



NON-OBJECTIVE COLOR

Introduction

"What color do you use to color skin?" If I had a nickel for every time I've been asked that question I could buy an island in the South Pacific and retire.

Unfortunately it's the wrong question to ask. A better question would be, "what color is skin?"

Ahhh, now we're getting somewhere!

Skin is mostly translucent! It doesn't matter if it's light skin or dark skin, the color of skin is almost nonexistent.

The thing that gives skin its color is light, and light can be any color depending on the source. The color of the light that illuminates skin dictates the color of skin. So with that in mind, any skin can be any color!

We can color skin blue, purple, or green and still make a believable skin tone. It's actually amazing what the brain will accept as realistic given the appropriate visual cues.

When we use colors in skin that don't normally belong, that's called a non representational color scheme, and that's exactly what we are going to learn to do in this class.

A quick side note before we get started. I'm using regular old copy paper in this class demonstration. I'm also using a colored line drawing. To ensure that the line work shows up on camera I have to print it a little darker than I'd like. Consequently my lines don't completely disappear and it's likely yours won't either. It's not a big deal, but if you want your lines to disappear, lower the opacity of your coloring page in an image editing software before printing.

Ok, let's get to it!

Copic Colors Used For The Class Page

(Refer to the color conversion chart for non Copic alternatives)

E00

E04

E09

E13

E27

E30

E34

E42

E43

E51

B000

B01

B14

B21

B23

B24

B34

B97

R02

R11

R12

R22

YR31

C2

C4

C5

C6

W3

W6

BV11

Chapter One:

Coloring The Base Colors



Because the color scheme for this image is non representational we can do ourselves a favor by coloring in base colors for all the individual areas. In this image the background will play a dramatic role in influencing the colors in the skin and hair, so establishing an overall color scheme first will ensure we place the rest of the colors appropriately.

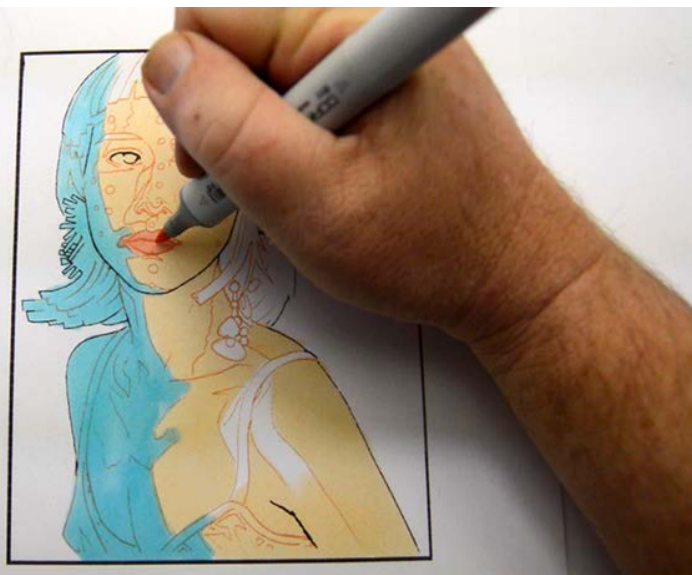


I color the "light" side of her face and torso with a flat base color of E51.

I leave an area on her near shoulder uncolored for now since this area will represent reflected blue light from the background.



I color the "reflected light" side of her face, hair, and torso with B01.



I add R11 to her lips.



I use E42 for the base color in her hair.



I add a layer of B21 to the background.



I then touch in some B0000 on the shoulder to finish off the basic base colors and establish my overall color scheme.

Chapter Two:

Coloring The Face



With our base colors laid in and our overall color scheme established we can now accurately place our colors in the face. Had we attempted to color the face first without the other colors in place it's likely that we would have colored either too dark or too light, and the face would have ended up looking "pasted on" rather than fit in with the rest of the image.



I add R11 to her cheeks on the left side of the image.

The gradation from top to bottom was created by applying more pressure at the top and "lifting off" at the bottom of each stroke.

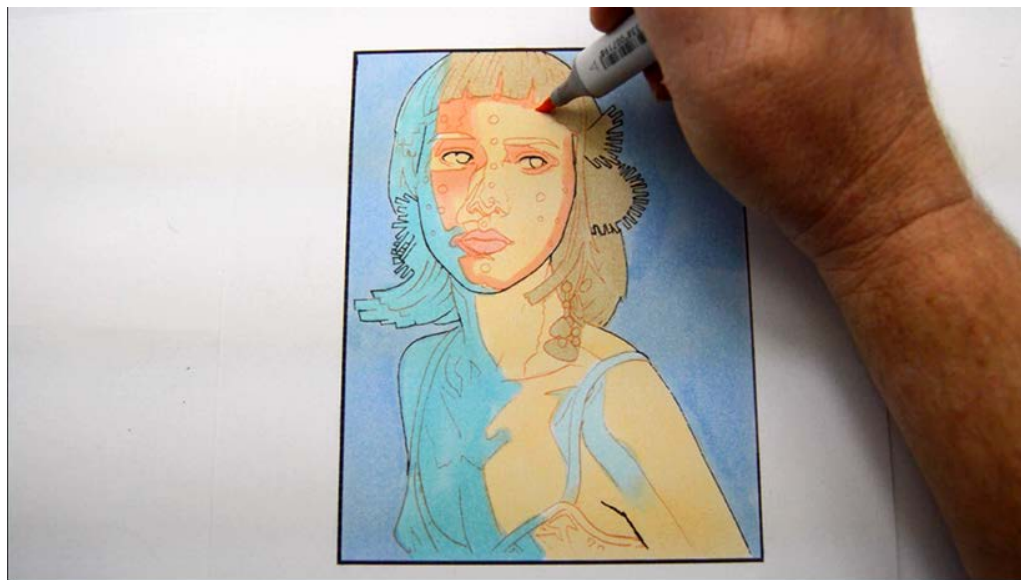
I also add touches of R11 at the left corner of the mouth and under the bottom lip.



Continuing with the R11 I add color to the eye sockets and forehead, again lifting off with my strokes to create a gradation between the R11 and E51 base color.



I add R11 along the contour on the left side of the face where the E51 and B01 areas meet, then continue down the chin and up and around the other side of the face.

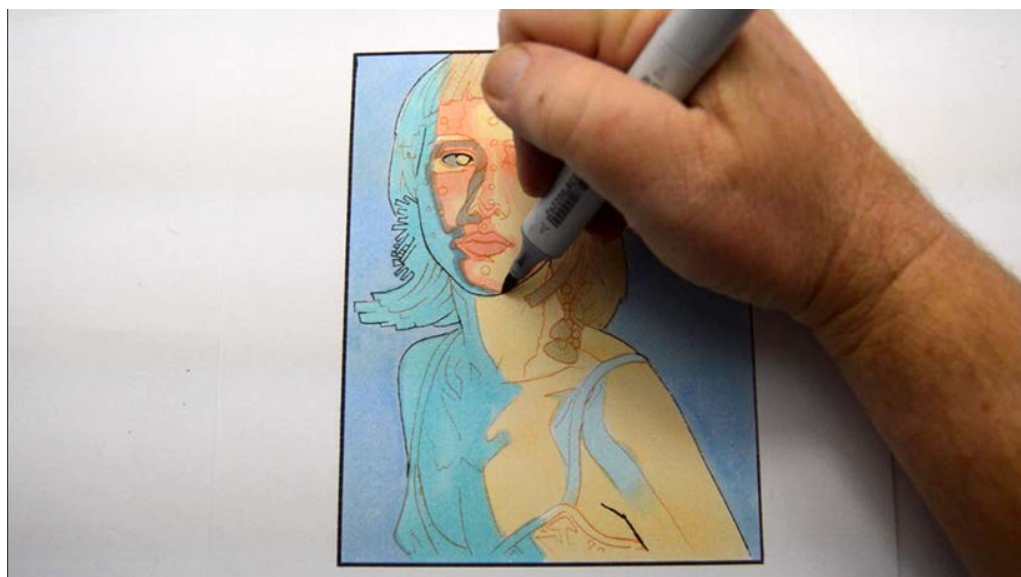


I add R11 to the hairline on the forehead...



...and to the nose and lips (R11).

Notice how rough and unblended the color is. That's ok!



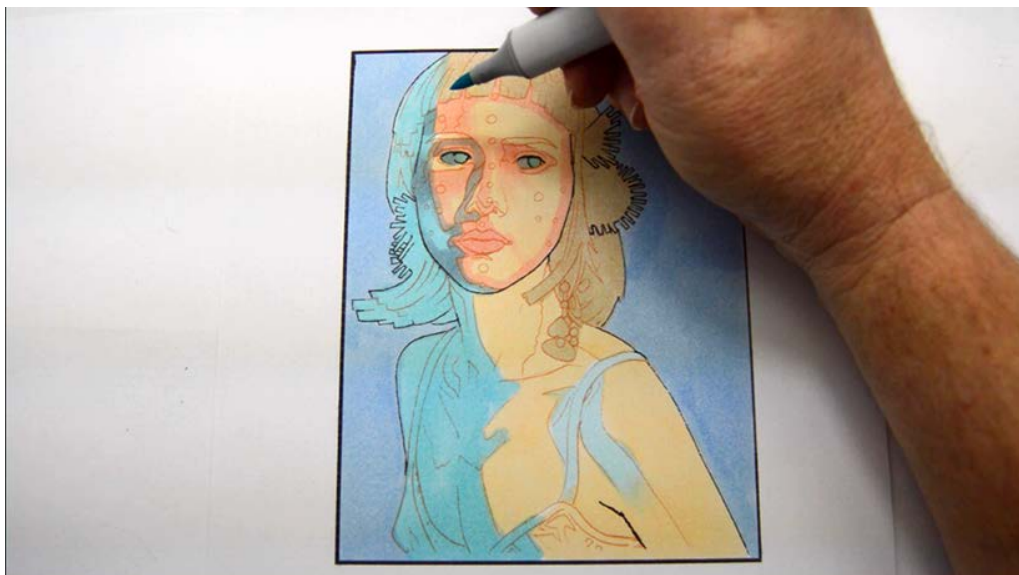
I add C2 to the "whites" of the eyes and along the line of demarcation that separates the blue side of the face from the "skin" side. I also lay this color in to indicate the cast shadow on the nose.



Continuing with the C2 I add some darker accent areas to the blue portion of the face.



After the C2.



I add B01 to the iris...



...and to the reflected light area on the tip of the nose. (B01)



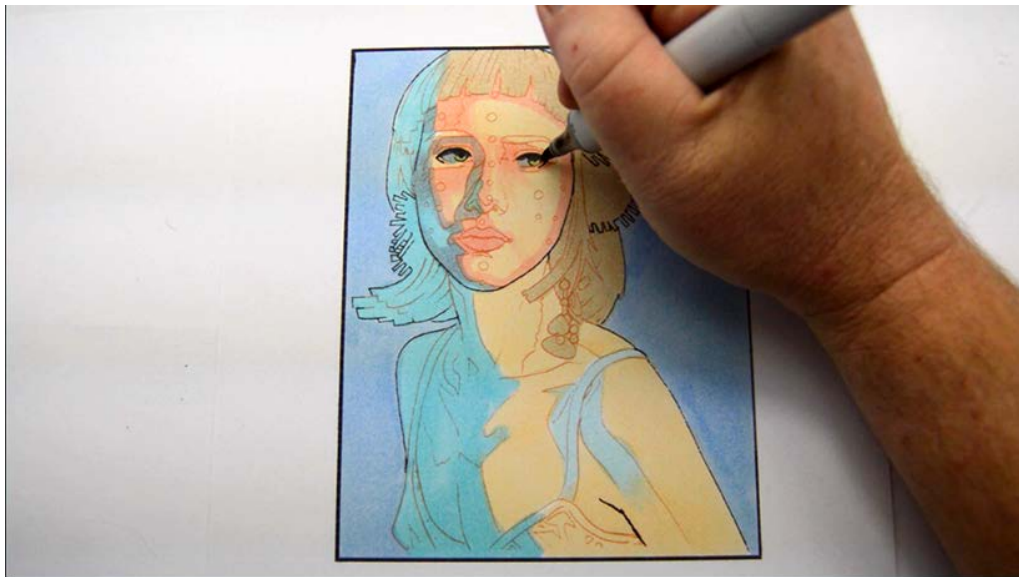
After the B01.



I add YR31 to the iris. Honestly this didn't do what I expected it to do and you can skip this step if you like.



Using a 0.3 micron black multi liner I add the pupils to the eyes and strengthen the lash line.



I add shadows to the iris with W6.



I add W6 to the shadow shape on the inside corner of the left eye...

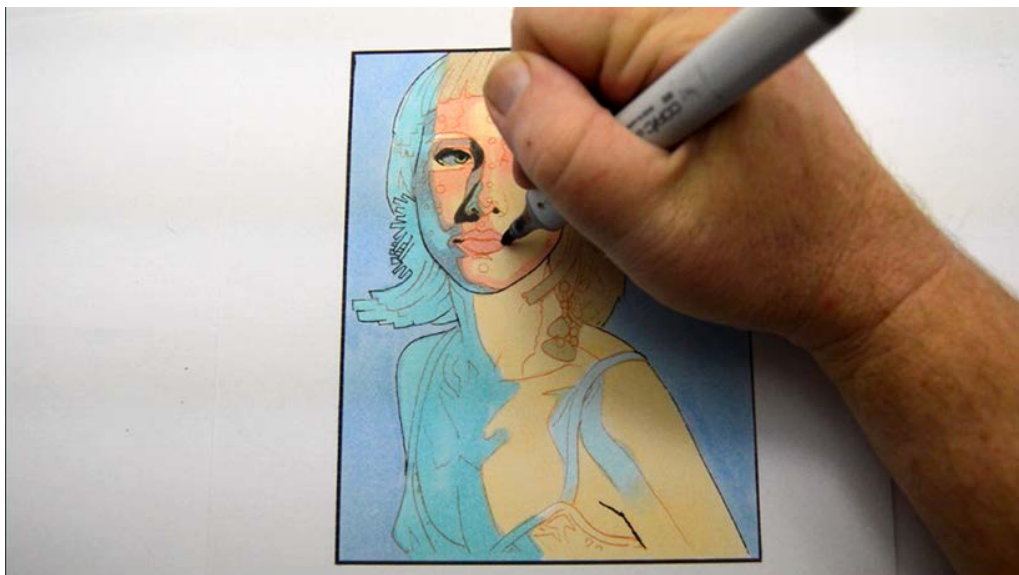


...and to the nostrils... (W6)



...and cast shadow at the bottom of the nose.

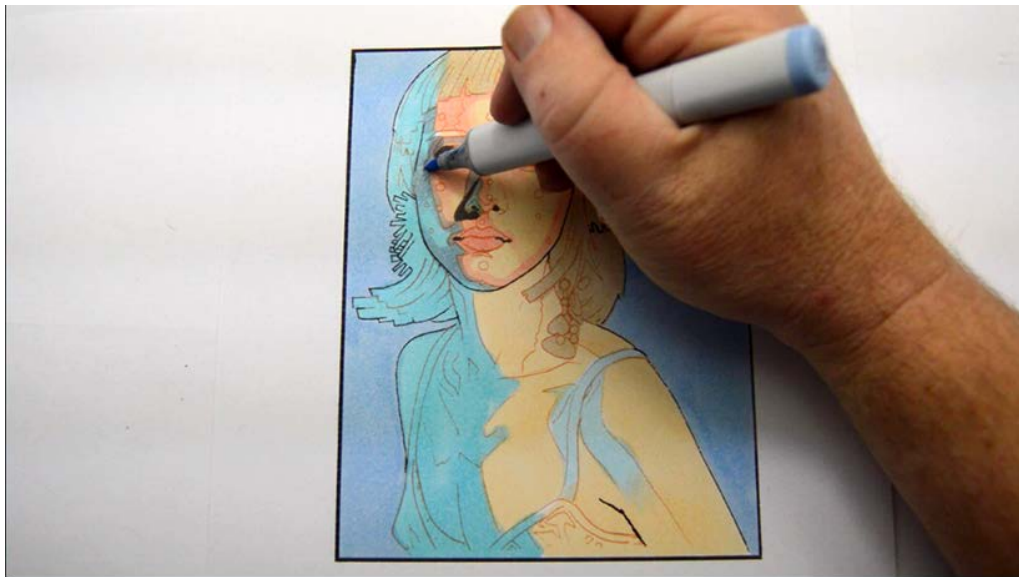
Notice the middle portion of the nose shadow is left untouched at this stage.



I add W6 to the corners of the mouth...



Notice the little "up-tick"
on the right side.



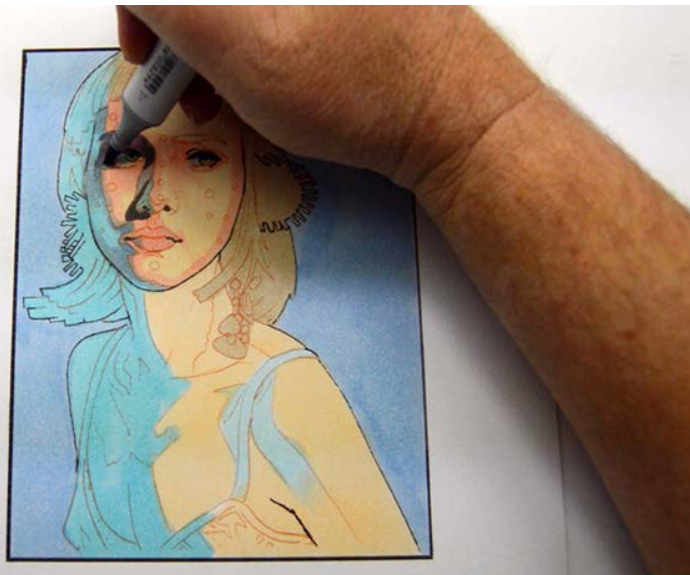
I add B12 to the outside corner
of the left eye...



...along the line of demarcation,
as an accent to the bottom lip,
and to the little shape above the
top lip. (B12)



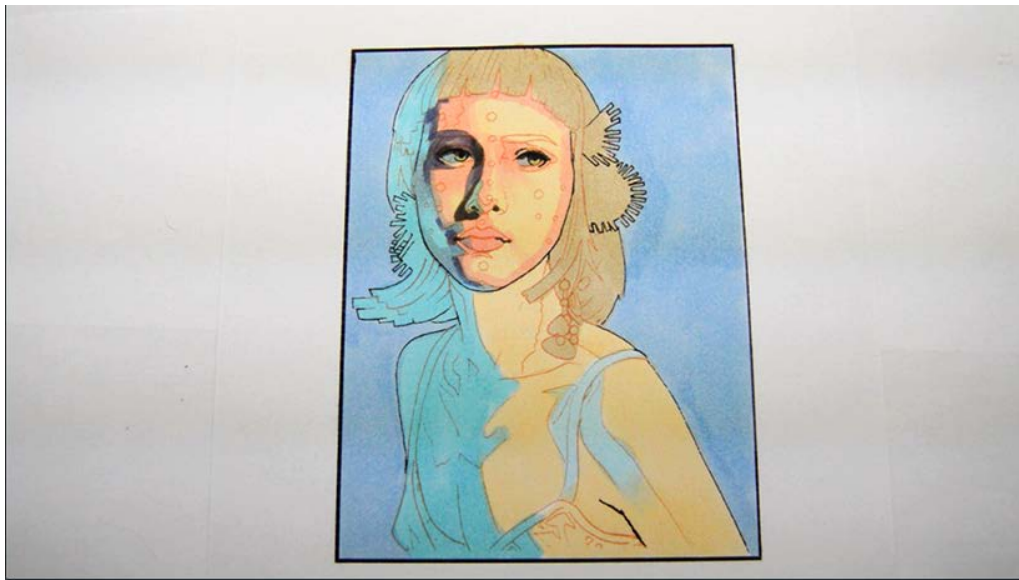
After the B12.



