

Painter PAIN REALISTIC EARS

Ears are too often a forgotten feature in portraits, but artist **Katarina Sokolova** shows how they can add to a character...

Artist PROFILE

Katarina Sokolova

COUNTRY: Ukraine



Katarina has been working as a CG artist for five years and her work

is in the Exposé and Exotique books and a number of exhibitions. She does commissions for private clients.

katarinasokolova.com

DVD Files

The files you need are on your DVD

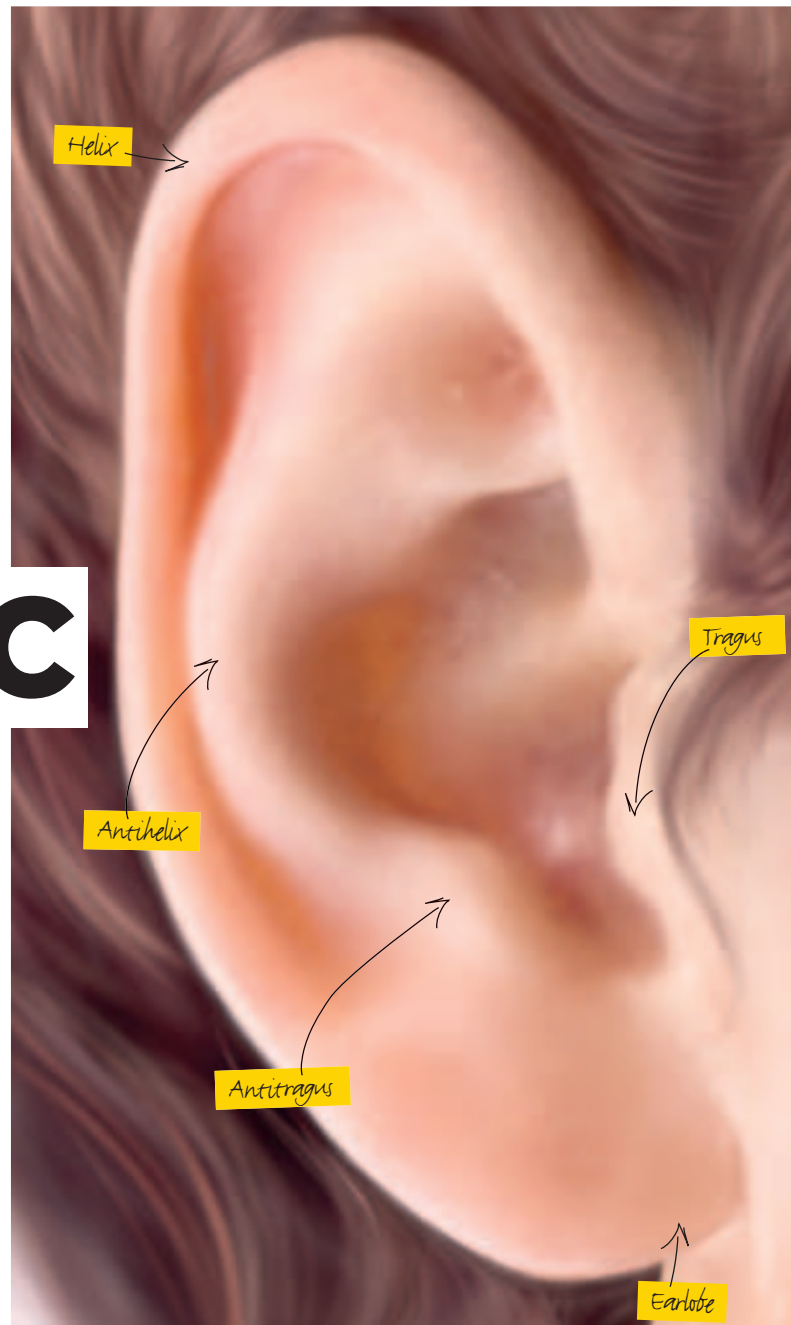
in the Katarina Sokolova folder in the Workshop section.

