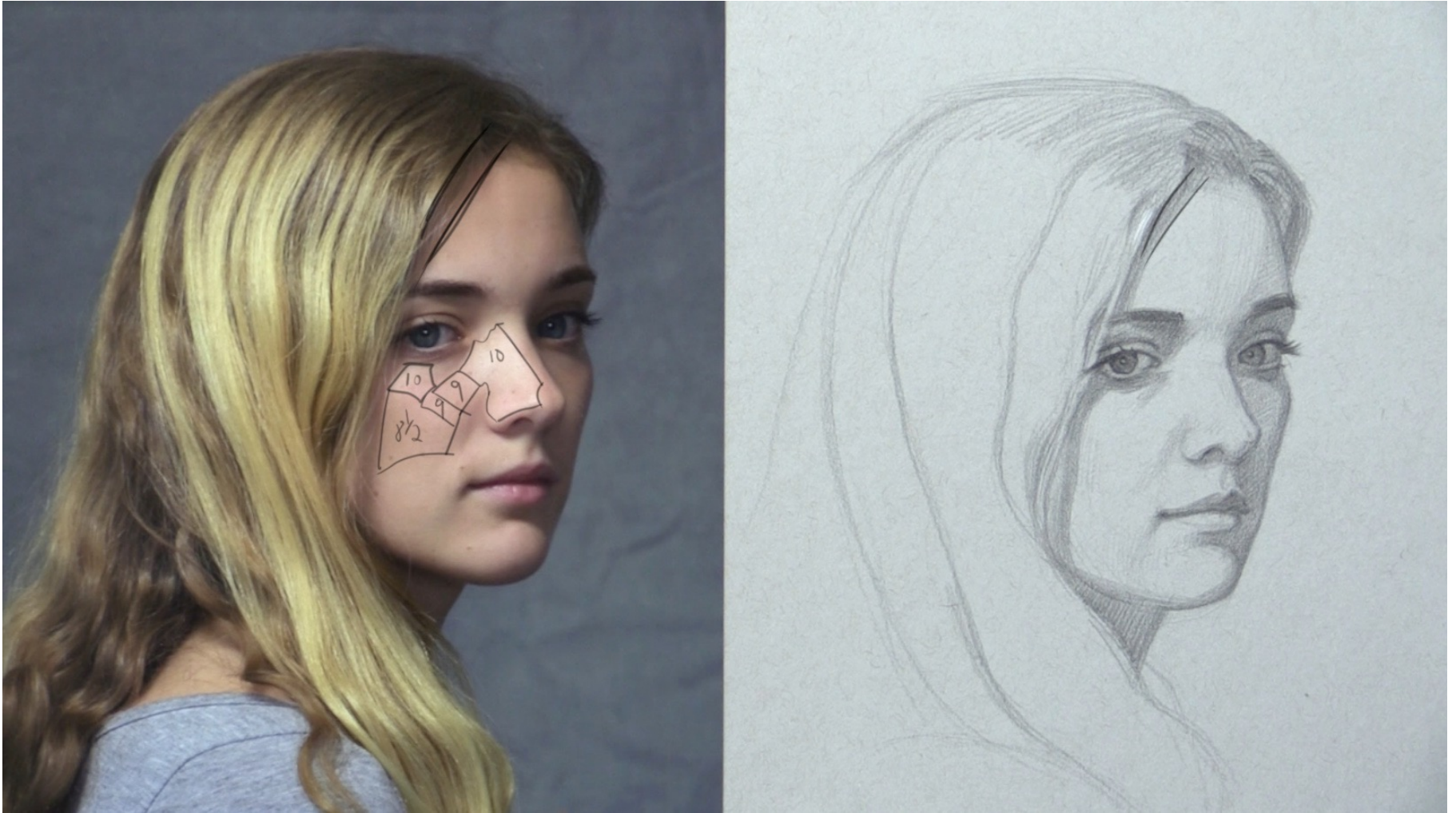


A very basic fundamental concept that will improve your portrait drawings. Using a line to separate the light shape from the dark shadow shape. Yes the face is very complicated. Think about the basic form of the head while drawing that complicated line.