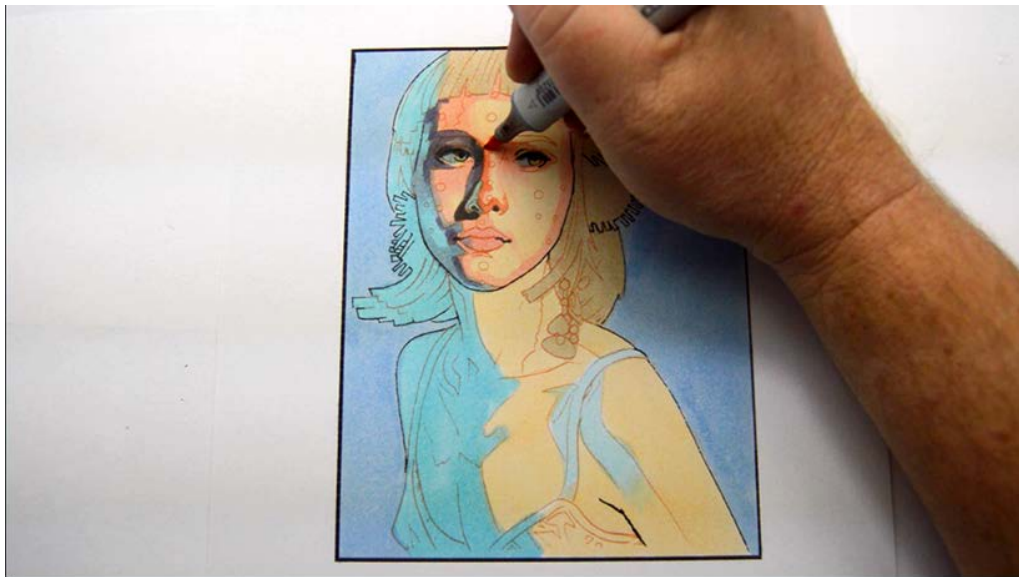
I add BV11 around the left eye socket...



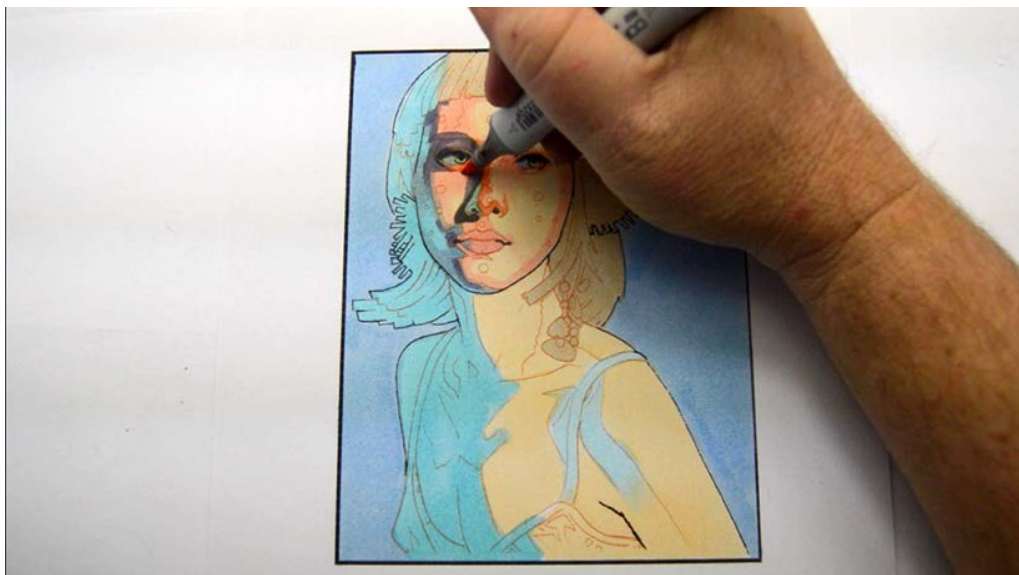
...to the lighter shadow shape
on the side of the nose...
(BV11)



...and to the corner of the mouth and along the line of demarcation on the chin. (BV11)



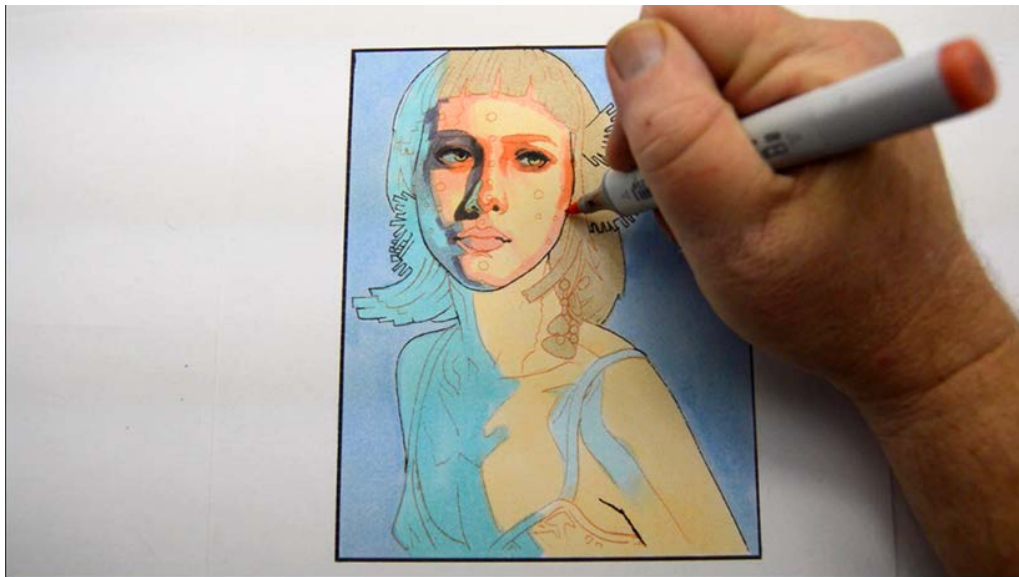
I add a nice warm R02 to the tip and shadow edge of the nose...



...on the underside of the left eye... (R02)



...and to the right eye socket and brow. (R02)



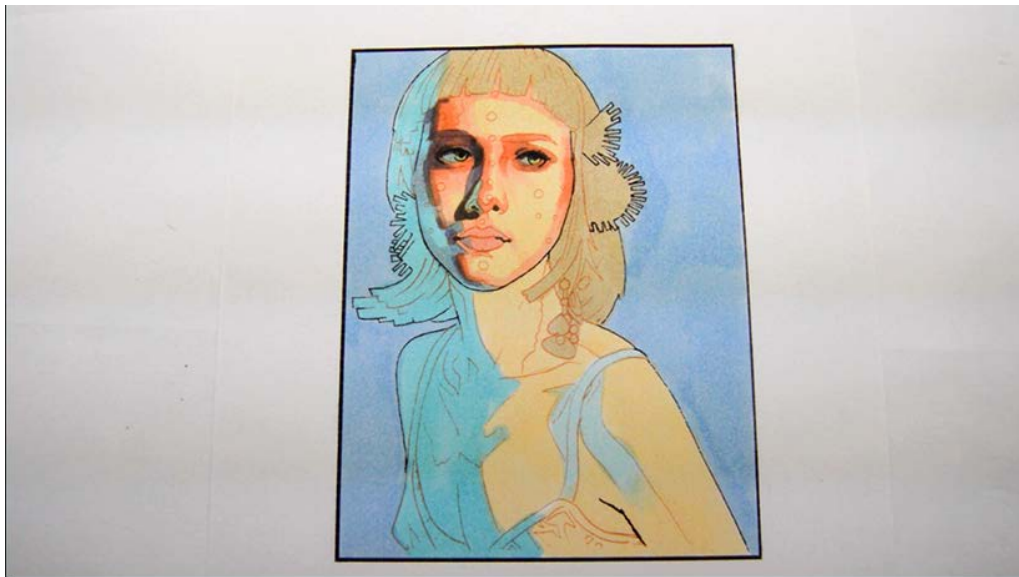
Continuing with the R02 I add blush to the cheekbone...



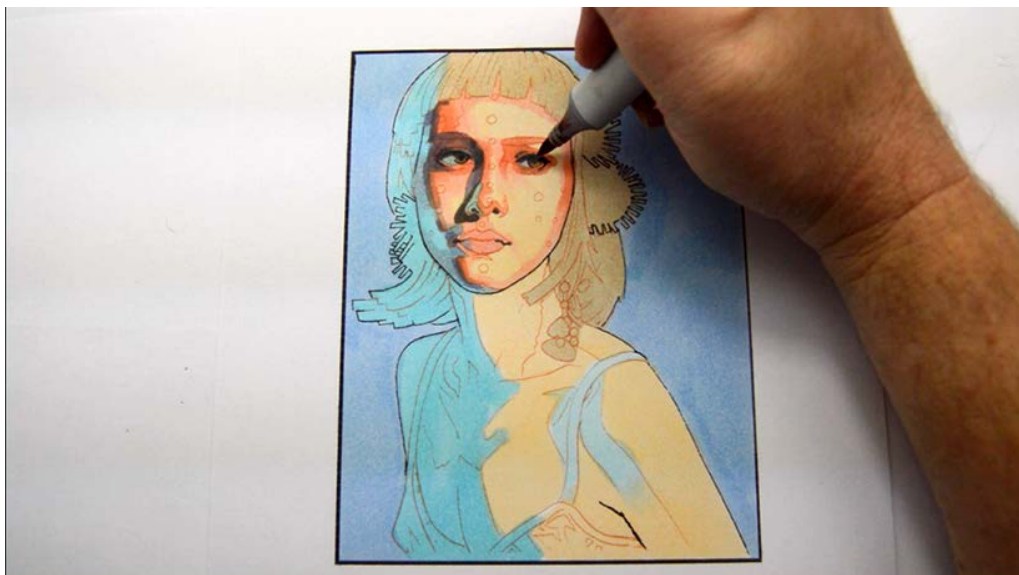
...then add some warm touches to the line of demarcation and left eye socket. (R02)



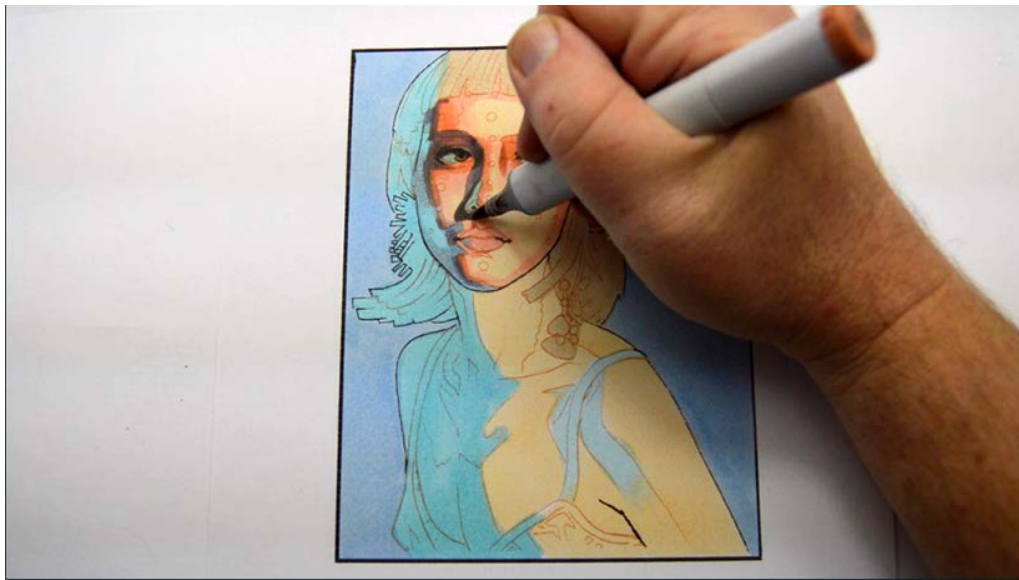
I also add a little R02 to help the transition on the forehead.



After the R02.



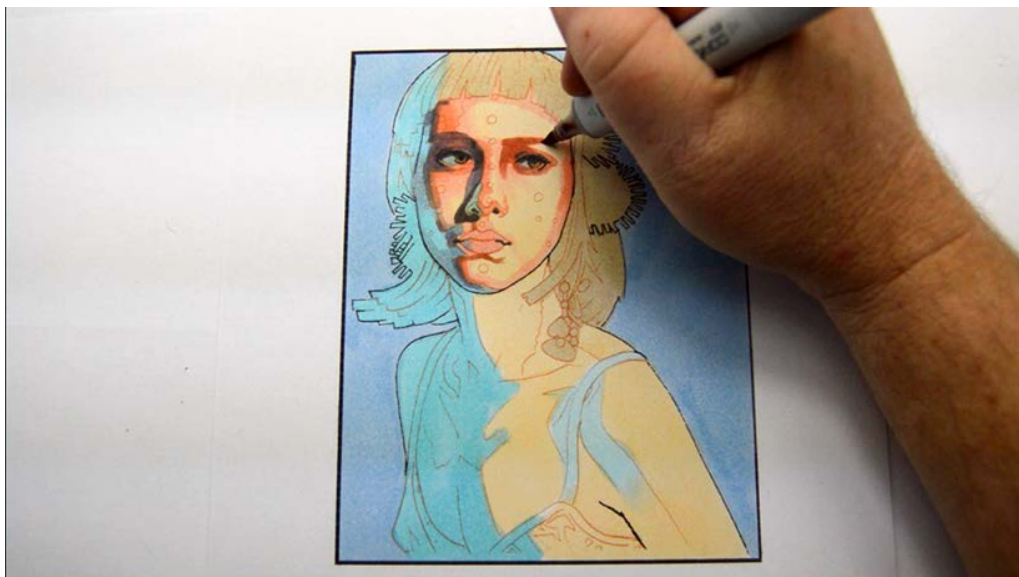
I add E13 to the iris...



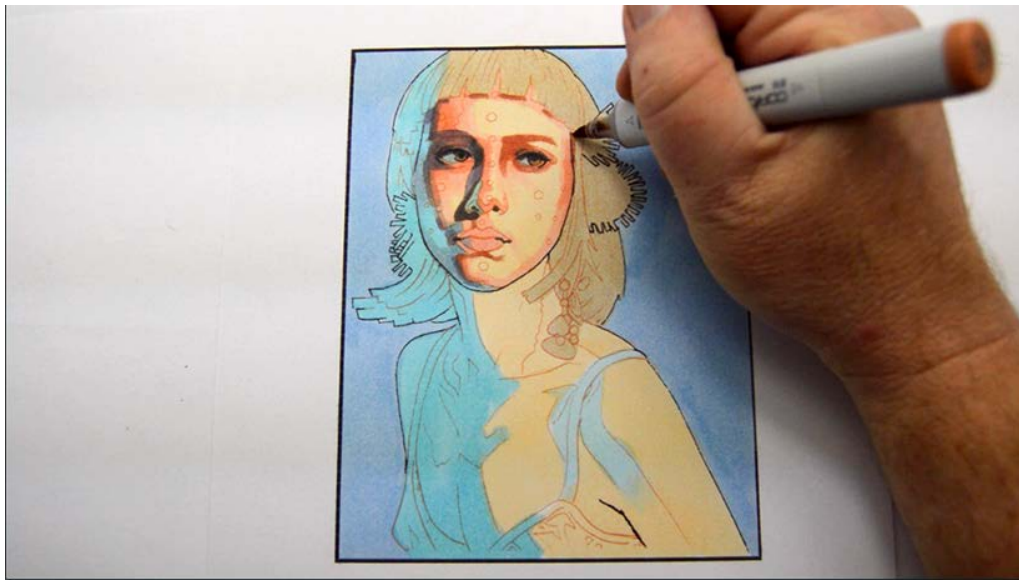
...the layer it over the lowest cast shadow on the nose to warm it up a bit. (E13)



Continuing with the E13 I redefine the shapes on the chin...



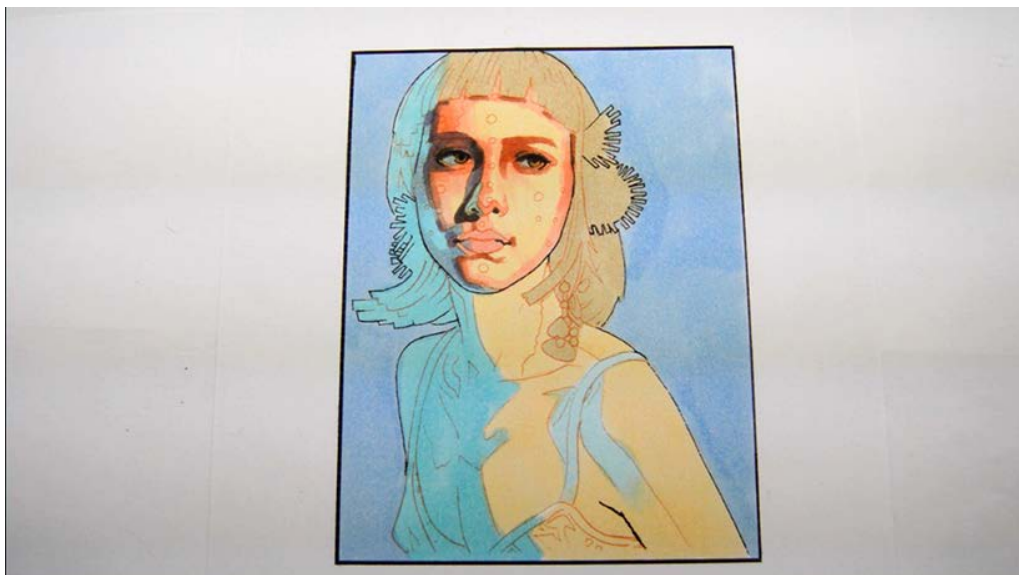
...and darken the inside corner of the right eye socket and eyebrow. (E13)



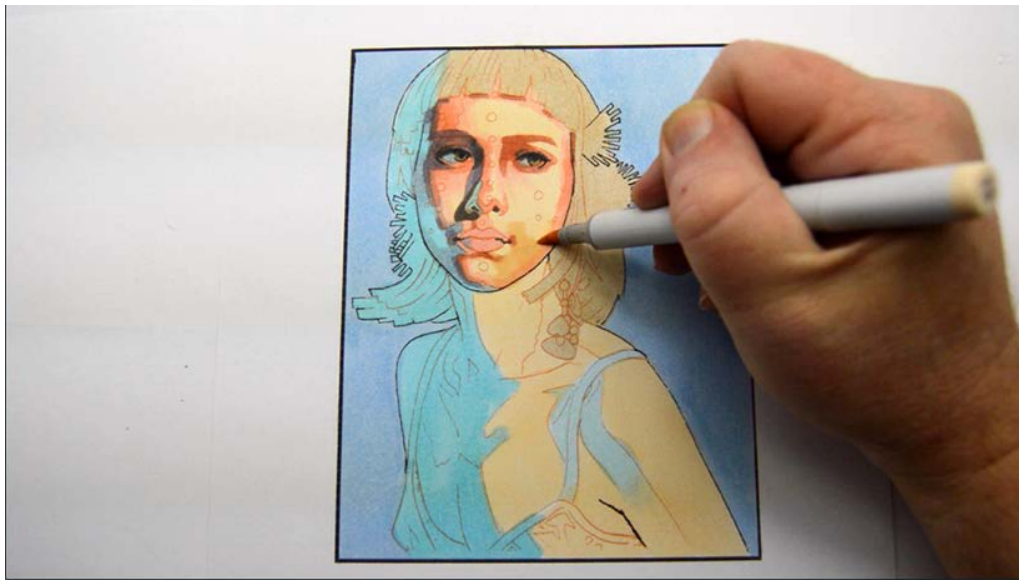
I add touches of E13 to the hairline...



