

My dearest watercolourists,

Today we work on a portrait.

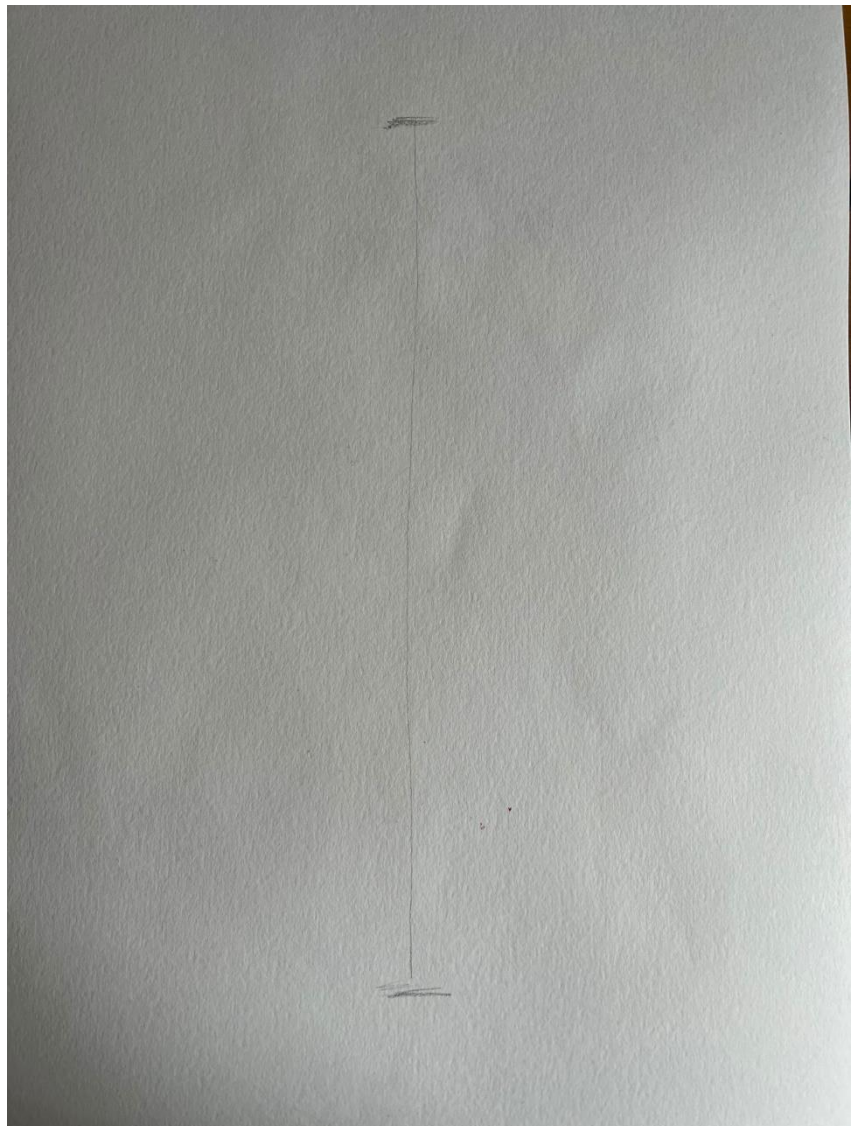
First of all, please do not feel intimidated by this subject. I promise it is really easy. We already have quite a bit of experience working with this sort of a subject. We revisit the human proportions and those figure drawing skills to paint a lady.

