DAYTON ART INSTITUTE

draw from the COLLECTION ... at home!

Faces

Draw faces from different perspectives inspired by Focus Exhibition *Norman Rockwell: Stories of Emotion*.

Supplies
- pencil
- paper
- eraser
- ruler (optional)
- tortillon (optional)

Norman Rockwell (American, 1894–1978), *People We All Like,* 1930, oil on canvas.
On loan from a private collection, L13.2020

Step 1

Find artworks or magazine photographs with several faces that interest you or take photos of your own face in several poses as reference photos to work from.

Helpful hint: for best use, take a non-flash photo of the artworks or magazines.

Step 2

Take a moment to assess the perspective of the portrait (ex: side view, front view, etc.) and the turn or tilt of the head (ex: looking downward, head tilting left, face turned to the right, etc.).

**Helpful hint:** use a portrait with a front facing, non-tilted or turned head if possible.

Have time for a short survey? Let us know how you're enjoying our digital resources!

Note: intersecting point of horizontal and vertical lines in the illustrations below represents the midpoint between the eyes and the top of the nose. Not all possible head tilts or face turns are featured—your reference portrait may vary.
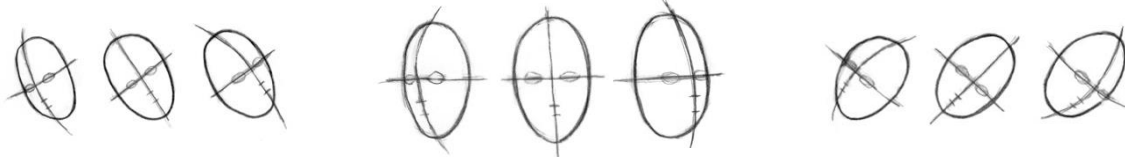

Step 3

Draw the head using an almond-like oval shape, with the narrower end at the bottom and larger at the top. Lightly draw a horizontal eye line in the middle of the head, followed by a vertical nose line, which will also represent the center of the face.
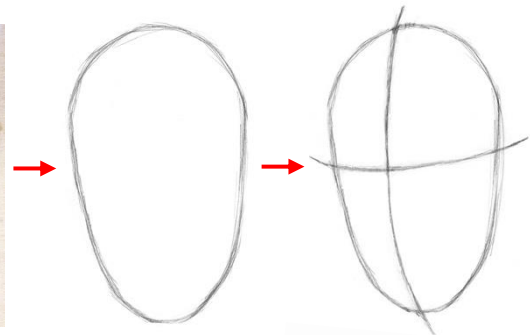
Note: if portrait is tilted, head shape must also match the tilt of the reference head before horizontal and vertical lines can be drawn.
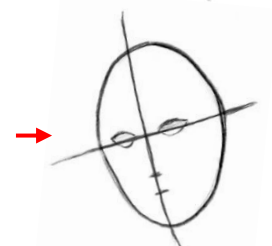
Note: if the face is turned to one side, vertical nose line must also be drawn in that direction (ex: if face is turned to the left, vertical nose line should also be drawn to the left). For best dimensional effect, vertical line should also curve along with the oval shape.
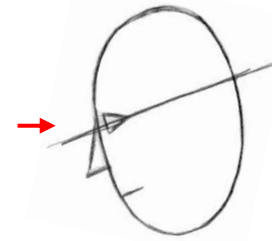
Step 4

Draw a pointed oval-like shape for each of the eyes along the horizontal line, placing half the shape above and half below that line.

Note: eyes need to be exactly one full eye length between each other (ex: if eyes are 1 inch long each, the space between the eyes should also be 1 inch). The head should be approx. 5 eye lengths wide.
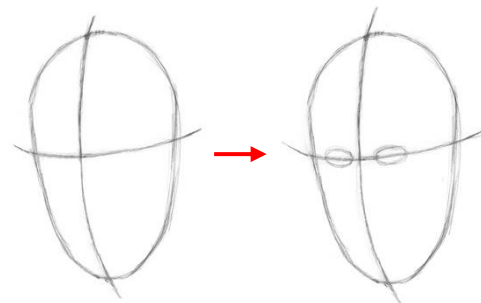

1 eye length apart

Have time for a short survey? Let us know how you're enjoying our digital resources!

Step 5

Draw the basic geometric shape of the nose below the eyeline, placing half the shape to the right and left of the vertical line.

Helpful hint: noses vary in shape and size but should be approx. 1.5 eye lengths long and 1 eye length in total width at the base of the nostrils.