...and to the right corner of the mouth. (E13)



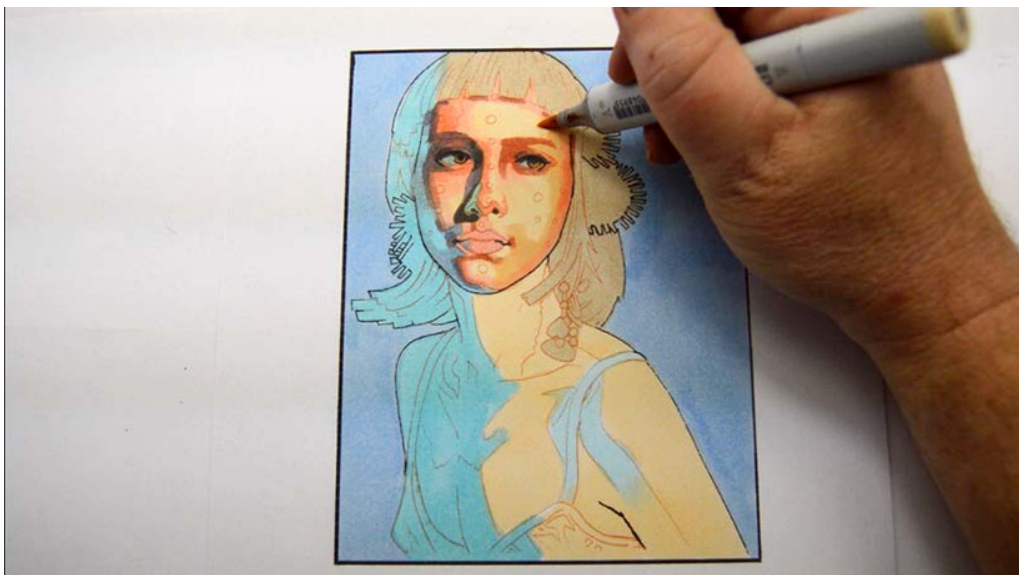
After the E13.



I add E30 where the forms of the cheek and chin "round down" towards the neck.



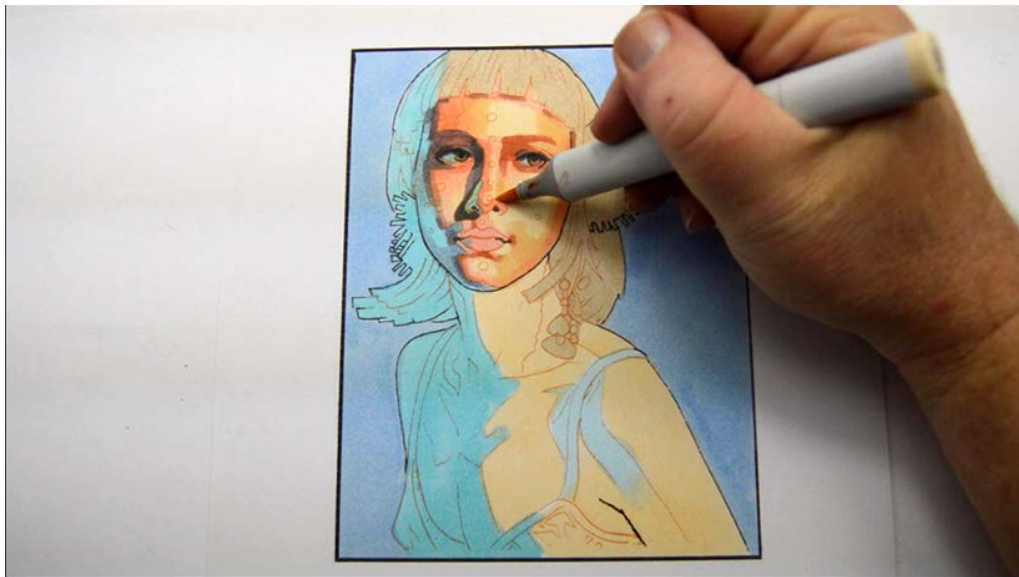
Continuing with the E30 I add shape to the cheek and eye socket...



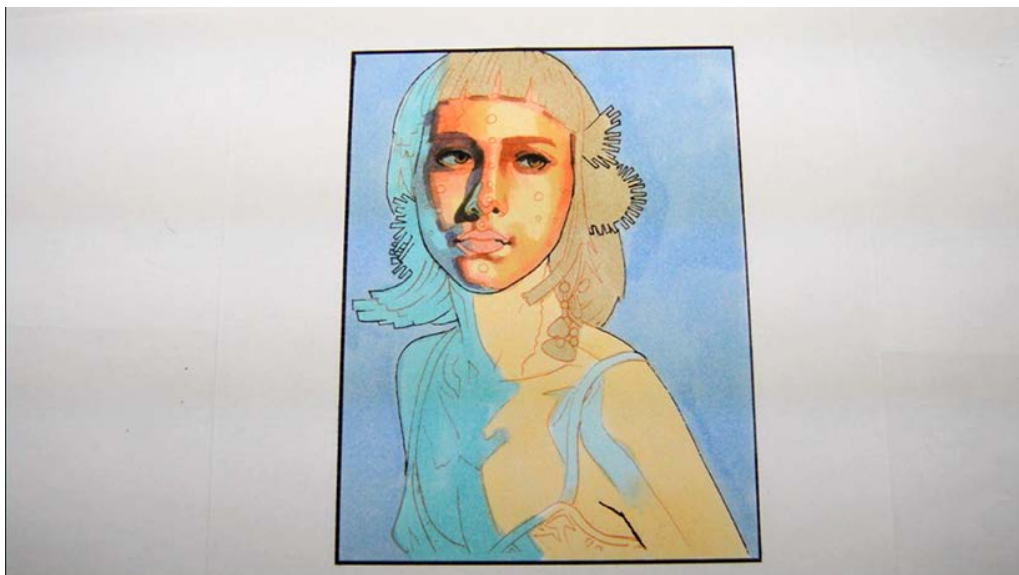
...to the forehead... (E30)



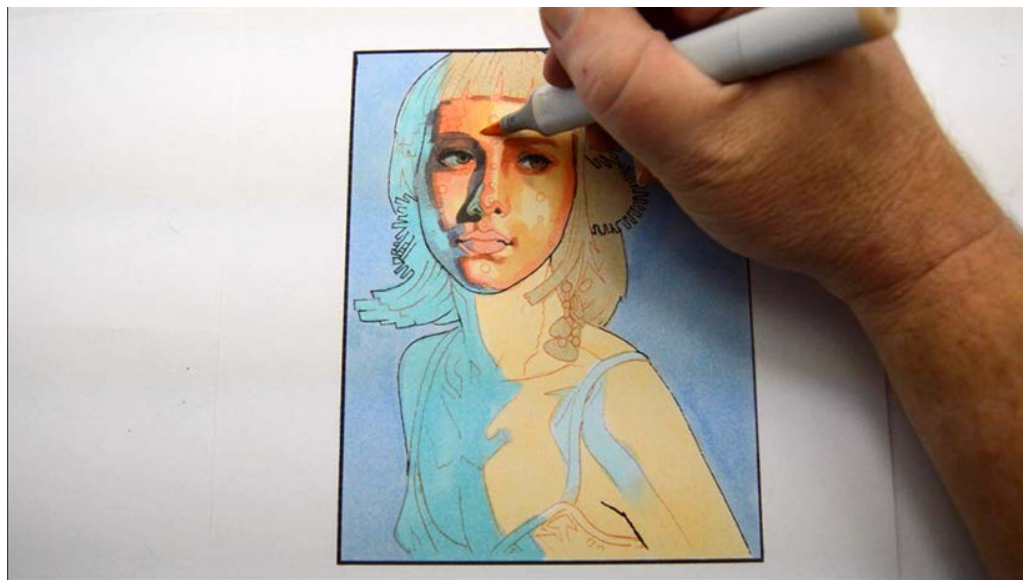
...and work the transition on the other side of the forehead. (E30)



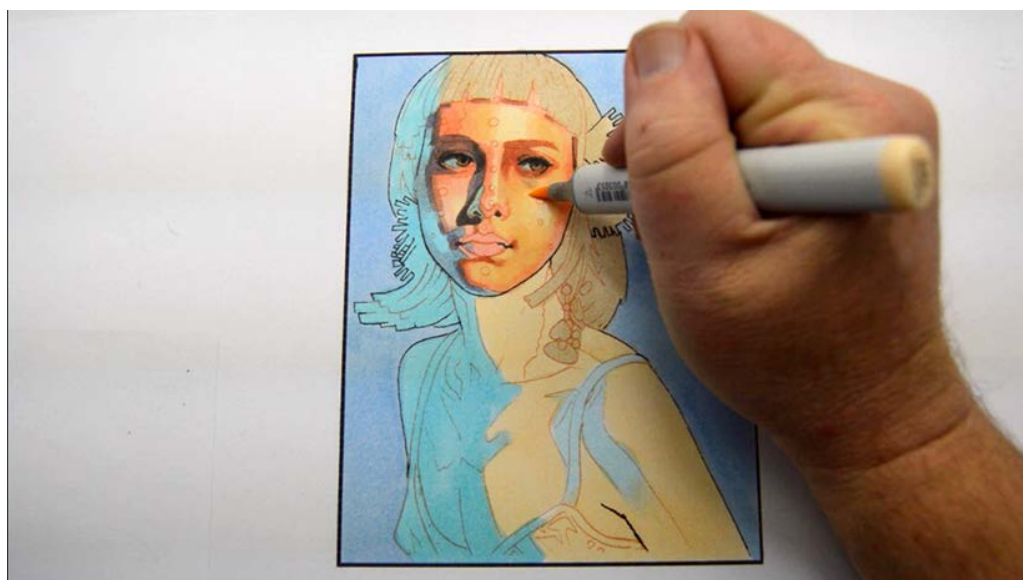
I add E30 to the right side plane of the nose.



After the E30.



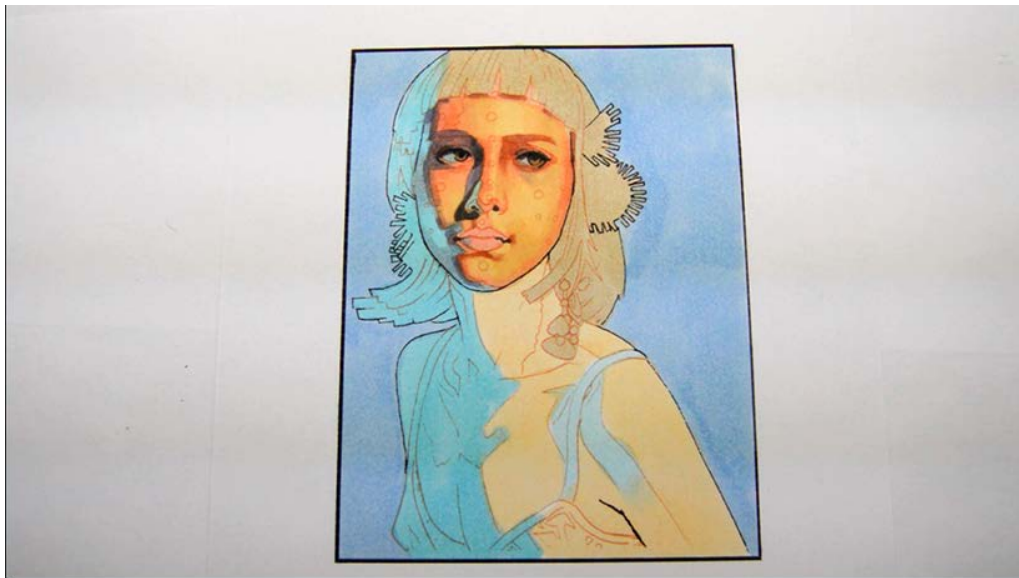
I soften the edges of the E30 with E00...



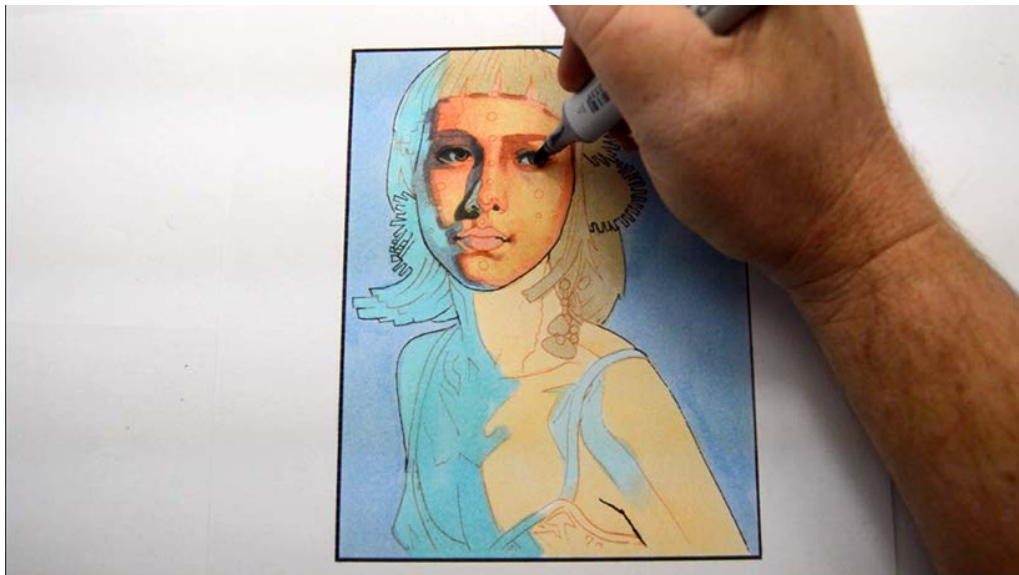
...then blend the entire "skin side" of the face with E51.



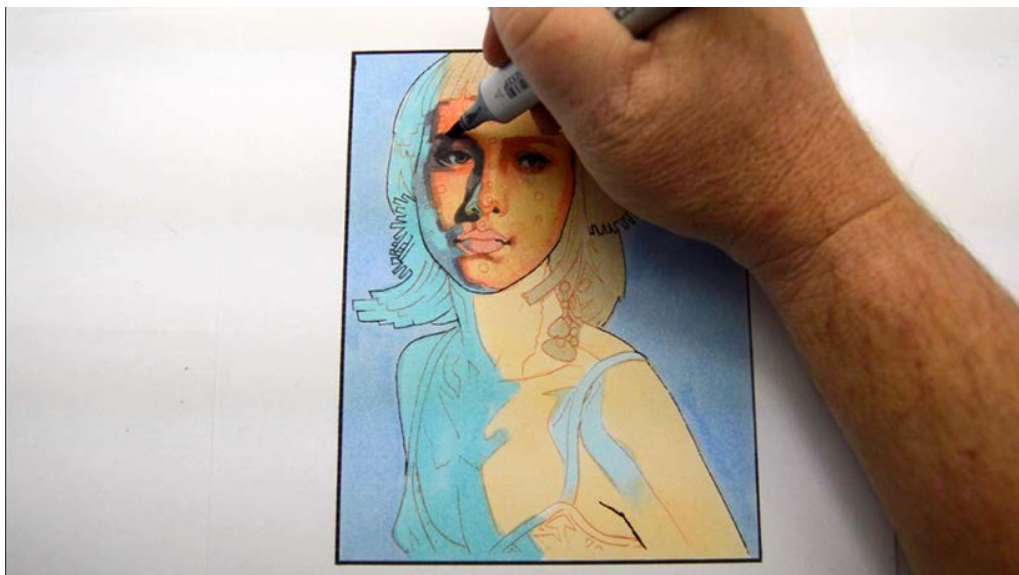
E51



After the E51.



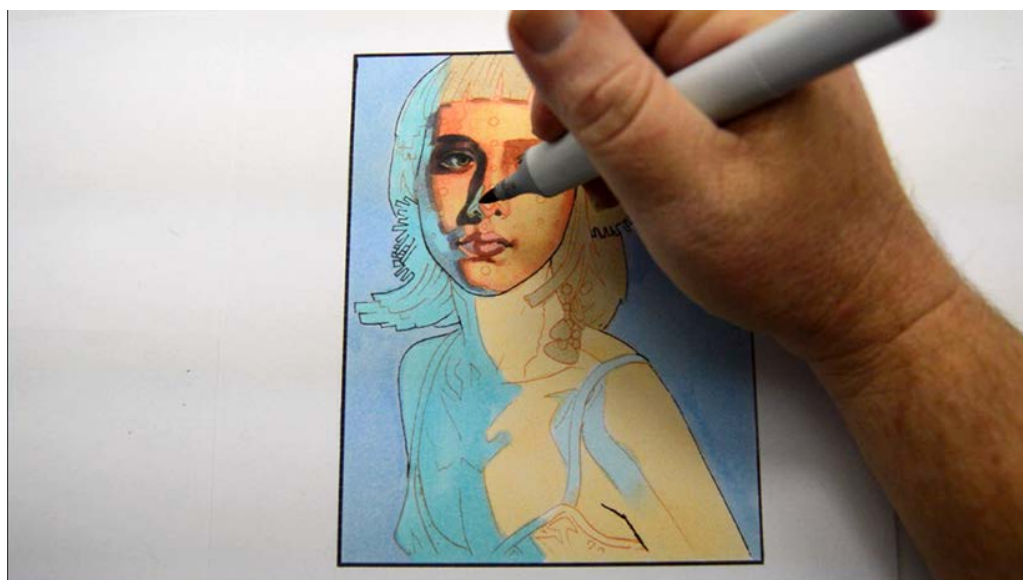
I add C5 to the eyes to darken them down just a bit...



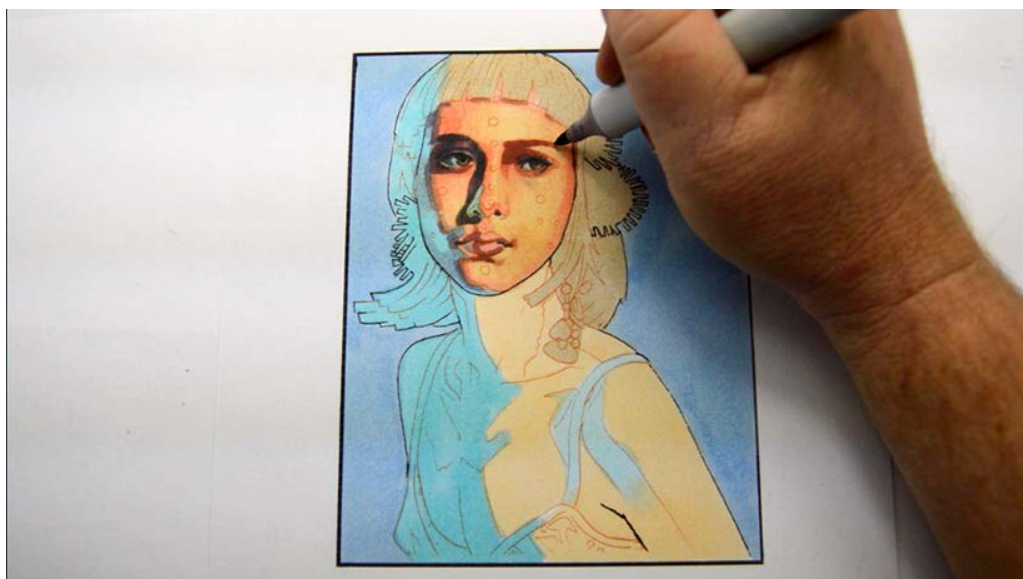
...then place some dark accents around the left eye. (C5)



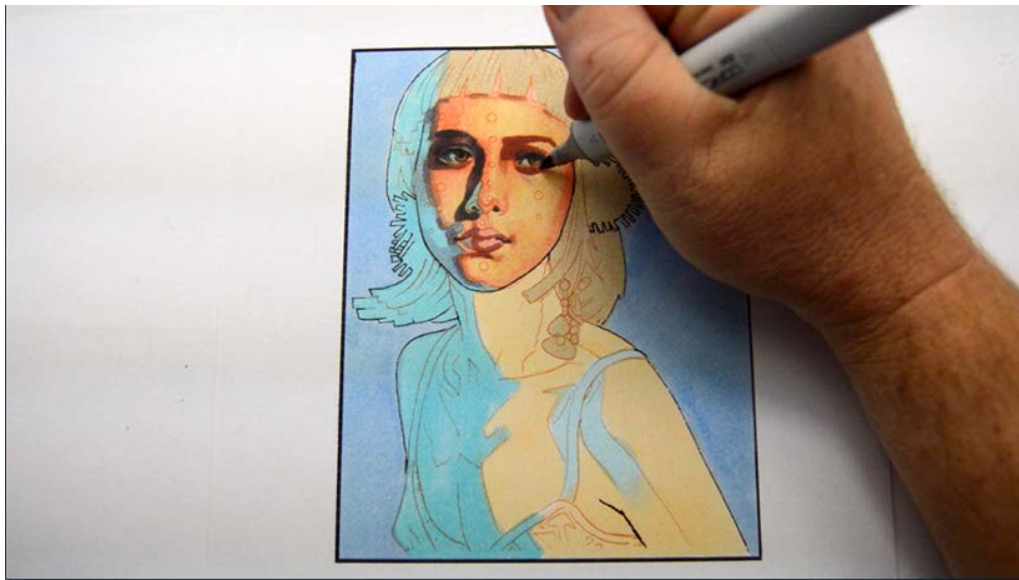
I add E04 around the left eye...



