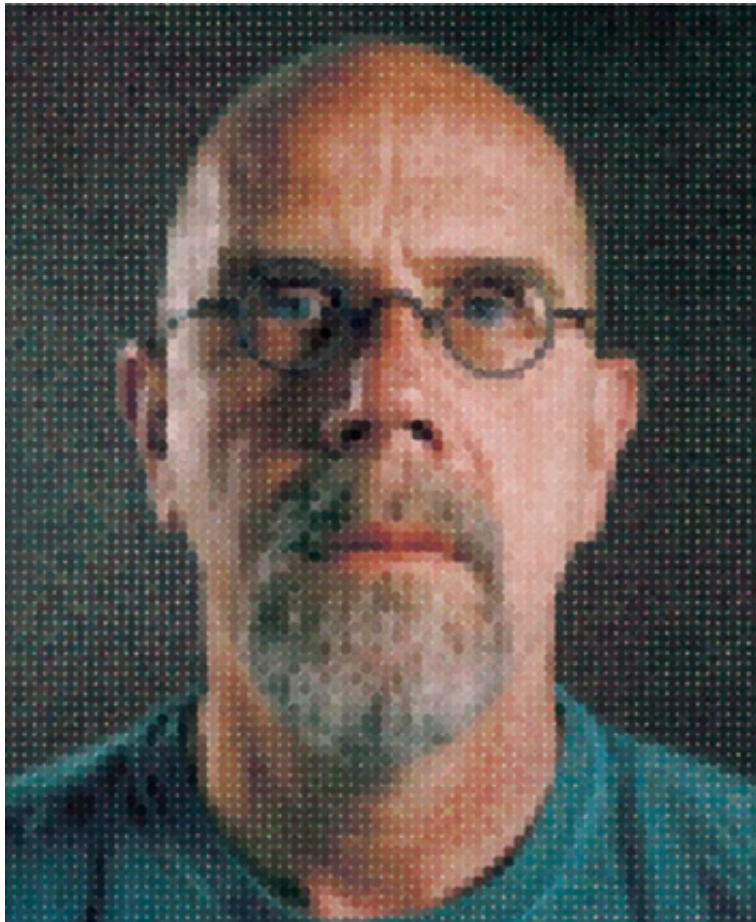




PARRISH ART MUSEUM

Parrish Home Art Studios

Chuck Close: Gridded Portraits



Chuck Close (American, born 1940), *Self Portrait*, 2012. Archival watercolor pigment print (90) on Hahnemuhle rag paper, 88 x 66 inches. Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, NY. Gift of the Riggio Collection

Chuck Close is known for his large-scale photorealistic portraits. Photorealism is an extremely realistic style of painting or drawing, in which the artwork is based entirely off a photograph. Artists who work in this style often use a gridding system or a projector in order to accurately transfer and copy the photograph onto their canvas or paper. Close uses this gridding technique, and sometimes even chooses to keep the grid marks visible — as shown in the work above.

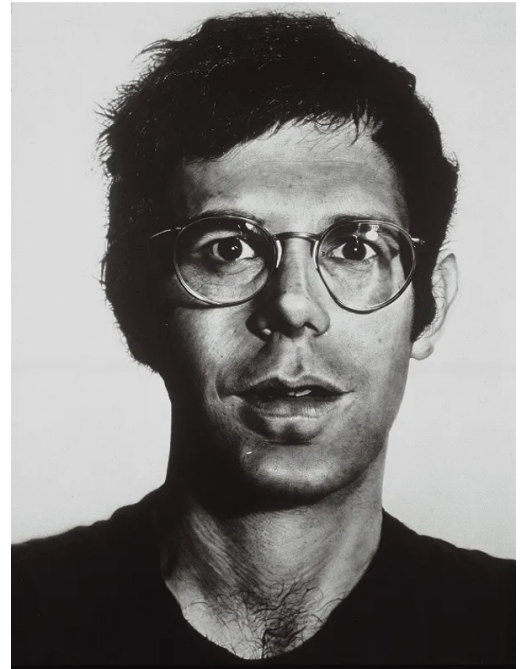
Interestingly, as an artist who is well known for his portraiture, Close has a condition known as face blindness. It's a disorder where the ability to recognize familiar faces, including one's own face, is impaired, while other aspects of visual processing and intellectual functioning remain intact. Referencing his condition, Close has stated "I think I was driven to paint portraits to commit images of friends and family to memory. I have face blindness, and once a face is flattened out, I can remember it better."