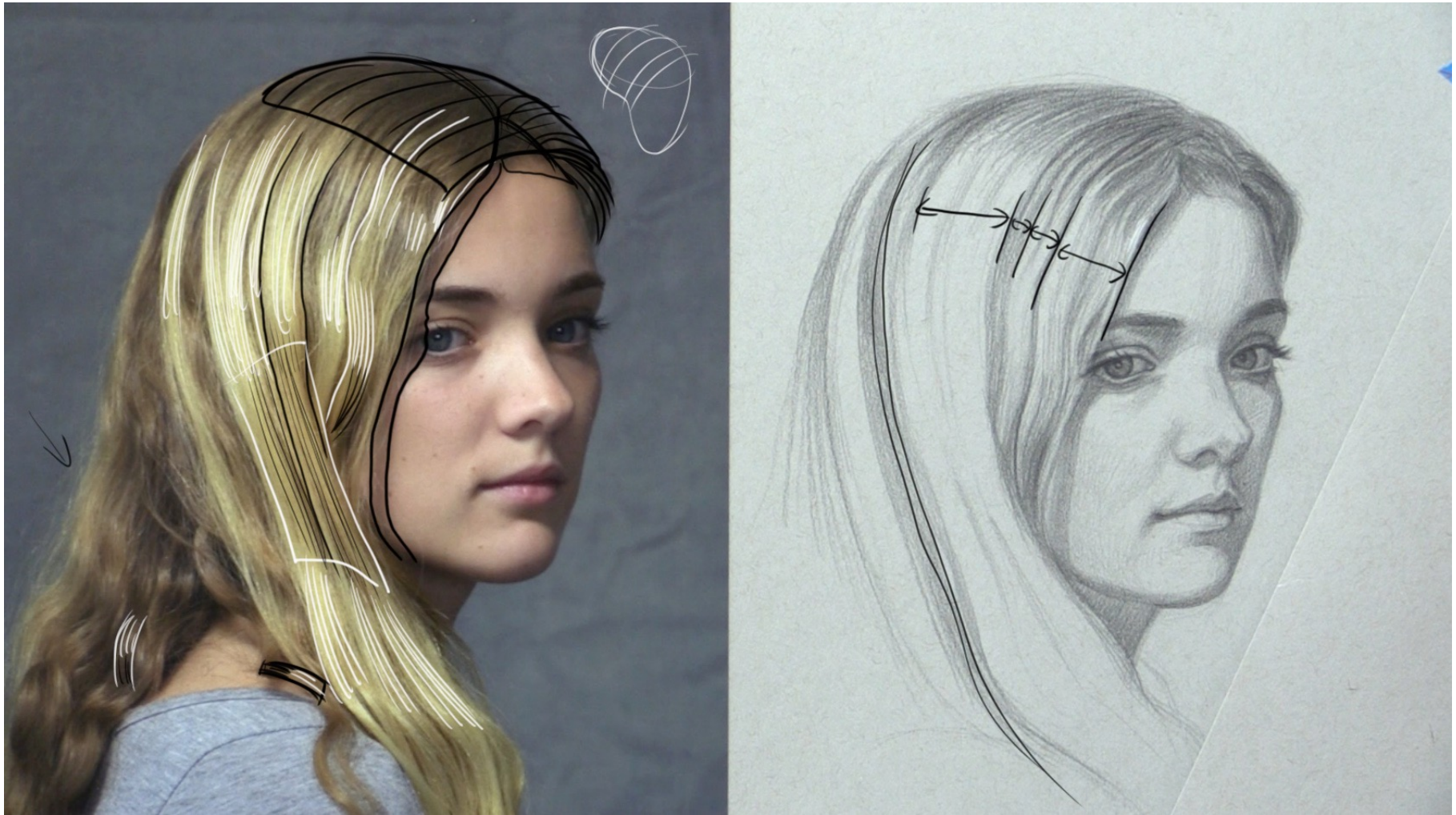
Think big, top to bottom consistent light and shadow.