...and to the lips and chin.
(E04)



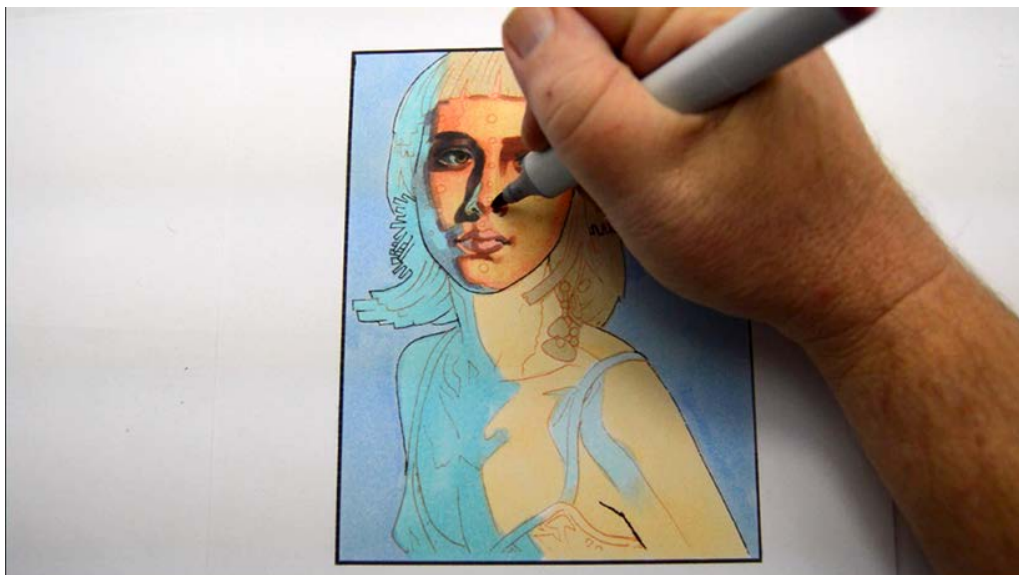
I darken the corner of the
right eye and eyebrow...
(E04)



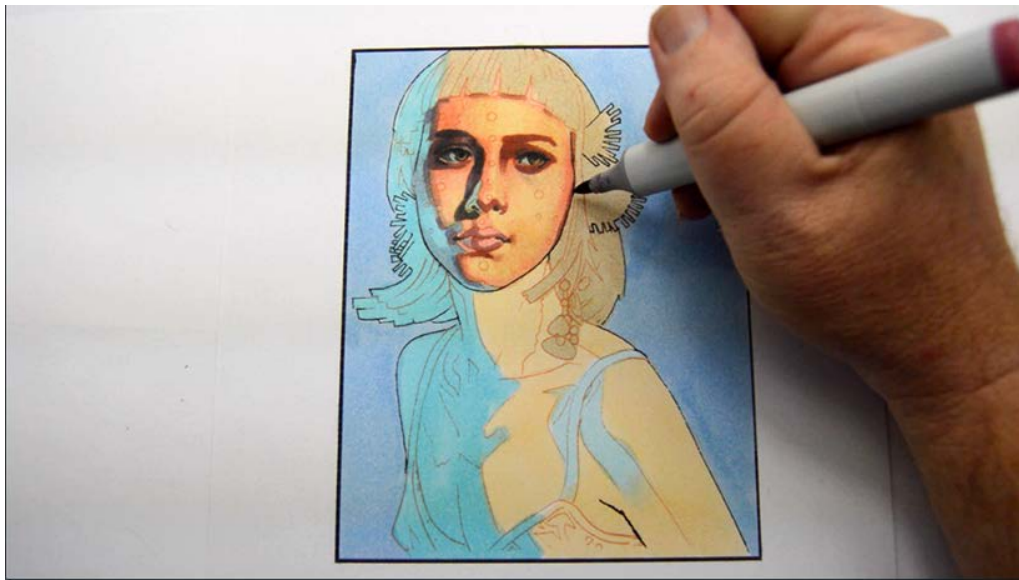
...the add E04 under the right eye.



I add a small accent on the right "wing" of the nose... (E04)



...then color the shape on the underside of the nose. (E04)



I strengthen the right side contour line... (E04)



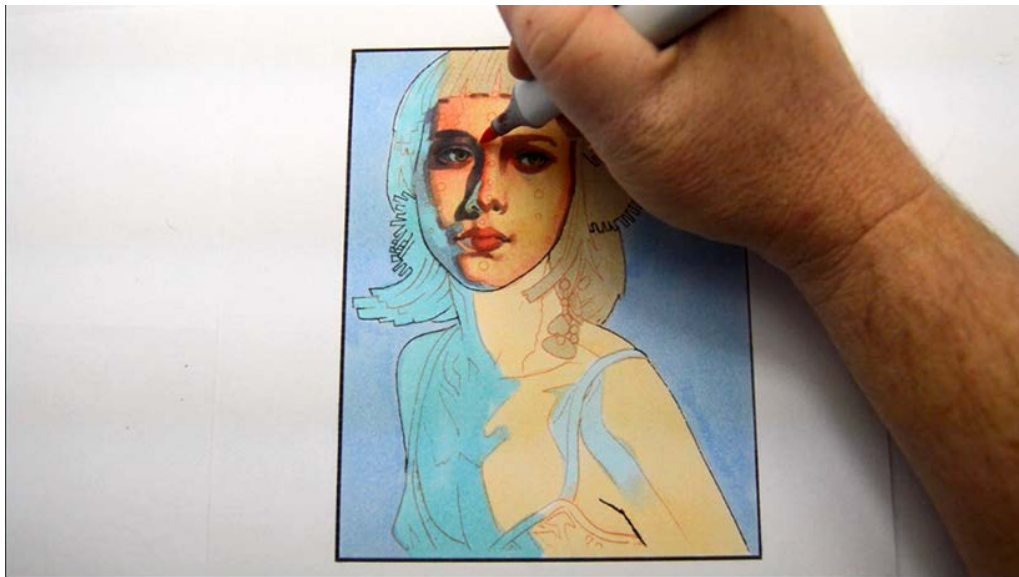
...then hit accents on the hairline. (E04)



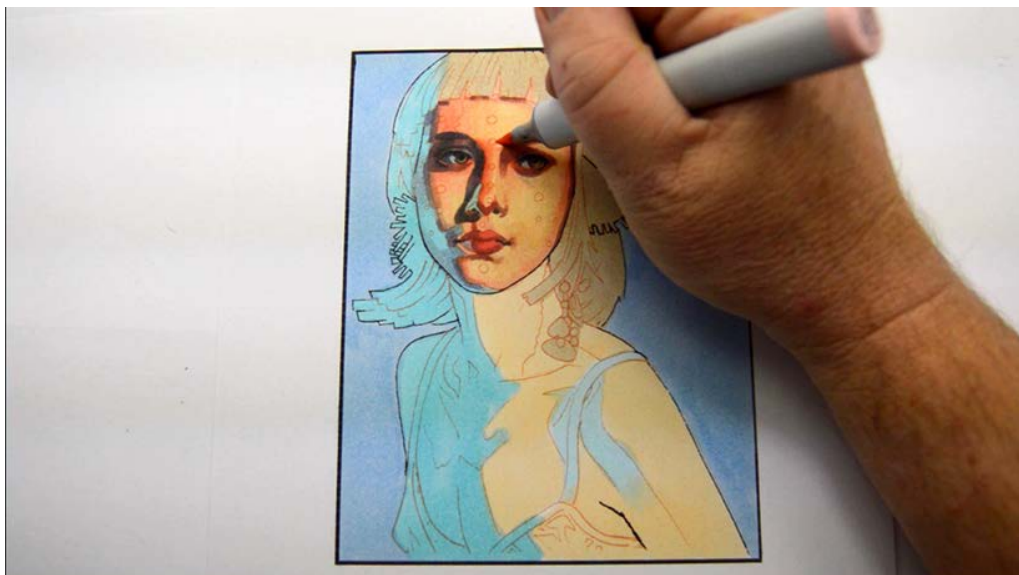
I strengthen the color of the lips with R22...



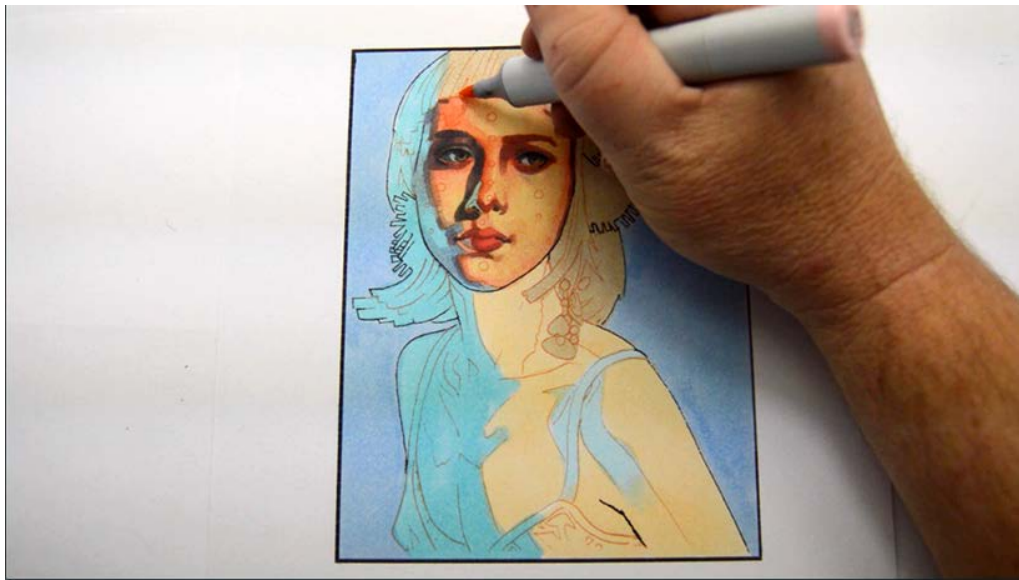
..then add touches under the eyes. (R22)



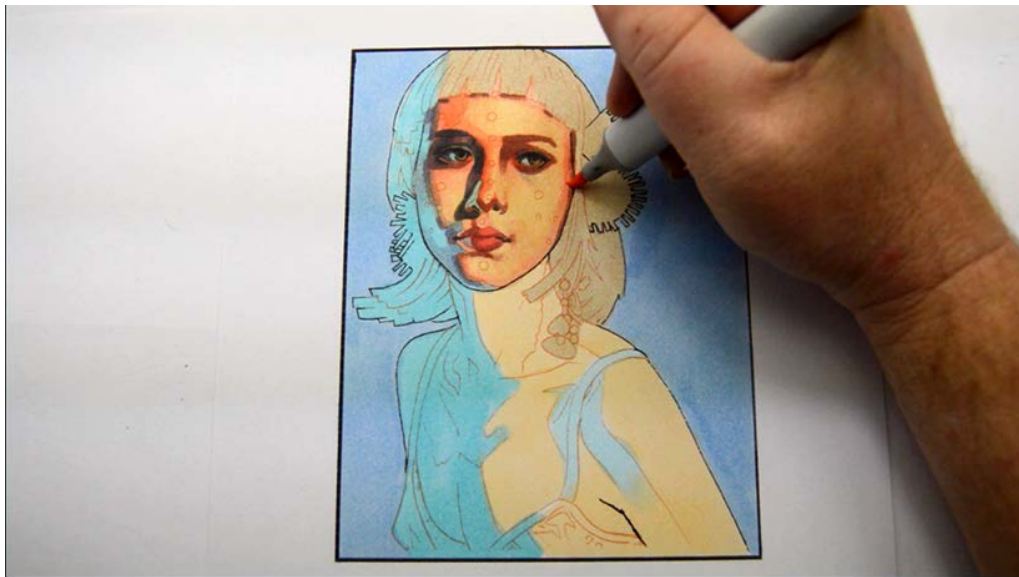
I add R22 to the line of demarcation on the nose...



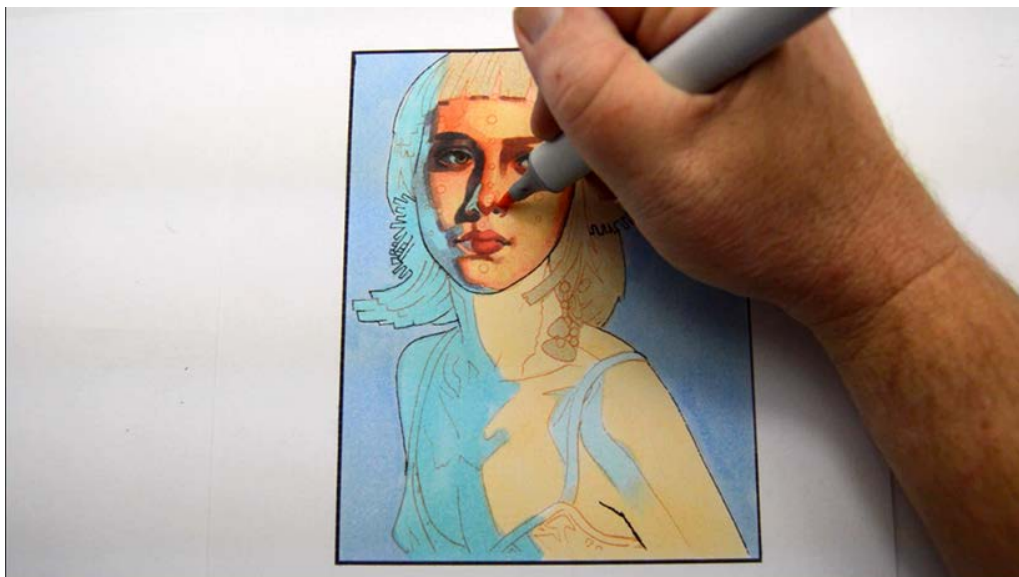
...then soften it out with R11.



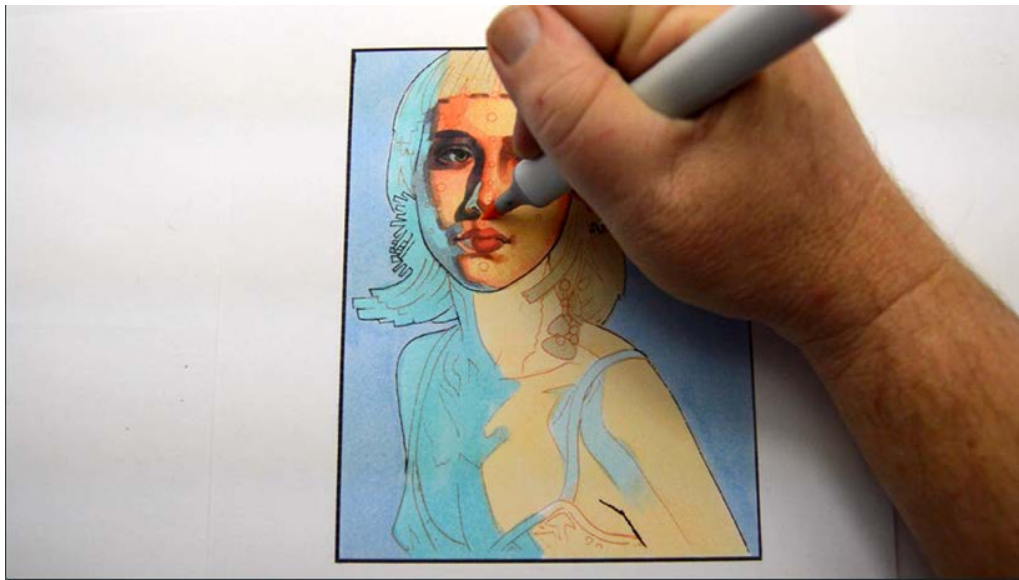
I readdress the transitions on the forehead... (R11)



...then add R11 to the side of the face...



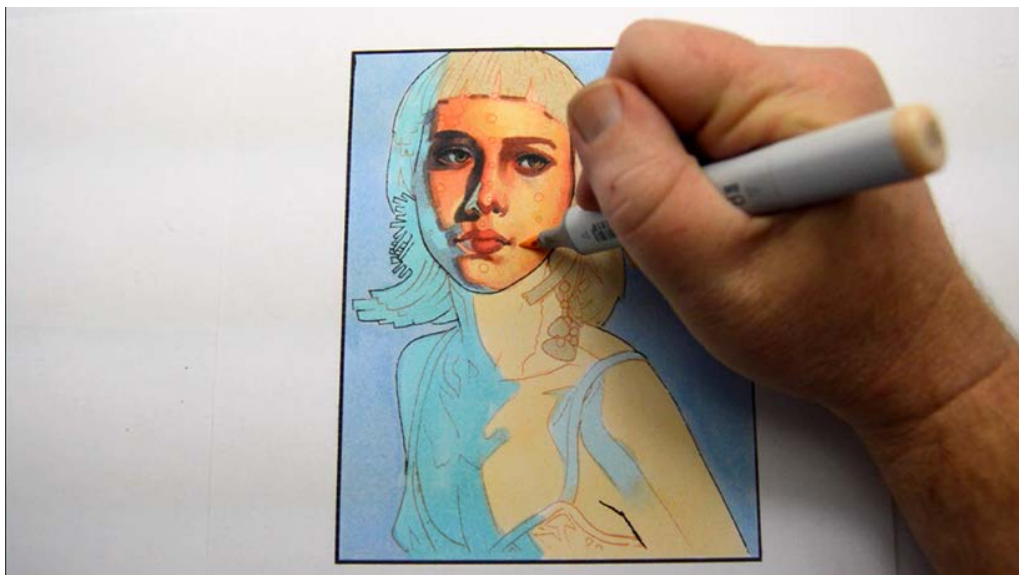
...and the right nostril. (R11)



I add touches of R11 to the upper lip...



...and left cheek. (R11)



I soften the edges of the R11 with E00.



After the E00.



I add C4 to the tip of the nose.



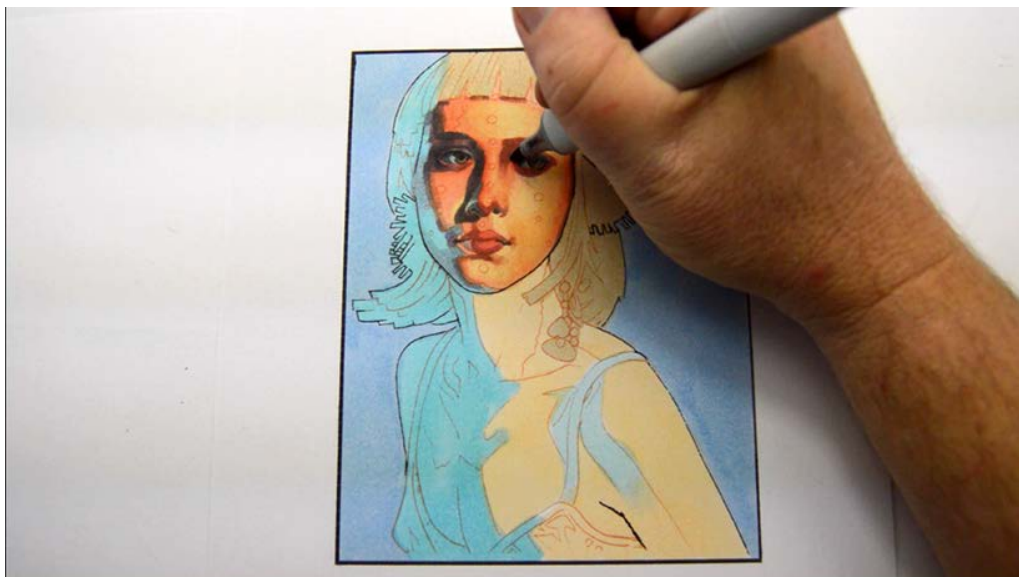
Look carefully and you can see it!



