

Classical Head Drawing

Direct observational drawing is necessary to learn realistic techniques. The nature of teaching art in magazines and online involves the use of photography, which limits the artist's perception and depth of field seeing the object correctly.

Getting the light direction right is central to classical drawing. When I photograph my subjects, I search for the best lighting conditions. It means I try to catch strong lights and shadows on my models. When you're learning, it's much easier to re-create patterns of shadows on the subject to make it look realistic. That's why I often convert my color reference to a black-and-white one to observe those strong patterns of light and shade. In terms of color the referenced sculpture has two major divisions: warm, brown-orange shadows on the left side of the head and cool, blue light on the right side of it.

LIST OF MATERIALS USED

Prismacolor colored pencils: 50% Warm Grey, White, Dark Umber, Sienna Brown, Goldenrod, 10% Cool Grey, 20% Warm Grey, Eggshell

Faber-Castell Polychromos colored pencils: Venetian Red, Cadmium Yellow, Orange Glaze

Canson Colorline drawing paper, Coral hue, 92lb.

Saral Transfer Paper, White or Yellow hue (or Loew-Cornell transfer paper, White), Kneaded eraser, masking tape.



These are the colors I used in this demonstration. You can match them visually with your available brand of colored pencils.

Why do I draw on colored paper?

Drawing on colored, mid-toned paper gives me several advantages:

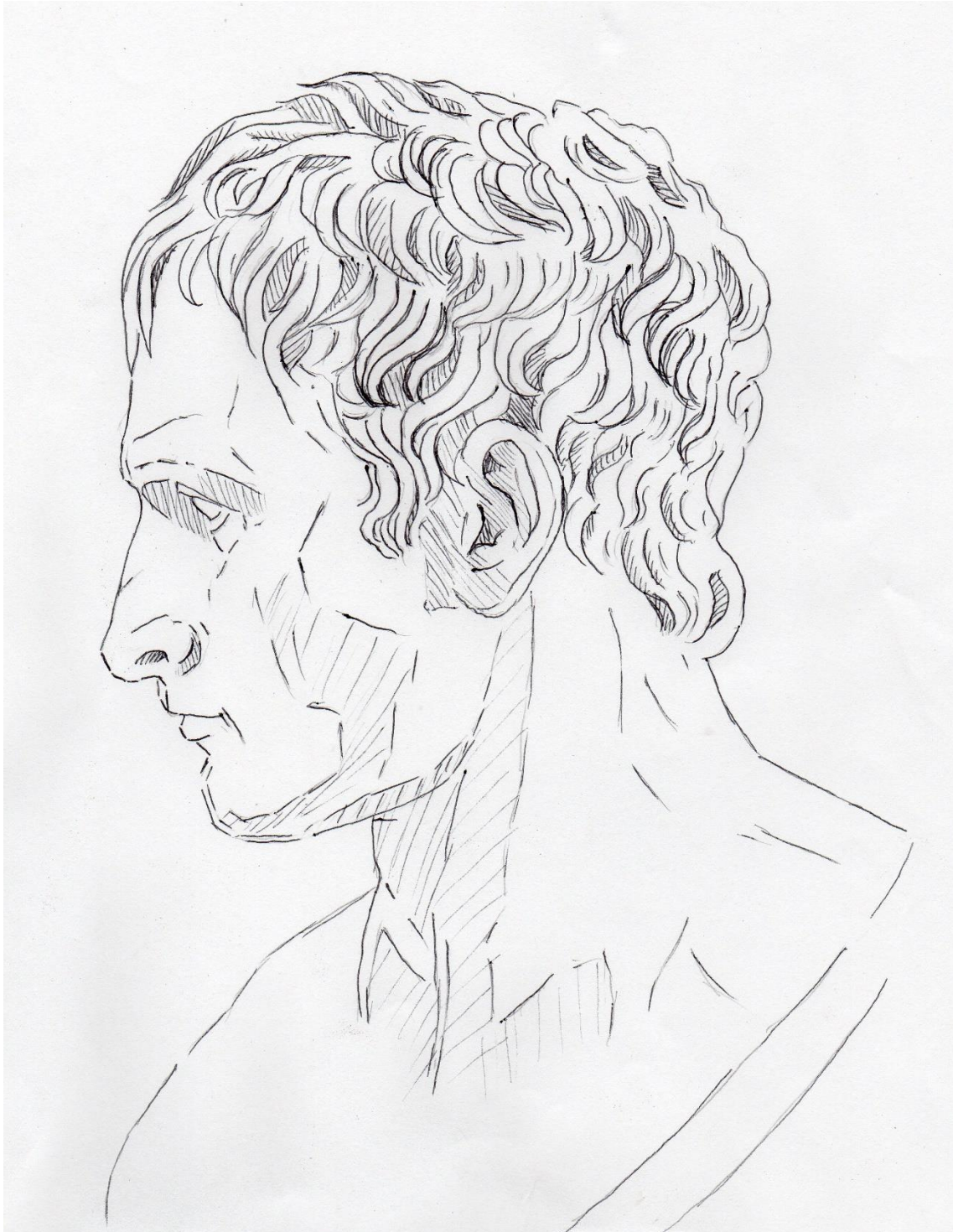
1. I don't have to fill it all in.
2. It's easier to control the tones or values by placing the strongest lights and darks first.
3. Fun, colorful result that's not always possible to achieve drawing on white paper.