Do your very best to avoid using straight lines in your portrait drawing. Start with straight angles then progress to s curve type lines. Yes look for connecting shadow shapes with flowing gesture line.



The face is a puzzle of complicated surface planes shaded with the appropriate value.



Hair is made up various cylinders. Some cylinders are shallow and flat while others are wavy and very curvy. This model did not have curly hair therefore gradual value shifts were more appropriate.

Think less detail in the shadows more detail in the light. Give your hair soft edges. You definitely do not want to give your model helmet head.



There is not one right way to draw surface planes. In general form comes in all different shapes and sizes, ovals, cylinders, boxes and spheres. Add to that different head positions provide you with different challenges.

Being aware of the direction of the light will help you stay consistent with where you shade the shadow shapes. In this case all of the shadow shapes are under planes. You can take advantage of pencil stroke direction to maximize the form of the models face. Understanding the anatomy of the face will provide you with more food for thought. You can shade with the direction of the muscle fibers too.





Even for a simple portrait drawing like this one adding a subtle background tone to your drawings will give you something to shade into. If you can shade into a background tone you can create depth. This will enable you to create variety with your edges.

Remember your background tone is there to promote the portrait, not take away from it. Beware of super messy contrasting pencil strokes in the background. Another variable is giving your background tone a flow. In this case I just pulled from the flow of her hair.

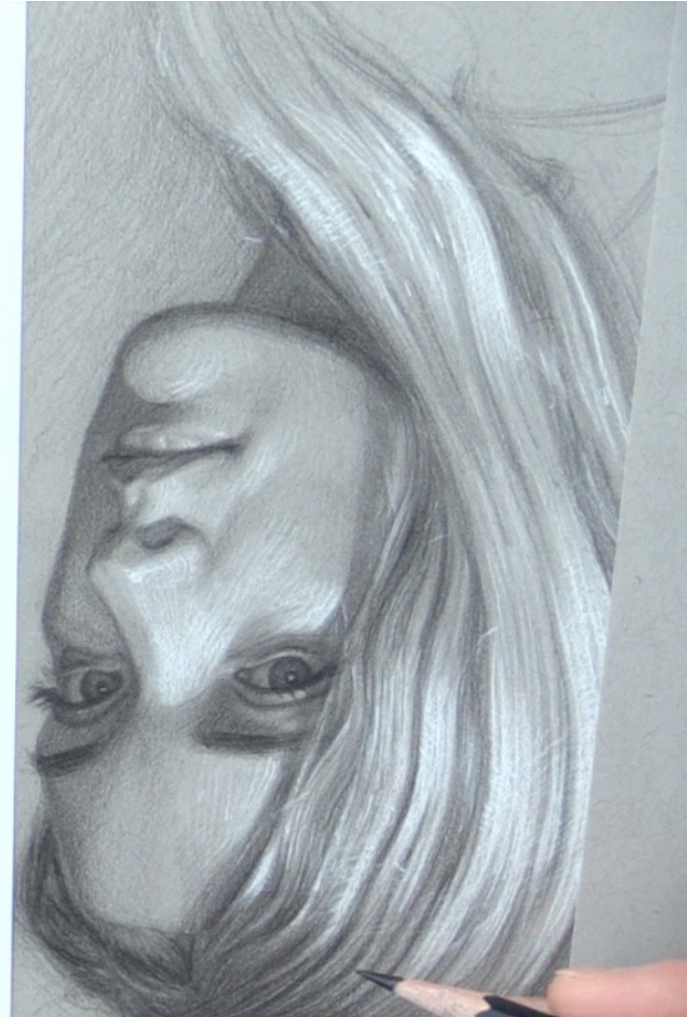


There is no one right way to choose your flow. You have to feel it out. Just because it's in the photo reference does not mean you have to draw it. As you can see I decided to draw just part of the models hair leaving all of her shoulder out of the drawing.