I add C4 accents around the eye...



...and on the forehead... (C4)



...then add C4 accents to the right eye socket.



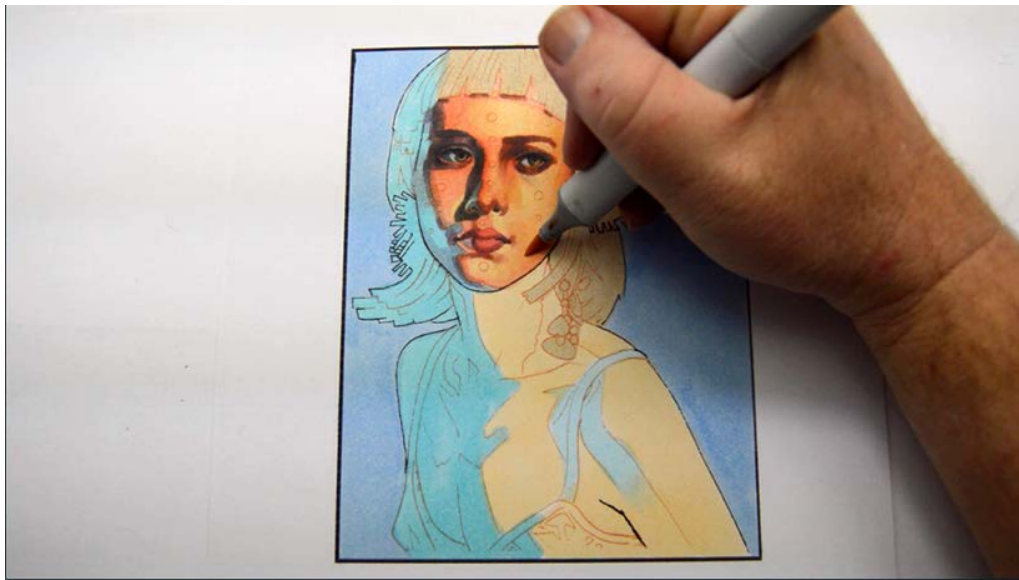
Getting there :)



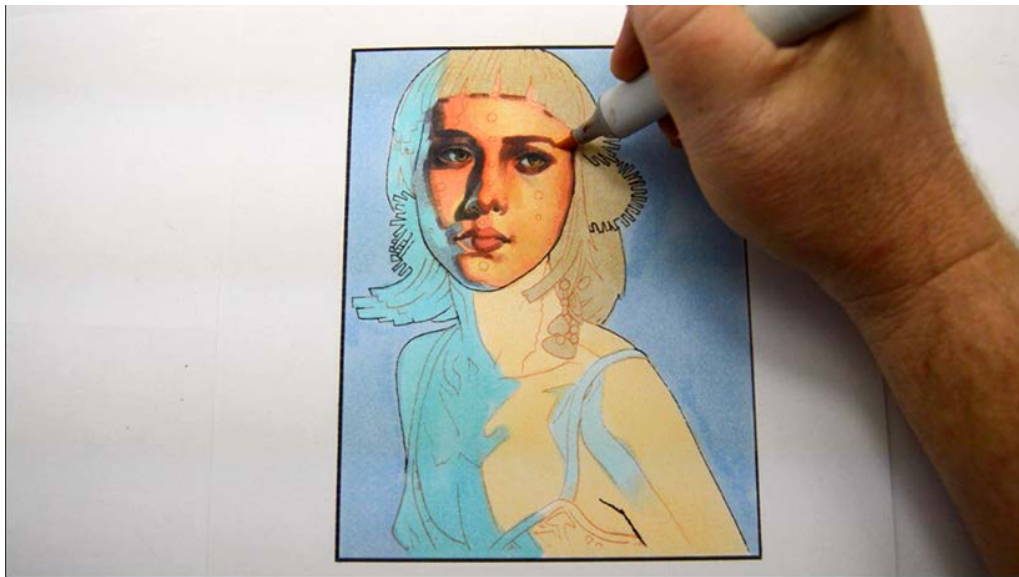
I add shadow accents to the left portion of the top lip with C4.



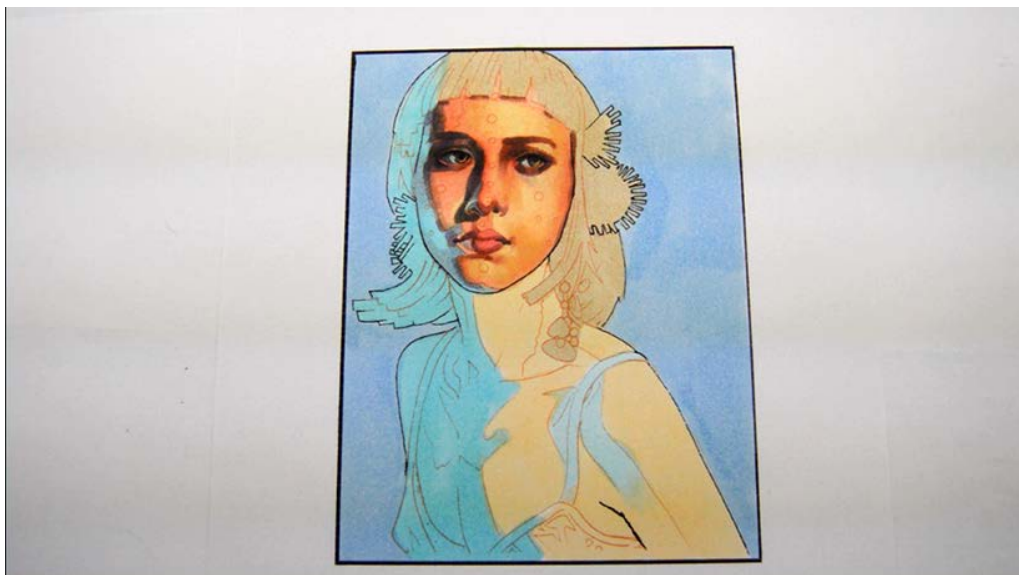
After the C4.



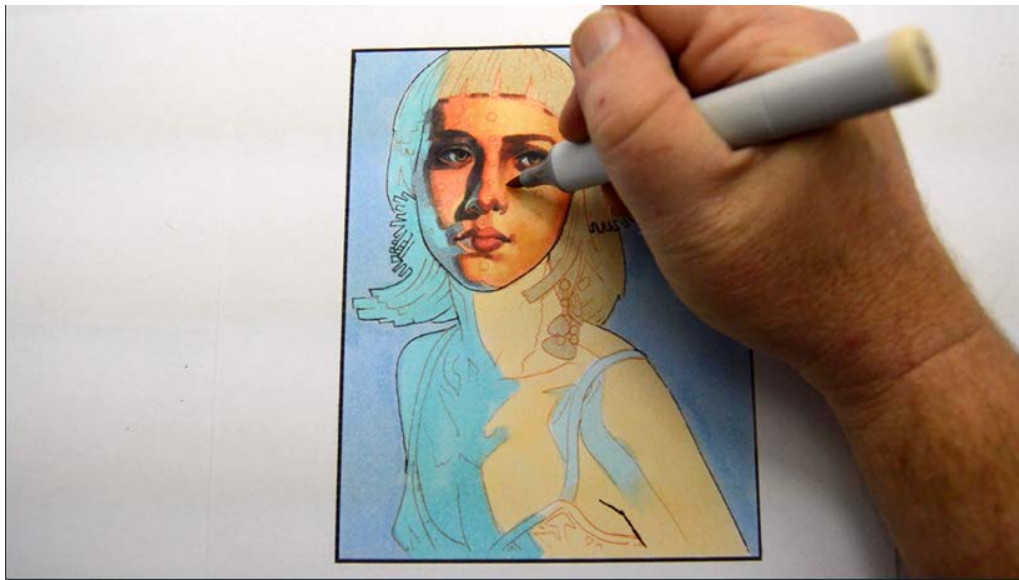
I add E30 along the side of the nose and bottom of the cheek...



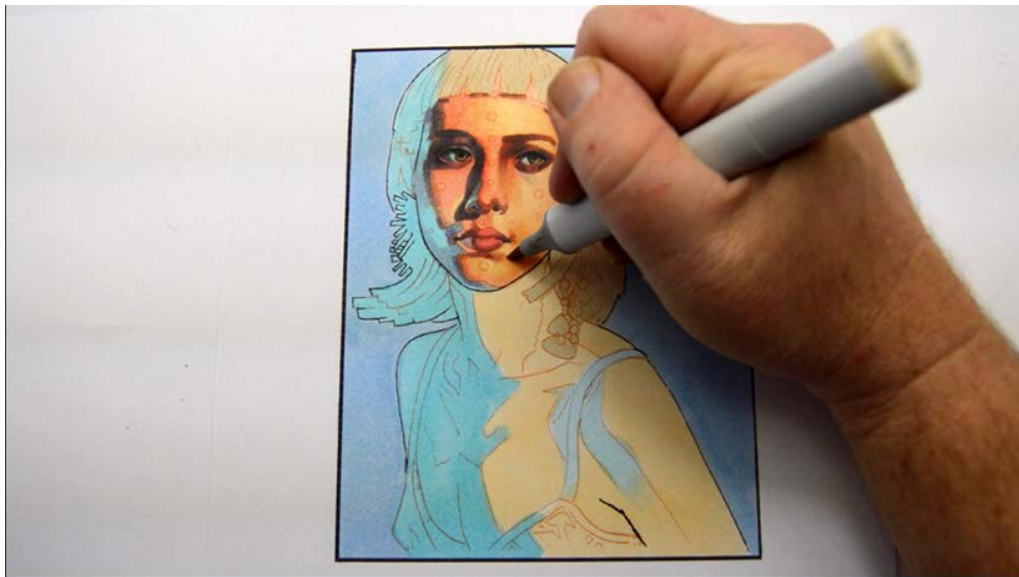
...and along the side of the face.
(E30)



After the E30.



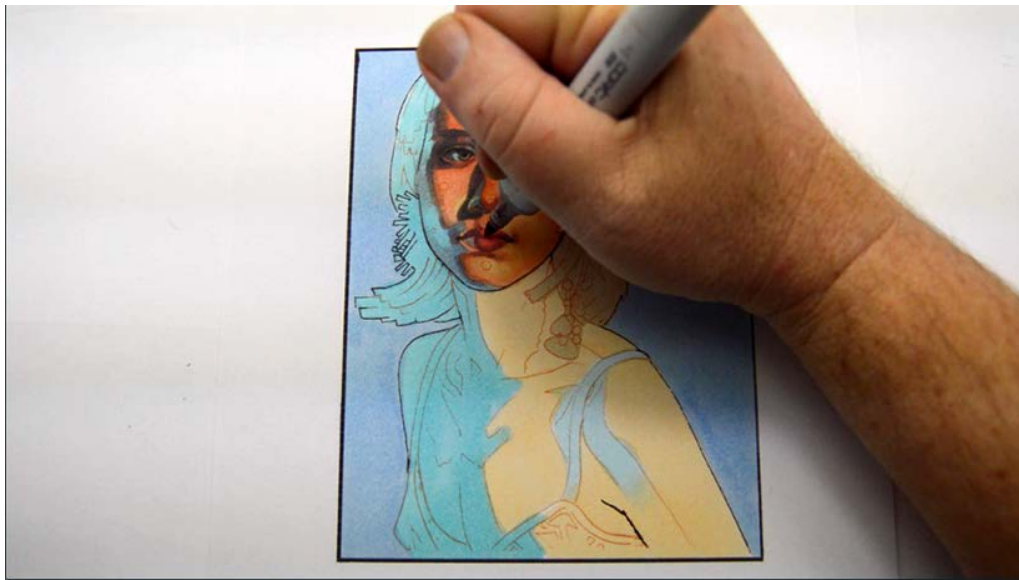
I add E42 here...



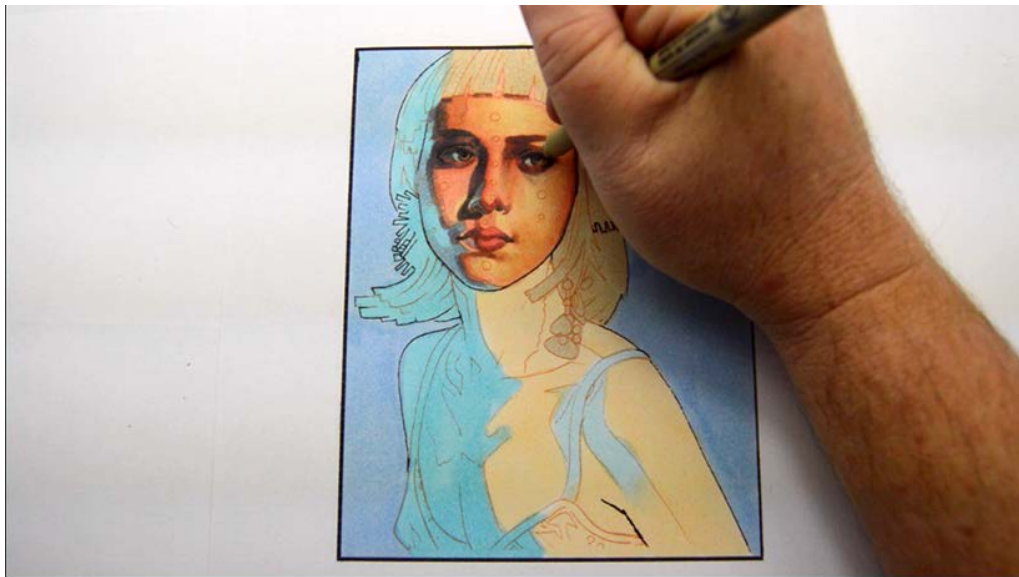
...here... (E42)



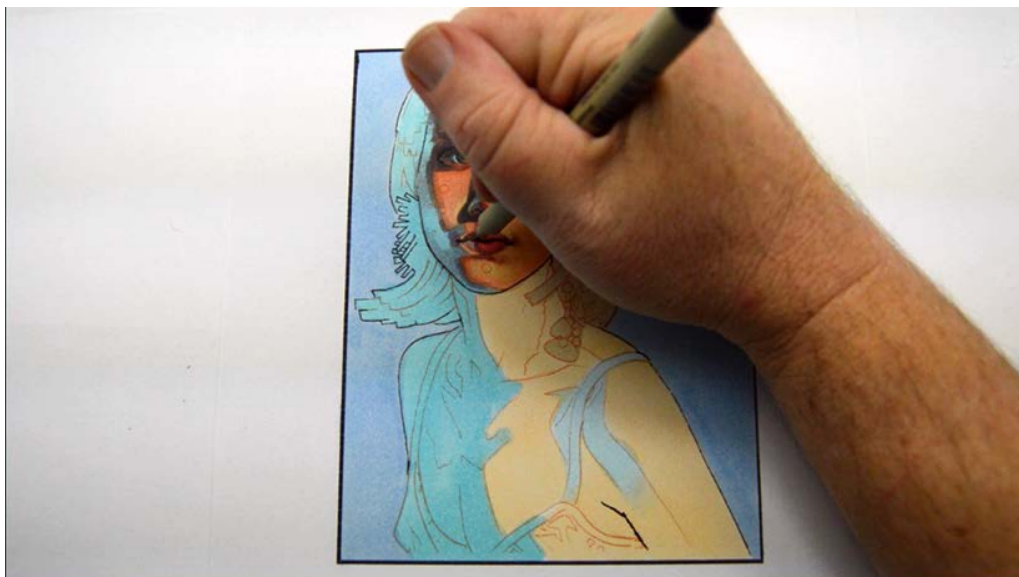
...and here (E42) to add just a bit more contrast to these areas.



I add E09 to the nostrils and to the line between the lips.



I strengthen the lash line with my 0.3 multi liner.



I strengthen the division of the lips with the 0.3 multiliner.



I add B01 to all the jewels.



I add small accents of B23 to the jewels...



...to finish off the face (excluding highlights).

Chapter Three:

Coloring The Hair And Highlighting The Face





I add "dot" of B23 to the philtrum between the nose and upper lip. There is a jewel here and I forgot to color it earlier.



Continuing with the b23 I add "hair strokes" to the blue side of the hair.



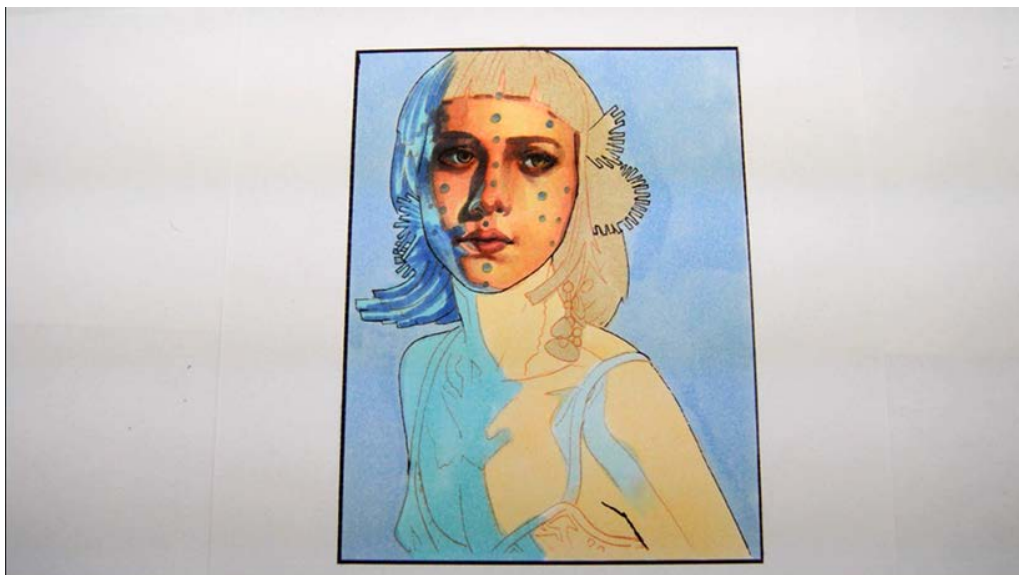
No need to be super specific here, we are just creating form.



I add B23 shadow accents to the blue side of the face here...



...and here. (B23)



Notice the B23 accents around the lip.

