Step by Step Drawing

I'd recommend reading the entire email before you begin, like you would a recipe.

Representational Painting can be broken down simply into these four technical fundamentals:

Shapes
Values
Edges
Color

Drawing teaches you**:**
Shapes
Values
Edges
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By practicing these fundamentals with the simple tools of drawing you can more efficiently learn the bulk of information that you will need in order to *paint* representationally.

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The Exercise:
To practice your drawing skills make a copy of the my Portrait of Maryanna, which you will see below.

The supplies I used:
This drawing was made using graphite(I prefer a simple mechanical pencil) on a smooth piece of paper (this was Strathmore 400 drawing series). A grey kneaded eraser will be the most helpful erasing tool. A number two pencil and a sheet of printer paper will do if you have nothing else. Don't use charcoal on this one.

Tip: Make sure you pad your paper with several more sheets of paper behind it or your pencil will make harsh and awkward marks.

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Step by step: Draw your copy from my *finished drawing*, while referencing my steps as you proceed when you get into trouble.

Step 1) First you draw only lines mapping out shapes, carefully and patiently separating lights from darks in a **2 value** system. There should be **no filling in of the shadows** until the entire drawing is mapped out, that is step 2).

- Squint to decide if a shape belongs in the light or the dark.
- Use a light touch to start to make sure you can erase mistakes.
- When two dark shapes touch they are to be combined, you may need construction lines to figure them out and that is fine (you will see that I made many construction lines), but simplify the shapes when possible. See how in my step 2 image- the shadow under the chin is connected to the hair and the cast shadow on the neck and shoulder.
- In this stage we are thinking of flat abstracted shapes, accurate but not worried about anatomy or detail (so don't try to invent detail in the eye!). Big truths are more important to begin with.
- Draw with straight lines, this will aid in accuracy of likeness. It is difficult to record an accurate curve, it takes years and years of observational drawing from life to get it correct right off the bat. Using a series of short straight lines to illustrate a curve is a better plan.
- Always correcting: You may notice that in step 1 I separated out "light" shapes in the hair, but then though better of it and got rid of them when I moved to step two. I am always improving my plan of attack, streamlining my process.

Step 2) Second, you must **take your time** to fill in your "darks" with a single medium value dark, don't go black. This will take patience. Fill in as smoothly and simply as possible covering all the white of the paper in the darks areas, you do not want to fill in carelessly and have it appear that there are unwanted and confusing shapes in the darks.

Step 3) Begin with the eye, bring it to finish(full value, accurate edges), then when you are satisfied you may move methodically to the nose... mouth.... etc. Remember when rendering to finish not to use the eraser in the darks that you filled in in step 2, you may darken more... but the "average dark" cannot be lightened.

Tip**:** Set a timer for 20 minutes of focused drawing time, and also for 5 minute breaks. Do not look at your drawing on the breaks. This will help you remain objective. Objectivity is your most valuable tool, after your pencil;)!