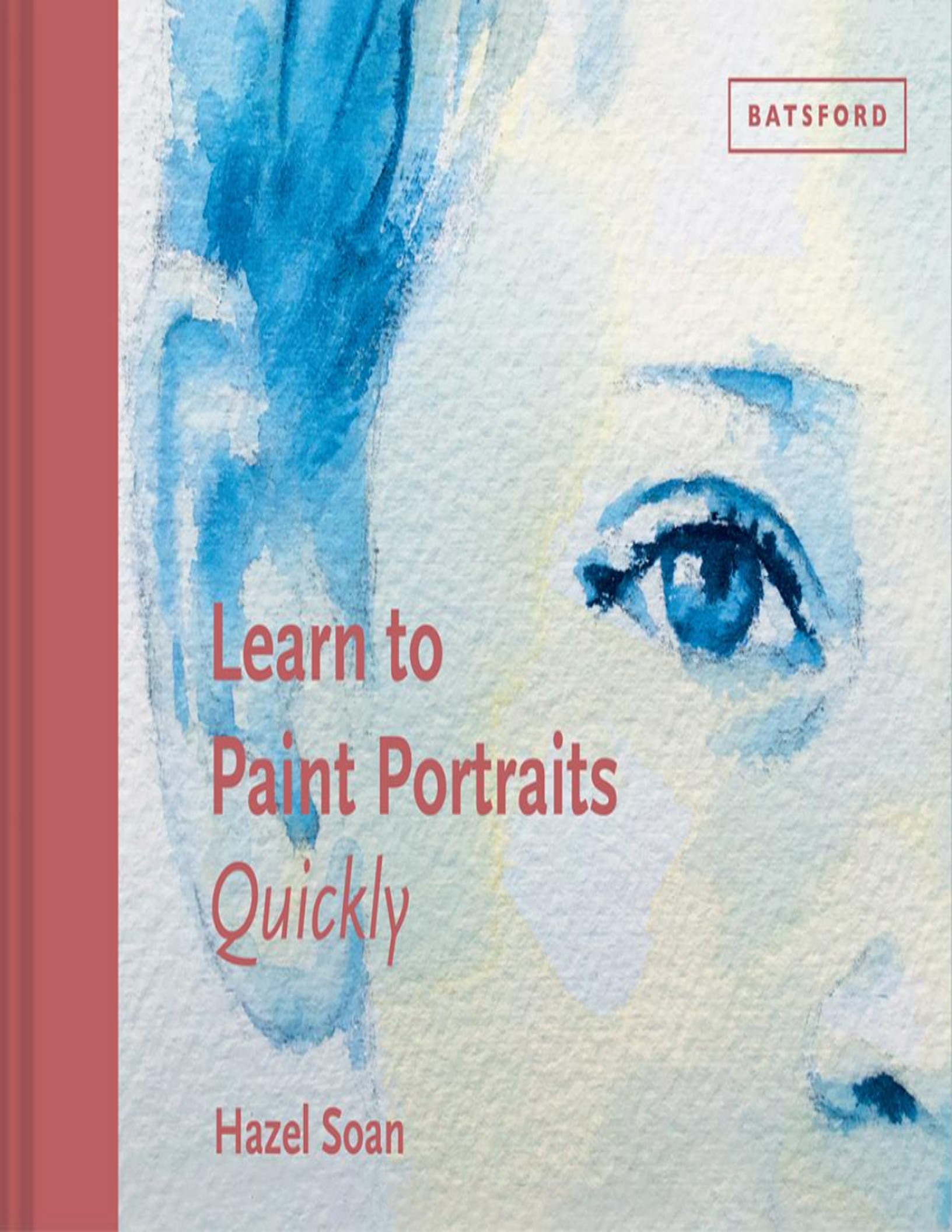