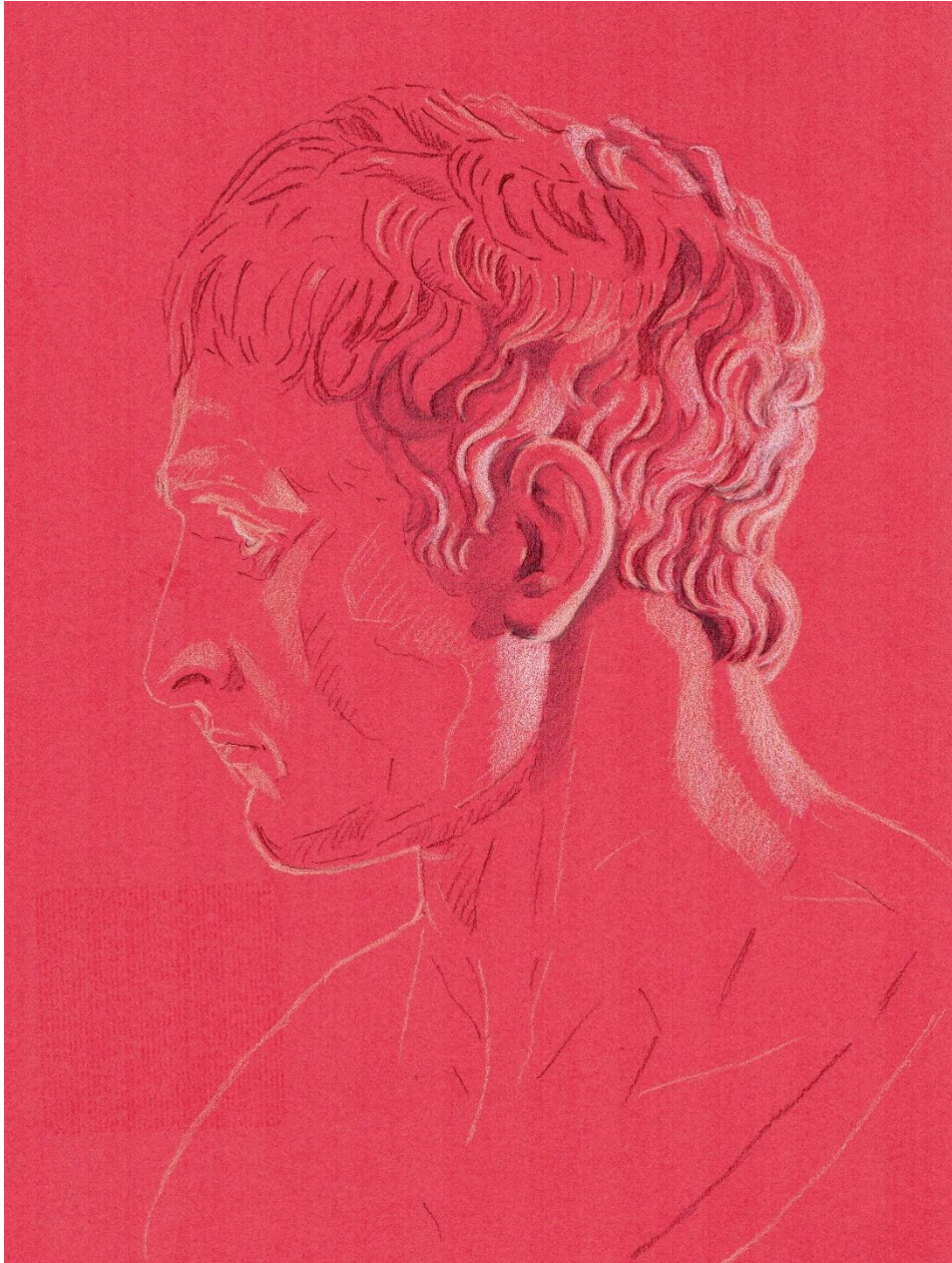
Reference



PREP WORK

Choose your favorite way to transfer the image. It can be sketching on a sketch paper first or it can be transferring the outlines straight from your photograph. Transfer the outline either using transfer paper, window light or light box. White transfer