Creativebug Live: Blotted Line Monoprint Portraits of Inspiring Women with C

Chapter 1 - Blotted Line Monoprint Portraits of Inspiring Women

Creativebug Live

(bright music) - Hi, everybody. Welcome to Creativebug Live. I'm Courtney, and it's Women's History Month and I wanted to share one of my favorite drawing techniques that creates a monoprint, so you could do a portrait of an inspiring woman. And when I was thinking about preparing for this live, this quote kept coming to mind over and over, which is attributed to Virginia Woolf. And the full quote is, "For most of history, Anonymous was a woman," and often that just gets fragmented to anonymous is a woman or was a woman. And so I changed my mind and let inspiration strike. And instead I wanted to show you and demo for you doing portraits of anonymous women and shining a light on people we may not know their names or their exact story, but honoring women's stories throughout history that have often been neglected or overlooked. This technique can be used for any portrait that you want to do. And what I like about it is it's very accessible. You don't have to be an advanced drawer to be able to make a portrait that looks like a person or the person you have in mind. So follow along with me. You've probably seen me do this many times in some daily practices and other classes. And this is a technique that was developed by Andy Warhol and used in his commercial illustration career. And this is my interpretation of that technique using my favorite materials and tools. So what I have in front of me is a photocopy. You'll need to have a flat image. So if you're using a family photo of a woman that has been, her name has been lost to history, but you wanna give her the spotlight for this project, you'll need to make a photocopy or have that photo out flat on the table. This image is an anonymous portrait of a Black woman from the Schomburg Collection in New York Public Library's digital archive that you can find a online. You could also look at the Library of Congress for photos of women if you want to use someone that's not from your own personal archive. So I have that photocopied out. On top of that, you'll see it's taped to the table just using artist tape. Of course it's neon pink. And then on top of that is a transparency. I recommend using something that's laser printer compatible. That's gonna be the most often labeling for transparency. If you have a local photocopy shop, you can just get a single piece. Otherwise you have to buy a full pack. And you can reuse this over and over. So you don't need to have a full pack, you just need one or two. So that's taped on top. And we're gonna be drawing on this surface using a pointed pen. So this is a straight holder with a nib. I like to use the Nikko G nib, which is often used for comic book drawing, but you can use any pointed nib that you like. And the reason we use a pointed nib is because it lays down, I'll show you. A thick beaded line and it's that quality of ink, that amount of ink that we need to create our monoprint, which is gonna gonna be the final image, the final print, it's gonna get my paper towel here and wipe that up 'cause we don't want that to be in our print. So I'm using that nib. I like to use FW acrylic ink because it's permanent and then I can watercolor on top of it. But you can use any ink that you like to use with your nib pen. I would say most marker pens and other types of pens are not gonna work for this process. It's really essential that you have a nib pen. And then the paper that I like to use is Strathmore drawing paper. This is in the 400 series. It usually comes with a brown cover like this in a spiral bound sketchbook. You can get smaller sizes of this, larger sizes of this. I'm gonna either use it full or torn down into half. So either one. And this is actually gonna go on top and I'm gonna tape it in place in two spots because this is what's gonna create our print, what we're printing onto. And so it's gonna be hinged. I just eyeball it to be centered over my paper. So the process is that we are

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going to draw here and print and our image is going to appear here. So draw print image will appear here and we're gonna do that over and over. So once you have everything set up, you can start. With portraits I like to do thin light strokes, almost broken strokes, if you will. So not one continuous line, because you can always add more but you cannot take away. And when you get to drawing the features, this becomes really important because if you've spent a lot of time tracing and drawing your portrait and then you get a big blobby eyeball, that's not gonna look good and you're gonna be disappointed and frustrated. So thin, small, fine strokes, even dots, I'm trying to get the texture over hair, and anything that you miss in this print, you can also add in watercolor if you're choosing to add watercolor afterward, which I often do, but it's not always required. Sometimes just a black and white line drawing print can be pretty impactful and doesn't require any further painting. So fine little dots. You can see that I'm printing often. If I wait too long the ink is gonna dry on the transparency and it just won't