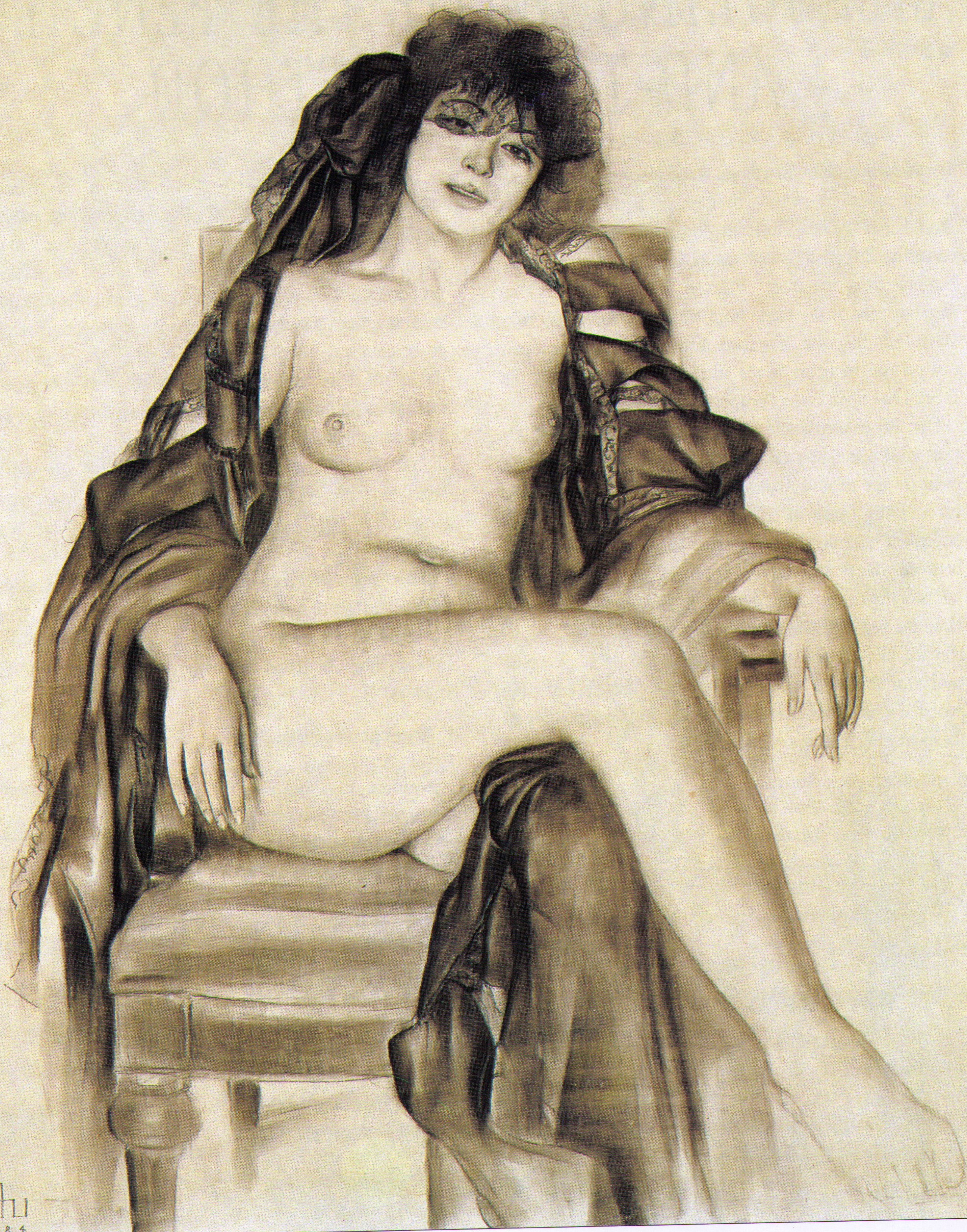




..... Q & A .....

# THE POSE

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Can you give me some guidelines on choosing a pose for my sitter?

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One of the great joys of portrait painting is that each new sitter you encounter has a different personality, and it is up to you to decide how best to bring this out. Pose, expression and surroundings can all contribute to the final effect.

In choosing a pose, there are many options available. Take the time to plan carefully and decide whether you want the portrait to be head only, head and shoulders, half length or full length. In general a seated pose offers more possibilities – upright, leaning forward, hands in lap, and so on. A standing pose looks more formal, and from the model's point of view is less comfortable to hold for long periods, but nevertheless offers some interesting possibilities.