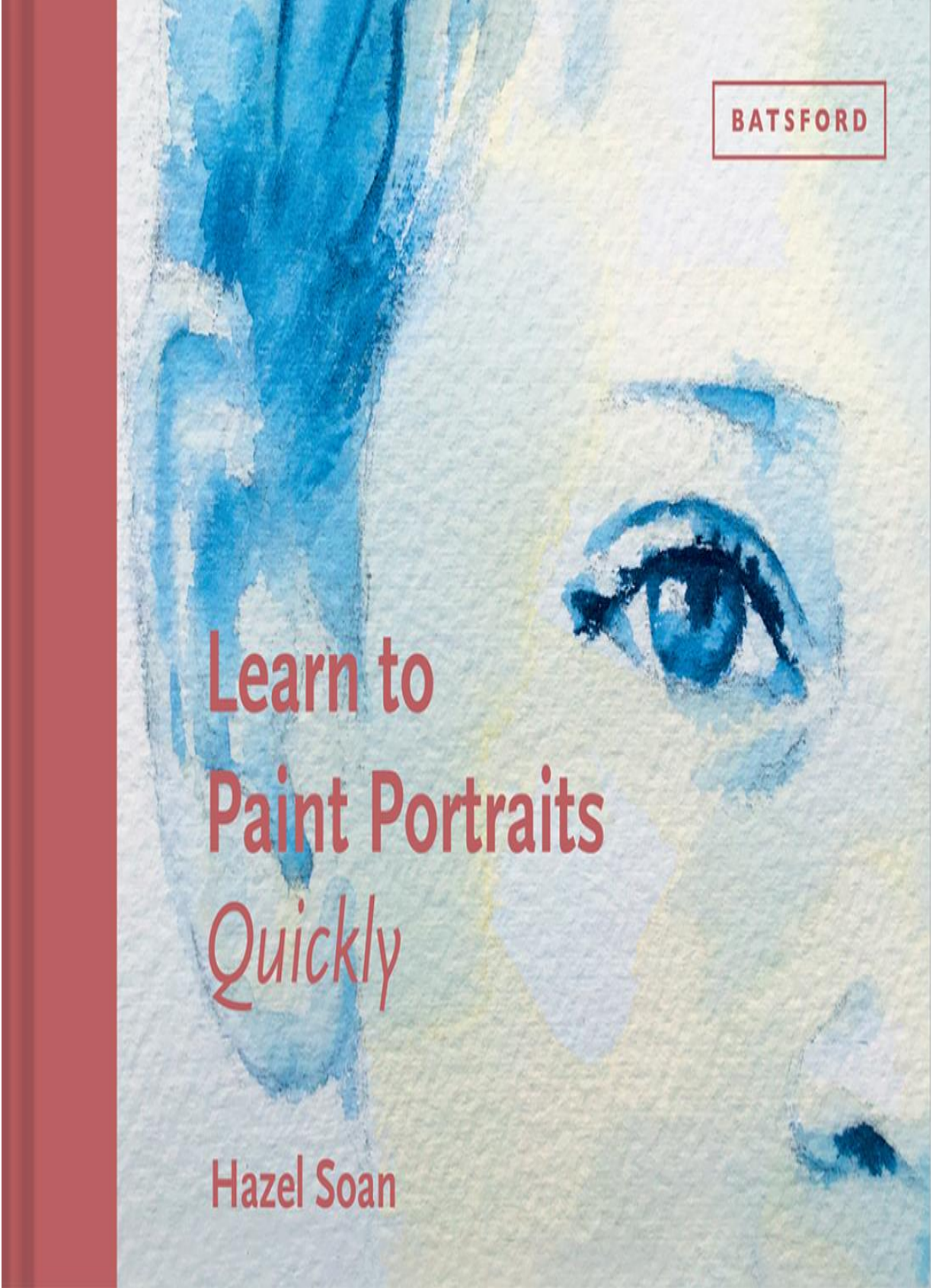


