

RECOVERY ART

PAINT A PORTRAIT

A creative and social workshop

This programme is supported by the WMMD Recovery Grant



Hello Recovery Art Members!

We hope you are all safe and well – we are so happy to be working with you all and continuing to deliver our online Recovery Art workshops in 2021.

We want to welcome you all back to The Barber Institute and even though the galleries are still temporarily closed in line with our national lockdown we very much look forward to when we can be there again.

Our teams are still working from home and we hope like us you are feeling a real sense of Recovery Art Community.

We hope to use artworks from the Barber's collection to instill a creative, relaxing and positive experience during these sessions.

Portraits

If you joined us last month have you had a go at using any of the mixed media and collage techniques and materials from our Set the Table activities? If so we would love to see these.

Our theme for this month is Portraits!!

As we have been connecting over zoom – we thought we would do a live portrait painting workshop to celebrate the new year and Recovery Art!!! This could be a self portrait and Flora has kindly offered to model during the zoom session.

In the meantime you can practice portraits from zoom, photographs, magazines, phone images and in person.



It's been an incredibly difficult period in our lives but as always we have been thinking of positive words to describe how we might be able to look at this time.

POSITIVITY

HOPE

GRATEFUL

EXCITING

MOTIVATION

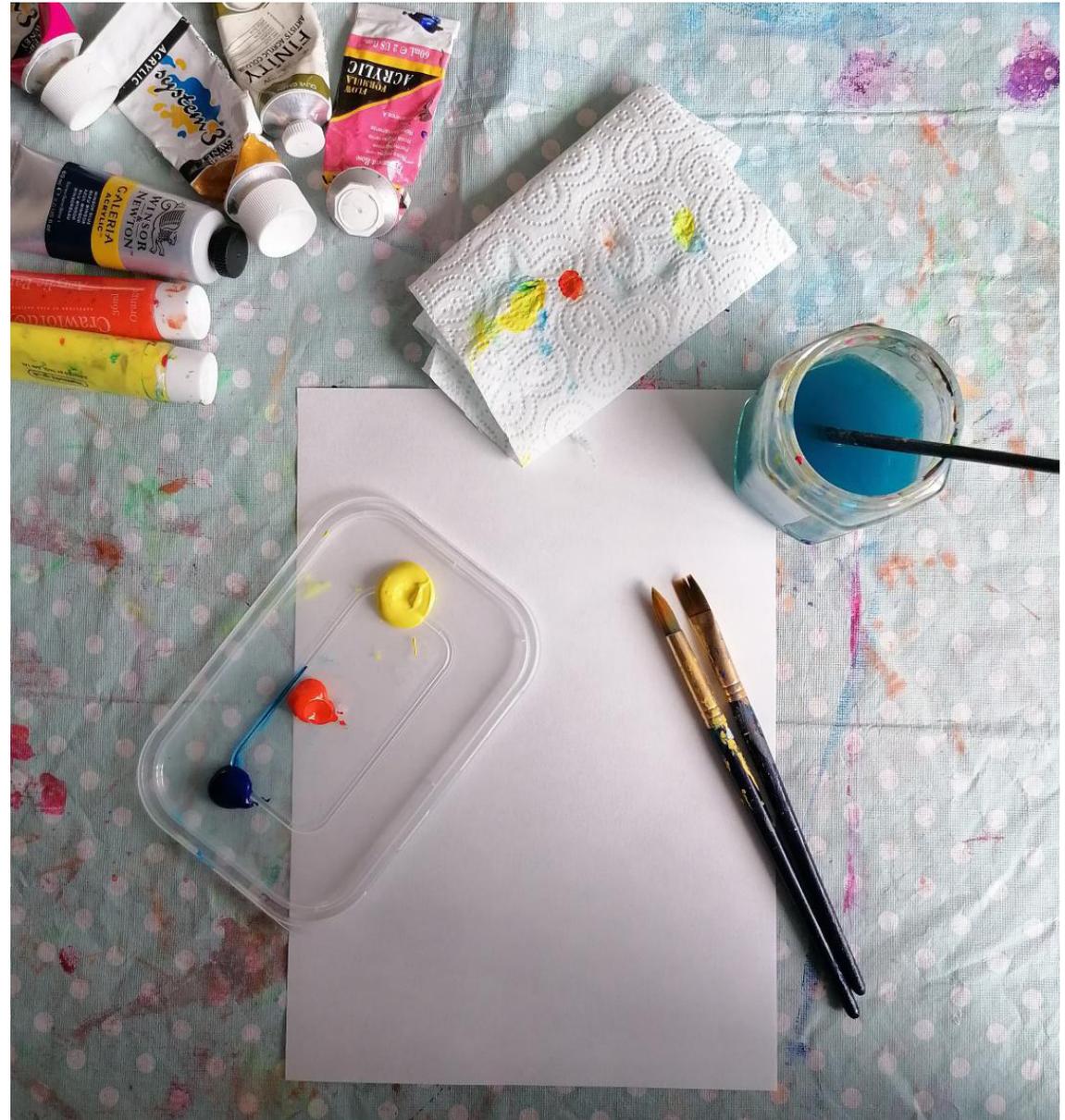
RESOLUTIONS

REFRESHED

Suggested Materials:

Cartridge paper
3 pots of acrylic paint
Brushes
Waterpot
A plastic lid or something similar (as a paint palette)

Take a moment to get comfortable and make a tea.
Gather our art materials, thoughts and a biscuit or 2...





