**Newark Community Art Club with Elaine Winter**

**Session no. 24 (Summer Term): Optical mixing 2 – Portraits and colour**

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**Materials needed:**

Pencil, rubber, sharpener

White paper to draw on (any size you like to work on and whatever you have at hand)

Primary colour ready mixed paints (red, blue, yellow)

Cotton buds

Paint brushes

Water pot

Palette or old plate for the paints

**Introduction:** Optical mixing is a type of paint mixing used by many artists including Georges Seurat and Vincent Van Gogh. Rather than mixing wet paints together on a palette to make a new colour to be painted on and allowed to dry, dabs of paint of different colours are placed next to each other on the canvas and our eyes do the mixing instead hence the term ‘optical mixing’. Van Gogh used this method and his self portraits show some brilliant examples of how to use warm and cool colours to show the contours of the face and the shadows that are formed around and under them. On the example here note how the blues and greens are used on the face to show where the shadows are e.g. look under they eyes.

**What to do:**

**1 –** Take a piece of paper and using either a selfie photograph or a small mirror, draw a simple portrait of yourself using as few pencil lines as possible.

**2 –** Next mix a range of secondary and if you can, tertiary colours too – make a good range.

**3 –** Now using the range of colours you have mixed build up the detail of the portrait by using the warmer colours for the lighter areas and the cooler colours for the shadows using only dabs, dots, short brush strokes. Your main aim with this exercise is not for detail but for a representation of the contours of the face. Think of your face as a landscape with a series of hills and valleys!

**4 –** Keep stepping back and looking at how your work is progressing. You can judge it better from a distance.

**Note** – Don’t be disheartened if you think your final piece doesn’t look much like you – this is hard to do and you are just trying out this technique!