

The Grid Method – The Way to Accuracy

What is the Grid Method:

The grid method is an inexpensive, low-tech way to reproduce and/or enlarge an image that you want to paint or draw. The grid method can be a fairly time consuming process, depending on how large and detailed your painting or drawing will be. This process is not as quick as using transfer paper or a projector, but has the advantage of helping you to improve your drawing and observational skills.

To me, it is a way of breaking down an image into manageable bite size segments, creating smaller pictures to form one big image. This is especially helpful when transferring more complicated, detailed images onto my canvas. I recommend that the squares in the grid, on the canvas, should not be more than an inch in size, as it can affect the accuracy and photorealism of your drawing/painting.

What does it Involve:

The grid method simply involves drawing a grid over your reference photo, and then drawing a grid of equal ratio on your work surface (paper, canvas, wood panel, etc). You then draw the image on your canvas, focusing on one square at a time, until the entire image has been transferred. Once you're finished, you erase or paint over the grid lines, and start working on your painting, which should now be in perfect proportion.



Figure 1 - Reference Photo.

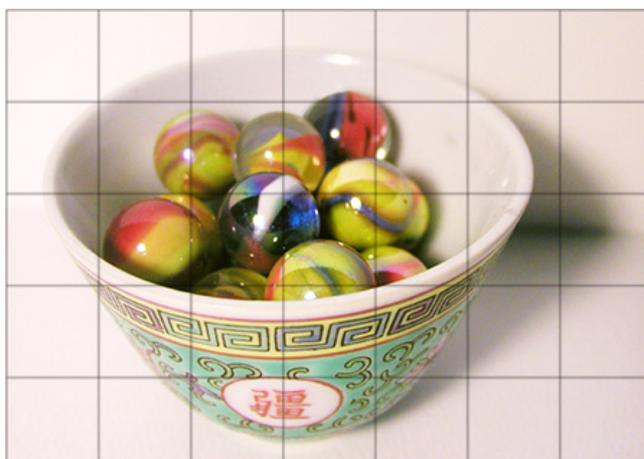


Figure 2 - Drawing the grid onto the reference photo.

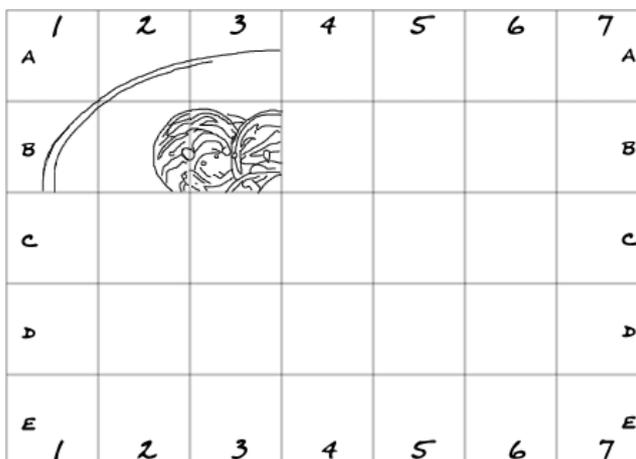


Figure 3 - Drawing the grid method onto the canvas, filling in each segment, until the entire image is transferred.

The Process:

You will need a ruler, a paper copy of your reference image, and a pencil to draw lines on the image. You will also need a work surface upon which you will be transferring the photo, such as paper, canvas, wood panel, etc.

It would be best to use a mechanical pencil to draw the grid lines, to ensure you get thin crisp lines. Be sure to draw the grid very lightly, so that you can easily erase it when you are finished.

To draw the grid lines on canvas or wood, it would be best to use a thin piece of sharpened charcoal. Again, make sure you make the grid lines as light as possible, so that they are easy to erase when you are finished. The advantage of using charcoal on canvas or wood, rather than a pencil, is that charcoal can be easily wiped off with a paper towel or rag, whereas pencil can be more difficult to erase.

