

Pastel portrait drawing is an artistic technique that involves using **pastel sticks, pencils, or powders** to create **lifelike or expressive portraits** of people. Pastels are a dry medium made from pure powdered pigment bound with a small amount of gum or chalk, giving artists **rich, velvety colours** and **soft, blend-able textures**.

✦ Key Features of Pastel Portrait Drawing

- **Soft transitions and subtle shading:** Because pastels can be blended directly on the paper, they allow for smooth gradients and delicate skin tones.
- **Rich, vibrant colours:** Pastels provide a strong colour payoff without needing layers of paint.
- **Textural possibilities:** Artists can create realistic skin, hair, and fabric textures or use bold, expressive marks for a more painterly effect.
- **Direct application:** Unlike paint, pastels don't require brushes or water — artists draw and blend directly with their hands or simple tools.

👨‍🎨 Why Artists Use Pastels for Portraits

- They capture **the softness and warmth of human features** beautifully.
- The medium is **forgiving and flexible**, allowing for layering and reworking.
- It can produce anything from **classical, realistic portraits to modern, expressive interpretations**.
- The immediacy of the medium encourages **intuitive mark-making** and a close connection with the subject.

📖 Popular Materials Used

- Soft pastels or dry pastels
- Pastel pencils (for fine details like eyes and hair)
- Textured pastel paper (e.g. Fabriano Tiziano)
- Blending tools like fingers, tortillons, or cloth

🕒 Historical & Contemporary Use

Pastel portraiture became popular in the **18th century**, with artists like **Rosalba Carriera** and **Edgar Degas** mastering its luminous qualities. Today, contemporary artists continue to use it for its immediacy, colour depth, and expressive potential.

👉 In short: **pastel portrait drawing** blends the precision of drawing with the richness of painting — ideal for capturing the character and emotion of a sitter.