Miniature Portraits in Frames

Mini class by Renata Loree

Welcome to my class - Miniature portraits in frames

. You might have noticed that small miniature paintings have gained popularity lately. They are mostly painted in gold, or even any other color, giving them more of an retro look are very popular. They can be used as being part of collection on a gallery wall, or just as small gifts or as magnets attached to a refrigerator.
I have been inspired by these small paintings and wanted to recreate them. We will try to make them from scratch, using clay and paint a small portrait on them.



Supplies you will need

- Clay forms (or molds) to create frames with clay, or see below for other options
- Air drying clay, I used DAS
- cornstarch (optional)
- brush for applying cornstarch
- Cardboard to fit your frames for drying
- Glue to attach frames to cardboard
- Acrylic Paints - Pthalo Blue, Viridian Green, Yellow, Q. Magenta, Medium Red, Raw Umber, Cobalt Blue, White
- Brushes - #2 flat brush and #2 round for blocking areas of color. Detail brush and liners brush
- Pencil, eraser, Gesso, Varnish, Gold Paint, Magnets(optional)

I use clay forms quite a bit in creating, so I have accumulated variety of forms, but if you don't have any and you really don't want to purchase them, you can roll out a square or rectangle and cut an opening through it. Attach it to cardboard with glue and while the clay is drying, you can take a toothpick or any kind of sharp object and draw in decorative shapes and then let it dry.
If you would like to purchase mini frames from Amazon - here is a link. .
here is one I used from IOD

Making the frame with a mold

Decide how you want to proceed. If you have a mold, the process is easy. Simply press you clay into the mold , you might want to prep the mold with cornstarch first, just a thin layer applied with soft brush will do, and then pop the frame out gently right away. Don't let the clay dry in a mold because it will probably warp and bend while drying and not sit flat on your cardboard surface. But if you have a mold that does not need cardboard backing, like the very small frames, then you would not have to worry about it and just paint on the clay.





Prepare your cardboard by cutting it to the size of the frame/s and apply a coat of craft glue. Make sure that the frames attach to the backing securely. You can weigh the frames down gently with some object to enable it to dry flat and keep checking for warping.. As it dries, you might need to adjust the pressure of the weighing object.



Once the clay dries, you can cut the cardboard out with sizzors for neater look and apply couple coats of gesso and you are ready to make a sketch.
I ended up with two frames, one smaller then the other, and I used the smaller one to practice on. The other one became my main piece.





Starting simple

Once we make our sketch, we start by blocking in some colors. Use your larger flat brush for this. Start simple and work fast as not to get bogged down by details. Choose only two color mixes for the face, one for hair and the background and the body. Create mixes that have contrasts. Similar colors will easily blend into each other and you will loose shapes and contrast of the portrait.



Once that first layer of color is down, you can start adding some details, you can use smaller brush for this or keepusing the same brush and challenge yourself how to use it by mixing the right shades of color. For the tiny details, you could also use brush acrylic markers instead of brush, for example for eyelashes or eyes or jewelry.



After you have added all your details in paint you frame with dark color, like raw umber or burned umber. When the paint dries, you can apply gold paint over it. In a past I tried gold leaf over these frames, but textured surface is very challenging to reface with gold leaf and I would not recommend it.









The work is never really done even after you finish your frames and as you can see she has changed couple more times untill I finally accepted that she was done .

Images I used for inspiration







Thank you for taking my class, I like working with clay to create small objects, jewelry or decorations. here I have created a small pendant from a seashell an clay.

Thank You!

Renata

RenataLoreeArt.com
Facebook - Renata.Loree
Insta - Sunctuary