SOFTWARE: Painter X (demo)

Ears are a very important part of person's character, but unfortunately in portraits they're often forgotten or simply covered by hair. It's a pity! An open ear, decorated by a beautiful earring, visually extends the neck and can subtly give the character sensuality, finesse and daintiness.

Human ears, just like the other parts of the face, vary greatly in form, size and character. However, despite the variety, all ears have common structure and that's a vital consideration when constructing an image. The base of an auricle consists of complex curved forms. It's almost completely made of cartilage with the exception of its bottom part, the earlobe.

The edges of the auricle have a thickening, called the helix. The antihelix is the next curved section of the auricle, laying inside the helix. In the middle of



the auricle there is a cavity, whose front part has a characteristic ledge, known as the tragus. Opposite to the tragus, there's another ledge, called the antitragus. At the bottom of the ear is the earlobe.

Unlike the other parts of the auricle, the earlobe has no cartilage. Its form is extremely diverse. Earlobes can be chubby, flat or angular. They even can be almost absent, merging right into the bottom of the ear. For some people earlobes are located in the same plane as

the rest of the auricle, whereas for others those planes are different.

When you start sketching ears, begin with the general form. Start the sketch by defining the axial line, which helps to correctly establish the ear position. At the same time, while building the form of an auricle in three-quarter perspective, pay attention to its position in the space. External outlines of an auricle look like an ellipse. Remember, some ears are close the head, while others protrude away.



Quick technique Realistic ears

1 Pencil sketch

The ears are drawn between the top of the eyes and the bottom of the nose. The top of the ear must be in line with the eyebrow, while the point where the ear is attached to the head should be on the same line as the eyes. Mark the ellipse-looking plane of an auricle. Remember, the ear is the link between the head and the neck. Give it the correct proportions – an ear's width is roughly half of its height.

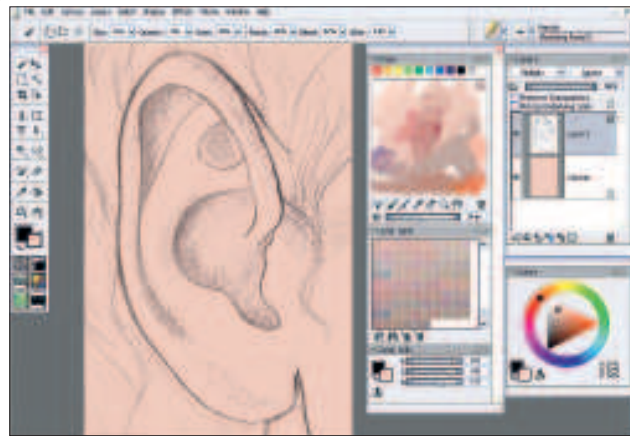
Sketch the general contour of the auricle, and draw the other parts of the ear, in proportion. It's a common mistake to forget about the proportions and as a result the ear looks deformed. While working on the auricle keep an eye on the thickness, form and character of the helix.

Think about perspective right from the beginning, too. In order to better show the volumetric-spatial form of an ear, I recommend you sketch its farther parts with lighter lines, and nearer ones with stronger lines.

The complexity of the painting specifically arises from the necessity to consider proportions, perspective, character, form, spatial depth, contrast and tints, to know techniques and anatomy. Therefore you should be very attentive during the painting process.

2 The auricle's form

Scan the sketch and open Painter. When modelling the auricle's form you must pay attention to the light source; it's important to preserve interrelation between the lines and tone. Lines around the form of the auricle are borders between the sections, which will have



different levels of shadows and highlights. First, paint the darkest areas of the form, then you can firm up the volume with the help of shadows and highlights. The correct shadows are vitally important to painting attractive ears.

3 Shadow work

When working on the shadows, you should remember that falling shadows show not only the original form, but also the form of the surface on which they fall. Revealing some parts of the auricle, don't forget to coordinate one part with the others and with the general form. These rules should be observed strictly at all stages of work.