Used properly edges can have a dramatic effect on your portrait drawings. Hard edges make objects come forward. Soft edges make objects recede into the background. Also certain textures will be enhanced with specific edge qualities.

Hair is very soft so using a soft edge will promote that texture. In this case my hardest edge was placed on the contour of her face. A little stylized no doubt. Think about placing some of your hardest edges within the center of the models face.



Getting a likeness is difficult. If you are struggling with this try working upside down. This will make everything abstract. An eye shape becomes instantly abstract. Our brain can draw abstract shapes much better than literal complicated shapes.

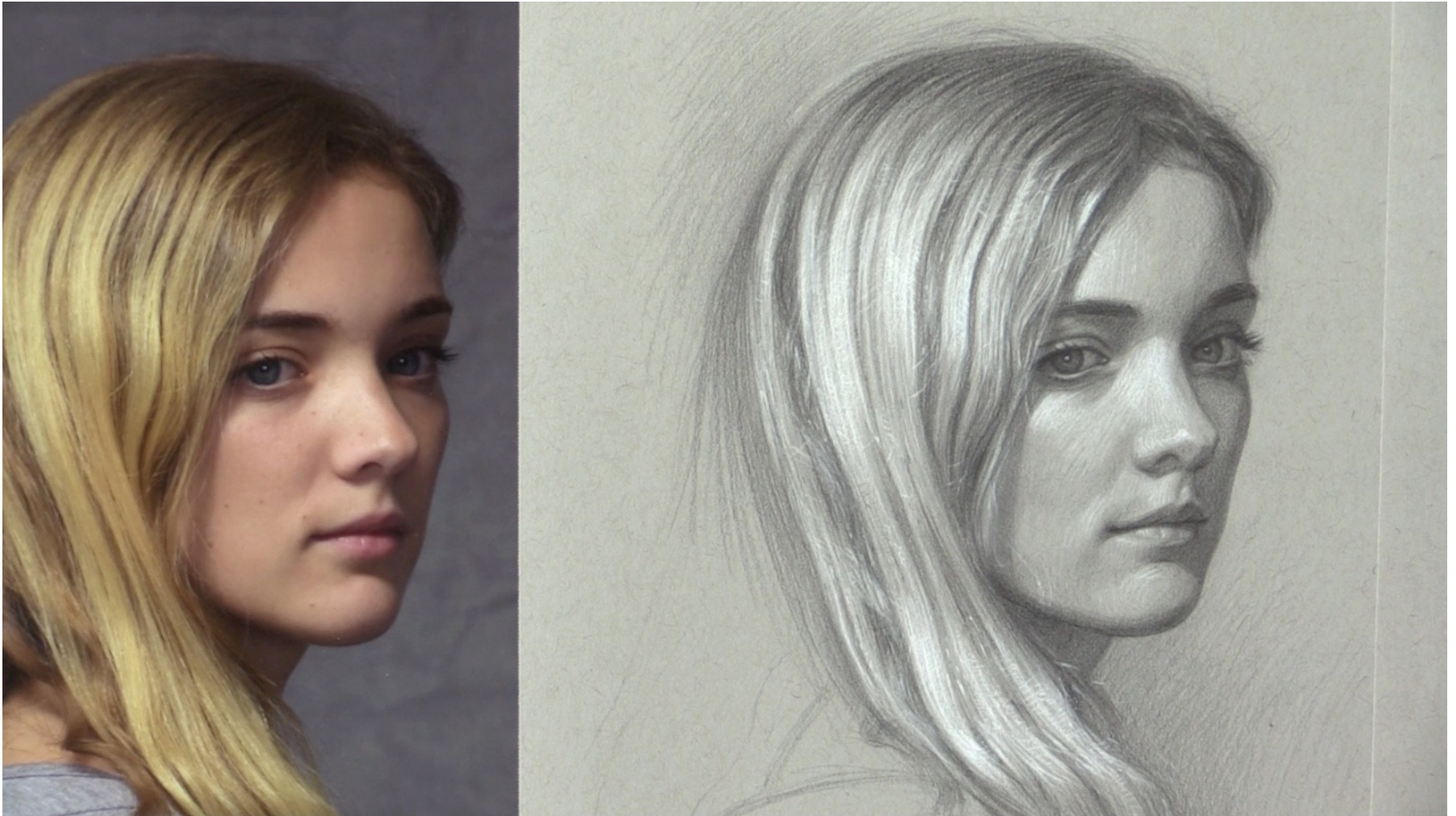
This technique simply put just gives you a different perspective on things. When you turn your drawing right side up again you will see your drawing through a different lens immediately. You can also try looking at your drawing in a mirror with the reference right next to it. That helps too.