Bernardo Strozzi, *The Head of an Old Woman*, 1620, oil on canvas.
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University of Birmingham.

We continue to focus on a different piece of work in the Barber's collection while exploring a new technique or skill. This month we will be looking at two paintings:

Bernardo Strozzi, *The Head of an Old Woman*, 1620.

This painting is situated in the Red Gallery.

This startling image is a study of old age made from a model, rather than being a commissioned portrait. Such character studies were occasionally painted by artists as the basis for biblical or mythological subjects which included old people. Strozzi painted this work in Genoa before his move to Venice where he had a successful career as a portraitist and a painter of mythological and religious subjects.

This painting is a great example when examining different tones, the shadows on the old woman's face are so contrasting and angular and the dark background accentuates them even more and makes it feel like she is working in the dark or walking out from a darkened room. We can see how the light hits the top of her head and face.



Andre Derain, *A Portrait of Bartolomeo Savona*, 1906, oil on canvas.
© The Henry Barber Trust, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts,
University of Birmingham.

Andre Derain, *A Portrait of Bartolomeo Savona*, 1906.

This painting is situated in the Blue Gallery.

It is a vibrant oil painting with a story of friendship. Painted in London in 1906 and is relatively small in size (45.7cm x 35.4cm) It really stands out in the calmness of the blue gallery, with its rich and acidic tones.

Savona was a Sicilian student who was staying in the guest house Derain used during his visit to London in 1906.

According to family legend, Savona acted as the artist's translator when he needed to visit a dentist. He then painted this portrait in three twenty-minute sittings as a gift. Derain uses raw and clashing colours and exuberant brushwork to create a lively and sympathetic image. Similar works had led him, and his associate Henri Matisse, to be dubbed Fauves (Wild Beasts) when they exhibited in Paris in the previous year.

Two very different paintings but we can learn so much about tones and hues by examining them.

Think about what you like about these paintings and explore the colours you see in each of them. Who are they portraying and how has the artist done this successfully?

Which painting do you prefer or inspires you most?