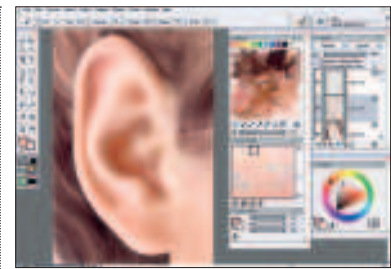
Let's work on the highlights next. You first need to mark the darkest and the lightest tones. I work with a big, soft brush to show the softness and roundness of the ear's forms.

Make sure that all the parts of the ear are coordinated and fit the overall image.

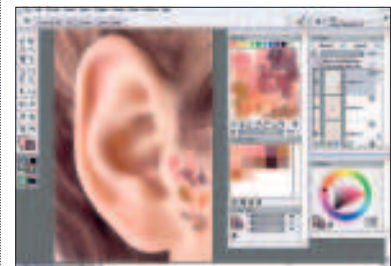
PRO SECRETS

Colour Mixer

I always use the Colour Mixer palette, especially when painting portraits; it's one of my favourite functions in Painter. It's very handy for mixing colours, because it's the same as a traditional media painter's palette. You can add cold and warm colours to the base skin tone for creating realistic or fantasy tints of the skin, depending on your painting style.



The reflection's tone should not be stronger than the tone in the light. Contrasts of shadows and highlights that are deeper in the ear shouldn't stand out.



4 Enrich with tints

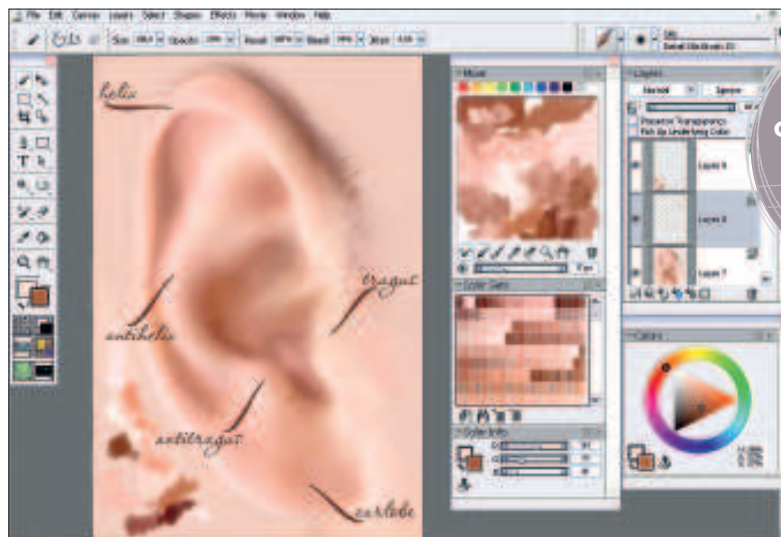
I add non-saturated lilac tints into the shadows of the deeper parts of the ear. After that I add cooler, non-saturated pink to the earlobe. Emphasise the cheekbone with highlight, to show a point where the ear is attached to the head. In the final stage of painting of the auricle you must give the painting a sense of completeness, to bring the separate components of the auricle together to a finished form.

5 Finishing touches

To finish the painting, suppress excessively darkened sections and sharply outlined edges, and to strengthen insufficiently outlined edges. I add a stroke of saturated pinkish-orange to the shadowy area of the ear between the antihelix and helix, then make the highlight on the edge of the curl brighter.

If the form is broken up into too many sections, unify it with consistent lighting. The lighting should uniformly fade as the

source of light gets farther from the illuminated area. Don't make shaded parts too dark so that they do not stand out. The parts in the foreground should be more precisely detailed than those in the background.



Shortcuts
Add Current
Colour to Colourset
Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+T
This is very quick and useful when you are working with tints of one skin tone.