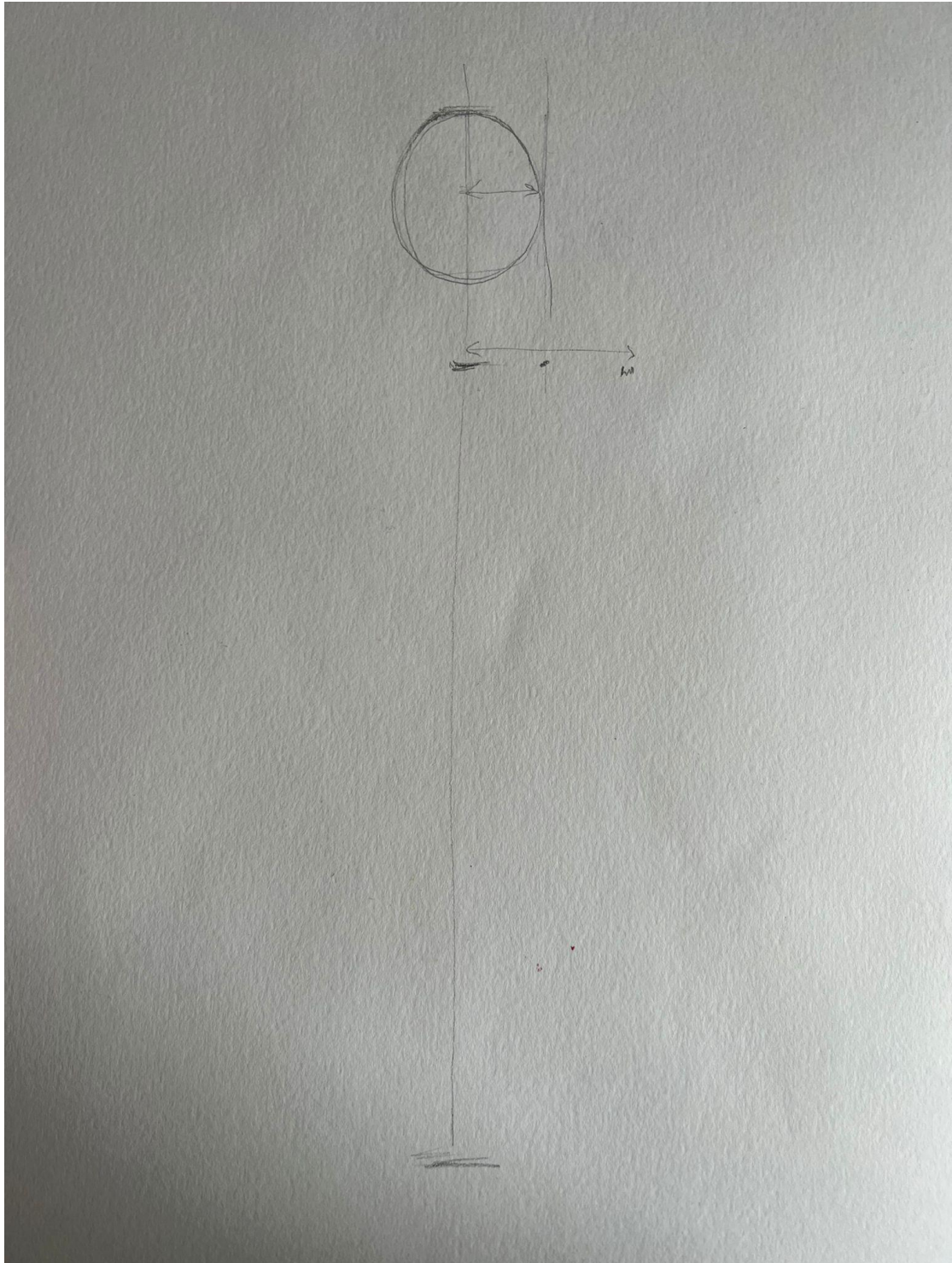
This painting is loosely inspired by one of the Queen Elizabeth II's portraits from her youth and to be honest the one giveaway is the crown. We are not trying to go for a professional likeness. We are just working with an image as inspiration in order to exercise our figure drawing skills.

We start with a portrait-oriented piece of paper. We mark the top and the bottom of the painting. This helps keep the composition central. We use a very thin line as a symmetry line down the middle of our page.

This is not a full figure a portrait We are only illustrating the figure to the mid-thigh area.

We need to divide our symmetry line into about five equal parts. The head is the first element that we are sketch, and it is an oval that takes up the first vertical part.