paper is easy to erase and gives a nice, visible outline on toned paper you can use as a guide to correct your outline drawing further.



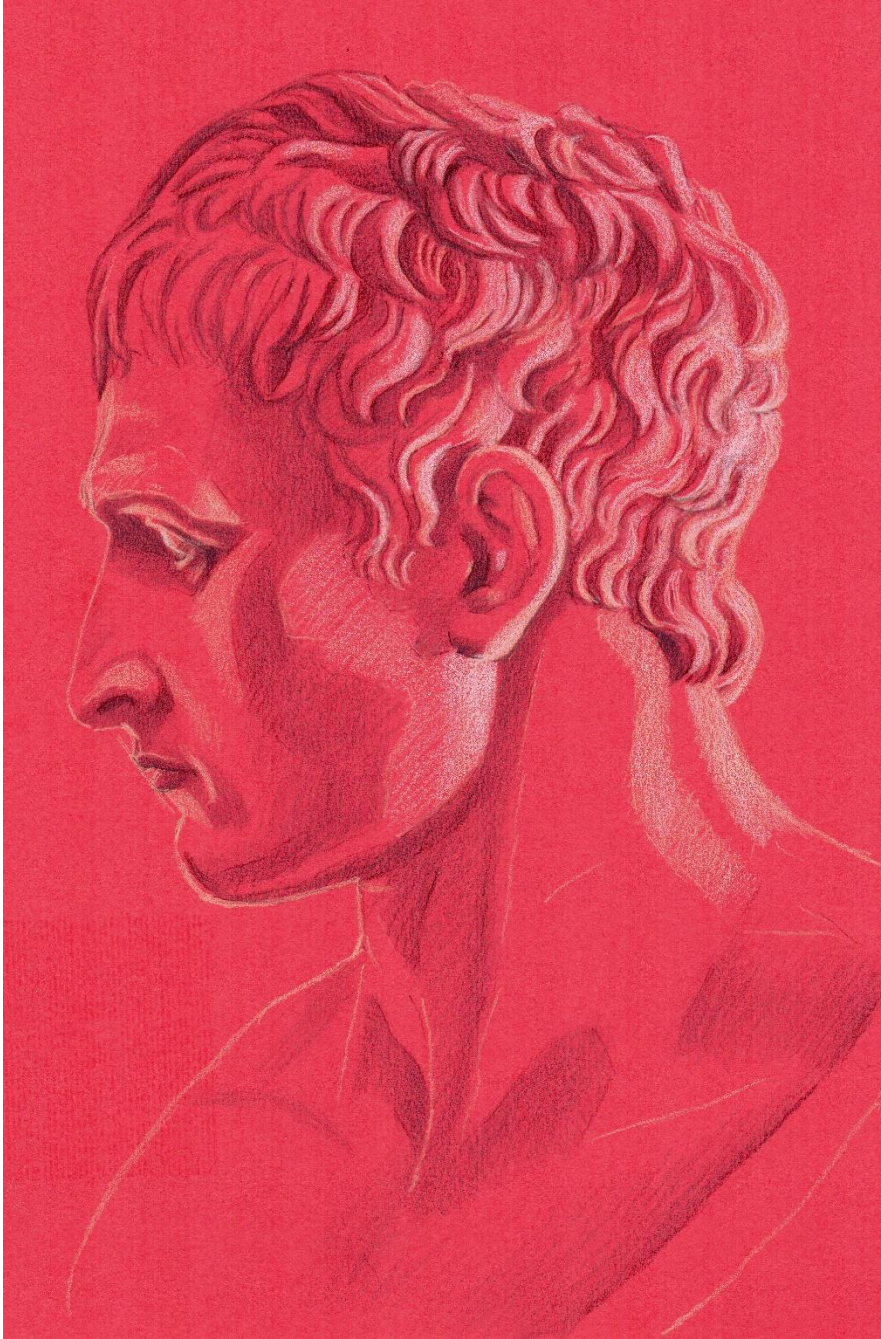


STEP ONE

After transferring the image, I mark the strongest lights with Prismacolor White pencil using medium pencil pressure.