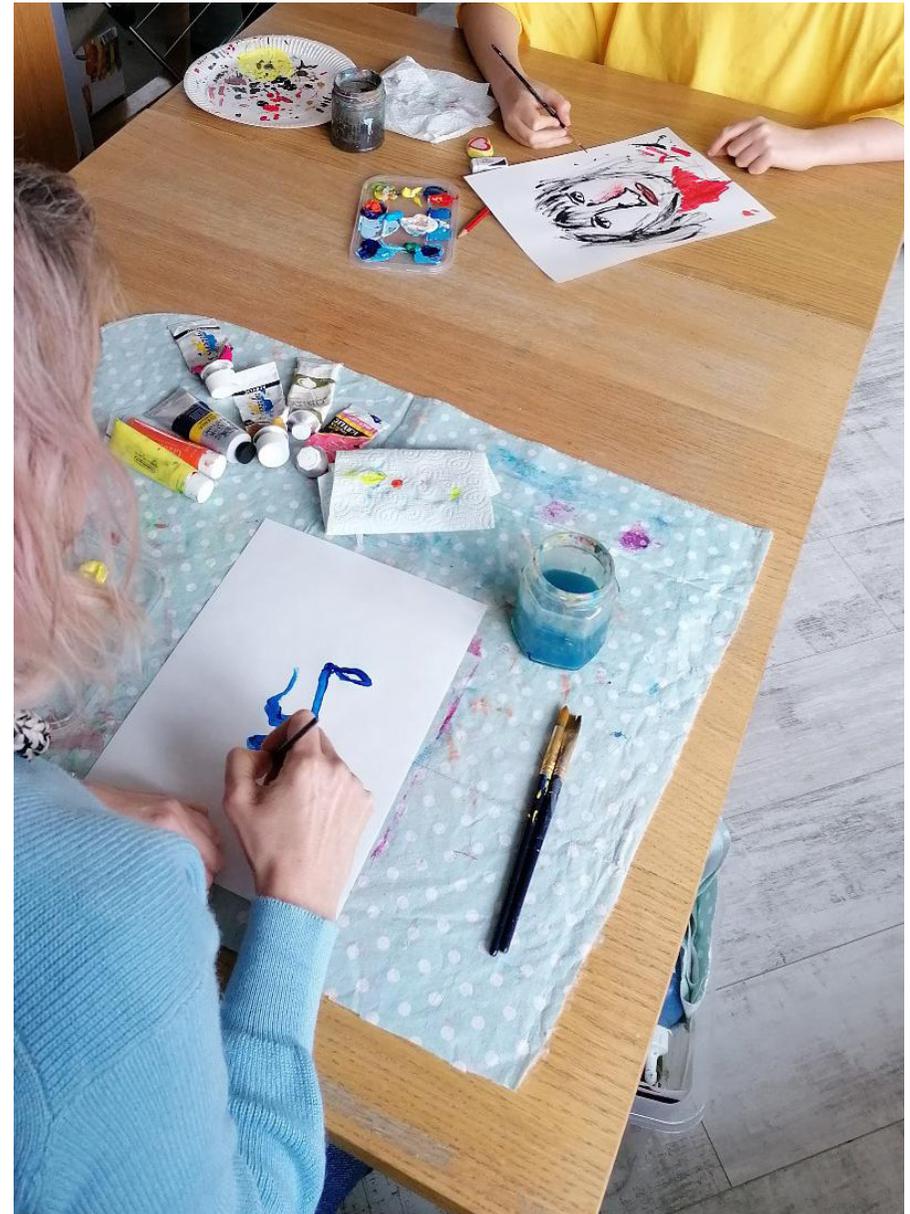
Continuous line drawing with paint

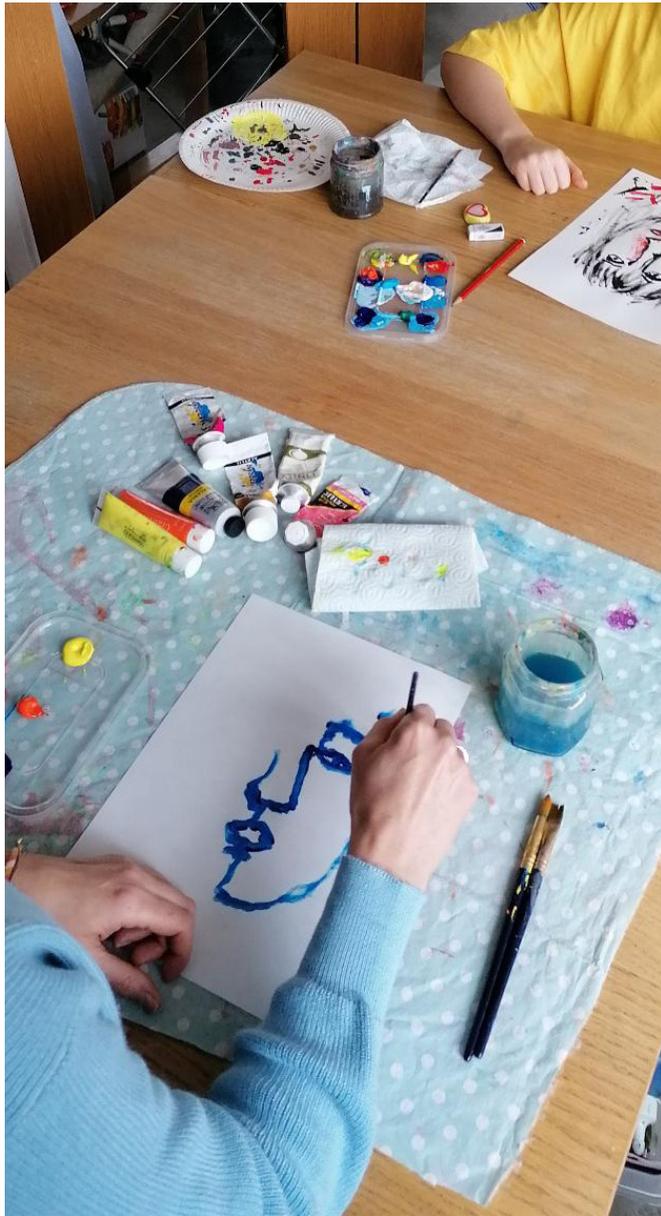
Ok so lets make a start, have a look at your model and use your finger to trace around all of the contours around the face.

Once you have done this you are ready to have a go at a continuous line painting. Just like the drawing activities we did in September but this time we are using the thinner paint brush and paint.

This is a line drawing where you don't remove your paint brush from the paper until you have finished – it can be tricky, but the secret is to choose a starting point and follow/draw the contours of the face.

I usually start with an eye and go down to the nose and mouth, then to the chin and around the edge of the face to the hair. You can stop at this point, re apply paint to your brush and do the other eye and ears. Try and use a continuous, flowing line, you may need to add water to help the paint flow. Please don't be put off by a strange, unusual outcome, these are just fun painting activities to help you to relax and look at the face.





