



FREE ARTICLE: [Painting Without Painting The Artist's Magazine \(July/Aug 2015\)](#). Enter your e-mail address and get the Artist's Network newsletter!

[SEND](#)

Verdaccio Painting Demonstration by Adrian Gottlieb

By: Adrian Gottlieb | September 15, 2010



The Verdaccio Technique in *Portrait of Gregg*

By Adrian Gottlieb



Portrait of Gregg (oil, 26x20) by Adrian Gottlieb

The best subject is an interesting person painted from life. When I paint from a photograph, I only paint a static understanding of a human being. That the portrait grows and deepens as the artist works on it is the wonder at the heart of portraiture.



1. After I do a drawing and color study, I draw in paint, working on top of a warm imprimatura (first layer, the underpainting) that is closest to burnt umber in color and actually rather dark in value. I try for the color/value of the imprimatura to be the approximate color/value of the shadows of my main subject. When the imprimatura is fully dried, I draw in a similar color.



2. In this step I build up the piambura, or white base, thinly so that the finished painting will have a luminous and translucent effect. It's important that I create a good value relationship and blueprint of the form right from the beginning.



3. The Verdaccio technique, which uses a verdaccio layer is particularly advantageous for a bright figure against a relatively dark background. I fully model the forms, using temperature variations (cool and warm) between blue-greens and reds. I keep the painting too light (in value) so when I glaze the piece, the tone will fall back down.



4. You can see the results of the primary and secondary glazes, executed in thin layers, using lakes of color that are similar in degree of transparency and tint. I then apply straight color to work out the exact color notes and establish the relationship between figure and ground in Portrait of Gregg (oil, 26x20).