Even in a simple head-only or head-and-shoulders portrait, the aim should be to make the pose as interesting as possible. For example, a head viewed from a three-quarter angle, or at a slight angle to the shoulders, or upturned slightly, tends to give a more animated feel than a head that is viewed full-face.

**Portrait of Lucine** Rudolph Katchaturian, *sepia on gessoed wood panel*

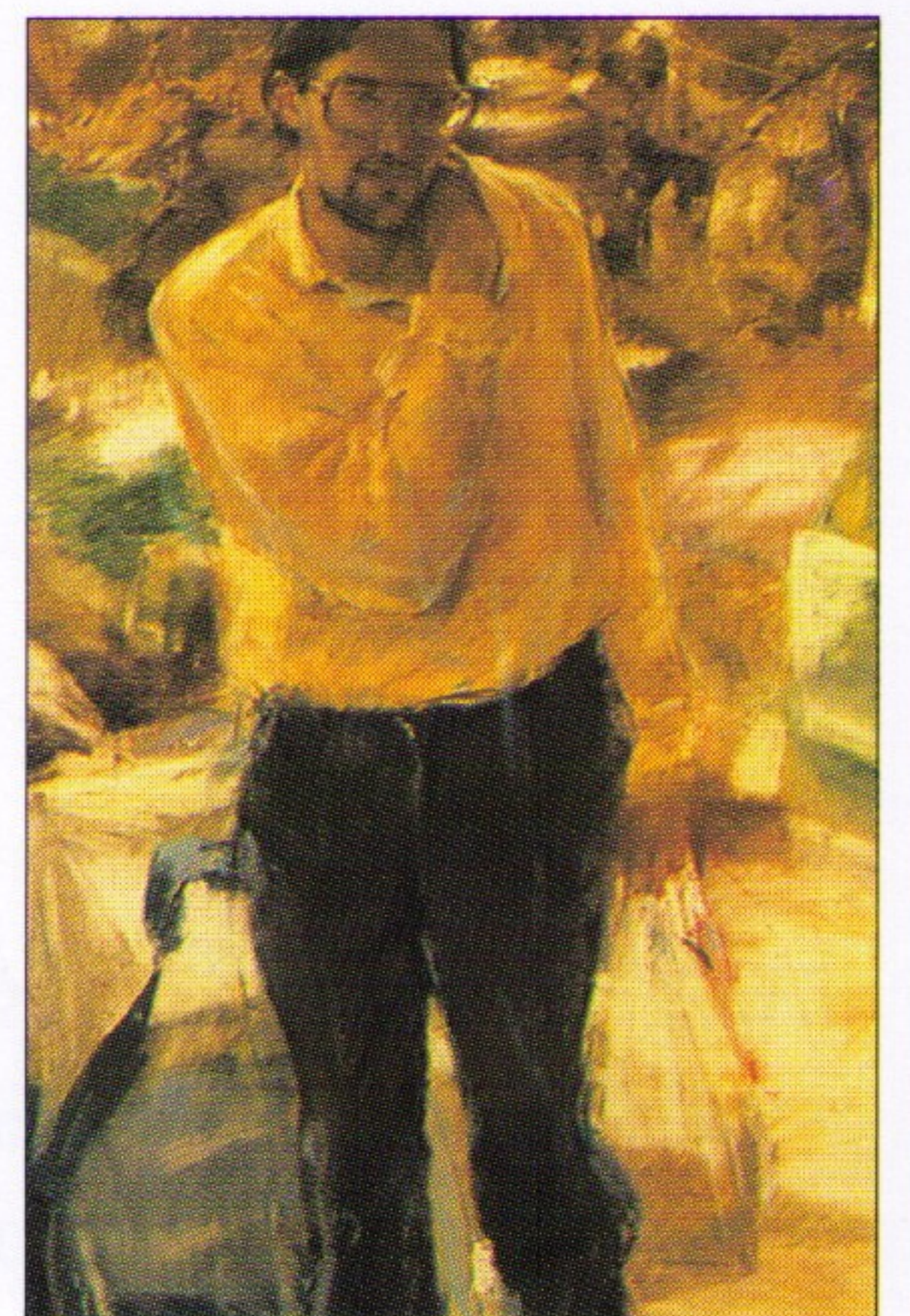
When deciding on a pose, there are several questions to be asked. Does the pose convey the personality of the sitter? Will the outline of the figure create an interesting composition? And, last but not least, will the sitter be comfortable? This picture is successful on all three counts: the pose is relaxed and lighthearted; the sitter is obviously comfortable leaning on the back of the chair, and the positioning of the hands and arms lends vitality and interest to the basically triangular composition.