I mark the position of the deepest shadows with Prismacolor 50% Warm Grey with light pencil pressure.

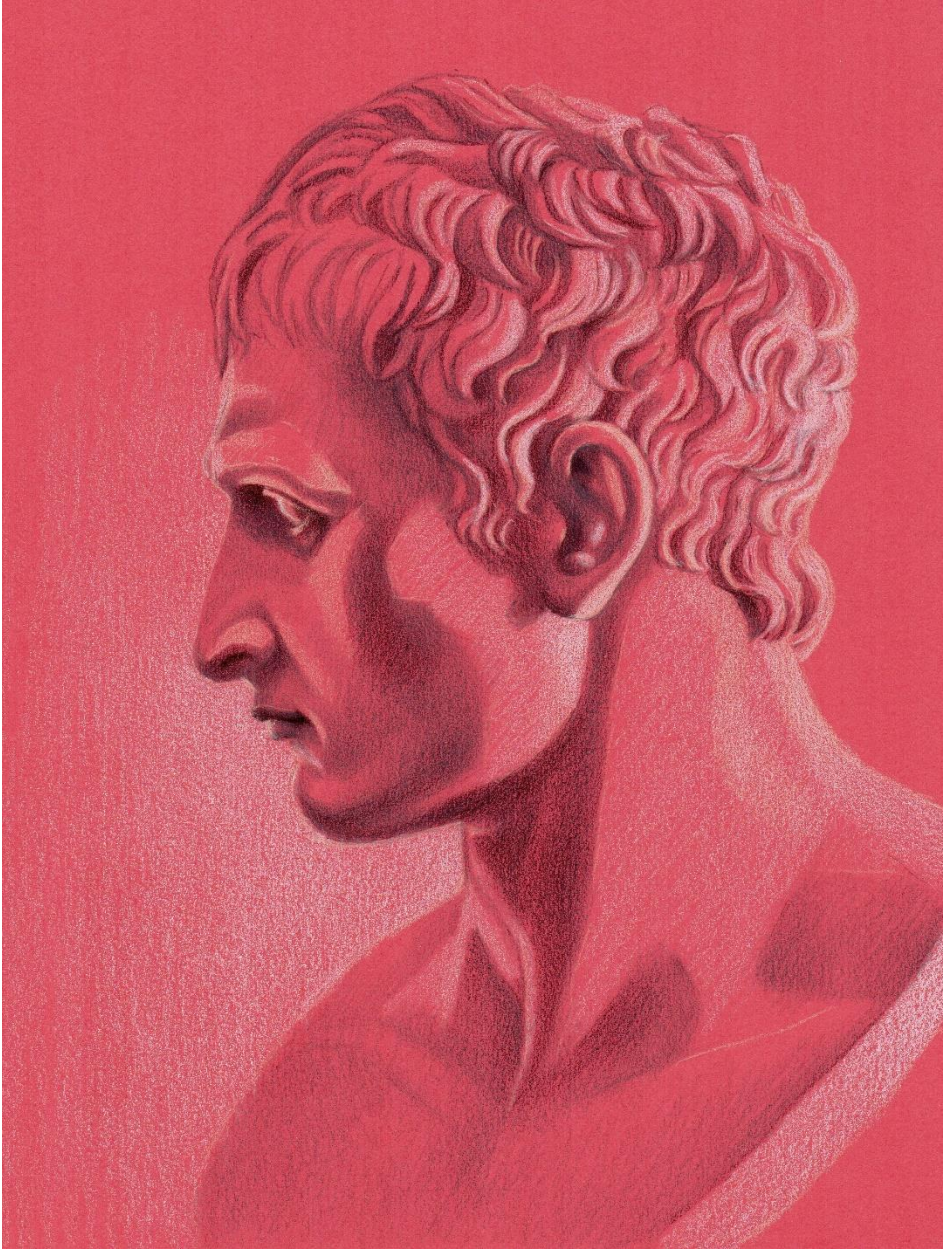
It's very easy to erase light pencils, so I prefer using either White or Off-white pencils to map out the initial outline drawing.