The most important tip for using the grid method is that you must religiously keep to 1:1 ratio, otherwise the drawing will be distorted. What I mean by the 1:1 ratio is that you should have the same number of lines on the canvas as you have on the copy of the reference image, with the lines evenly spaced apart, in other words, absolute perfect squares.

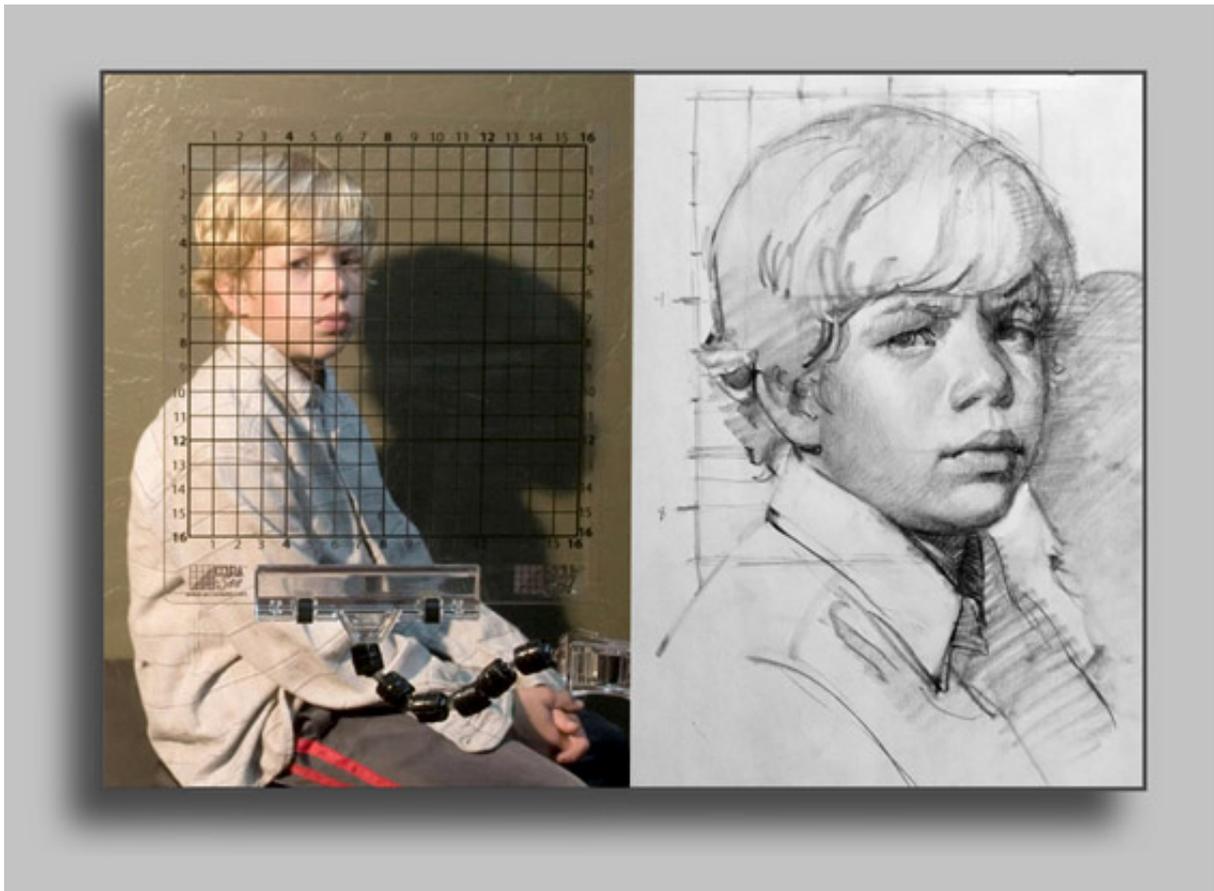


Figure 4 - This example is of the Accurasee system however it can easily be duplicated with a ruler and pencil.