Barbara Zanelli

Alla Prima Portrait in Oil Workshop

Feb 24

In this intensive one-day workshop, students will experience the freedom and excitement of alla prima painting.  Alla prima painting is a one-layer approach where paint is applied wet on wet without letting earlier layers dry. We will start with grisaille to capture the gesture, mood, and initial proportions of the sitter’s face.  From there, we will move into finding the basic structure of the portrait using anatomical landmarks, planes, and relational lines.  Students will be encouraged to squint and/or step back often, and “paint what you see when looking at a glance.” The form will be further refined as we paint simple masses of light and shadow. By working from large to small shapes, as opposed to focusing on the features, we will organically arrive at a more sculptural understanding of the face.  Students will be encouraged to use color at their own comfort level, incorporating warm and cool tones while maintaining value relationships.  This workshop’s aim is not the creation a perfect, smoothly painted surface but rather a rigorous and honest exploration of form and light that will bring your childlike excitement back into the process of painting!

Alla Prima Portrait in Oil Demo:

Feb 19

Barbara Zanelli will demonstrate the start of an alla prima portrait in grisaille, gradually adding some color. Her focus will be on capturing the emotion or mood of the sitter as well as their likeness, keeping her hand loose and moving around the surface of the painting to engage with what she sees.