

Foundations of portrait drawing & painting

MODULE 3: Planar Structures of the Head

Having now acquired the skills of striking shape and fixing proportion you are now well equipped to venture into portrait painting in oil.

John Singer Sargent strongly advised his students to spend some time painting the head without the features. That way you'll acquire an understanding of the planar structures of the head. And not be a feature centric painter.

Mixing flesh tones is a large hurdle to cross. Hence, we'll begin with only four colors from which you will begin to master flesh tones.

SUPPLY LIST:

Canvas or panel. I'm using a 22x27 cm (8.66" x 10.63") toned with an imprimaturi of yellow ochre and a touch of vine black. You can also use a larger canvas or 9x12" canvas and tape to 22x27cm.

Oil Colors: I strongly recommend using professional grade. Old Holland, Rublev and Williamsburg are excellent brands. Student grade pigments are a false economy, quite like bargain grade dish detergent. And the likelihood of color collapse is guaranteed.

You'll need: titanium/zinc white, yellow ochre, indian red, vine (or ivory) black.

A wood palette that has been well seasoned with cheap linseed oil.



Two palette knives

Linseed or walnut or poppy oil

Artist quality rectified turpentine

[If you are adverse to turpentine you can use painter's mayonaisse which is an emulsion of equal parts white vinegar, egg yolk and 3 - 5 parts linseed or stand oil. Shake vigorously and store in the refrigerator. It will last about a week.]

A range of round and/or filbert bristle brushes. Every manufacturer has a different numbering system. Mainly, do not paint with overly small brushes. It is better to paint with a brush that is slightly larger than your comfort zone. My personal preference is the Escoda Classico chunking bristles.

Small glass jars or medium dippers

A measuring stick (knitting needle)

An HB or H pencil.

Cotton rags

A small level to ensure that your painting is square upon your easel.

MODULE 3 : Part 1 : 7/8's profile view

Module 3 : Part 1 is comprised of five chapters. Two hours, forty-five minutes.

Each chapter is numbered beginning with **301-MODULE-3-Planar Structures-Profile-Part-1**. This keeps everything in order so that you can readily match up the video lesson with the reference image.

Download the reference image at: artacademy.com/tv/300-Degas.png

I strongly recommend printing the image on photographic paper at the same size as your canvas (22x26cm) which is the size of the original painting.

MODULE 3 : Part 2 : the frontal view

Module 3 : Part 2 is scheduled to be released in the latter part of February 2026.

