

Exercise 5

Long Hair Drawing Strategy

One of the most common mistakes is to attempt to draw every hair as a pencil-stroke. A single pencil line cannot represent the many changes of tone along the shaft of hair, so this approach is invariably disastrous. Another problem is lack of care - you should spend at least as much time on the hair as on the face.



First, look carefully at the model or reference photo and identify the major sections of hair. Curls will often be rather flat, like ribbons curling back on themselves. Try to ignore odd strands at first, concentrating on the main bulk of the hair, and lightly outline the main shapes and sections.



Next draw in the darks with a soft pencil, being careful to leave the highlights well alone. At this point, you might wish to lightly sketch in prominent lighter hairs that need to be left, bringing the darks up close beside them, to avoid problems with erasing them.

Make sure you follow the direction of the curl.



Now draw the mid-tones, with pencil-strokes following the direction of hair. Draw the darker lines separating sections of hair, and patiently draw the dark areas showing behind lighter hairs.



To finish off, add a few stray marks to loosen up the drawing around the edges. Some sections of hair are smoothed with a blending stump and highlights picked out with an eraser.