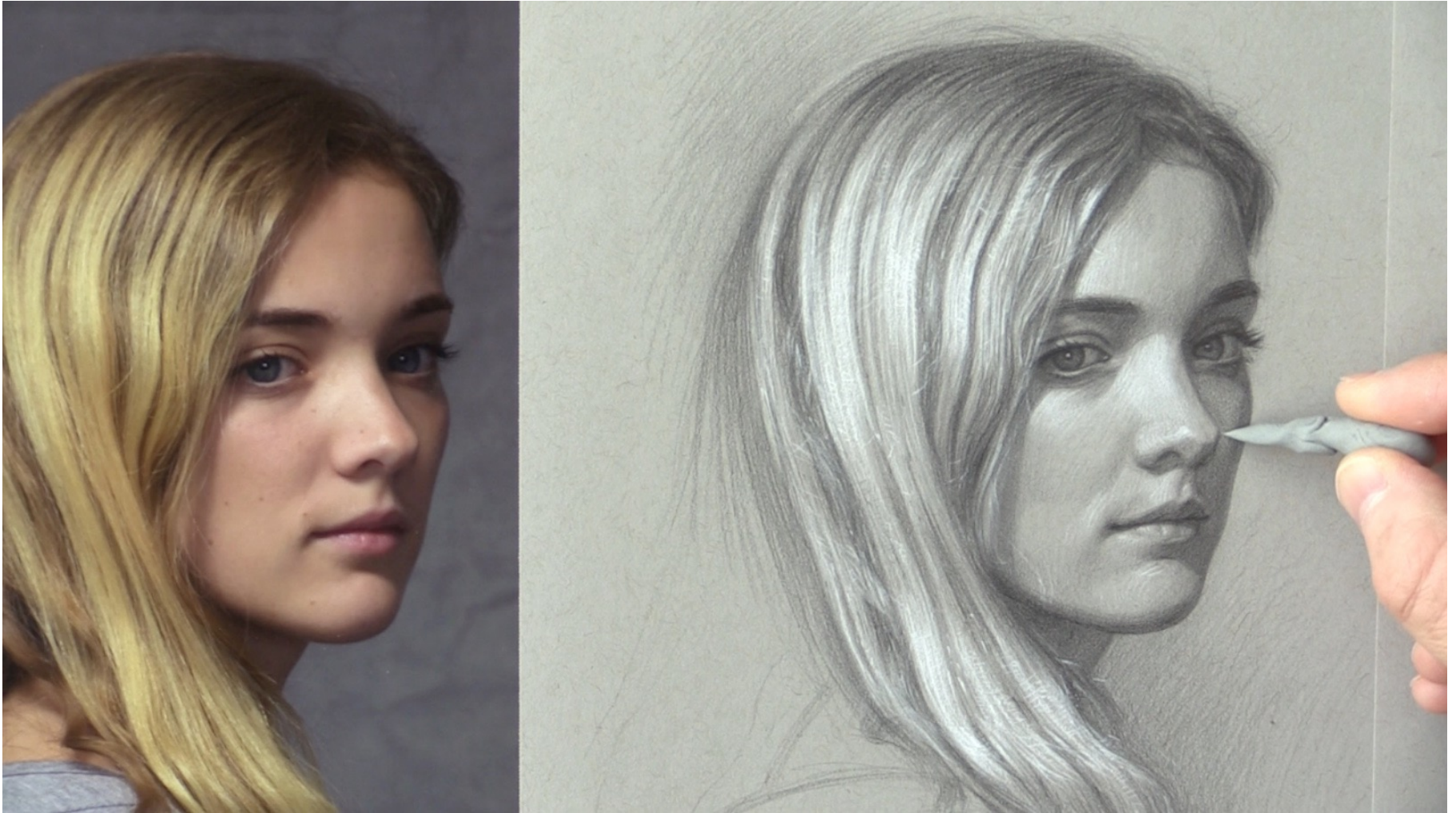
Take your drawing outside of your studio. Look at it in a dark room. Look at it from very far away. These techniques will help you to get the likeness of the model.