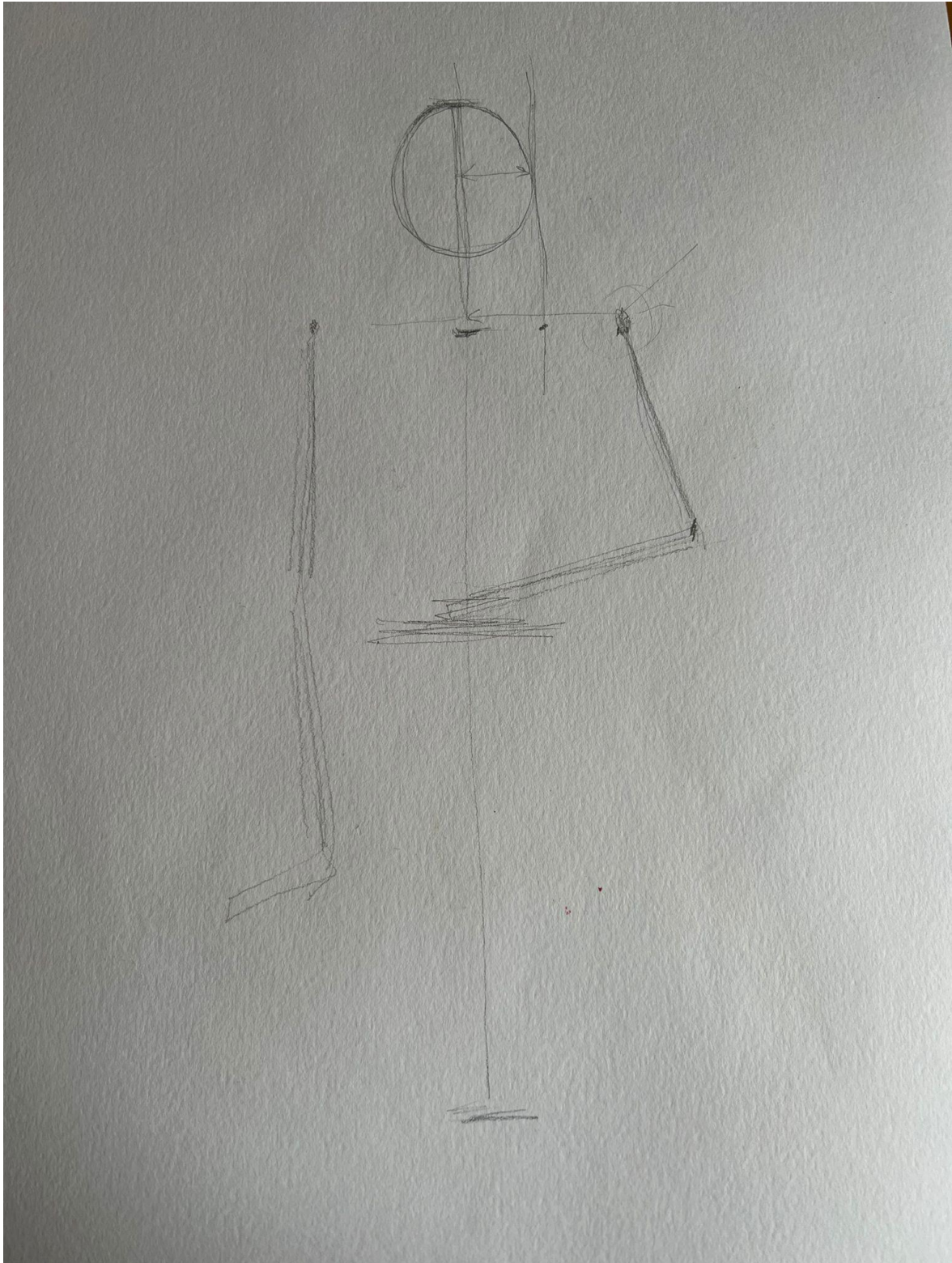




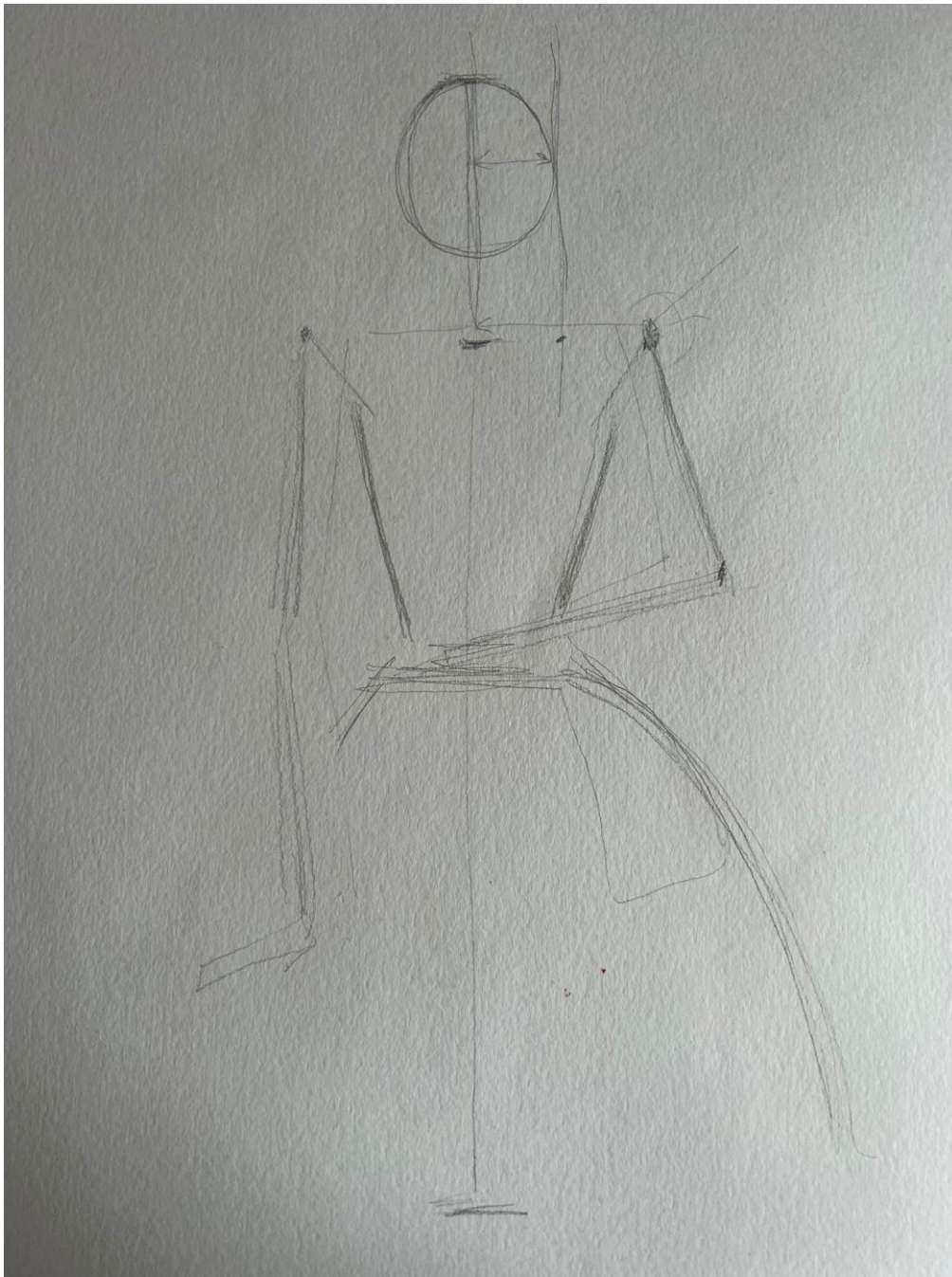
In our past classes, we have already established that the neck is normally about half the height of the head, so we divide the second section in half- that will be the base of the neck. Shoulders are in line with the neck. They are normally about two head-widths wide from left to right. So, from the dot marking the base of the neck tracing one horizontal line with the width of the head to the right we find the shoulder joint.