STEP TWO

In this step I go over all major shadows I see in my reference.

For that I mark the position of the shadows with Prismacolor 50% Warm Grey with light pencil pressure.

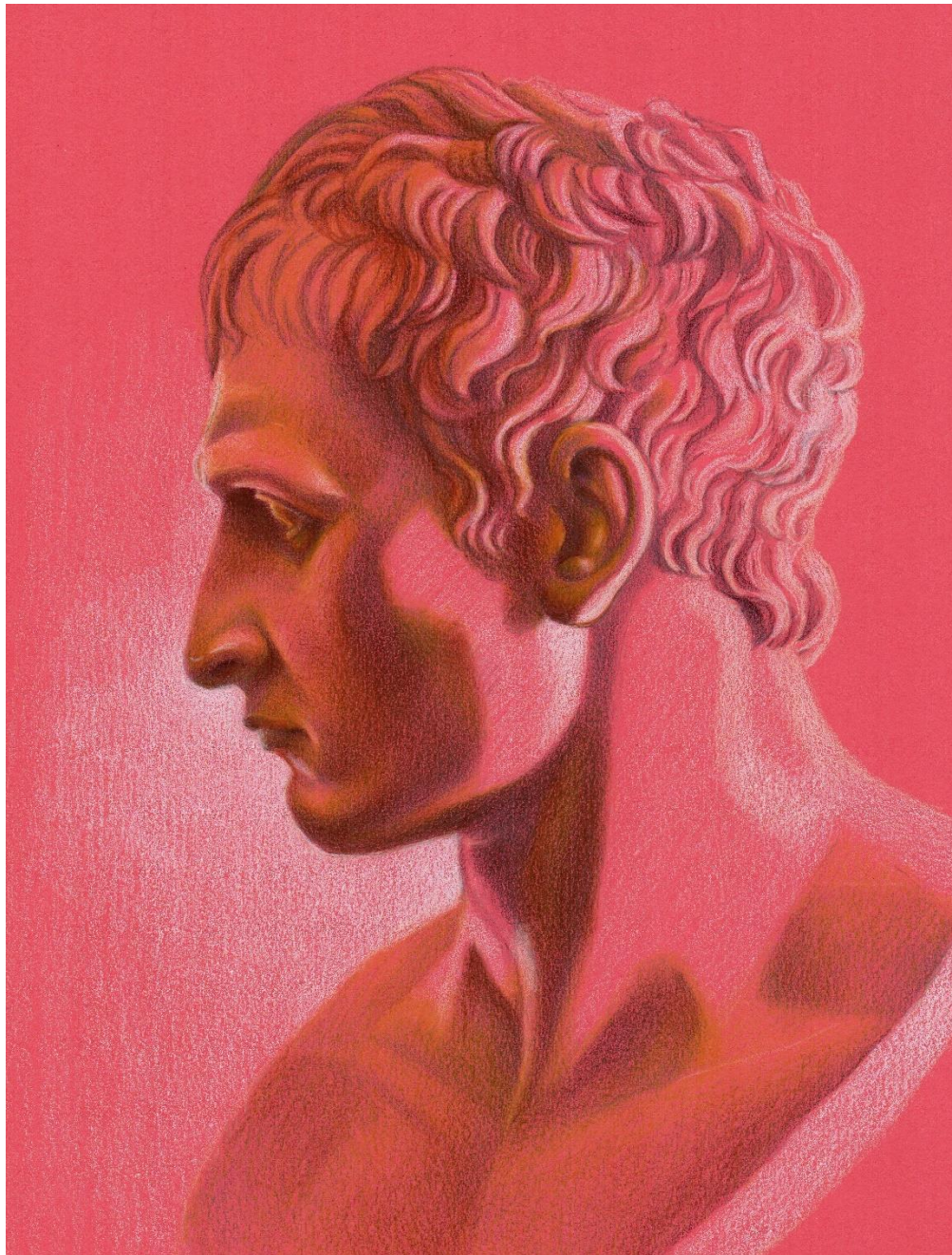


STEP THREE

I darken the deepest shadows with Prismacolor Dark Umber. I use light to medium pencil pressure shading in short, circular strokes. I outline major curls to make them definite.

I also continue shading the lightest lights with Prismacolor White.

