

**BELOW**

Caporale, her model, her extensive array of pastels, and her initial drawing.

**OPPOSITE PAGE**

Caporale looked at her initial drawing through a hand-held mirror to check its accuracy. "Being able to see a reverse image allows me to become more objective when evaluating my work," she explained.



an indoor setting with the light coming from above the sitter—or what's called a 'Rembrandt lighting situation'—which draws attention to the cheekbones and chin line."

When a client is able to come to Caporale's studio in North Salem, New York, she has a greater number of options in terms of lighting, background cloth, model stand, and furniture. She illustrated how those varied choices can be evaluated during the filmed demonstrations. "I tried blue, white, red, black, and gray background cloths behind Chris, and each one presented a different balance of values, colors, and effects," she described. "The red and black were quite dramatic but too strong for a young man; the white was too bland and

and the subject's personality and interests. Since many of Caporale's commissions are for portraits of children, much of her dialogue is with the parents, but she always solicits opinions from the boy or girl about his or her preferences.

For the portrait documented in the video/DVD, the boy's mother recommended a half-dozen shirts, jackets, and ties in neutral, midtone colors of brown, gray, and blue; and she sent one black shirt to be considered as well. Caporale recommended clothing that was not so stylish or elaborate that it would quickly date the portrait or distract from the child's face. Caporale asked the model, Chris, if he would want to wear a formal outfit, such as a jacket and tie, or if he'd be more comfortable in a casual outfit. Chris quickly expressed a preference for an informal sport shirt, and Caporale indicated that one with a collar would be preferable.

With most of her commissions, Caporale takes photographs of her subjects in their homes, where they feel most comfortable, and she finds that natural light coming through a window is usually adequate. "I avoid having a child pose by a window where strong light is streaming in, as that may cause harsh shadows that age the appearance of the child's face," she explains. "I sometimes use a reflective piece of white board to bounce light into the shadow on the face to soften the shadows and make them less harsh. I may also try photographing the child outdoors with the sunlight coming from behind his or her head; but in most situations I prefer

made it hard to separate his facial features from the background. The gray, however, worked perfectly with the colors of his clothing, skin, and hair."

## Take Lots of Photographs

Once Caporale and her client come to a general agreement about the size, clothing, and pose of the figure, she takes dozens of photographs of the subject while asking him or her to move slightly in one direction or another, smile a little more or less, and angle his or her head in different ways. If there is still some uncertainty about the best clothing or background, the artist will take additional photographs, which can be used once a final decision has been made.

Caporale has contact sheets made of all her photographs, and once she has identified the one or two that will work best for the painting, she has 8"-x-10" enlargements made. "I try to find the best photograph that has everything I want in the portrait," Caporale explains. "I don't want to be taking the eyes from one photograph, the mouth from another, and the hair from a third."

## Rely on Accurate Drawing

During her workshops, Caporale takes a considerable amount of time to offer tips on drawing the human head accurately. "Even if you work from photographs, it is very