print, which means I either have to draw over these lines again or I need to wipe away the surface and start over depending on where you are in the process. So you can see I've got the outline of her hair there and I'm liking the way that looks. Now I'm gonna move on the shape of her face. I'm wondering who this woman was. And of course at this time this is a studio portrait. So she would've had to have been fairly financially successful and maybe had an important social standing to have her portrait taken. Photography was so expensive 150 years ago. What was her story? So small strokes. Often in these historical photos there's a bit of detail that is lost and you just get these big fields of shadow and I'm sort of making up some information here. Small fine strokes. Almost just like little stipple dots. And if you've never done this technique before, you may not wanna start with a portrait or you may wanna work on the other parts of the body before you go to the face. Eventually I would recommend just working top down, so that you don't run your hand through any ink and smear it. Whoop. So I did like a little funny line right there. I could wait for it to dry and not print it. I could go in with a Q-tip or a bit of paper towel to try to remove it. I'm just gonna go with it and print it and see how it looks. And it didn't really show up because I was talking and it's dried so, and I get a chance to correct my line. If you find that your ink is beading on the surface of the transparency and not really sticking, you may have some oil from your hands or some residue from the transparency that you'll need to remove first, and you can just do that with Windex. Okay, so eyes, I'm printing eyes. So oops, that's a lot of ink. I'm worried that the eyes are gonna look a little bit too bold, the pupils and the iris here. So I might just give them a minute to dry so they're not extra juicy. Eyes can be tricky. You might have to add lines or omit lines, so that you don't get something that looks not human. So you may just wanna add soft lines for the nose, for the lips. Okay, and gentle pressure here. I just wanna see how those eyes turn out. Okay, I'm actually happy with the eyes. I don't think that they're overly printed. I get the upper lip. Soft strokes. And then I can do bolder lines, which happens just by pressing down more on the nib in the garment. Once I move on to that part. Oops, I shifted a bit. Let's see how that looks. It's fine. So here, because you are tracing, you can be as methodical and detail oriented as you choose to be. That's not how my natural hand is. I kind of like to go quick, and so I'm taking some liberties with the shape of the garment and I'm mostly being inspired by what I see and not perfectly tracing. I might do some scribbles for the shadows of the folds in her clothing. So this is where you're gonna make your artistic choices. And yes, you are tracing a photo, but the technique itself is gonna change the look of your art. So the piece that you're printing from its original source already, that process is gonna change the look of it. In addition, the way that you move your tool, your hand, its natural inclinations that's also gonna change the look of it. By moving faster and taking some liberties with these clothes, I'm even further making this artwork my own and taking it away from the original

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portrait. Especially if you're worried about things like copyright and so forth. Definitely you could work with collections in the creative commons or in the public domain if you're worried about that and you're actually selling it. I'm thinking of this more as like a personal project of highlighting unknown women and kind of giving them a place just in my process here. So I can't really see what's going on. There might be like some pearl buttons or something, just making it up some of this detail. So I have some really blobby lines or marks happening here that are not really happening anywhere else. I might wanna go back and just for the sake of symmetry, add some thicker lines in other places, so that that area is not the only part that's so dark. Although in the photo it's much darker too. If you've watched the Andy Warhol-inspired monoprints class, which is the first class I taught on this technique, you will have seen that, you can use this for lots of things. It doesn't have to just be for portraits, it could be for any kind of image you wanna trace. I like to do flowers and combine images in my own way. So you can do a portrait of anyone, it could be a birthday portrait, a pet portrait. Okay. Skipping over some of the details in her dress. Now is the opportunity before I disassemble my setup here, to really take a second look at what's been printed and if I wanna add any more information, I'm not gonna be able to realign this in the same way. So once you take this apart with the tape, you can't get back to registering this perfectly. So just be sure that things are looking the way you want them to look. I'm generally happy with the print. I do feel like there's a lot of dots. I did a lot of dots for the texture in her hair, and some of these marks in the dress when they were printed, although they started as lines became