Painting tones

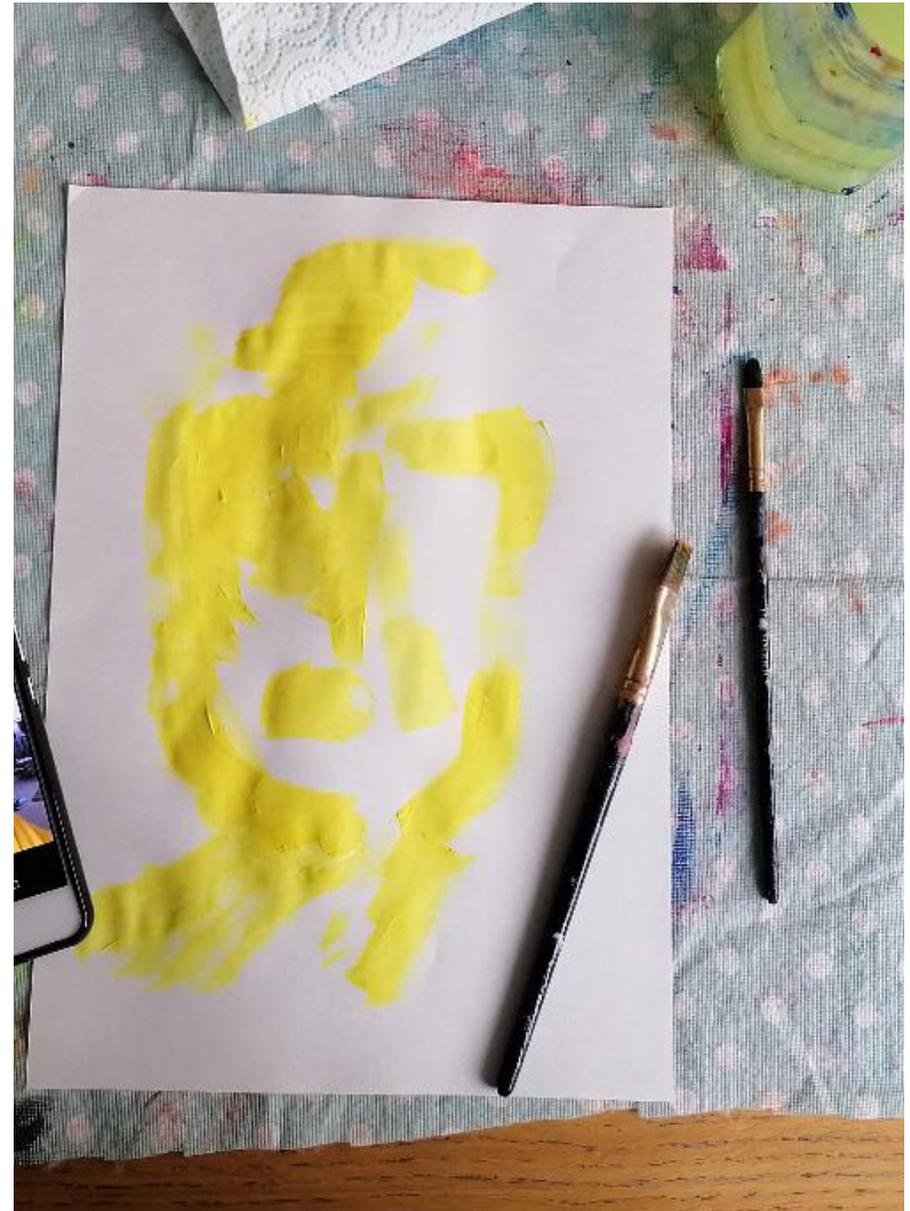
Now we are going to focus on the tones of the face using your 3 shades of paint: the yellow is your lightest tone, orange your mid tone and the blue is your darker tone.

This is just a quick practice so try to paint with confident and strong marks and enjoy the boldness of this painting activity.

Start by folding one of the A4 white papers in half.