The upper arm is about one head and a half long and the forearm is equal in size. Our figure will have one relaxed arm and one bent elbow, with one hand holding a fan. In our initial sketch we add simple lines to build the proportions.

Where the bent arm's hand rests is roughly in line with the navel and the narrowest part of the waist.



We next work on the torso fairly simplistic shape: an inverted triangle.



From where we established the waist to be, we start tracing the outline of the very wide skirt.

Now it is time to go into a little bit more detail.

First of all, work on the face. This is a semi profile, and this is a little bit more difficult to work on especially since there is not a symmetry line down the

middle of the page, which means we cannot repeat what is on the left side to the right. We think about the outline of the semi profile as a flatter number three.

Just like it is demonstrated here:



We break the height of the face into three: the height of the forehead, the nose, and the distance from the base of the nose to the chin - all equal.

We can also add the outlines of the neck and the shoulder. We go over the harsh straight lines with more rounded, sinuous lines.

If the shoulders look too wide- you can narrow, then down by drawing the outlines closer in. You can also widen the shoulders by adding more volume if the proportions are off.



We continue to focus on the face, and we are adding the eyes and nose:



In the space between the base of the nose and the chin are we draw one horizontal line that is the mouth. The width of the mouth is roughly about the same as that of an eye.



Next, we add the hands as well as the details of the dress: the off the shoulder sleeves, the very large bow, and the fan that's in the sitter's hand. If you want

to, you can also decorate the head with a crown. I forgot to mention we are also work on her hair.



The hair is brushed in tight curls, and it is also quite voluminous compared to the initial drawing of the head, which was just an oval. If you need to, you can add a bit more volume towards the head. This can help soften the width of the shoulder. If you notice your figure looks a little bit too wide-shouldered, you can balance the proportions by adding more curls for example.





Finally, it is time to use our watercolours.

For the dress we used the wet-on-wet technique. We wanted to suggest it is brocade, and make it look expensive and decorated with a flower pattern. We had a wet base of a deep amber and added drops of brown, orange, yellow.

As we let that to dry, we coloured the face. For the skin colour we used a base of 95 - 98% white and then we mixed in pink and yellow. one thing that is really important to remember is that the colours may change as the paint dries so if you find that your painting ends up drying being very red, consider letting it dry and adding a thin layer of white (perhaps also some yellow) on top. If you noticed that the skin colour dries very faint- too paper white-y, add another layer of paint. As you paint the skin colour, make sure that you avoid the wet areas of the dress to keep the paints separate.

Once the skin area is dry, we focus on the hair.



When the dress is dry, we paint the blue bow, and finally, the turquoise detail on the edges of the dress. With turquoise we also added some curly whirly details in the textile to suggest an intricate pattern of leaves or some little flowers adorning the dress.

Not to forget, the jewellery! It is all silver coloured and we need to paint it! In order to get silver, we use a light baby blue base which would be 90% white with a little bit of blue. In this we mix in a little bit of purple. This should end up looking like very light greyish silver.



Well, my dearest watercolourists, I hope you enjoyed this figure tutorial!



I wish you a very beautiful rest of your day!

Kindest regards,

Ioana