sort of dots. I'm not sure if I'm loving that. So I'm gonna go back and just in the hair add just around the face specifically some longer lines just so there's more variety in the print and the texture. And this is what's nice too is that you have an opportunity to add, if you had a light touch to begin with, you can always go back. The opposite is not true. You can't take away as easily. So I wanna preserve the texture in her hair, but I also just wanna have more variety of marks here. And maybe it's more dense curls in the shadows. So building up of marks. A few lines. I don't wanna add too many lines and make her look more aged. Sometimes more lines can look like more wrinkles, which is fine if that's what you're trying to portray, but if it's not true to the image that you're wanting to convey, then you may wanna think of other ways to get those marks in. Just a curve here. So all of this part of her face is in shadow. I'm not gonna add lines there. That's something I'm gonna come back with watercolor and do. Okay, so I am gonna disassemble things. Before I do that, I'm gonna clean the surface of this off. Once the ink dries, it's fairly stuck on there, so just water's not necessarily gonna work to clean off. I like to use a little bit of Windex and a paper towel and then it comes off really easily. So you can reuse this over and over. A little bit more. It would make more sense to have a spray bottle. I just happened to have it in a little tiny ink bottle there. Okay, and now actually I wanna add something before we add color. And I wanted to show you that if you want to composite an image. So instead of using Photoshop and assembling all your motifs and printing something out, you can do like an old school version of compositing where because we're tracing and we're using the transparency, we can start to add other elements. So let's say I wanna have a floral border around this figure, this woman, I love using my Dover clip art books because this is copyright free imagery. Again, we need it to be flat so we make a photocopy of it, and I might wanna add a flower. If I knew where this portrait was taken, maybe I would use the state flower. You can start to add more layers of meaning and significance depending on what motifs you choose. You can also just choose them because they're pretty and you want something that's decorative. I think maybe the rose. And I did not bring scissors. So we're gonna tear this out loosely. And the reason I'm not just slipping this paper under, thank you, is because I actually do wanna make sure that I'm not covering her face when I go to trace this. And

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Nicholas so generously brought me some scissors. So where do I want this rose to land? Here. This is covering her bodice, that's covered up, or her dress rather. So now this will be overlapping. So maybe we wanna move it more like this. Do we wanna have it this way? Can play with it. I might also want a smaller rose, now that I'm looking at it. Maybe instead I want to do two roses, small one and a larger one. So maybe something like that and it would overlap her dress. One thing I didn't mention is that this process, because it's a monoprint process, does reverse your image. So you know, I say this with image transfers too. If you're Aunt Ida, you're doing a photo, a portrait of her, and she has a mole on her right cheek. When you do the monoprint, it's gonna be on her left cheek. So you'd need to reverse your image if it's important for it to be the right orientation. Same thing goes with text to remember. Okay, I think I like how that looks there. And so back, these are smaller motifs, they're more detailed. Again, small short strokes. I'm gonna go a little bit faster though, and I might make up my own marks here and that's fine. And in something like these stems, I don't need to do the outer two lines. Instead I can do a single line, because when I print it, it's gonna make a thicker line, like if you can see it there. So instead of having an outer line, it's just one line which creates the stem. I think the roses need a little bit more lines drawn to see what there. And this is also where watercolor is gonna become helpful, because by adding the colors of the flowers, they're going to be more readable. Okay, the bigger one. Also just really love the look of the style of monoprint. You could trace your own images even, it doesn't have to be a found image, it could be your own sketches, but you want to create this more print maker look. That could also be an application. So fast single line for the stem. And yeah, I think it's a good time to add color. What's nice about the process is I'm happy with this placement. I can add color, but I can then add more drawings and print if I want to, like add more flowers after I've sort of added color to this and assess if I like it or not, because I'm not reliant on this exact setup again. You can also just leave it and come back to it. It's up to you. So I'm taking the tape away and you might wanna clean this off just in case anything still damp ink wise. So back with my Windex, you can see how you can use the transparency over and over. All right, I'm happy with that. Let's put a cap on my ink so I don't spill it on