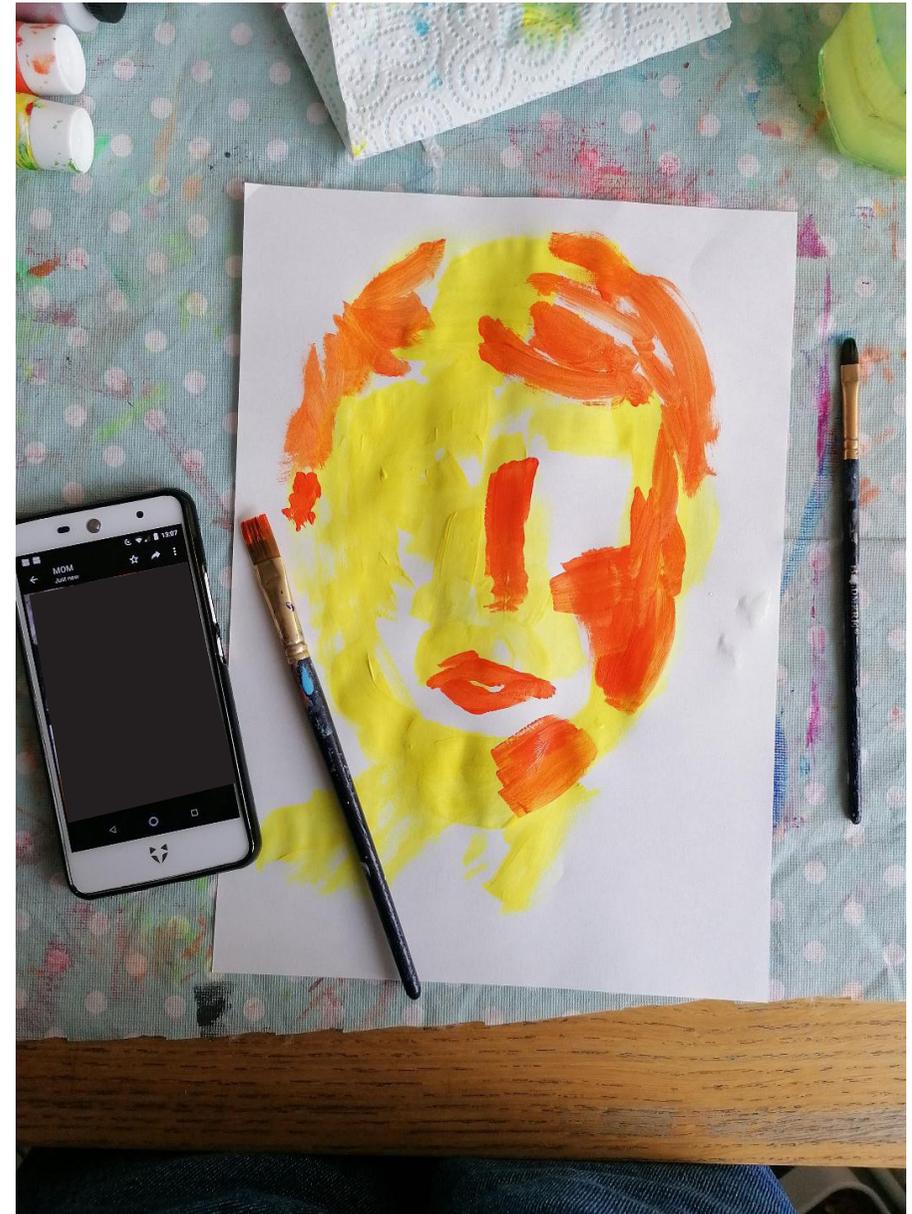
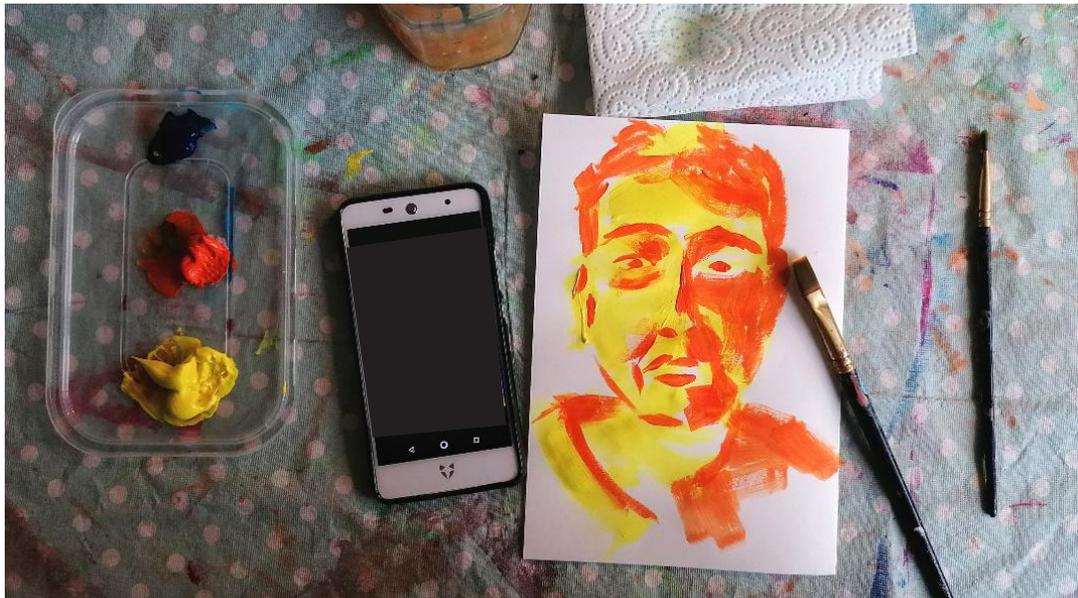
Then using your larger flat head brush you are going to paint all of the light tones of the face with the lemon yellow paint. Look at your model's face and almost close your eyes as if you are squinting, try and spot the lighter tones, you can keep trying this as you are painting to remind you of the variation in tone.

You may find it easier to paint the outside of the face/head and then roughly paint most of the facial features in blocks/shapes of lemon yellow where you see the lightest tones.



Mid tones

Next you are going to paint the mid tones with the orange paint. Again try not to be too careful, make strong lines and shapes with the orange paint and the larger flat head brush. These are the mid shadows on the face, try squinting again so you can see them, you may find that one side of the face is darker than the other, one side of the nose, chin, mouth and neck. The iris of the eyes and under the eyes, some of the hair and inside the ears.