Soft edges promote atmosphere. Practice using a light touch when blending edges. You can practice this by drawing gradations in your sketchbook.

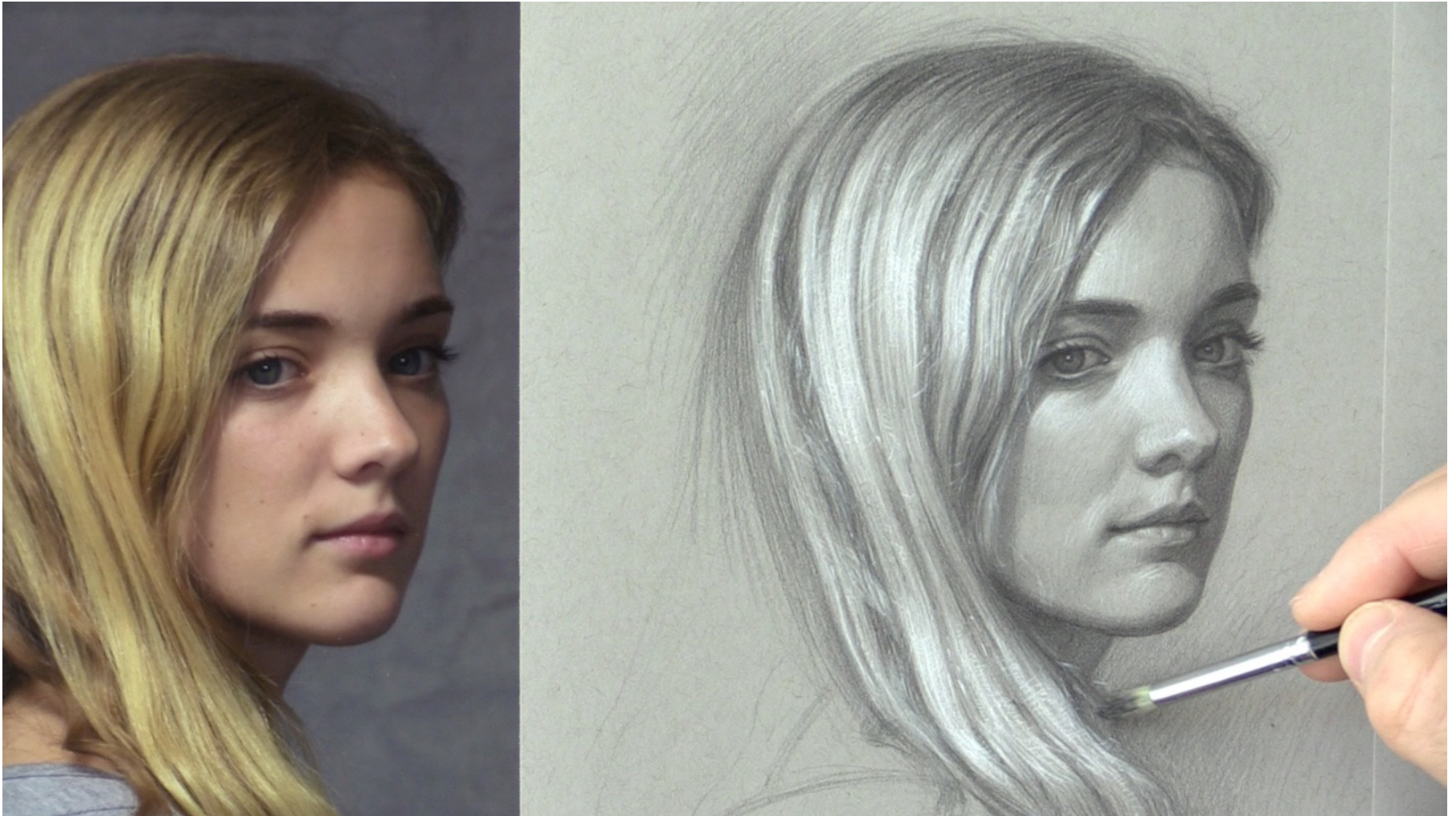


Not quite there yet with the exact likeness. Color definitely plays a big part in the likeness factor.



Use a kneaded eraser to tap when working with subtle value