accident. I'm using the Gansai Tambi watercolors just because they're big and bold and they look nice on on the table. If you've not worked with these, they're in between a gouache and a watercolor. The pigment has slightly larger molecules and so they sit on the surface a little bit more. They have a bit more of an opaque quality and a little bit of shine to them. So different than just regular watercolor. There's not a place to mix. So I have an enamel plate here. And something you're gonna have to do is that a lot of these historic photos are in black and white and so you're gonna have to make up your own colors. It's warm, it's maybe not dark enough but we'll start with it. Now the Strathmore paper will take some watercolor but not a ton. And so you have to be fairly decisive. You're not gonna be able to do a lot of layering or lifting with this paper. I still prefer it though overall. I'm gonna go right into parts of the hair where her ears would be. I also like to have some color in the eyes at this stage. I just use the skin color but lightened, because the whites of the eyes were never page white. Hair will be darker. And of course my mind always goes to zines. I think it'd be a nice zine project to do, really thoughtful portraits of anonymous women, people who somehow we've lost their names and their stories, but just to sort of honor that they were here. So I'm getting, because of the paper, I'm getting a little bit of feathering. What you can do is try to go over one clean swoop more or come back to it later. I don't wanna overly work the paper because it can't take it. So we'll see how that does. I can also just wait for it to dry. Okay, so now I get to make some fun choices about her outfit. Probably based on the photo her outfit was like black or gray or dark brown or something, but I can change it. I think I wanna do of a purple color. And this will give me

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an opportunity too to play with the color of the roses. So I'm just mixing my watercolor here. You can refer back to your original photo for areas of shadow if you didn't make lines in your monoprint to indicate. A lot of these lines are more trying to capture some of the detail on the garment, but they're just pretty general right now. Like they just feel like movement and texture, which I like how it looks. I do remember that one arm was more in shadow, which is this one because it's reversed because we had those blobby lines. So I might just wanna make that a bit darker just so that the dress is not all one color. I am just mixing a bit of a darker color here. This paper will buckle a bit. You can see probably that where it's wet, it's shining and it's buckling just a bit. When you're done, if you're doing watercolor painting on top of the Strathmore paper, you should definitely weight your paper once it's dry. So just put it under a heavy book and you'll get a nice flat print at the end. All right, so now flowers. I also want them to be a purpley toned. I don't wanna use this lavender because it has white added in it. I don't always like the way that that looks. I'd rather use the white of the page and just add more water, maybe something with a bit more pink. So there's a little bit of difference. More pink. And again, this paper can't take too much wet. So like kind of a finer washes better, not too wet. I lost my rose a bit here, so this is where I can bring it back with watercolor. And let's see, it's going back over any place where the paint is pooling. And then let's do our leaves. Again, not too thickly. We'll do two different colors of leaves in this part of the larger rose just so there's more variation. So again, you're making these artistic decisions, you're using your original photo as a jumping off point. But the process of printing it in this way using the blotted line monoprint and adding color starts to really make it your own and give you a lot of options for how you want this to look as a final piece of art. And I could go back in with some darker for the rose. I am tempted to add more color to her face like in her lips and cheeks and around the eyes. However, I'm also a little bit worried about adding too much water. So that might be something I do as a second layer and I'm just gonna let this dry. But overall, I'm happy with the way the print looks, the monoprint and adding the flowers, I think, is pretty once it's dry. If I want to add another layer of monoprint for more flowers, I could do that. I'll share with you some other ones. Here Is another woman, anonymous woman, and this is the print that I did. And here's another version of the print. You can see that there's like a little bit more detail in this garment band. Here I use a slightly heavier hand. And so I have a thicker line, very light, delicate lines for the face and the hair. And then in this one I added watercolor. If you wanted to work with a watercolor paper, I would definitely recommend a hot press because you won't get the texture that could then create a distressed line in the print. However, that paper is really gonna soak up the ink, and so you may not get as smooth results when you're doing the monoprint technique itself. And here's another image. I really like the purple with