► **Portrait of Sabina**

**Corsini** Richard Foster, *oil*

The easy grace of the sitter leaning back among the cushions lends a refreshing air of informality to this portrait.



▲ **Portrait of Niel Henry**

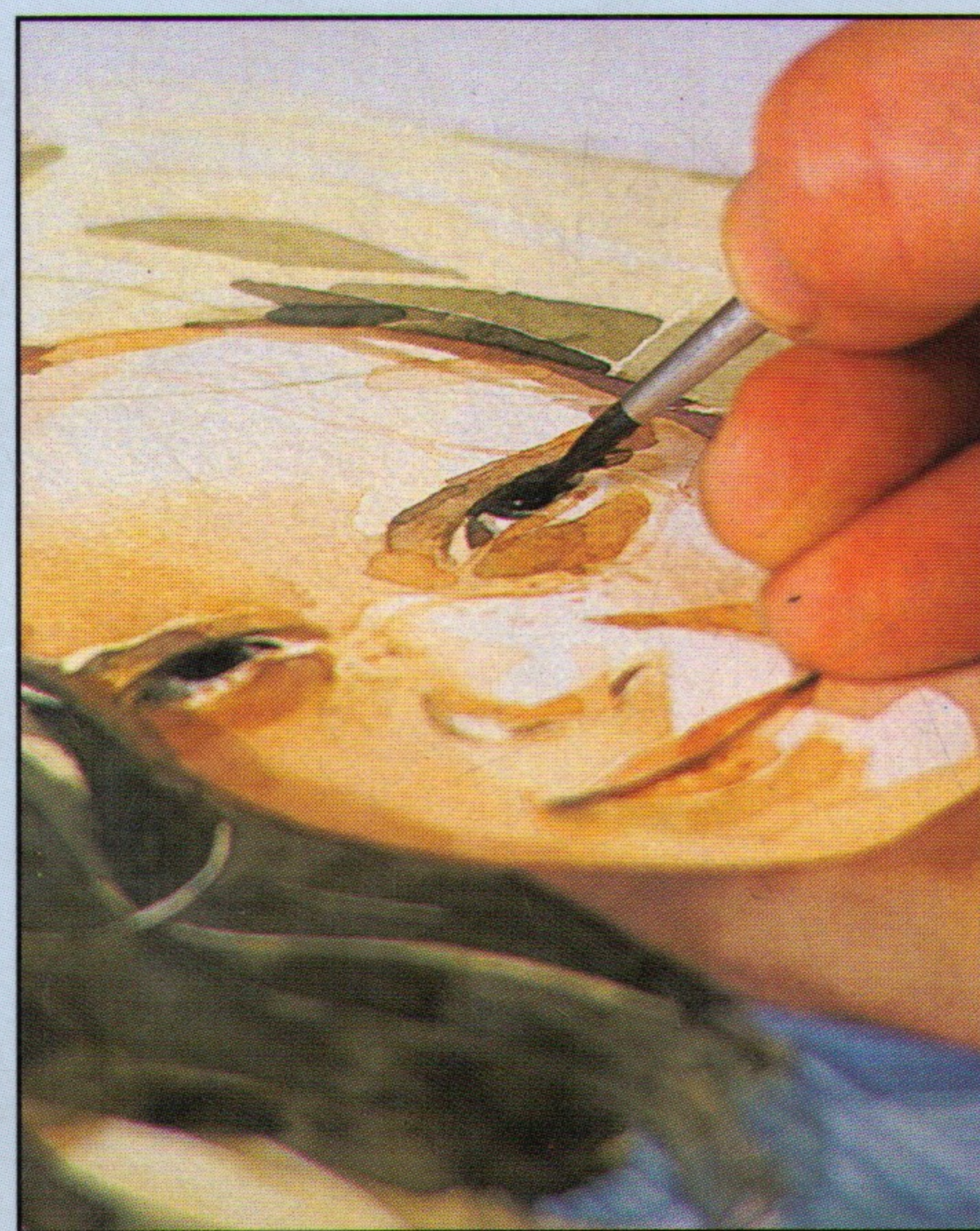
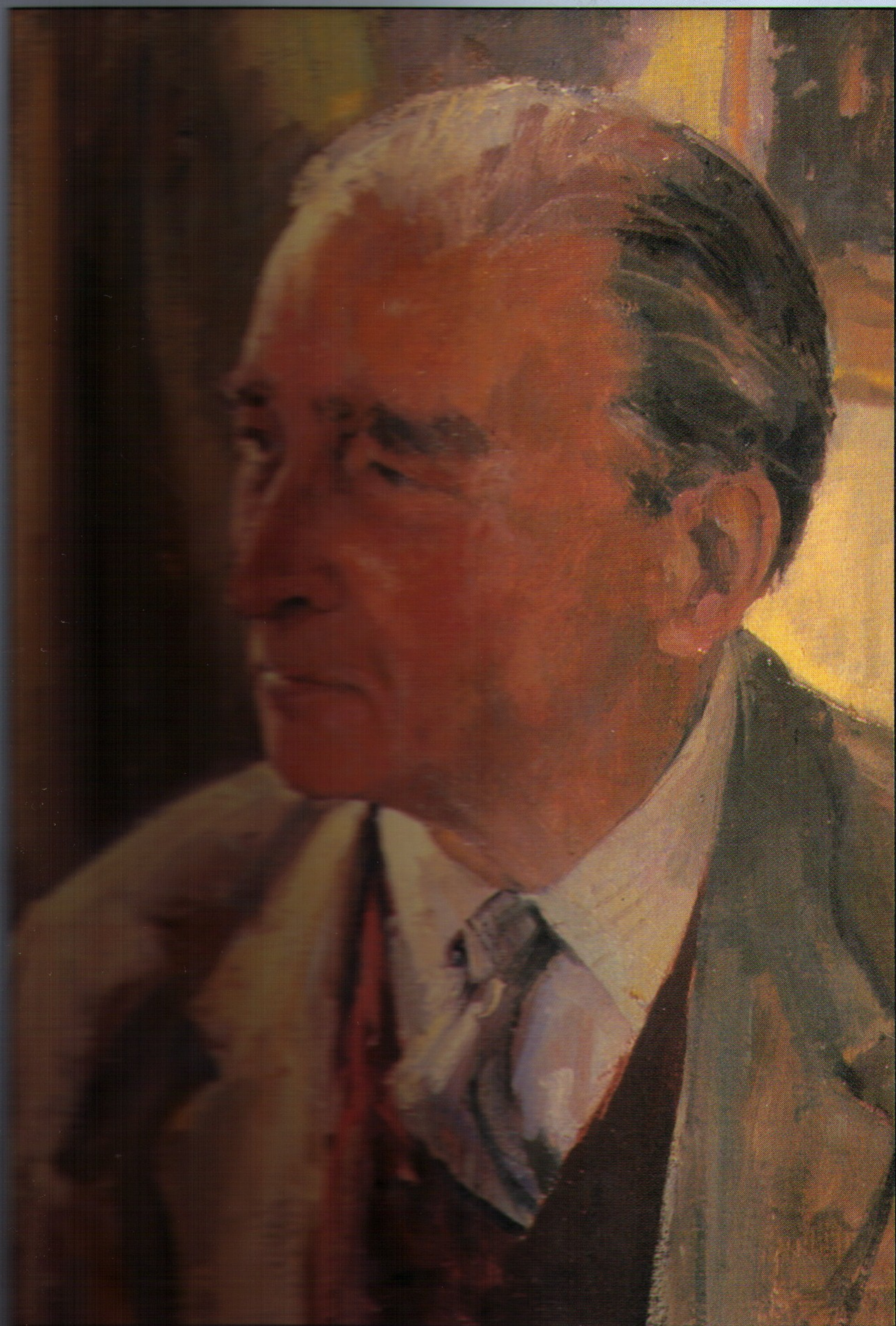
Barry Atherton, *pastel*

It is impossible to contrive the "perfect" artistic pose – telling your model to move this way or that is counter-productive. Simply watch the model move around and when he or she assumes an interesting pose ask if it is comfortable to freeze. I like the snapshot approach of this portrait – it is as if the model has paused momentarily to reflect on something. The involuntary movement of the hand to the shoulder is a well-observed gesture.

PAINTING SOLUTIONS

# HANDS • FACES AND FIGURES

From creating a likeness to making hands look lifelike...all your questions answered.



ANGELA GAIR