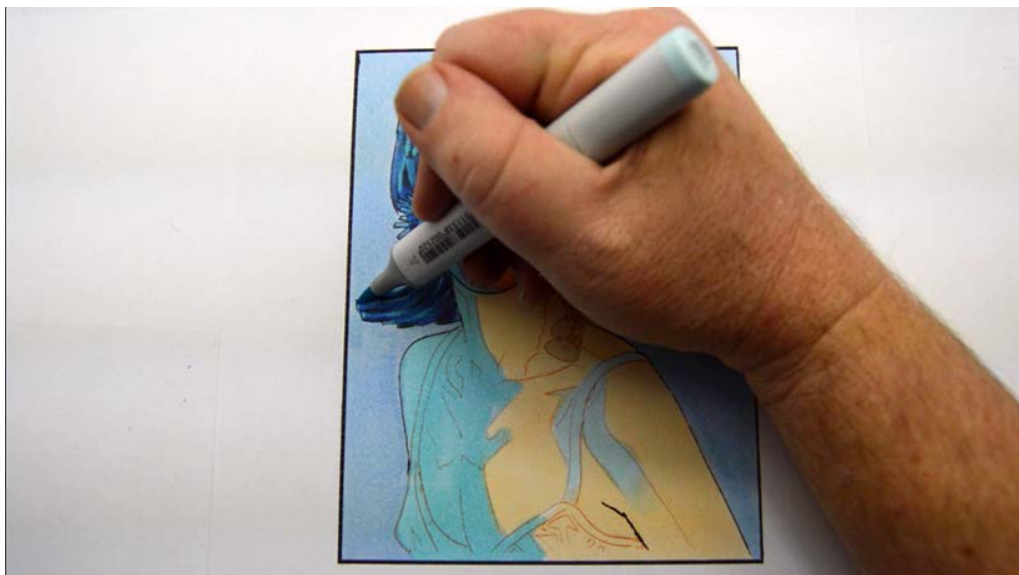


I add a darker B24 to the hair...

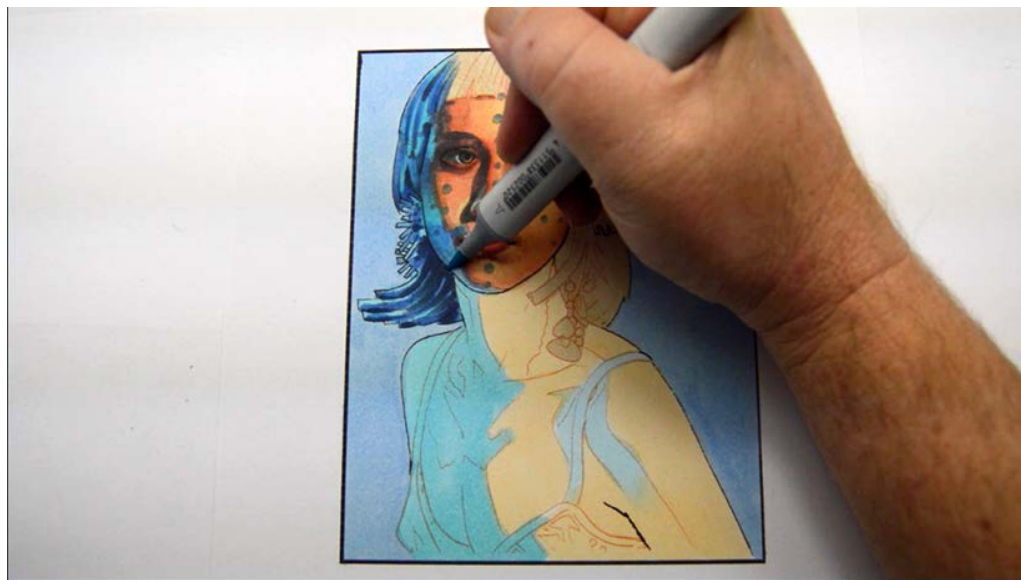


...and then a very dark B97.

In both cases I'm simply trying to accent the hair and give it shape and form.



I blend the blue side of the hair with B01...



...and soften the darker accents on the blue side of the face.
(B01)



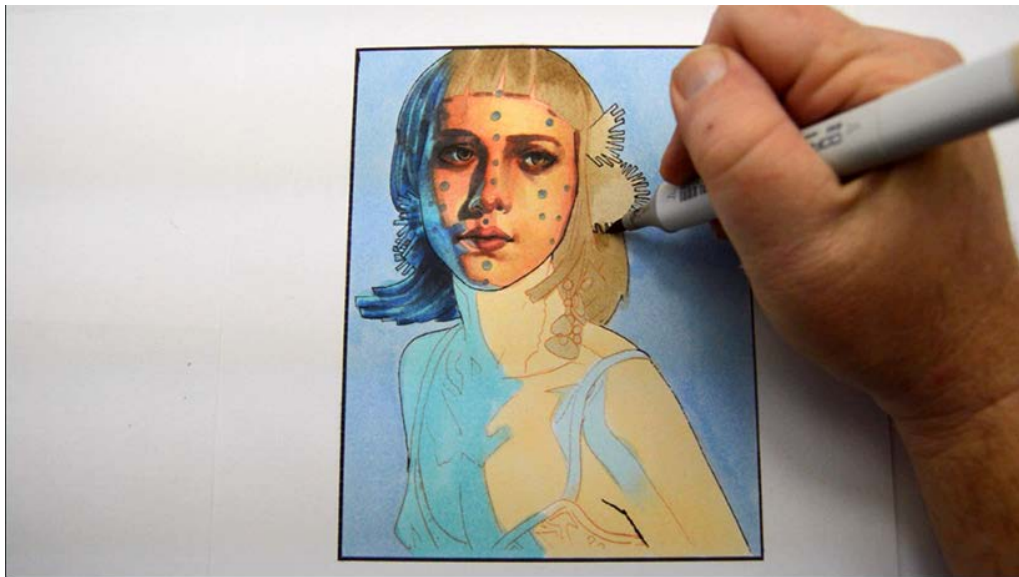
It's a bit abstract and "chunky" looking, but that's ok!



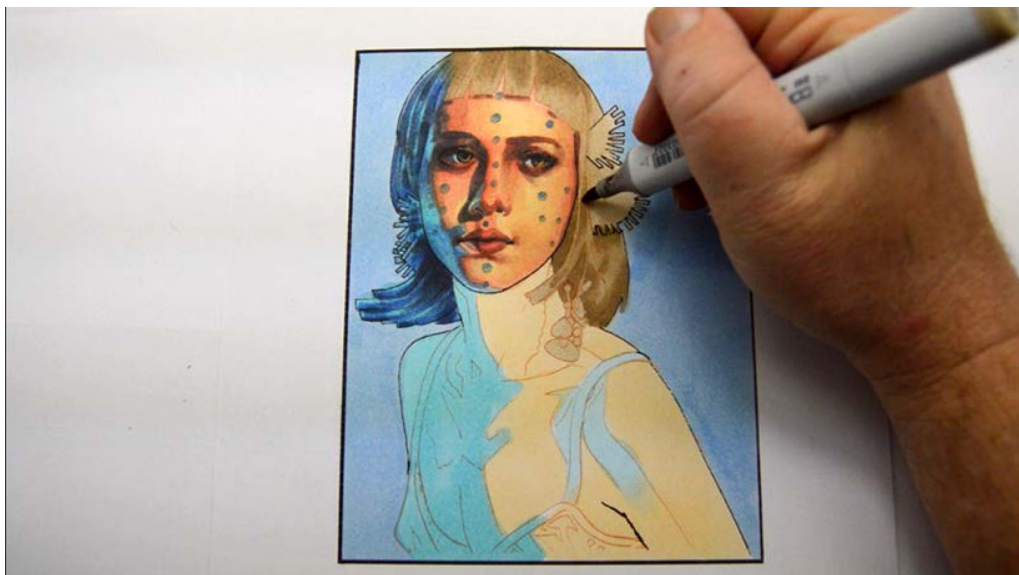
Moving on to the blonde side of the hair I add an overall layer of E42.



After the E42.



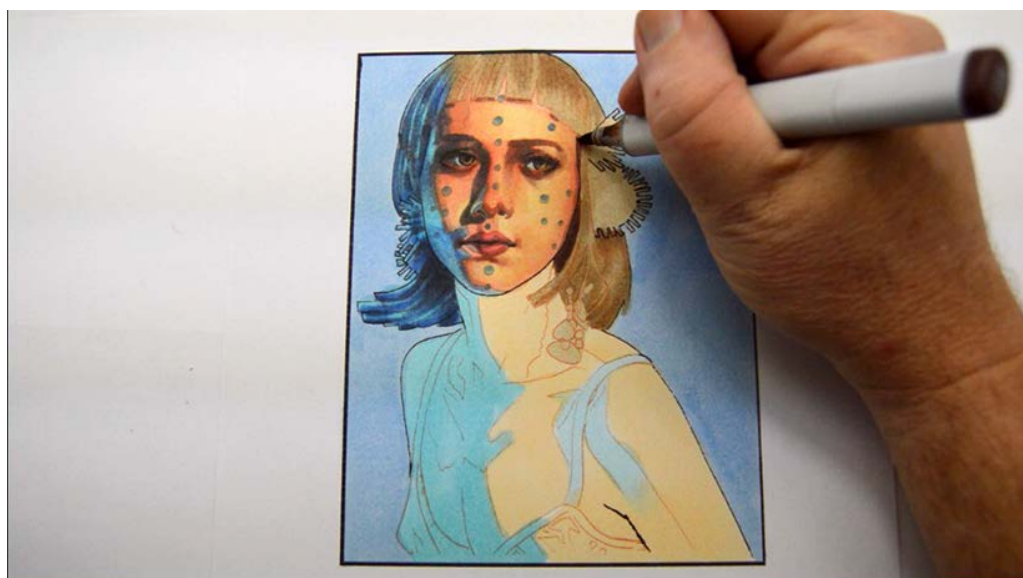
Next I add slightly darker E43.



This helps "round" the hair and give it some shape. (E43)



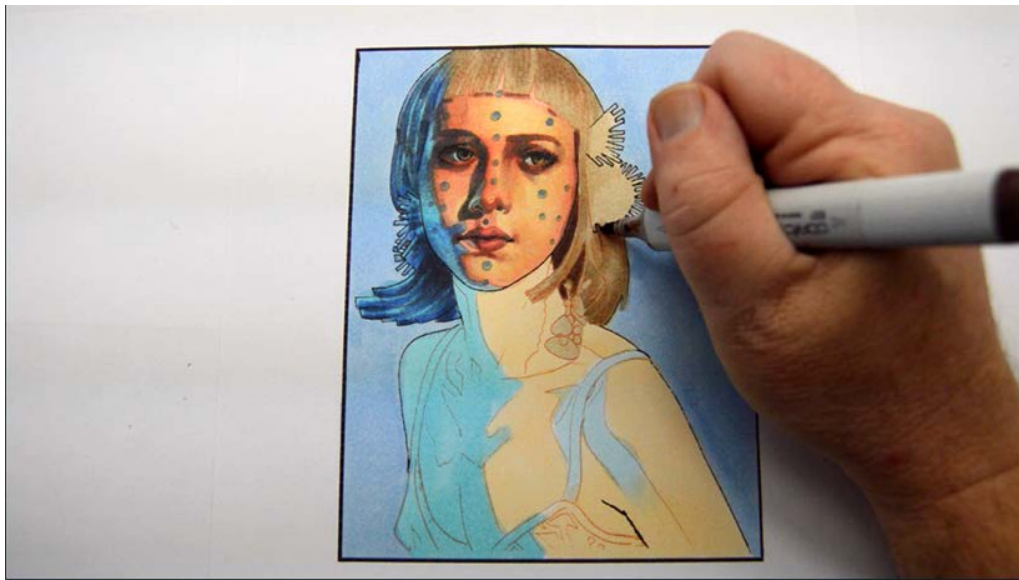
I add small "hair strokes"
with E13.



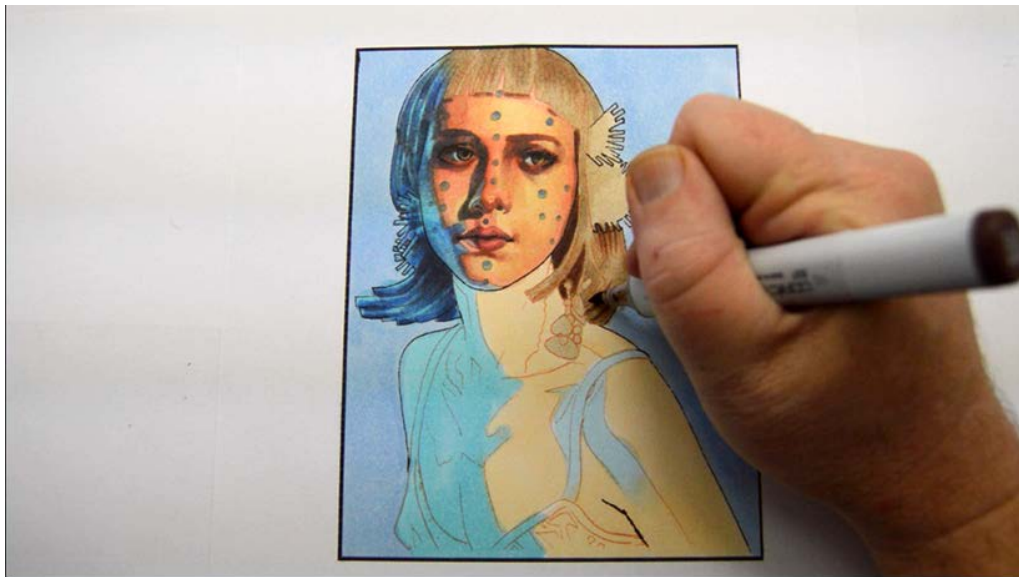
I then add dark accents
with E27 here...



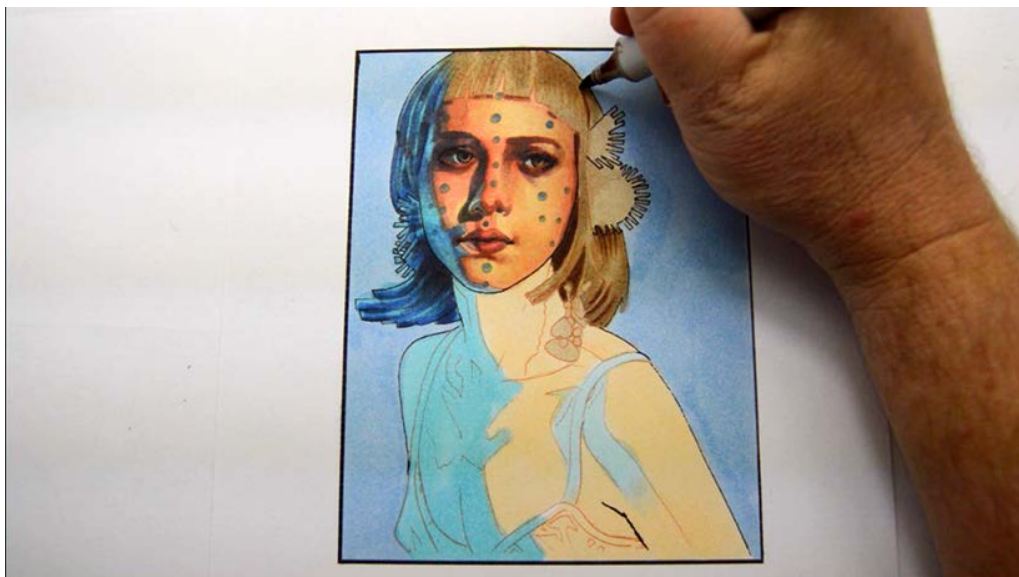
...here... (E27)



...and here... (E27)



...and then add some darker hair strokes as well. (E27)



E27



After the E27.



I blend it all together with E42 to finish off the hair (excluding highlights).

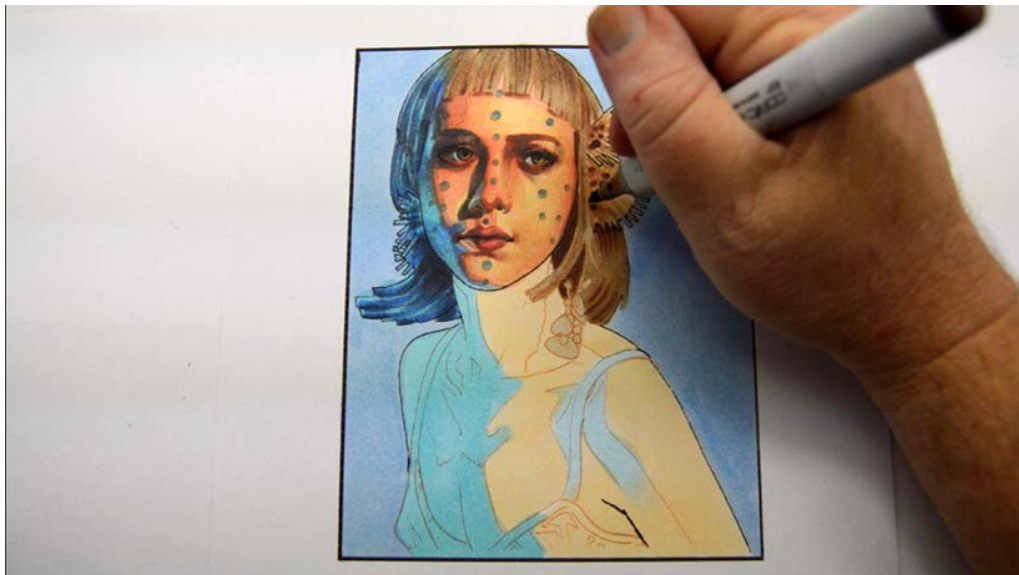


I turn my attention to the accouterments in her hair. I'll be treating these very abstractly with little to no detail.

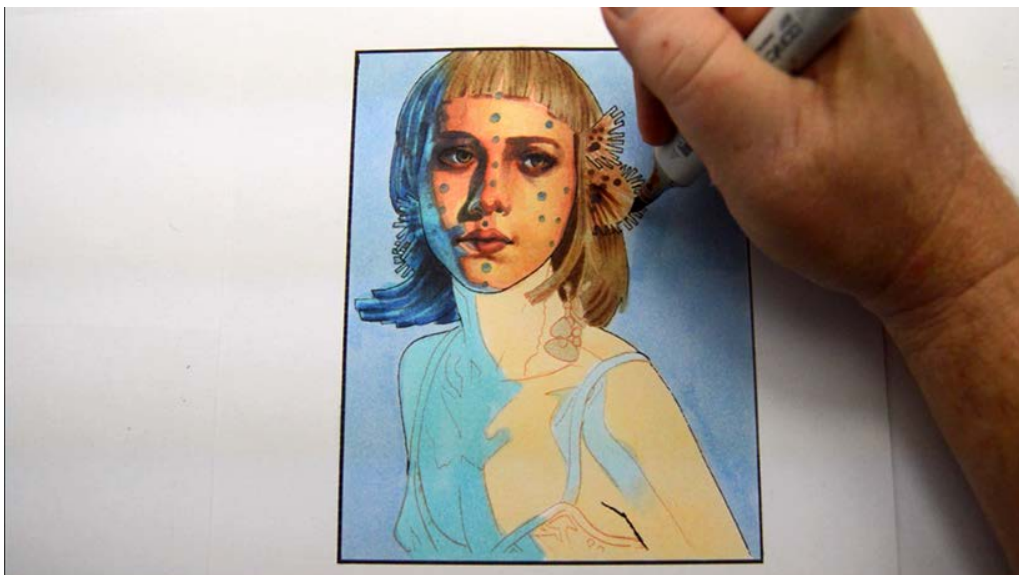
I add "lines" with E13...



...like so. (E13)



Then I add dots... (E27)



...and lines with E27.



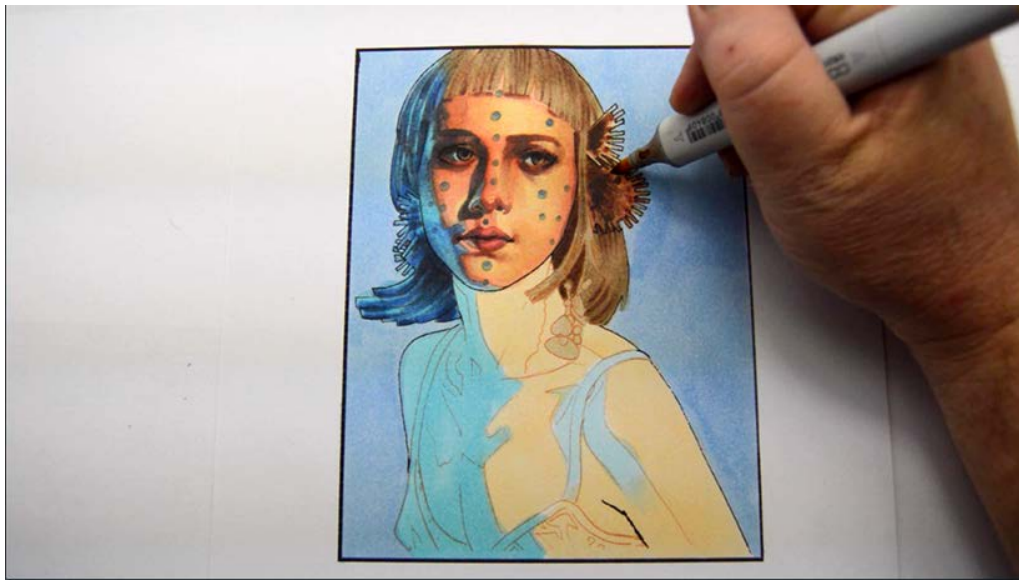
After the E27.