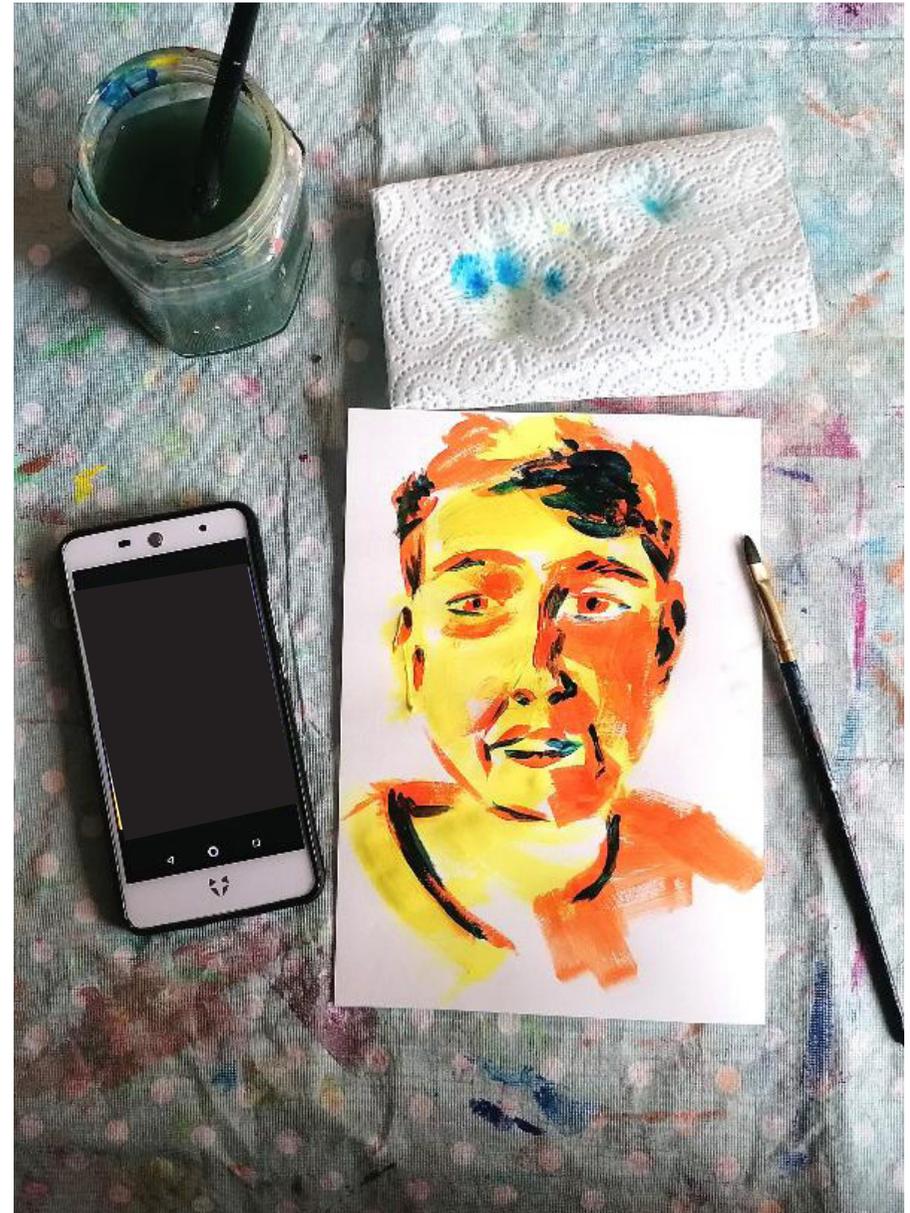


Dark tones

Finally with the smaller brush you can add in the smaller darker tones, these tend to be the details in the face, the odd hair on the eyebrow, some of the darker areas of hair, the pupil, nostrils, corner of nose and mouth and inside the ears. You can also add in some detail around the neck and collar. Be more careful this time and add small amounts of paint, you can always add more.

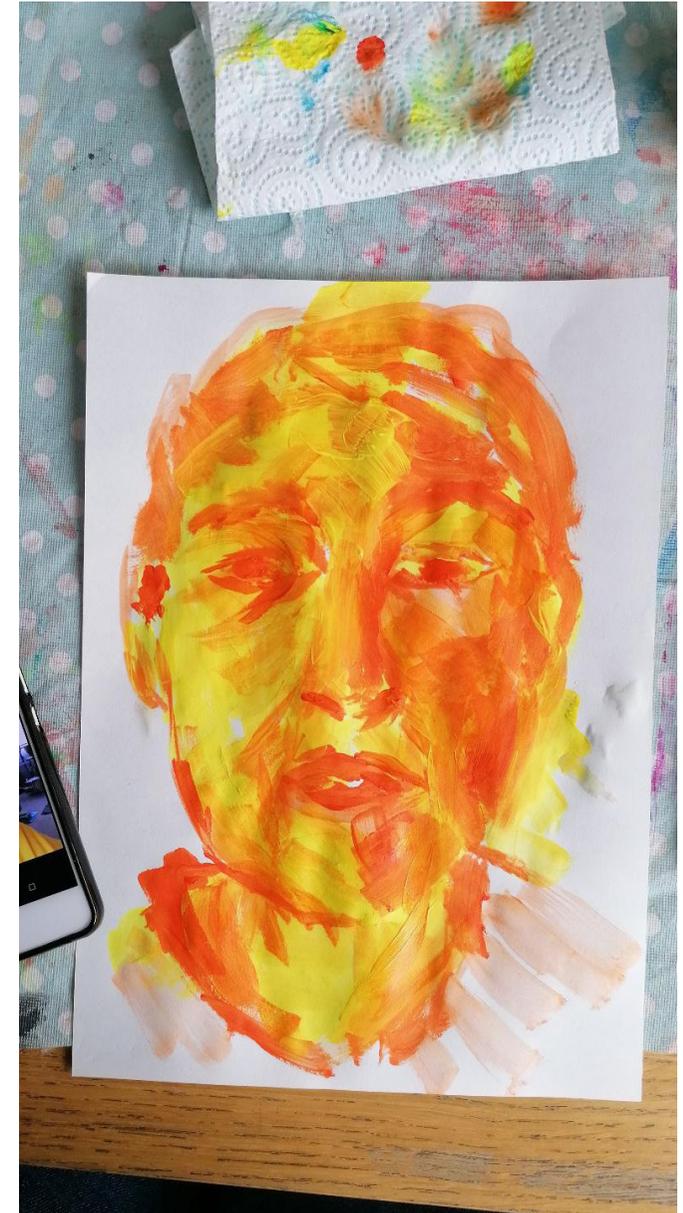
Acrylic paints are great for experimenting – there are many ways/techniques to paint with these, you can mix them with water and layer colour or use them thick and they are more opaque. You can only blend these paints when wet so once they are dry the only way to correct is by painting over the top. So a speedy approach is always best.

Try and relax while painting, be experimental and try not to expect perfection, each portrait painting is unique, mistakes can create development in your painting!!

