

The Führer's Journal

Entry 10

Nov 2019

Dear reader I want to thank you for taking the time to read this journal, I'll do my best to keep it interesting... In the tenth entry I'll discuss the most important part of a portrait **The Face**.



I often say the face is what makes a portrait successful, is what I spend the most time on and what separates the pros from the enthusiasts. The proportion, the refinement and structure of the human face is a subject of study for generations, and we all have our own understanding of it.

Sometime, somewhere it occurred to me that all artists **unconsciously** replicate their own face when they're drawing; is subtle but makes sense because is our face the one that we see the most, our features are the ones that we fully understand, even if we don't like our own face, its structure is imprinted in our brains.

Then one time I read about one of my favorite artists: **Hans R. Giger**, and he used to be obsessed with actress **Li Tobler**, she was his muse and in many of his paintings Li's face is recognizable, even in the gruesome ones; Hans loved her face so much that he could draw it from memory, and maybe that made the entire painting look right for him.

So maybe is something about our **aesthetic perception**, what makes sense to us and is visually pleasant to our eyes.

As a teenager I was obsessed with getting the face "**right**", but I wasn't really thinking about the infinite variations that exist out there, in my mind a well done face should follow a classic set of rules, like the Da Vinci diagrams; but if you notice the **Uomo di Vitruvio** sets some very arbitrary expectations that almost no body meets; those proportions made sense for Da Vinci but not for me. Was his perception interfering with mine? So by ignoring all rules and eye balling what we find visually pleasing, we should get a **satisfying** result; and what is visually pleasant to me, is what matches what I've learned from studying my own face.

But what is it with faces that are so personal?... Why can it be just a random face? Well I think that what really makes a face is not the structure but the **expression**, there's a lot more than anatomy to it, it has to look alive and convey emotion; even in the simpler cartoons like Bugs Bunny we can experience a lot from his expressive face.

That would explain why some artists can't help to replicate themselves on their drawings; my feelings are the only ones I fully understand, I can try to copy my expressions in order to make a drawing look expressive, and without any other reference to copy from, all my drawings would look like me. So that means that I have an empathy issue.

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I'm a loner and I don't spend a lot of time surrounded by other people, but some artists actually go out to stare at people and learn about their faces in real life; and I've noticed that those artists are very good at drawing different faces (and a little less fucked up than me).

That's why I started making **portraits**; by copying someone else's face I can learn from their expressions and expand my perception of a well-drawn face.

So what started as a personal problem became my area of expertise, I discovered that having an obsession can make you an expert at something... and as cheesy as it sounds, it can be applied to many things in life. As an artist I recognize that as a very powerful tool, from time to time I'd develop new obsessions, like that one time I wanted to draw individual hairs one by one. Our focus shifts from one subject to another as our limits expand.

Thanks again for reading and don't forget to comment or message me what topics you would like to see in future entries. Take care.

Martin.



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