

recognize where the photo might have fallen short and I can fill in the gaps between the live model and the information the photo held.”

Caporale commits to painting six days a week. Of that time, she devotes one day to her own, noncommissioned artwork. For this, Caporale will still do some work from photos, depending on what kind of image she’s trying to create, but more and more, she has been setting up models at her home and working from a life situation (See *English Model*, opposite).

Methods & Materials

For her self-portrait, Caporale used a mid-tone gray Canson paper, and a combination of Unison, Sennelier and some Nupastels—her typical palette. For viewing purposes—since it was a demo—she started with charcoal pencil, which she hoped would be easier to see than hard pastels on a mid-tone paper. “I like being able to use something with a very fine point—either Nupastels or charcoal pencils—unless I’m doing something involving multiple figures.” In that case, she wants to be more conscious of the whole composition, and not get—in her words—too noodly.

“Most of my pastel work involves a schematic drawing underneath before building up with pastels,” Caporale says. “Generally, I’m looking for large shapes, staying very conscious of the light and shadow patterns, and trying to keep the masses in tact as much as possible.” She uses a local color to start massing shapes in, and then moves in with the various colors that she sees in the subject. This is when she begins the layering in order to create the variation of color. “I do use a number of layers, sometimes in areas that aren’t as central to the composition,” says Caporale. “If it’s a peripheral area, I might let a little of the paper come through—which can be a unifying factor; that’s why I like working on a mid-tone paper: If it comes through, it harmonizes, whereas if the paper were white, it would be too distracting.”

The artist finds that she usually works in one of two ways. For clients, who want to be clued in to the artist’s vision, she provides something they can see. “I compose with the camera at the initial sitting, and try to put the elements in place—so I know what I’m after.” Then, she lets the client choose from a series of poses—involving the client to help determine which pose seems most characteristic of the sitter.


“When I’m doing my own work,” Caporale says, “I have the opportunity to explore different ways of working. With the self-portrait, for example, it just started to slowly evolve, and I realized I could do more with it. That’s an exciting way to work, but not always the optimal way. Ideally, I like to figure out ahead of time what I’m trying to say and how I want to present



Jillian (9x5)

it, and I start with a pretty solid drawing—that’s more characteristic of the way I work. It’s fun to allow things to evolve, too, but it’s a little more dicey, and you’re never quite sure what you’re going to get.”

Always Growing

Having found the creative process for her self-portrait so satisfying, Caporale hopes to devote more time to similarly ambitious projects. She’s also excited about a completely new opportunity that recently came her way; she has become a new board member for Artist’s Fellowship, a 100-year-old organization in New York City that supports artists in need. It has been a good year for the artist, who just turned 50, and who describes herself as happiest when she’s pushing herself to keep growing. 

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