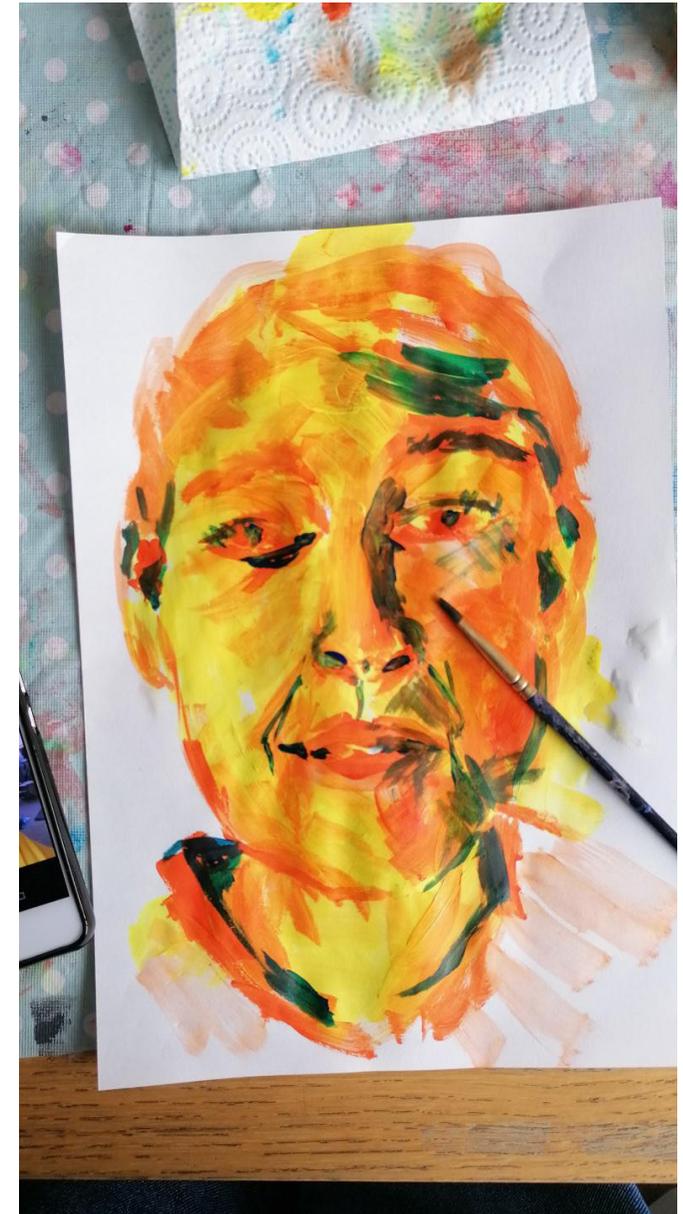
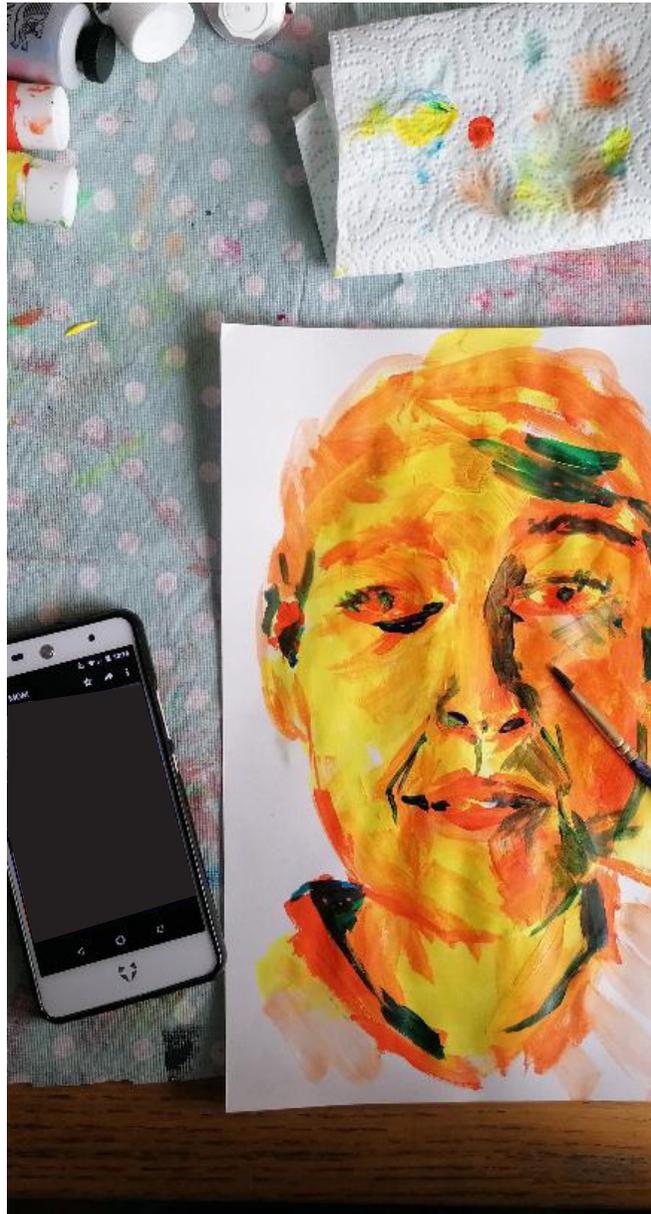


Blending tones

Now try painting with the tonal activity again, but this time on A4 sized paper. You can take more time with this activity and after painting the lighter tone (lemon yellow) try to blend this with the mid tone (orange paint). You can repeat... yellow paint, orange paint, yellow paint, orange paint until you are happy with the effects.