I add texture dots with E09.



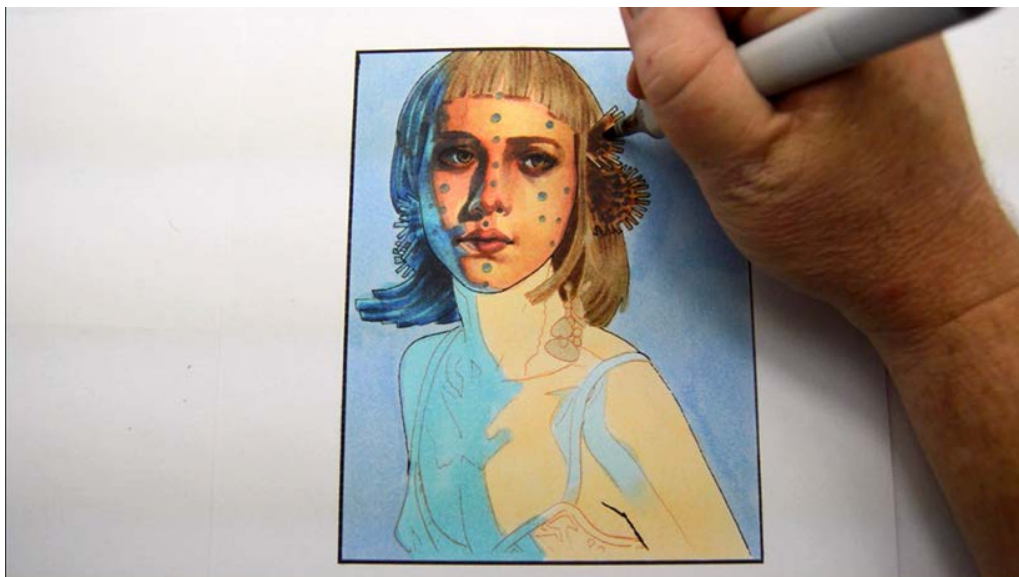
After the E09.



I then add a bit of color with YR13.



After the YR13.



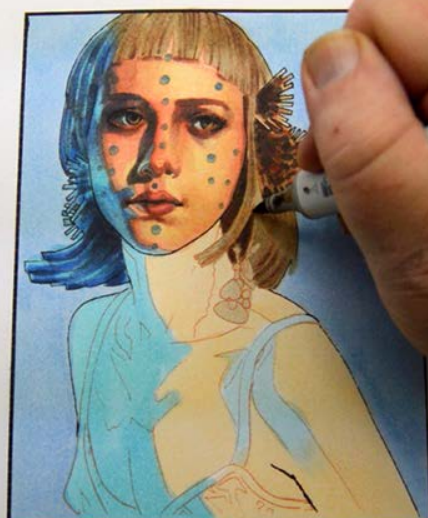
I add some darker accents with W6...



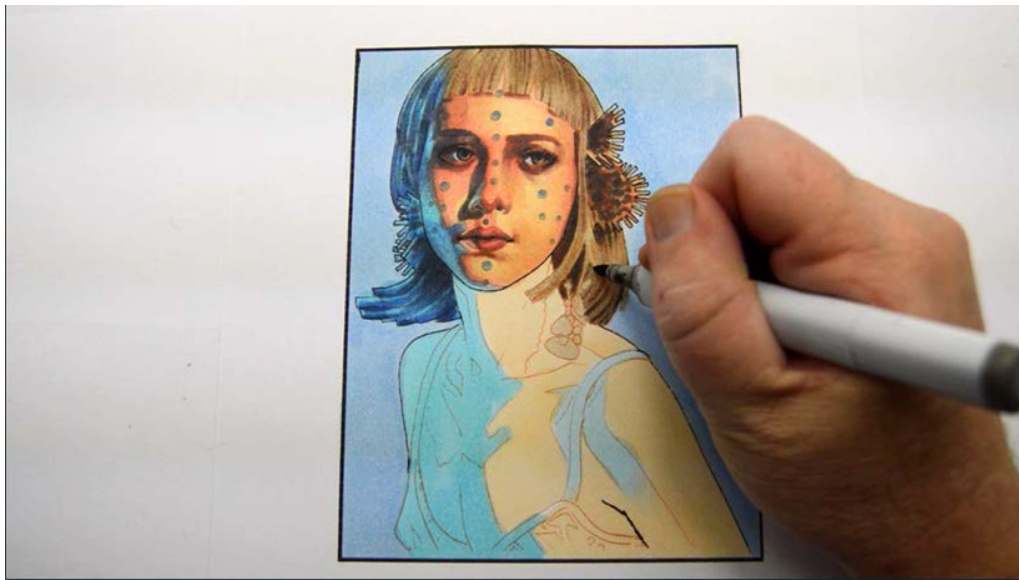
...to finish them off. It looks sloppy, I know, but it's gonna look awesome when we add the highlights!



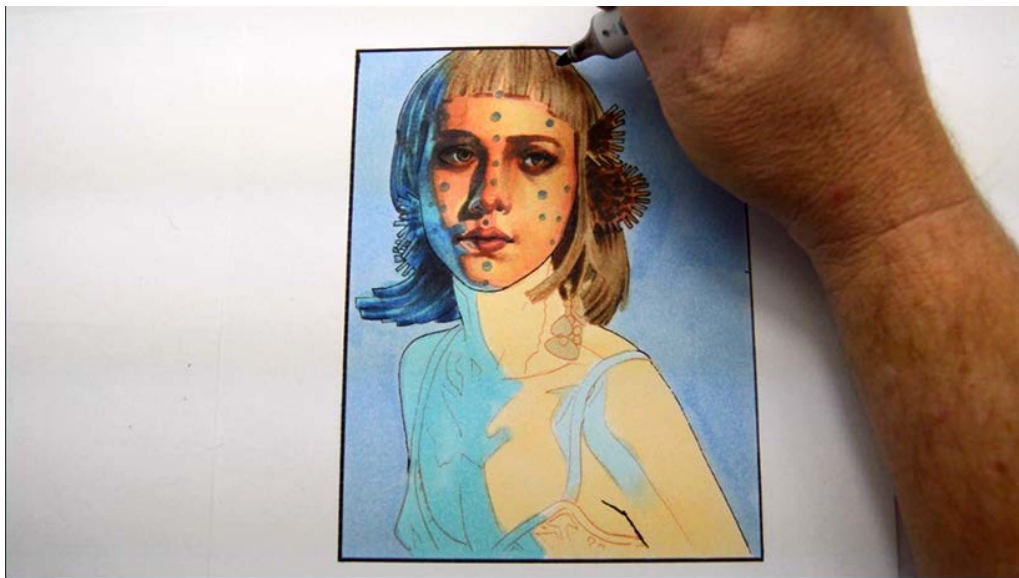
Continuing with the W6 I add dark accents to the hair here...



...here... (W6)



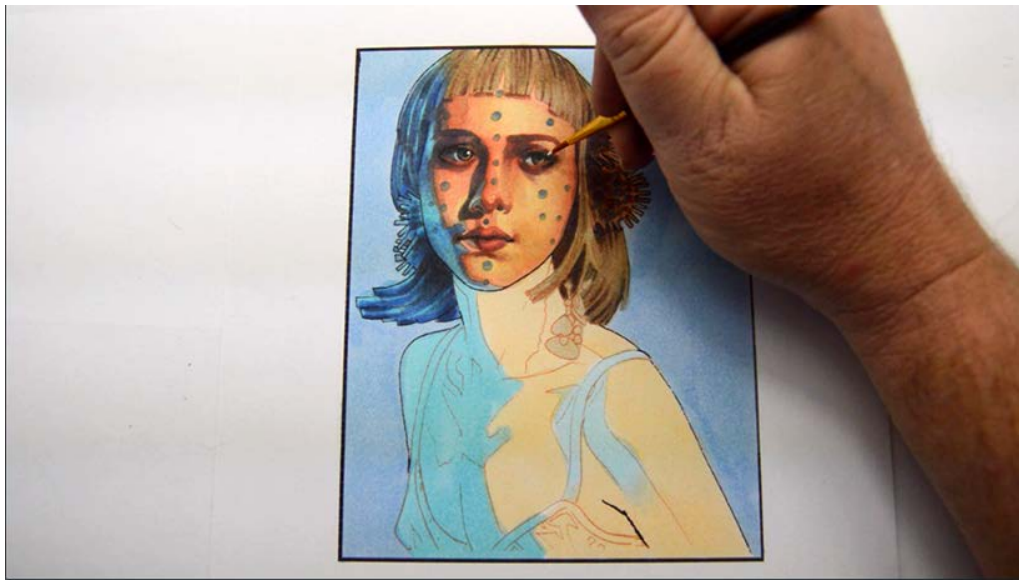
...and here. (W6)



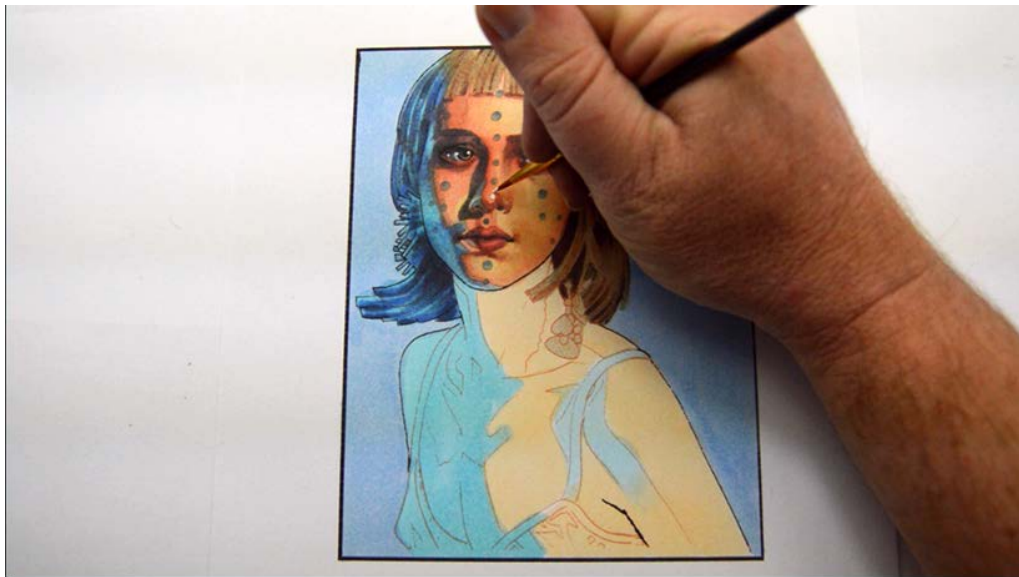
I add some very small W6 accents to the top portion of the hair as well.



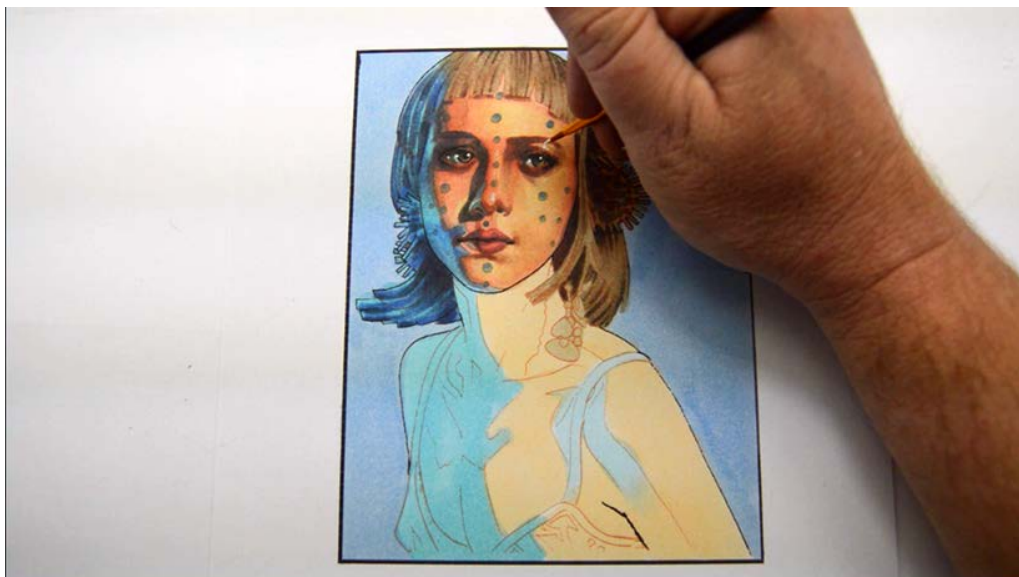
Ready for highlights.



I'll be adding my highlights with white gouache. I'll use my gouache both "wet" and "dry", and in some cases I'll blend it soft with my finger. Use your best judgment to determine which technique will work best in each area of your own drawing!



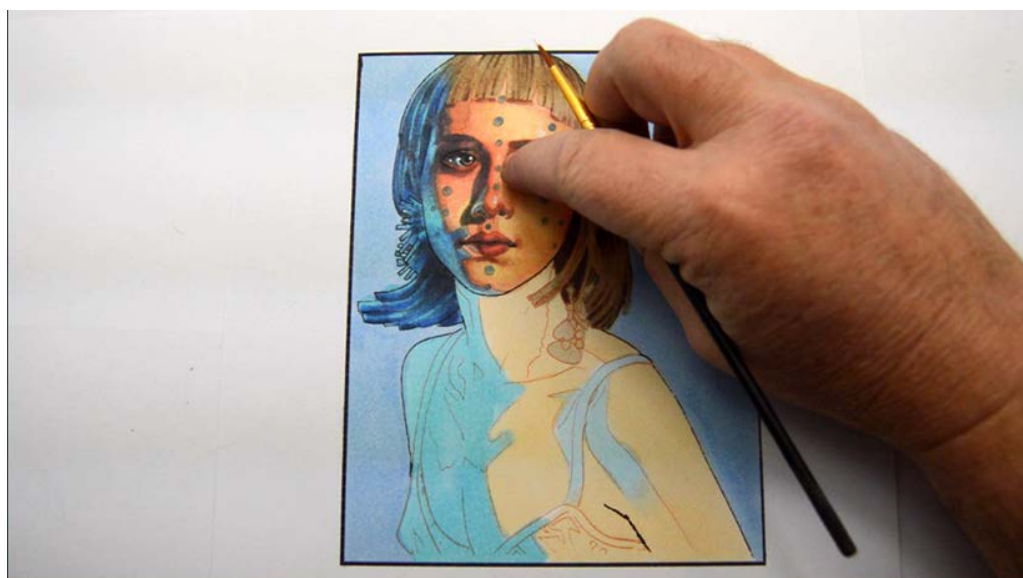
(White gouache)



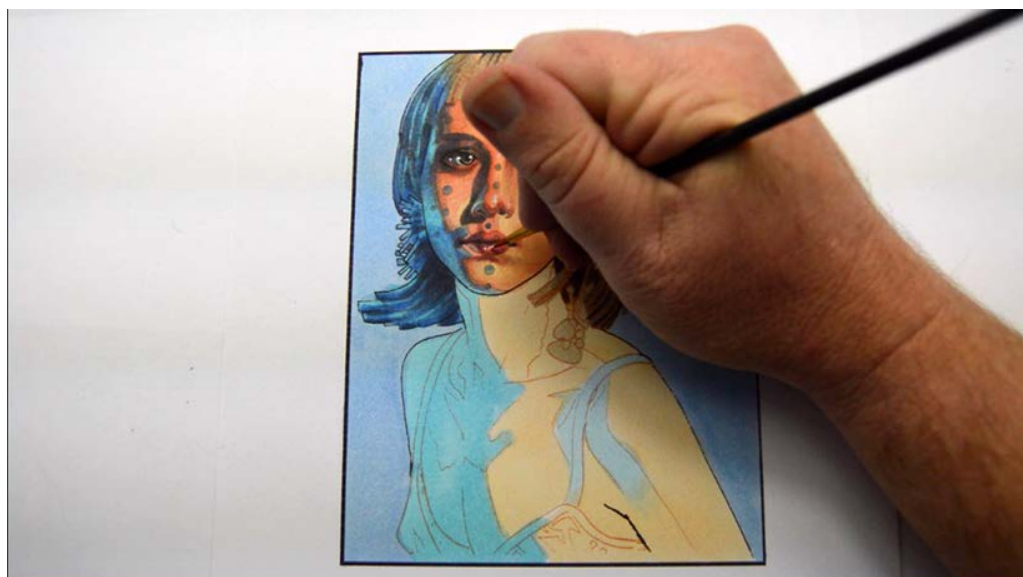
(White gouache)



(White gouache)



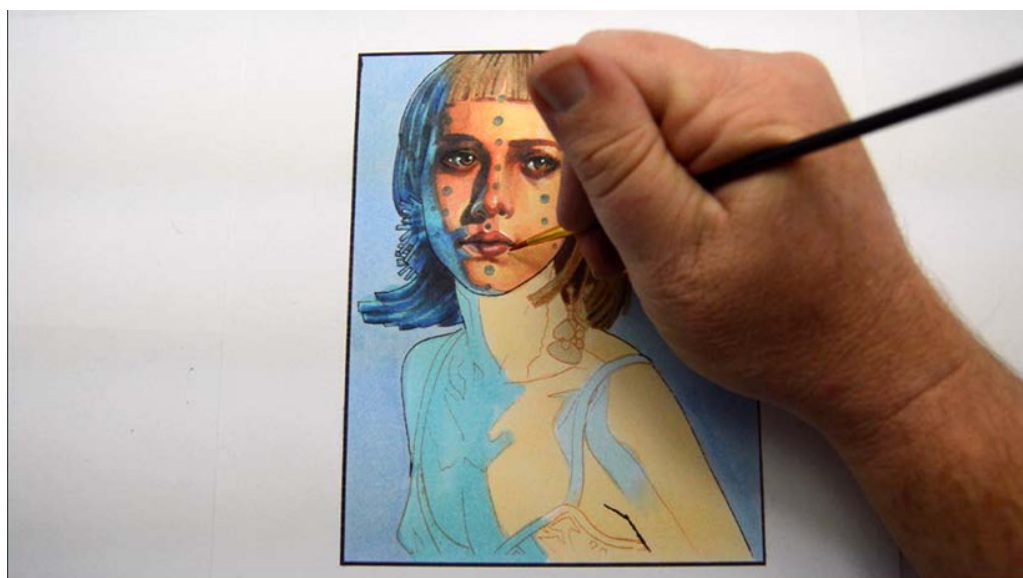
(White gouache)



(White gouache)



