Charcoal Portrait Drawing: Facial Planes and Tonal Modeling

Topic reference / ordinary illustration



Ordinary topic reference. Hypothetical dimensions in the four tasks are supplied in their own text; this illustration is not their measured answer.

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Worked example / complete source key

A face is lit from the upper right. The forehead plane faces the light, the left cheek plane turns away, the jaw plane is in shadow, and the nose plane is split. Assign hypothetical values from a five-step scale (1 very light to 5 very dark) and describe the charcoal application.

Answer: Forehead plane: value 2 (light). Left cheek plane: value 4 (dark). Jaw plane: value 5 (very dark). Nose plane: right side value 2, left side value 4. Apply charcoal with the side of the stick for broad planes, then sharpen edges at the nose bridge and jawline. Blend the cheek-to-jaw transition softly. Check by squinting: the left side of the face should read darker than the right.