shifts. This will pull small amounts of pencil off of the paper.





A bristle brush is a great tool for blending especially in the shadow shapes. It pushes the pencil into the texture of the paper.



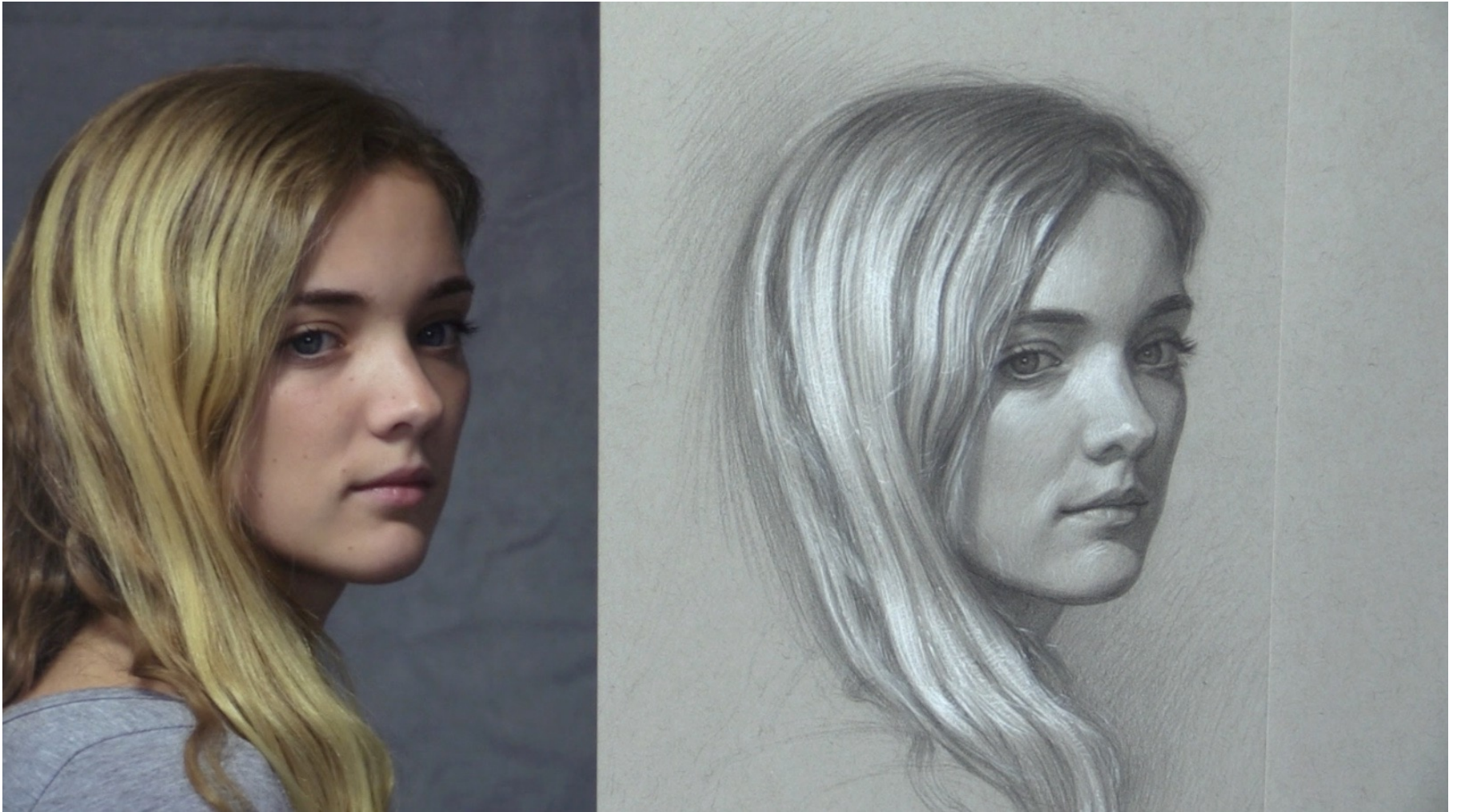
Separating the brushes you use for white charcoal and dark col-erase will prevent you from creating mud while blending.