these more historical photos. So here I did add a little bit of color to the face, which worked fairly well. So the purple. And then, of course, this is not anonymous, this is Frida Kahlo, and she's always fun to draw, so why not make a print of her? What I love about this technique is that it's very freeform. You don't need a lot of drawing experience to do it. But I think the results are always so delightful, because there is still something unexpected in the process of monoprinting. It's always these processes that keep me coming back and keep me curious, because even though I follow the same steps every time, there's something that just happens in the process of the printing that I cannot anticipate. And it is so delightful. And for anybody who's new to drawing and is not really confident in their capabilities, especially for portraits, doing something like this will still train your eye and your hand on how is a face composed but give you those results of a final portrait that still looks like a human and even better the human you intend it to look like. And you're building those skills even though you're tracing. And like I said, you also have the opportunities to input in

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different ways with the way that you hold your paper, how you might composite an image out of multiple types of images and how you add your color. So please use this technique for doing portraits of anybody or it could be a pet portrait. It's especially nice when we're trying to paint homage or honor somebody that's passed, a famous author or artist or someone in your family. This is a nice way to create a really successful portrait and it's something that I go back to again and again. Because we're live, you can ask questions. So I'm gonna ask Kobe if there are any questions that I can help answer, and I'll probably work on another portrait while we do that, - [Kobe] Just a few. Constance asks, "I would need to be careful in copying words with this tonight technique, because it would reverse on paper, correct?" - Yeah. Constance is asking what happens with words and how careful do you have to be and does it reverse? That's a great question. The answer is yes, it does reverse, but I can show you a quick little technique. Let's just put this underneath. So the thing that I actually would do instead of, you can trace, so let me answer the question first and then I'll show you my adaptation. You can photocopy text backwards and carefully trace it. Of course you have to worry about the pitfalls of blobby lines as well. So if you have very fine type, this can be problematic because you can easily fill in the negative space in an A or an O and then the text doesn't come out as nicely as you'd like. In my class, the first monoprint class about being inspired by Andy Warhol and using the monoprint technique I do show how to do type in that if you want a deeper look. The other thing you can do instead is, let me just get myself set up here, is who should we add text to? Okay, so in this case I wanna do with my ink. What I actually would do is, let's say I wanted to do anonymous, the word anonymous or just A-N-O-N, which is the common abbreviation for anonymous. I would actually write it first on the final piece. Oops, this pen needs to be cleaned. Okay, let's do this one. And then to get the look of the blotted monoprint, I would actually just lay something on top. But you have to be careful 'cause it can get blobby. So let's try again. This is our practice so it's fine. Let's do it again. Lighter hand. You definitely want to test on a side piece of paper though if this is your first time. Okay, and here slightly, let's do a slight tap. And what I like about this is you have more control. Your brain doesn't have to think in the reverse image. You can write your text normally and then by blotting you get a similar look that feels more cohesive with the monoprint. And I do cover it that in the Andy Warhol class, Kobe can put the link in the chat for you. So that's my approach if I'm gonna add text, especially like I think I show in the class how to do like a weave moved postcard and you're writing out your address, so that you still get the same look and feel as the monoprint, but you're not having to do all the work of backwards type and all of that. Good question. Are there any other questions? - [Kobe] Yes. - [Courtney] What happened to my lady? - [Kobe] So, Constance began, "Just say this is an absolutely stunning way to honor women. And what's the biggest one of these prints you've ever made?" - Ooh, that's a great question. Also Constance, thank you for your questions. She was saying that she appreciates the technique for honoring women, which I feel very happy about too. I like this idea of honoring people in your family, people unknown potentially, but just really spotlighting women in their stories in this way that feels very impactful. How big can you go? I mean honestly as big as your paper. If you are painstaking, it's like putting together a puzzle. You focus on like one small piece at a time and you go through the practice and what's nice is that there's not a lot of residue or messiness that you can accidentally like drag your hand through, because in that act of printing, most of the ink is absorbed if not all of the ink is absorbed in the paper. So there's not a lot of potential for damaging other parts of your image, like it is when you're doing a really fine graphite painting or something and you can smear your hand on working on a large piece. So honestly as big as you feel comfortable, I mean honestly you could do bigger. I think probably the biggest piece I've done has not been a