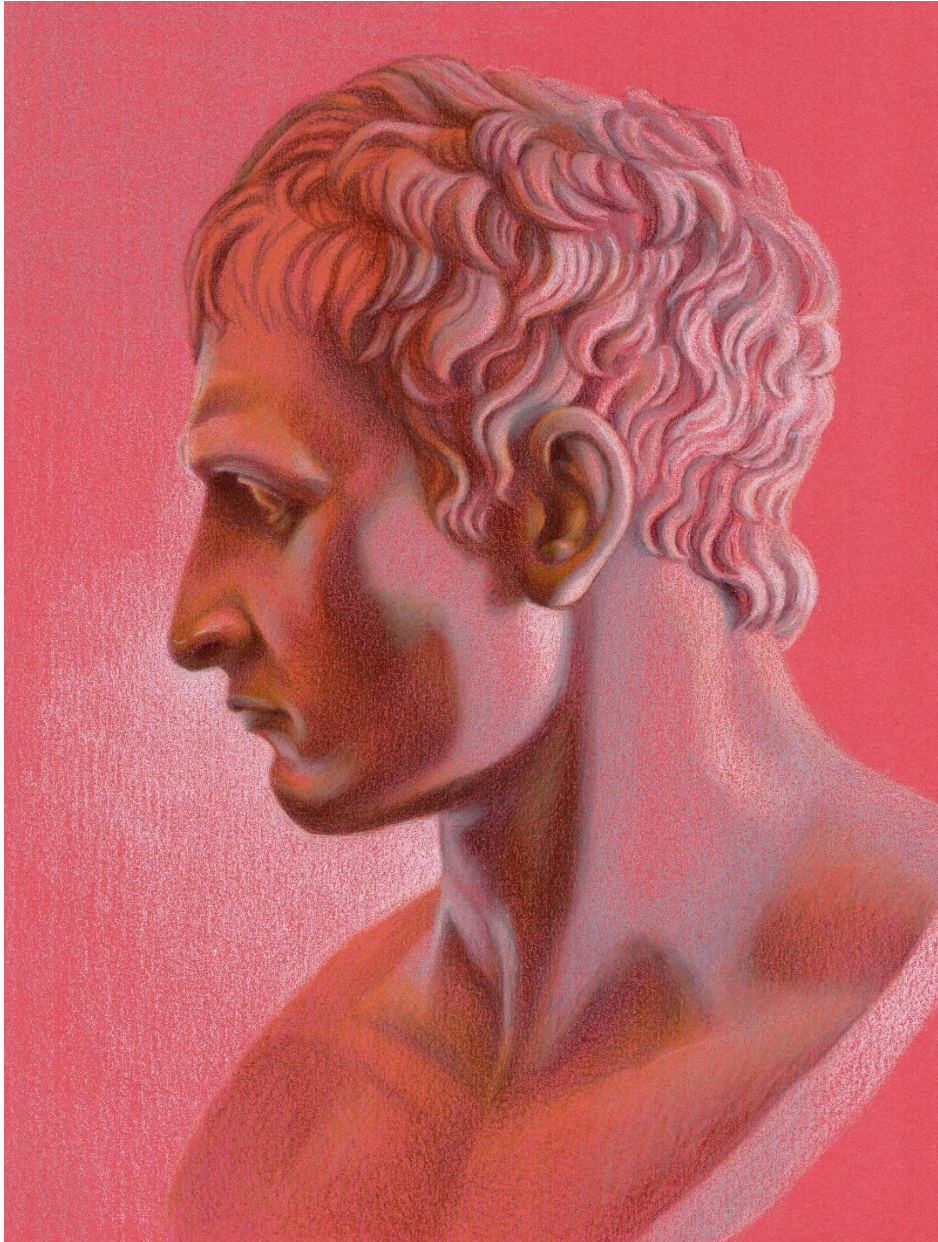
I touch up the background with White too.



STEP FOUR

Now I focus on the left side of the face and neck (shadow). I shade over the left side of the face, neck and hair with Prismacolor Goldenrod using light pencil pressure. Because I overlap this color over the previously applied grey, it creates a unified warm glow.

I Use Prismacolor Sienna Brown to shade over the previously applied grey. I extend this color some more, creating transition between the deepest shadows and Prismacolor Goldenrod.



