

## Introduction to Caravaggio

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio was an Italian Baroque artist famous for his powerful, dramatic paintings. He used strong contrasts between light and dark (called chiaroscuro) to create emotion and realism. His portraits often show intense expressions and realistic people in dark backgrounds, lit by a dramatic spotlight.

This is his self portrait which you can recreate using pencils and/or charcoal with some soft white chalk or pastel



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### Materials Needed

- A4 drawing paper
- Pencil (HB and 2B)
- Black coloured pencil or charcoal
- Red and brown coloured pencils
- White gel pen or chalk
- Eraser
- Sharpener
- Optional: watercolours or acrylics for background wash

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### Step-by-Step Tutorial

#### Step 1: Light Sketch of the Face

Sketch an oval for the face and lightly mark guidelines for the eyes, nose, and mouth. Draw the shoulders and the collar.



## **Step 2: Refine the Features**

Add more detail to the eyes, nose, mouth, and hair. Begin shaping the eyebrows and defining the shape of the face and jawline. Make the facial expression serious and focused, like in Caravaggio's portraits.

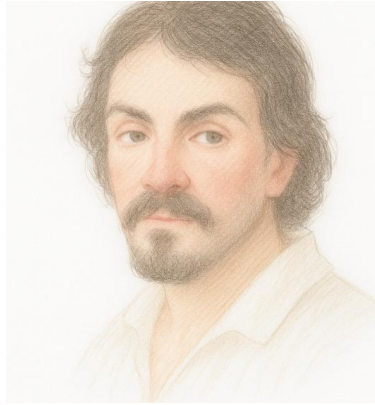


## **Step 3: Begin Light Colour Work**

Using coloured pencils or soft pastels, start adding delicate colour layers over the original pencil sketch. Stick to natural, muted tones:

- Use soft **peach** or **light beige** for skin.
- Add a touch of **warm pink** to cheeks, lips, and nose.
- Lightly shade the **eyes**, keeping them soft and rounded.
- Use **brown** and **dark grey** for the eyebrows and light touches in the beard and hair.

Keep all colours gentle and transparent so that the pencil sketch from Step 2 still shows through. This is just the base — do not add any shadows or depth yet.

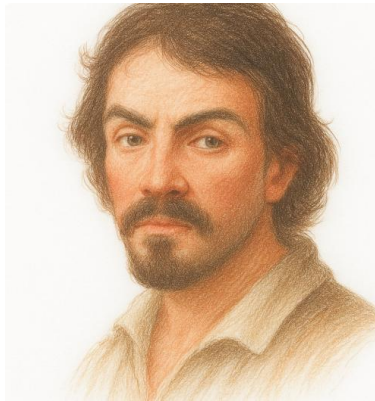


#### **Step 4: Build Up Colour and Hair Texture**

Now start to deepen the colours very gently. Layer warm tones like:

- **Terracotta, peach, and rose** into the skin shadows (under cheekbones, around the eyes, beneath the jaw)
- **Brown and deep ochre** in the hair and beard, following the direction of the strands
- Slightly darken the **eyebrows and lips** while keeping everything soft

Keep the strokes very light and layered. Don't overwork it — this should still feel like a coloured drawing, not a painting.



#### **Step 5: Final Highlights and Refinements**

In this final step, gently add:

- **Soft white pencil or chalk** or pastel to highlight the nose bridge, cheekbones, and top edge of the collar

- A little more **depth in the shadows** around the eyes, under the chin, and hair edges
- Extra definition to the **hair strands**, **lips**, and **beard** with darker brown, but **do not outline** — keep the soft, blended Caravaggio look
- Refine the edge of the shirt with subtle folds and gentle texture

This step should bring everything into balance while preserving the softness and contrast typical of Caravaggio's chiaroscuro portraiture.