A watercolor painting of a woman's face, rendered in shades of blue, teal, and yellow. The style is soft and painterly, with visible brushstrokes and a textured background. The woman has long, flowing hair and a large, expressive eye. The overall mood is serene and artistic.

BATSFORD

Learn to
Paint Portraits
Quickly

Hazel Soan



BATSFORD

Learn to Paint Portraits *Quickly*

Hazel Soan

Learn to Paint Portraits *Quickly*



Valerie Singleton OBE

Watercolour (99 x 76cm/39 x 30in)



Tashy Watercolour (56 x 45.5cm/22 x 18in)

Learn to Paint Portraits

Quickly

Hazel Soan

BATSFORD

Contents

CHAPTER 1

Finding the Likeness

CHAPTER 2

Creating Form – The Light and Shade

CHAPTER 3

The Facial Features

CHAPTER 4

Painting the Hair

CHAPTER 5

Skin Tone and Colouring

CHAPTER 6

The Body, Clothing and Background



Lukus Karlake Watercolour (51 x 40.5cm/20 x 16in)

Introduction

Portrait painting is in every painter's genes! The joy of painting an individual is a thrilling challenge, made even more meaningful by the added joy of the sitter. Achieving a likeness, however, can be a daunting prospect, and fear holds many people back from even attempting a portrait. The emphasis throughout this book is on how to paint the face, and the aim is to demystify the process, dispel fear, and enable you to engage with confidence in this special and worthwhile pursuit.

Due to my own painting preferences, oils and watercolour dominate as the main materials illustrated, but the instruction applies to all painting media. Whether you want to paint family, friends or strangers, the pages ahead are packed with the information you need to get going, focusing on the vital issues in a deliberately succinct format to equip you to start painting without delay – you could be painting your first portrait in less than an hour!





Your first portraits may well be family members. My three sisters, pictured here, have been obliging and forgiving models throughout my life!

Chapter 1

Finding the Likeness



What is portrait painting?

The intention of a portrait is to represent a specific individual. It can be painted from any angle, with or without background and can be considered 'finished' whenever the artist or sitter chooses. It is enough if it reminds the viewer of the sitter in some way and, even if at the time of painting little likeness seems achieved, you will almost always find in retrospect that something in the portrait represents the sitter by default.

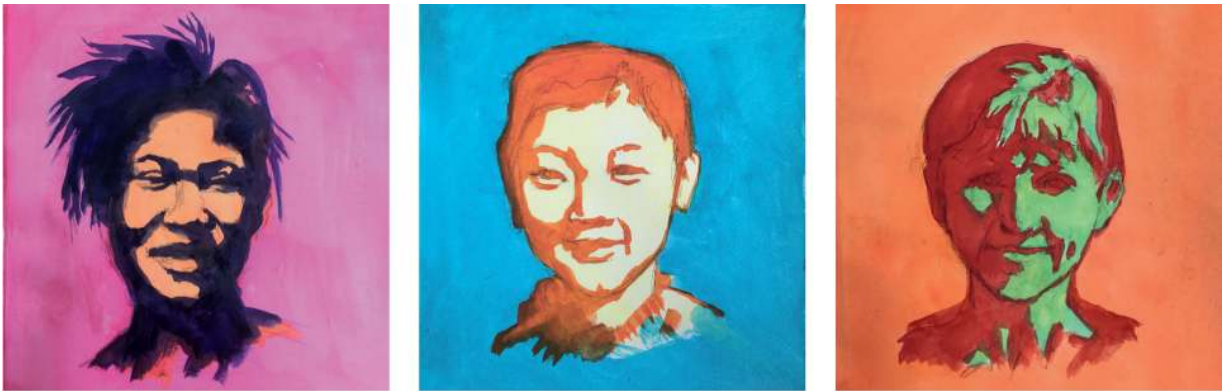


Abeba Misgan Yismaw Oil over acrylic stain on paper (40.5 x 51cm/16 x 20in) In portraiture, where likeness is the main aim, the finish of the painting is not so important. In this example, there is likeness already represented in the under-painting before the tones and colours become more nuanced in the finished version (below).



Catching likeness

Each face is individual, but what makes it unique? After all, eyes, noses, mouths and chins are in the same relative positions on all faces. The shape of the features certainly counts, but the key is in the spacing, the position of each feature relative to another. To represent a particular likeness requires close observation but there are general rules of proportion to offer a template. Once you grasp that likeness lies in the relationships between the facial features, then 'catching a likeness' becomes less daunting.



This set of 'Warhol'-style portraits clearly demonstrates that it is not the facial features that determine likeness but the spatial relationships between them.