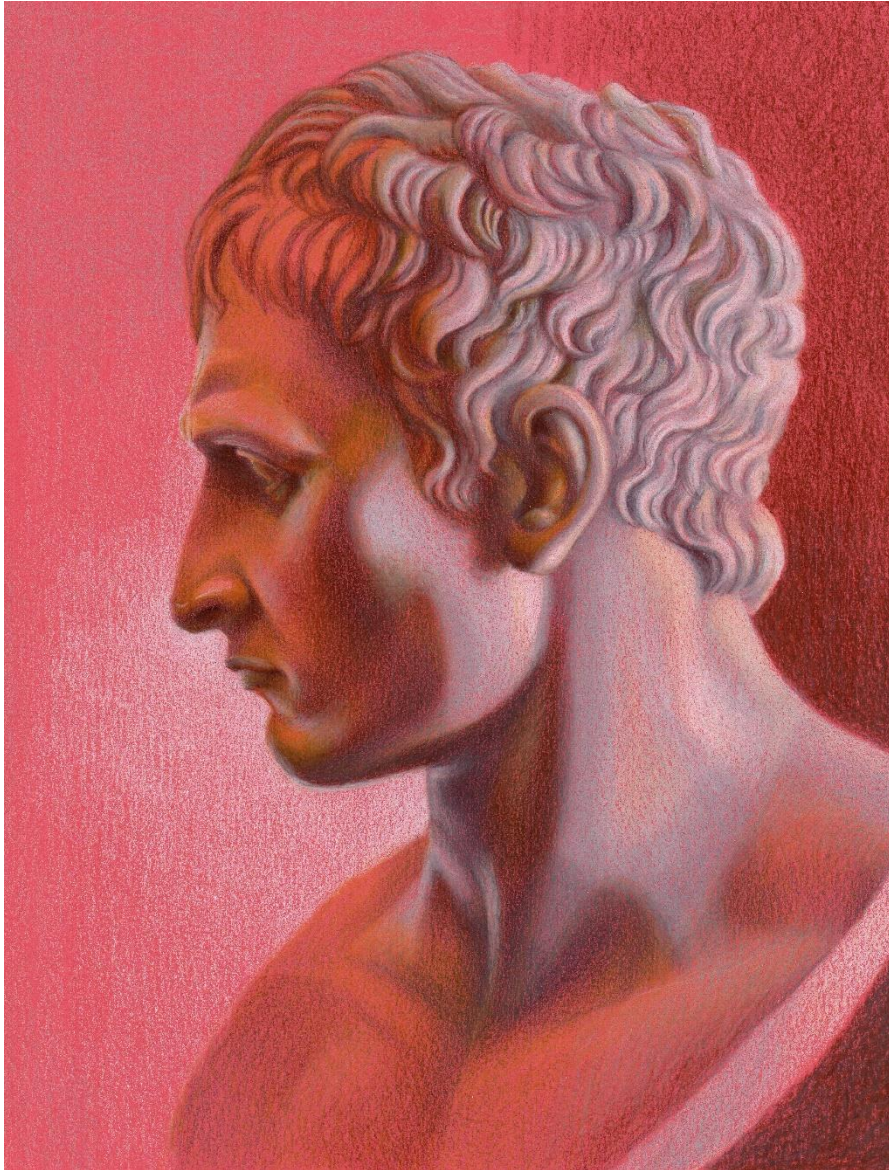
STEP FIVE

I introduce new color here.

I go back to the right side of the head and shade with Prismacolor 20% Warm Grey to create a range of light tones.

This shading becomes a bridge between the darkest shadows established in the first steps and the highlights.

Using Prismacolor 20% Warm Grey, I shade and overlap the dark edges. I increase my pencil pressure to blend the edges.