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portrait, but it's been flowers and it was composited. So multiple reference images kind of cut out and collage together and then traced and it was larger, like bigger than 11 by 17, probably 16 by 18 inches. Good question. - [Kobe] Quite a few questions about repeating the name of ink that you're using and watercolor that you're using. - Okay, questions about the materials. So I like to use FW acrylic ink. Let me show you what that looks like, if we can see that, it's very messy. Comes in many colors. I am often using indigo or paynes gray, sometimes CP. Those are my three favorite colors for this technique. I like the color and the quality of line, but you can try any color, you can do this in hot pink if you wanted. And the acrylic ink means that it dries permanent and you can watercolor over it. You can definitely try this technique with other types of ink that you might have, but just know that they will bleed or they potentially could bleed if you're watercoloring on top of it. The pen that I like to use, and again this is all in the other monoprint classes I teach on the site, so you could refer there, but this is just a plastic, you know, two or $3 straight holder that takes any nib. This nib that I like, although it's very messy right now, is the Nikko G. And it's usually done used for comic book drawing. I think it's my favorite. But I also like I love to buy old nibs when I find them and I'll just test anything out. So the nib pen, if you're unfamiliar with it, when you apply pressure the forked tongue opens and that creates a thick line and when you release pressure the tines close and that gives you a thin line, but it's a bead of ink that you are applying onto the transparency, it's just sitting on the surface and that's what allows you to make the monoprint. So it really does have to be this. I've tried with like other juicy paint pens and stuff, and sometimes it'll work but it's not consistent. I really do recommend the nib pen and watercolor. What was the last question? These are the Gansai Tambi watercolors. They're Japanese. I feel like I'm seeing these a lot in shops and when I had long weekend we sold all of the styles. It comes like this in a container and you can make your swatch chart. They're individual technically refillable pans, although I don't see the refills readily available in person, you might be able to get them online. And this pigment is slightly larger molecules than regular watercolor or traditional western watercolor. And so it has sort of like a slightly gouache like feel, but the pigment sits more on the surface of the paper and you get a slightly more opaque and slightly more glossy finished product. I actually let my then 3-year-old just have at it at a paint palette this size, and the paint rehydrates really quickly once you start dipping a wet brush into it. And she made these like really dense, rich paintings, like abstract paintings that were really cool and they do have a slight sheen to them and I love the way that they look. I haven't used it like that. I like thin it out more like normal watercolor just 'cause that's what I'm used to using. But I recommend them. - [Kobe] And let's take one last question which is, "How do you shadow with color?" - Ooh, last question. How do you shadow. This part's a little bit trickier. I would say the shadowing is pretty effective using the monoprint, so with the nib pen. But in the face I tend to not do that. And I think honestly it's probably just patients related. So let me go back to... Do I have a picture that I want to show you? This poor gal, I keep starting her and then not going back. Okay, here let's just use her. So you could very effectively do very fine lines with your nib pen in these shadowed areas and you would get a look that's similar to an etching. Like when you see the portrait of one of the presidents on the dollar bill, that really fine, all those shadows are made up by tiny fine parallel lines and you could definitely do that and I think you would get a really nice effect. Of course if you slip or you have a too hard of a pressure, you're gonna get a blob instead and then you're gonna have to wipe off your transparency and start over. So often because I'm not that patient and I don't want to do all of that painstaking work, I do apply my shadow in the watercolor phase. But like I said, I don't always watercolor on top of these. So in Miss Frida here, there was a lot of shadow. Most of her face was in shadow. It was a bit of a challenge because the original photo

