

8-Week Advanced Black & Grey Portrait Tattoo Master Plan

WEEK 1: Master Your Eye (Foundation of Realism)

- Print 3 black & white faces and trace only darkest shadows.
- Practice 3-tone block shading: solid black, midtone, and skin tone.
- 30 minutes daily whip shading practice using a 9-mag.
- Sketch one facial feature per day (eyes, nose, mouth).

WEEK 2: Contrast is King (Darkness and Light Control)

- Study portraits in black and white only.
- Identify pure black zones first and map them.
- Practice creating black-heavy, gray-heavy, and highlight-heavy circles.
- Focus on clean black packing and soft midtone blends.

WEEK 3: Texture - The Secret Sauce

- Study textures in different portraits (wrinkles, pores, lips, hair).
- Sketch textures separately from the rest of the face.
- Practice stippling, pepper shading, and creating soft and sharp hair textures.
- Tattoo textured areas separately on fake skin.

WEEK 4: The Eyes - Bring Life Into the Portrait

- Sketch 2 different eyes daily.
- Focus on reflections, catchlights, and smooth blending in the iris.
- Tattoo single eyes on fake skin.
- Practice subtle gradations around eyelids and lashes.

WEEK 5: Nose and Mouth - The Soft Zone

- Sketch 2 noses and 2 mouths daily.
- Focus on soft transitions rather than hard lines.
- Tattoo noses and mouths together as one mini-project.
- Emphasize airflow: light shading without visible lines.

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WEEK 6: Full Face Construction

- Sketch one full face every two days.
- Break face into four zones: forehead, eyes, nose, mouth/chin.
- Tattoo an entire face on fake skin focusing on large shapes first.
- Step back every 5 minutes to check values and flow.

WEEK 7: Depth and Atmosphere - The Final Touch

- Sketch portraits with atmospheric backgrounds (soft fade-outs).
- Practice creating soft and invisible edges.
- Tattoo a portrait where 70% of edges are soft or blended.
- Focus on depth: what pushes back and what comes forward.

WEEK 8: Final Project - Create a Masterpiece

- Choose a high-res black & white photo with good contrast.
- Sketch it in charcoal before tattooing.
- Tattoo using "big shapes > midtones > details" method.
- Slow down: aim for precision over speed.

Daily Apprenticeship Checklist:

- Study light shapes in every portrait you see.
- Sketch a different focus zone daily (eye, nose, mouth, ear).
- Practice fade-outs and whip shading daily.
- Tattoo at least 3 sessions per week (fake skin or live).
- Step back and reassess every 5 minutes while tattooing.
- Photograph every piece.
- Analyze a healed realism tattoo once daily.
- Reflect on wins and areas to improve each evening.

By the End:

- Tattooing with purpose and clear value control will feel natural.

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- Your portraits will appear alive and breathing on skin.
- You will have unlocked the gateway to advanced realism.