1.5 eye long

1 eye wide
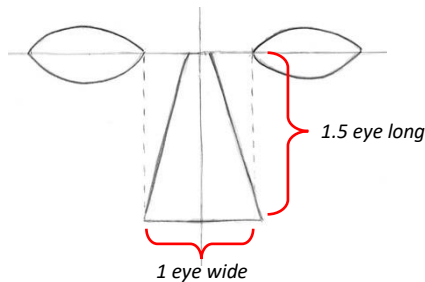
Note: for a turned head, nose tip should point in the same direction that the head is facing (ex: points left for a left turn).
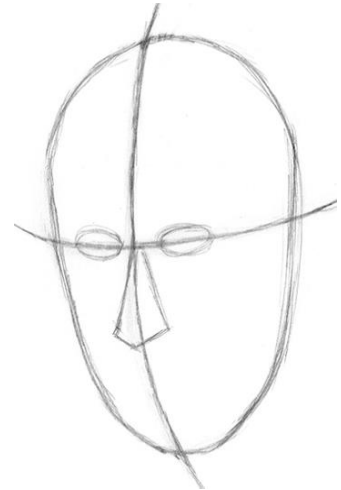
Step 6

Lightly draw the basic geometric shape of the mouth.

Helpful hint: mouth shape will begin approx. ½ an eye length below the nose. If at rest, the shape of the mouth will end at 1 full eye length below the nose and will also be equal to the distance between the centers of both eyes.

1 eye long

approx. 2 eyes wide (at rest)
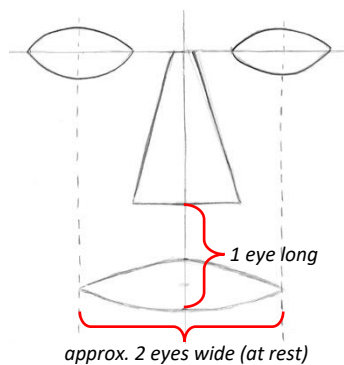
Note: the shapes and proportions of the mouth will vary widely depending upon the facial expression of the face.
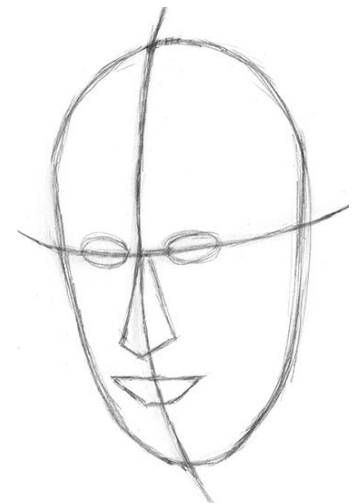
Step 7

Lightly draw the basic geometric shapes of all other parts of the face and head (ex: ears, hair, eyebrows, etc.), placing them in proportionate relation to the eyes and nose (ex: ear size equal in length from top of eye to bottom of nose, eyebrows same width as eye, etc.). Draw clothing or accessories (shirt, glasses, etc.) for more detail if desired.
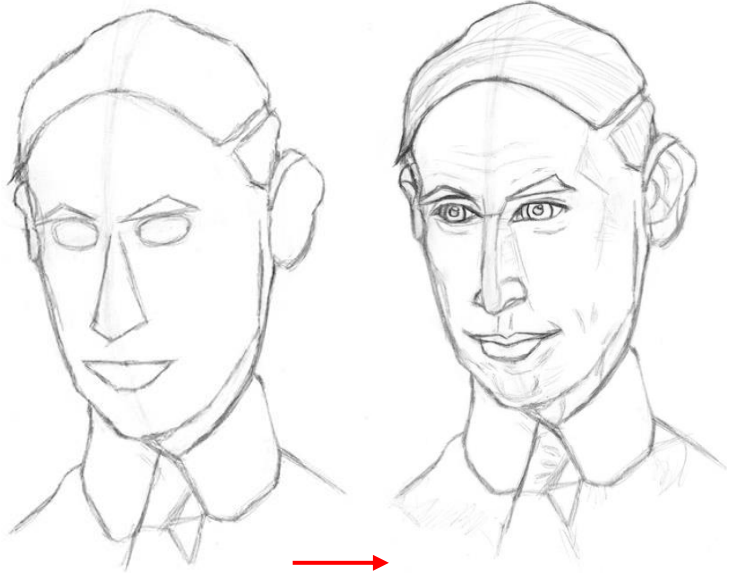
Note: some shapes may need to be estimated if not fully visible (ex: ears partially covered by hair).

Have time for a short survey? Let us know how you're enjoying our digital resources!
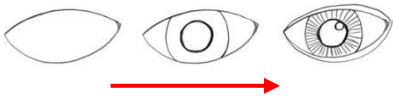
Step 8

Refine all shapes to best resemble each part of the face (ex: refine a circle shape to best resemble the shape of an ear). Erase shapes and guiding lines as needed.

Step 9

Lightly add more details (ex: circles for eye pupils). Further refine those shapes and erase marks as needed.

Step 10 (optional)

Add value to drawing if desired. Convert original photo to black and white mode to better reveal the underlying values.

Helpful hint: to smoothly blend values, use fingers or tortillon. For darkest values, use extra soft leaded pencils (ex: 6B). Use corners of eraser to add fine highlights.

Resources

Video tutorial: drawing basic facial proportions (front view)

DAI Focus Exhibition *Norman Rockwell: Stories of Emotion*

draw from the
COLLECTION
... at home!

Questions about or ideas for Draw from the Collection? Email edu@daytonart.org