I'm a big fan of the General's brand white charcoal pencil. They erase with ease.



If you have been with [Drawing Tutorials Online.com](https://www.drawingtutorials.com) for years you know how much I love the Prismacolor Col-erase pencil. It drags beautifully on the paper. Become one with your art materials. There comes a time when you have to stop experimenting with different supplies.



The finished drawing on video. I worked on the drawing off camera to make her nose a touch wider. You have to find what works for you. How much do you want to fuss. You will learn through experience when to stop.

Check out a high quality photo of the finished drawing on the next page.

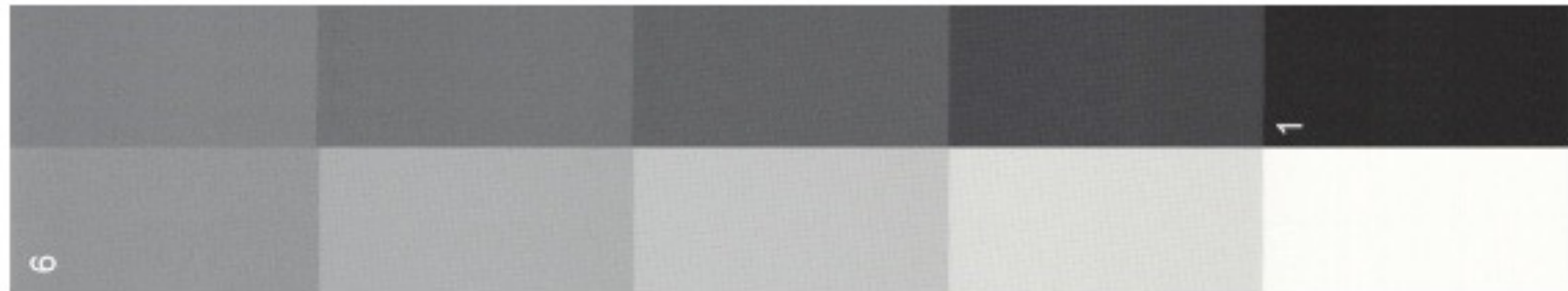


If you are viewing this PDF on an iPad you can pinch out to see a larger view of the finished drawing. You can also see a much larger view of the drawing on the webpages that house the videos. A very different look from a screenshot versus a high quality photo.

You can also download a larger version of the photo reference on the [webpages](#) that hold the video tutorials.

Thank you so much for reading.

Matt







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