

## Avoid Common Painting Mistakes

There are some important factors you must remember if you are to become a successful portrait painter. **Courage** Since you have decided to become a portrait painter, you must brace yourself against disappointments and unhappy moments. No two people like any painting equally well. And no two people even see alike. I shall not attempt to give a scientific explanation of such differences, but, after painting many portraits, I can offer a painter's view on some phases of the subject. There are of course many persons who do not see alike, literally, because of total or partial inability to distinguish chromatic colors. In short, though they may not be aware of it, they are color blind. In total color blindness, all colors appear as tones of gray, ranging from black to white as in a photograph. Partial color blindness is the more common form. There is a red-green partial blindness, in which these two colors appear gray; also a blue-yellow partial blindness in which reds and greens are distinguishable but the blues and yellows look gray. Obviously the many people so afflicted receive far from normal impressions of paintings. If they paint, their effects may look very strange to those with normal color perception. Then there are individuals who form their impressions a likeness from an emotional standpoint, usually because of close and long-standing association with the sitter. They see incorrectly because they are prejudiced. Mother, from a child's birth - from the first smile, tooth and "goo" - has created her own mental likeness which she varies at will from the first word of the cute little thing on to the first prom gown or suit. It is very difficult for the painter to record this sentimental picture which Mother has formed through tears and smiles. As to Dad, there's far less trouble pleasing him. Being less sentimental, he takes a more realistic view. Also, he has had less opportunity to notice the hour-by-hour development of the child. As to Uncle Joe and Aunt Mary, Uncle Joe belongs to Dad's side of the family and will invariably see something of his mother or, if you are painting a boy, his father. If Uncle Joe doesn't see this, he will be harder to please. Aunt Mary (bless her soul - sometimes) will not give you much trouble because she will be too busy disagreeing with Uncle Joe, for how can he see so and so in the picture which so definitely and unmistakably is a spitting image - and we do mean "spitting"! - of her mother or father, she will never know. After all, hasn't he always claimed the handsomest for his side? These two will come to your defence if, on the "q.t.", you agree with each. (I am not hinting at trouble to frighten you, but, since differences of opinion must be faced, I feel that I should prepare you for them.) One more person who occasionally has to be dealt with - I hope not in your case - is a jealous contemporary painter whose opinion your customer respects (he doesn't paint portraits but knows all about them!). If your painting is refused because of such an individual's freedom with his opinions, you may never learn why.

## About the Author

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