ArtRishi.com Project: Cat Portrait, Advanced

For: Upper Elementary and Middle School: grades 5, 6, 7, and up

Suggested Media & Paper:

Watercolor paper - size 9"x12"
HB graphite pencil
kneaded rubber eraser
Watercolor pencil set
1" flat hake brush for background
#10 round watercolor brush
Misc. watercolors

Steps to Success:

1. Prepare the "ground" - prepare the watercolor paper with a wet-on-wet glaze of watercolor paint. Start with wet paper and brush on very light - very pale - shades of color. It is important that the color is light and soft so that it does not compete with the portrait. **See Cat—Step 1.**

2. Provide students with a photocopy of the basic line drawing of the cat and a photocopy of the painted portrait - each student should have this by his/her workspace.

3. Plan the composition. Encourage students to draw a large cat face - so most of the focus is on the face and the body drifts off the side and bottom of the paper. How many faces will you draw - just one - or how about two cat faces with a slight overlap?

4. When paper is dry, lightly sketch in the cat face using the HB pencil and follow drawing directions using the provided art map that details line-drawing sequence. When finished with the basic line drawing, draw the outline shape of each stripe on the face and body.

How to use watercolor pencils:
5. Get to know the medium. Give each student a scrap piece of watercolor paper for experimentation and practice using watercolor pencils. Note that you can apply a strip of watercolor pencil to the edge of a shape and then use a wet brush to pull the color out into the shape. In other words - let the pencil and water work together - no need to entirely "color-in" a shape. Encourage students to select a color palette before beginning the painting. Suggested colors: Black, Gray, White, and Tuscan Red or Burnt Sienna for fur, Pink for nose, Yellow/ Green for eyes.

6. Painting the portrait. **See figure 2—Cat step 2**. Start with eyes and nose and establish light washes of color throughout the portrait. Be patient - the portrait will not look complete until just before the very end.

7. Last of all - paint the stripes, the fine details and finally, just draw the whiskers without wetting them.

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Additional Resources to enhance your advanced Cat project:

(Since the internet is always changing, we cannot guarantee that the following links will always be available)

The collection of poetry dedicated to cats by T.S. Elliot - "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats":   http://coral.lili.uni-bielefeld.de/Classes/Summer97/SemGS/WebLex/OldPossum/oldpossumlex/oldpossumlex.html

http://animal.discovery.com/breedselector/catselectorindex.do

Books for Purchase:

Warriors-New-Prophecy

Ultimate-Encyclopedia-Cats-Breeds-Care

Drawing-Cats-Books-Stuff-Bratun

Possums-Book-Practical-Cats-Illustrated