Making the sitter comfortable

An enjoyable portrait stems from a relaxed relationship between artist and sitter. Most people are grateful, and even flattered, to think you want to paint them, but will want to know how long it will take and whether they can move or talk. Positioning and detailing the facial features takes less time if the face is completely still, but after the features are in place more latitude is available – painting the forehead or hair, for example, does not require the mouth to be still. Since a portrait can be made in minutes, hours or days, seek the sitter's time preference before you start. In general, the first sitting should not exceed 45 minutes, and 30 minutes may seem long enough to the sitter thereafter. You can 'read' in the face when a break is needed, and offering this before being asked pays dividends.

Mark the locations of the chair, feet and elbows with strips of masking tape, on the surfaces where they rest, to help direct the sitter back into the same position after a break.

If you paint the eyes of the sitter looking directly at you, the eyes will 'follow you around the room'.



Tara Oil on canvas (60 x 45cm/24 x 18in)

Tara's gaze was directed straight at me while I painted, so the gaze in the portrait looks straight ahead, and thus follows the viewer from whatever angle the portrait is viewed.



Andy

Watercolour on paper (30.5 x 33cm/12 x 13in) The oval shape of the head is more obvious in profile.

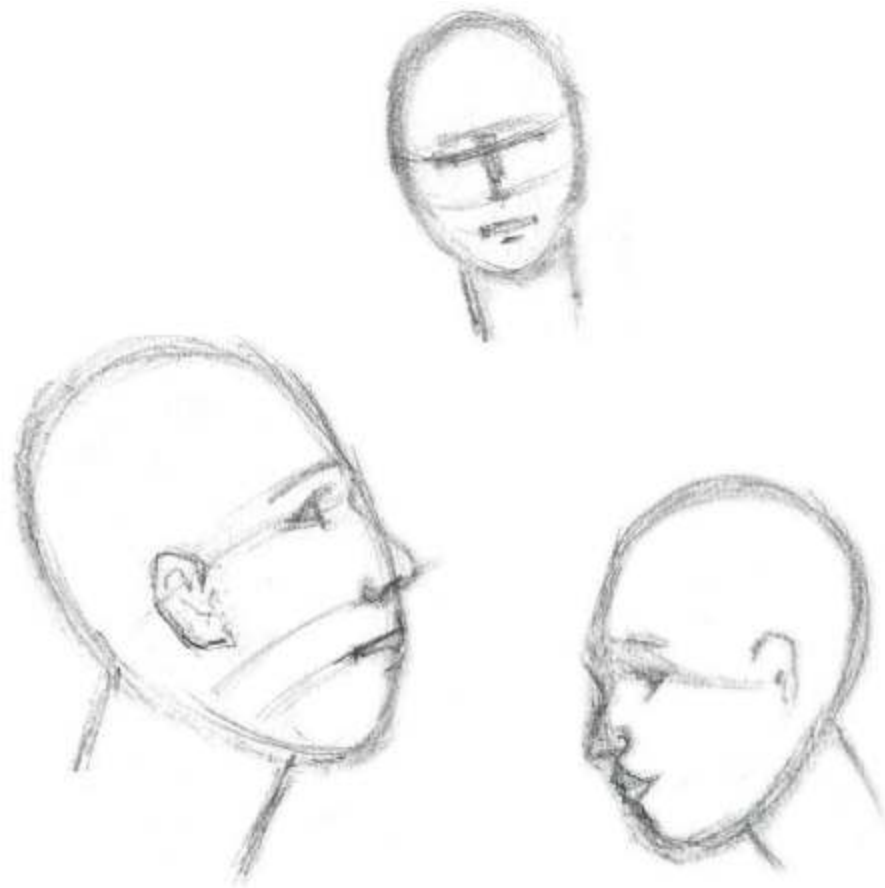


The Dancer

With the head dipped the curvature around the face is more visible.

The shape of the head

The head is roughly oval or egg-shaped, balanced on the pillar of the neck. The face is more or less symmetrical either side, but not flat – the features wrap around the curvature of the head on both lateral and longitudinal axes. The brow and nose protrude, protecting the eyes and airways.





The brow and nose protrude but they may still fall within the general egg-shaped oval of the head, which is supported by the pillar of the neck.