STEP SIX

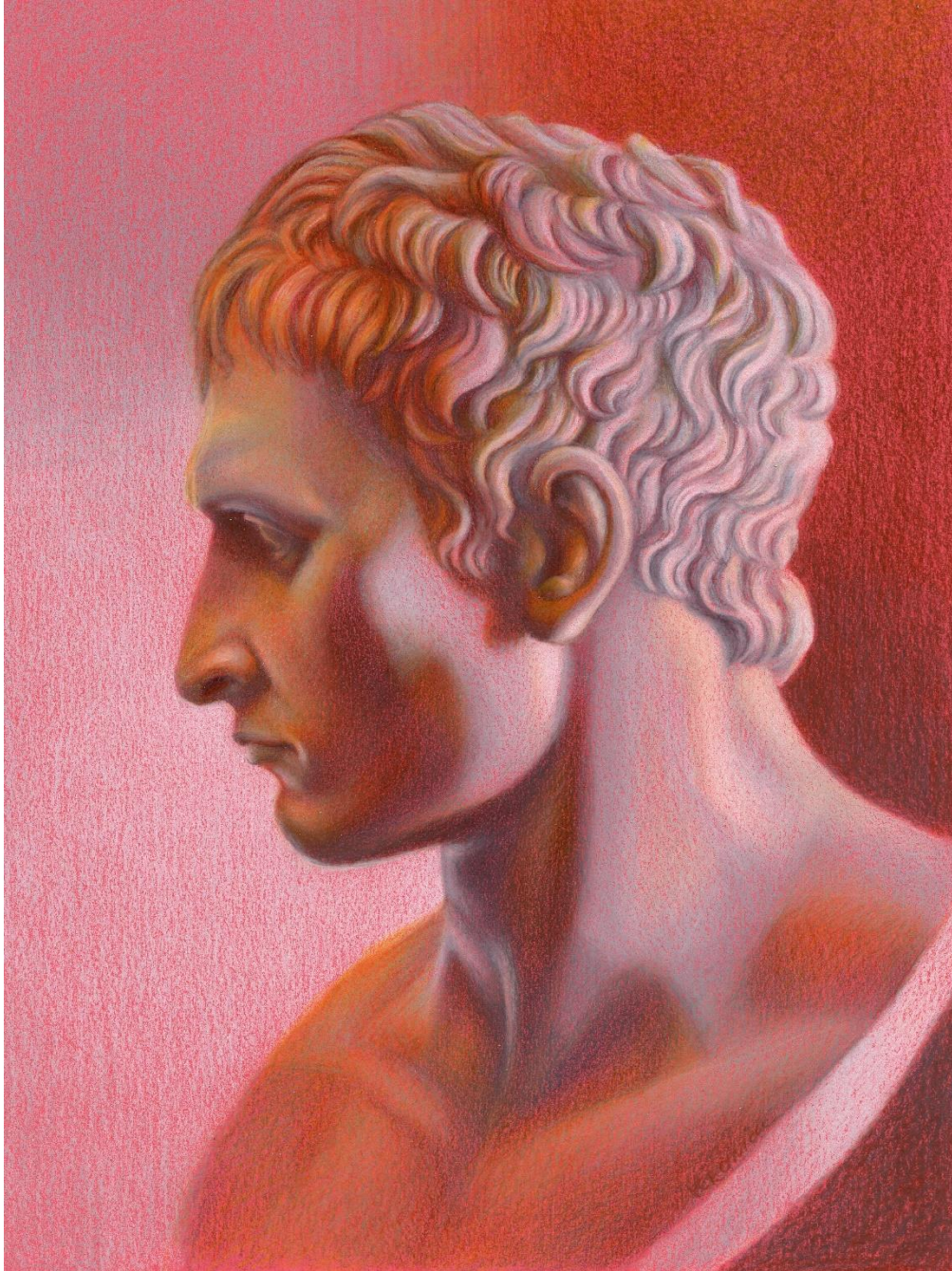
I focus on the right (light) side of the head to create a variety of light tones.

I shade with Prismacolor White, Eggshell, 10% Cool Grey, 20% Warm Grey.

I make the lights much stronger with Prismacolor White and 10% Cool Grey by increasing pencil pressure and re-applying them.

Pay attention to the curvature of the hair strands shading in short strokes and outlining some of the edges. Rotate paper to get the stroke in the right direction.

Shade the background with Prismacolor Sienna Brown and 50% Warm Grey.



STEP SEVEN

I switch back to the left side of the head to expand the values in the shadow.

For that I use additional colors for the shadow: Polychromos Orange Glaze, Venetian red and Cadmium Yellow.

I also use some Prismacolor Eggshell to shade the lighter areas on the left side of the face. Look for subtle shifts in tone and color using these additional colors.

The background has the same basic colors of light and shadow-Prismacolor White, 10% Cool Grey, 20% Warm

Grey, Sienna Brown and 50% Warm Grey.

In my last step I fine tune the shading by softening transitions on the face and outlining some of the hair strands to have more definition.

BIO

Born in Russia, Veronica Winters, MFA is Florida-based portrait artist, instructor, and book author. In color, figure and symbols, the artist explores the interconnectedness of everything living in the Universe to understand the meaning of life and systems that support it. VeronicasArt.com