Materials

Paper

Pencil (variety of soft and hard lead, but one pencil will be fine!)

Eraser



Chuck Close (American, born 1940), *Bob*, 1970, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 1975 © Chuck Close, courtesy Pace Gallery

DAY 1

Take a black and white photograph self portrait and print it. Divide your photograph into four equal horizontal sections. You can do this by using a pencil and ruler or by simply folding the paper. Next, divide your paper into four equal vertical sections. Keep in mind, you only need to draw three lines in order to create four sections. Once you are finished, you should have a grid on top of your image with 16 equal parts. You can use our example below as reference.

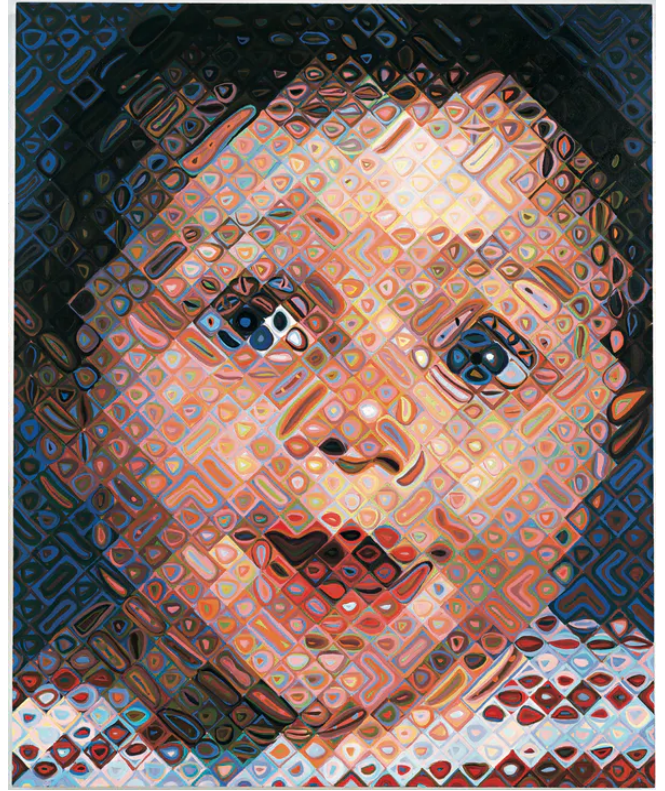
Now, start lightly sketching the same grid onto your drawing paper. Be sure to draw your lines very lightly, as you will need to erase it afterwards! Using your photograph as a reference, begin sketching your portrait. For this part, your grid will act as a guide or map; you will use each individual section to determine the placement of your hair, face, and facial features. After you sketch your portrait, carefully erase your grid lines. Your last step is to shade each portion of your drawing to match the values of the photograph. Value is how light or dark a color is. In this instance, we are working on a scale from white to black, with all of the shades of gray in between. In order to create different values, experiment with how hard or softly you press on your pencil. The harder you press, the darker your value. The lighter you press, the lighter your value. Here's our example:



We would love to see what you made! To share, post your artwork on Instagram with the hashtag #ParrishHomeArtStudios

DAY 2

Repeat the steps of the previous day, except this time take a color photograph. You can match the colors as best you can, or make patterns in each part of your grid. Take a look at Close's portraits below for inspiration!



Left: Chuck Close, (American, born 1940), *John*, 1998, 126 color silkscreen, 64 1/2 x 54 1/2, Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, N.Y., Gift of Chuck Close and Leslie Rose Close, 2008 Right: Chuck Close (American, born 1940), *Emma*, 2000, oil on canvas, © Chuck Close, courtesy Pace Gallery, photograph By Ellen Page Wilson, Pace Gallery.

TAKE IT FURTHER

Learn more about Photorealism:

<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/movement/photorealism>

Try to make a Finger print portrait like Chuck Close!:

<http://parrishart.org/artist-stories/#/collection/10739791>

Listen to this talk between Terrie Sultan and Chuck Close at the Strand Bookstore:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tedC8_s90rE