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was in black and white and I had to just add my color and think about what color are my shadows and are they kind of like cool shadows or warm shadows. But here is a place where I added shadow, I think, fairly successfully just by mixing up a warm gray. So I added purples to it because they're purple in the flowers, and that's how I composed the shadows. Again, this is the Strathmore drawing paper, so it's only gonna take so much watercolor, especially washes, otherwise you're gonna get some funky weird areas where the paint is pulled up more. So let me show you. So here you can see I wanted to go back in and add blush to the cheeks, and I got a little bit of striping if you will. I dunno if that's the right term. I could see the strokes here as opposed to like a nice soft even blend if I was using a watercolor paper. And it's just something you're gonna have to accept. This is the reality. I find that the watercolor paper, I don't get as nice of a line quality in the monoprint, but then, of course, it would take the watercolor better for me. I prioritize the monoprint over the watercolor. I think the color is a nice to have and I prefer just the monoprint and its success. So if we go back to the gal that we did together. I am getting some lightness now that this is dry in this area where I went back in with the lighter pigment and it spread more, and so you get kind of a patchy quality. I could go back in and add more shadow and try to fix this, but you really only have one or two passes to get it right because of the paper. So it's up to you how many tries you want to give it and what is your priority, is it the monoprint or is it the watercolor. I find that like for me, I'm happy with this image. I think it looks really good and it could be used in a lot of different things. Like I said, I really am imagining what does the zine look like of anonymous women that I can honor in this way. I think that's all the questions. - [Kobe] There are two more. - Two more questions. Two more questions. - [Kobe] One is, could you use other mediums besides watercolor? And the other is can you use a calligraphy fountain pen with an ink cartridge? - Okay, yeah. Remind me the second question if I don't get to it, Kobe. First question is can you use something other than watercolor? Yes, absolutely. Thank you for asking that question. If you are somebody who loves colored pencil, please use colored pencil. This paper will take it very nicely. That's not my first go-to, I think colored pencil is really lovely, but watercolor is where my brain goes to. If you're working with children, and I do think children probably as young as eight, you know, with some adult supervision, the nib pen is pokey, right? It is a sharp instrument. I think they can handle this. Don't give them like a finely detailed portrait as their first project. Give them a pet portrait or a flower or a building or something else. But then, let your kids paint whatever they want on it. If you want to collaborate and you wanna do the drawing and your child wants to color it in with marker, that's perfectly acceptable too. I think there's like a lot of great things happening with watercolor brush markers that are blendable and you're gonna have more control and less water goes on the paper, which is where Strathmore has a problem, right, 'cause this is drawing paper. So yeah, please try other media to use color. Absolutely. If that's like where you play, then that's what you should definitely do. I just play with watercolor and so that's my go-to naturally. That's a good question. The other question was, "Could I use a fountain pen with an ink cartridge?" Yes, you can try. Let me know how it goes. Like write in the comments and tell me the pen you're using, 'cause I always wanna know about a new pen. I love new materials. I would say I have tried some and I still find that I get the most consistent results with the nib pen. I've definitely played with fountain pens that create like a juicier line and have a more thick and thin feel like a nib pen. I'm sort of always on the hunt for a fountain pen that will do that. But the reality for me is often that I spend more time cleaning the pen and troubleshooting the flow of the ink than I get to draw. That's what I find. Also, fountain pens almost always do not use permanent ink because that's why they clog. They clog with permanent ink, and then therefore you not be able to watercolor afterward. There are fountain pen inks that are more

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water resistant and I would check them out at like your local art supply if they have it. We're very lucky we have FLAX here in the Bay area and they have great fountain pens, and so I often am playing with the various options, but I still think that the nib pen with the FW ink for me has worked the best, the most consistently. Thank you for your questions. Thanks for joining me. How can I say this? This technique works so well for so many reasons. If you're not a confident person, portrait drawer, I feel like a lot of people are like, "I love to draw, but portraits terrify me." This is a good foray into portraiture, and if you're trying to honor a famous figure and you want it to look like them and not just an interpretation of them, this is a pretty sure way to get the results that you're looking for. Give it a try. If you haven't done it, definitely give it a try.

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