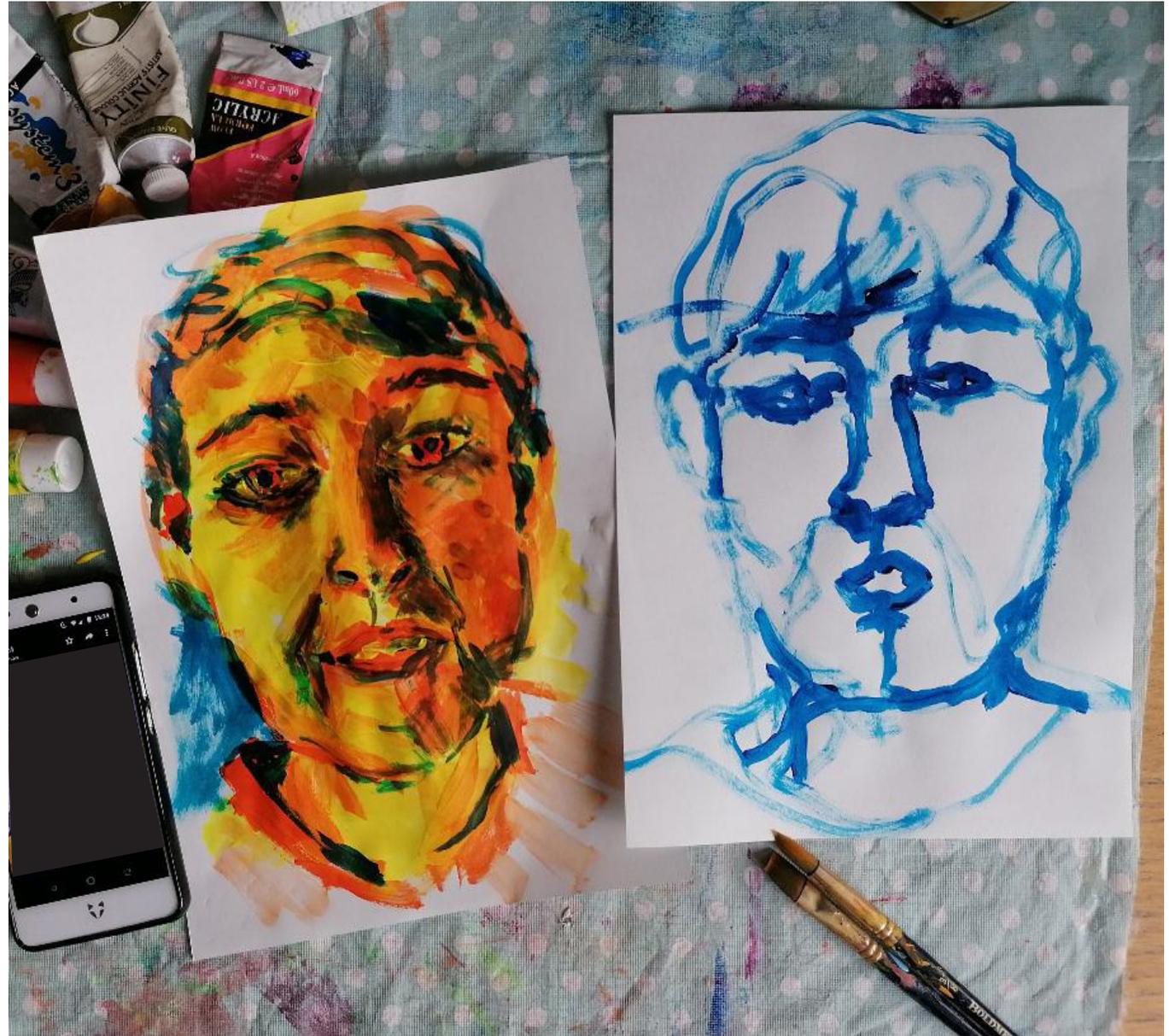
Add in the detail, I tried adding more water to my blue paint to give me a lighter tone tfo my first details, then went for the strong thicker blue paint afterwards, this gives a more sketchy textured finish. I also worked back into the eyes with yellow after I had applied the blue as I found I needed to lighten some areas, this was tricky and I did wait until the paint had dried so it had a more opaque effect.



Evaluation

You could develop this idea/ technique by using a different colour palette or limit your application of paint, maybe try the colours in reverse, blue for light tone, orange for mid and yellow for dark, just to see what happens.

It's great to look back at your paintings, show someone your work or photograph them.



Artist Research:

Another way of reflecting upon our work or technique is to research other artists who paint with acrylics. You can do this by google search or Pinterest. Here are some suggestions of famous portrait artists you could look at:

Lucian Freud



Frieda Kahlo



Frank Auerbach





Thank you so much for taking part in this workshop.

We have so enjoyed working with you all on these remote Recovery Art sessions this year, feeling connected and meeting up.

We hope you are able to use these resources and techniques to build into your daily routine to aid recovery, support wellbeing and develop your creativity at home.

Do join us to go through some of these techniques on our monthly zoom workshop - Monday 25th January, 11am. The link will be sent this coming week.

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