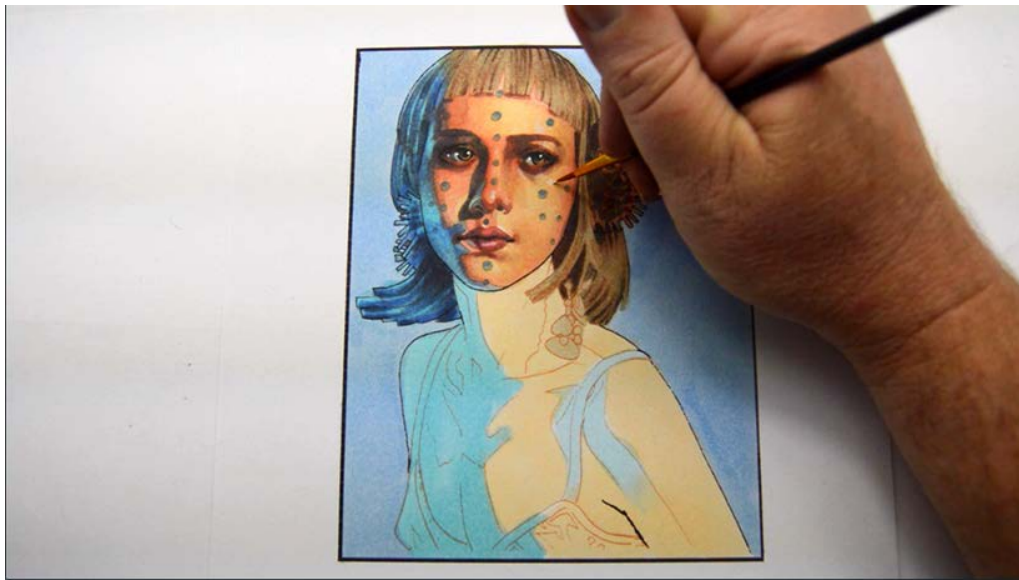
(White gouache)



(White gouache)



(White gouache)



(White gouache)



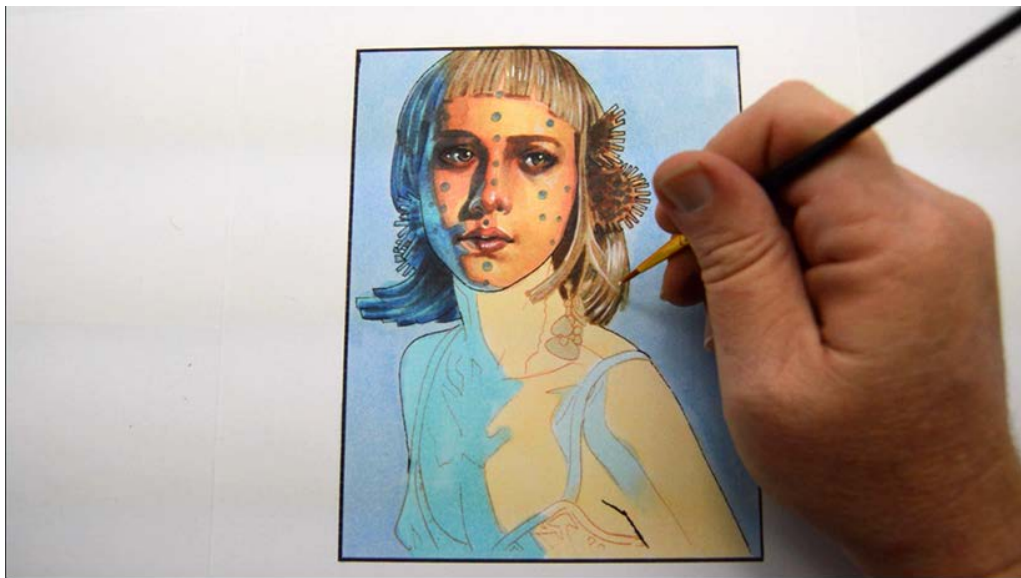
(White gouache)



(White gouache)



(White gouache)



(White gouache)



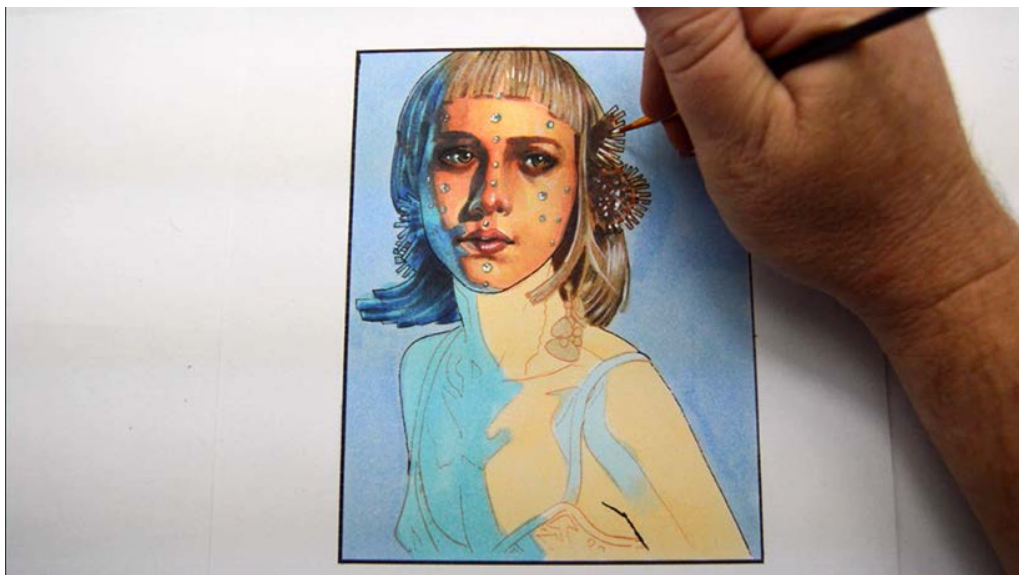
(White gouache)



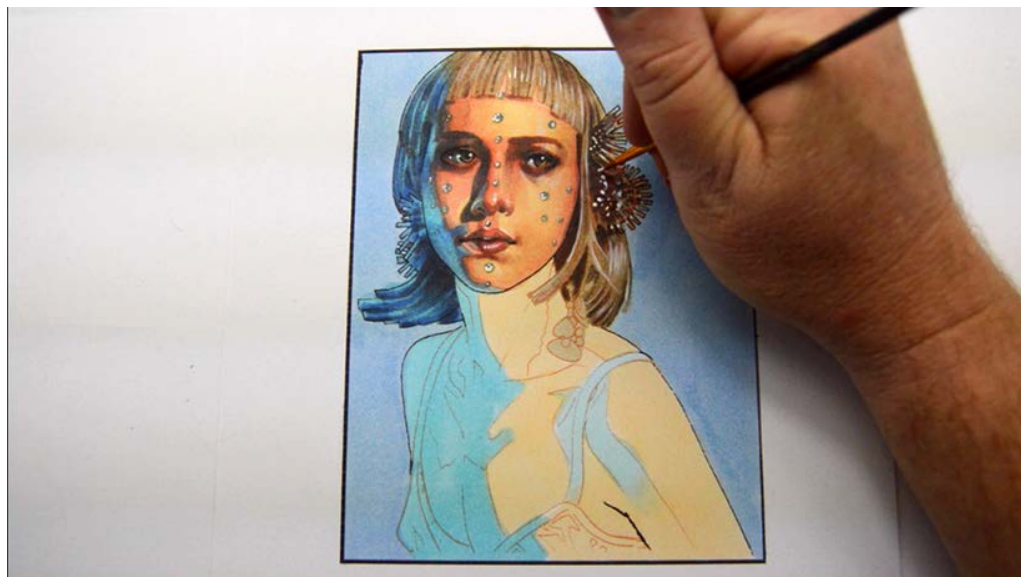
For the jewels I simply add white dots of various sizes.



For the hair accessories I add random white dots...



...random strokes...

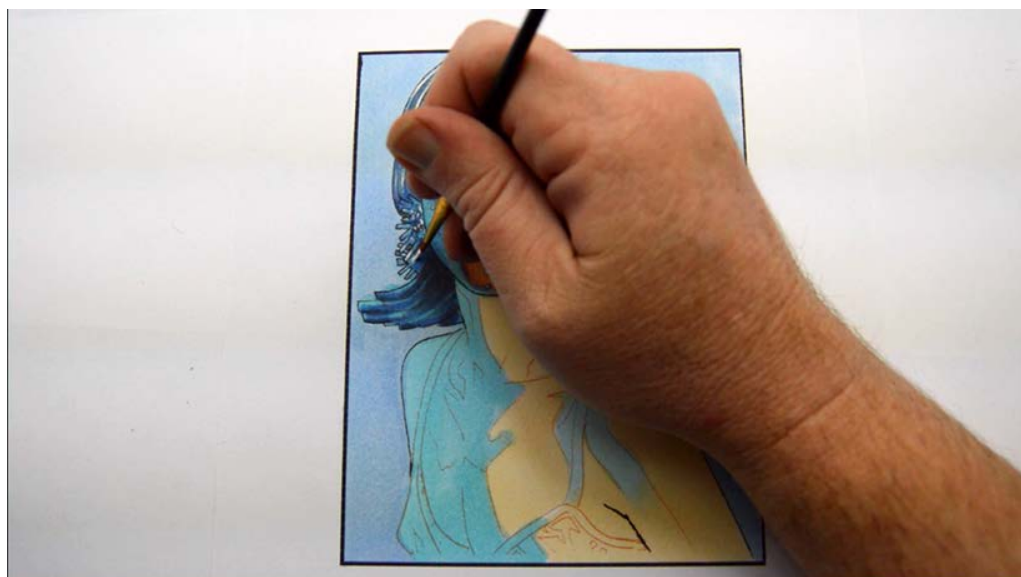


...and dots in a circular pattern.

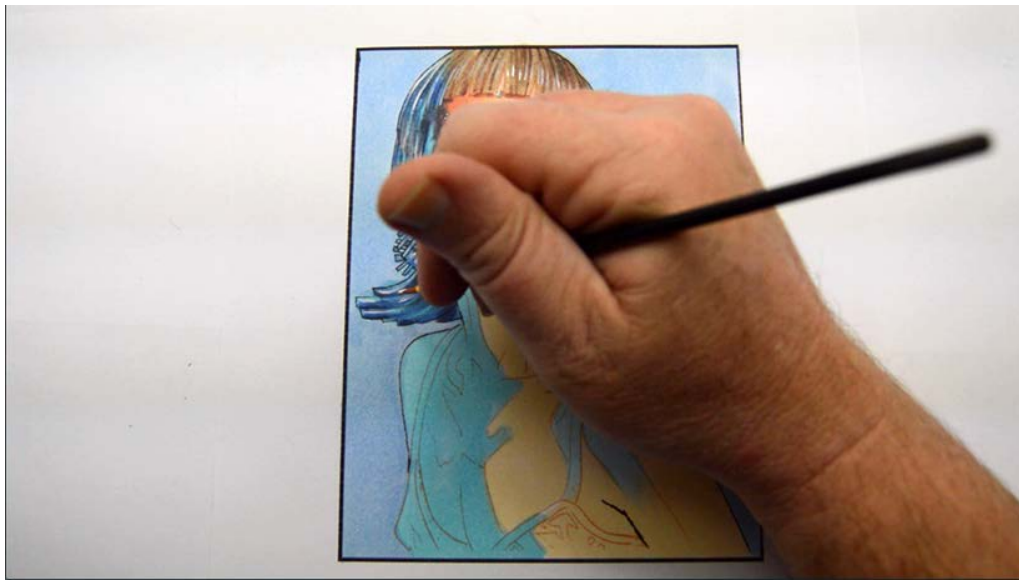
See? I told you it would work out ok! :)



I add highlights to the blue side of the hair...



(White gouache)



(White gouache)



...and then to the bangs...



...to finish off the face and hair.

Chapter Four:

Coloring The Blues





With the portrait established and our focal point for the image set we can now start the work on the supporting pictorial elements.



Starting at the top left hand corner I begin to lay in my background with B97. I carry this color down to a level just about even with the eye, using less pressure at the bottom and lifting my strokes to facilitate the eventual gradation.



Beginning at the "feathered" edge of the B97, I add B14, bringing it down to about the same level as the mouth.



I blend the edge of the B14 with B21.



Starting with the bottom left hand corner I repeat the process beginning with B97.



I then blend the B97 with B34.



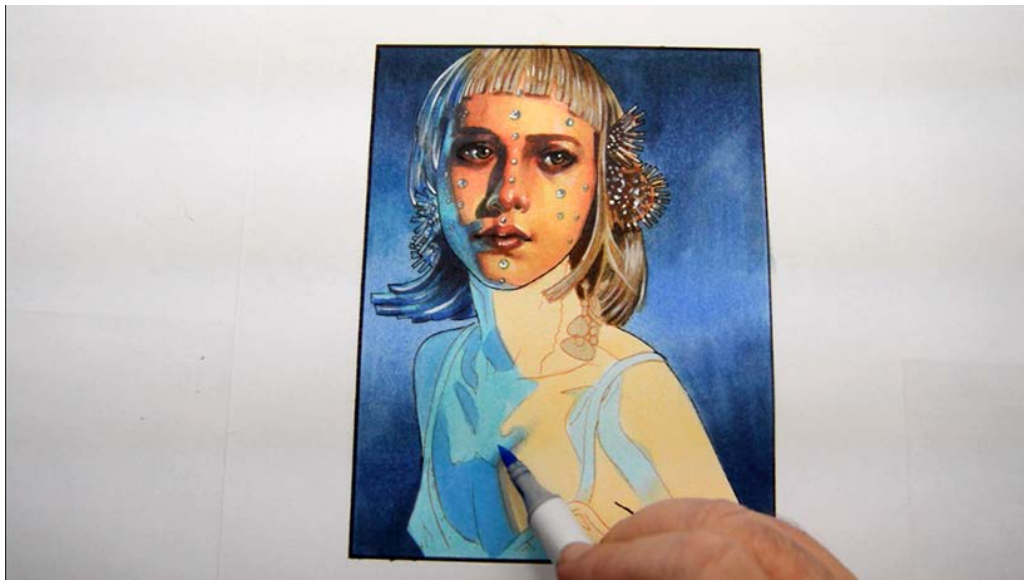
I finish it off with B21.



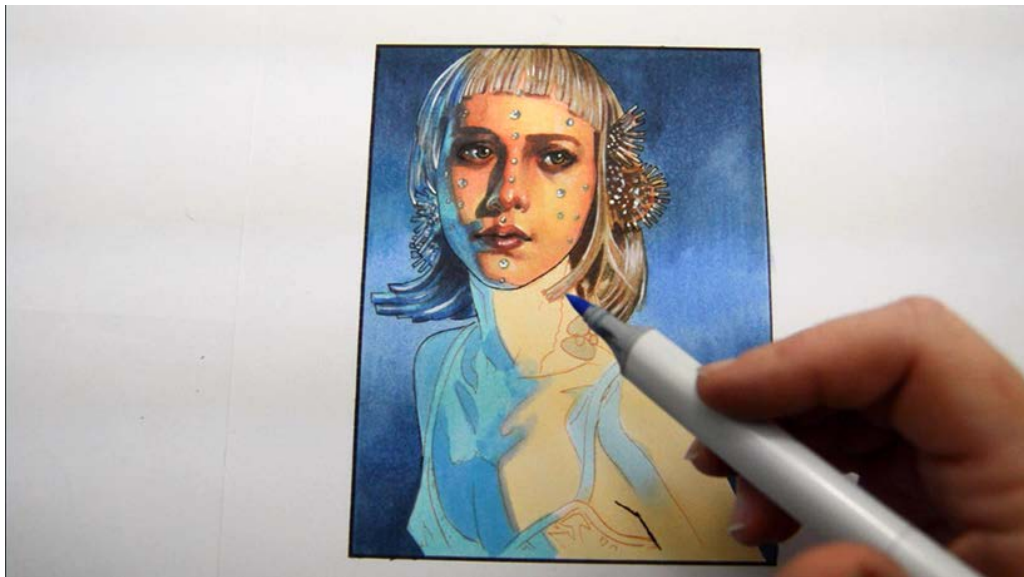
I repeat the process on the right side of the image to finish off the background.



Turning my attention to the blue areas in her torso, I add some darker shapes with B21. For the most part I've indicated these shapes in the line drawing.



For the areas where the blue and yellowish skin areas meet I use the side of the marker nib, and with very light pressure, "feather" the edge. (B21)



The color is the same we've been using (B21), but it looks lighter because the paper has absorbed less ink due to the application.



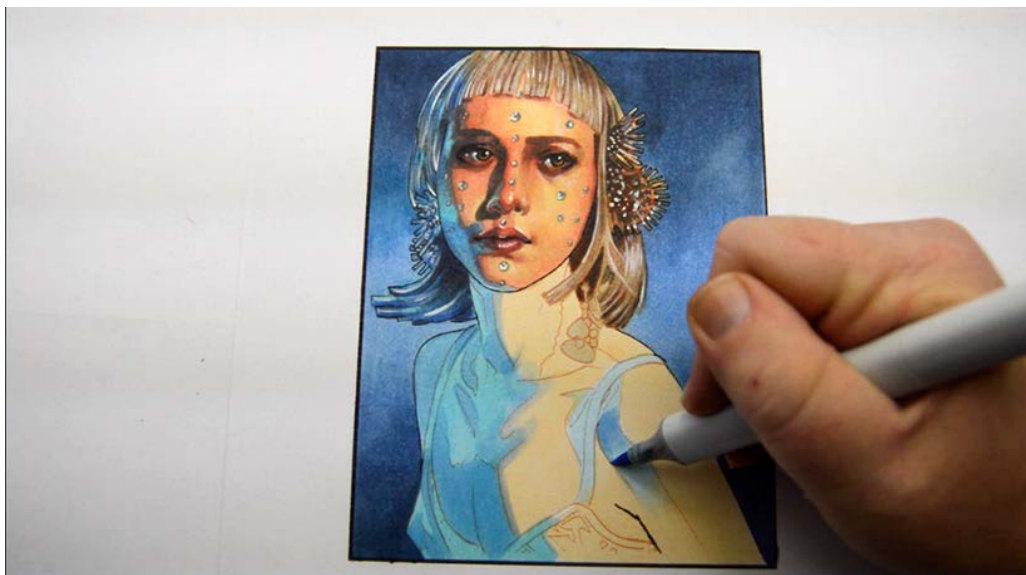
More B21 here...



...here... (B21)



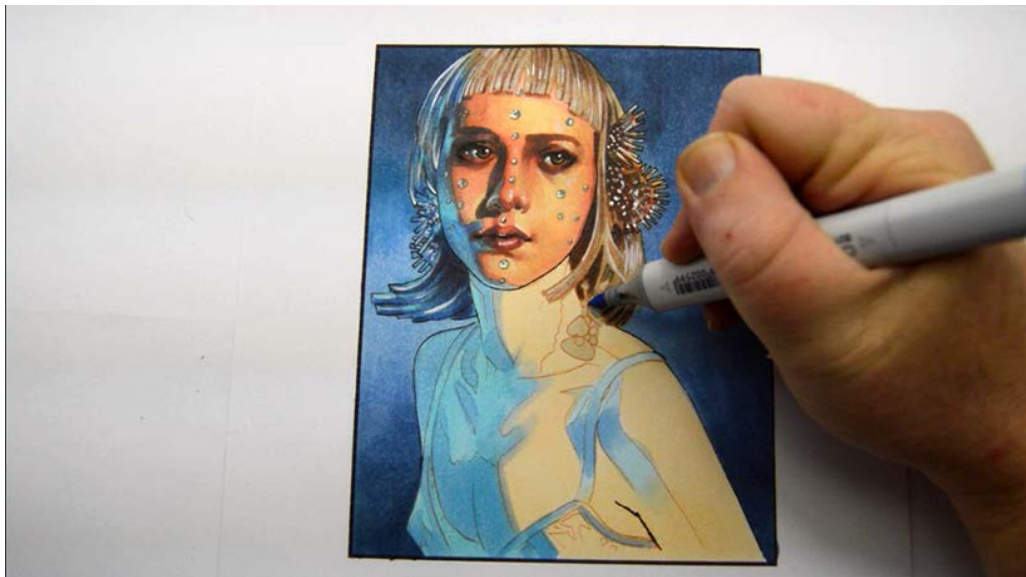
B21



...and here... (B21)



...just a little bit here... (B21)



...and here. (B21)



Yep, that'll do.



I add darker more saturated shadow shapes with B23.

Study this picture carefully and you'll have no trouble.



I add darker accents with C4 here...



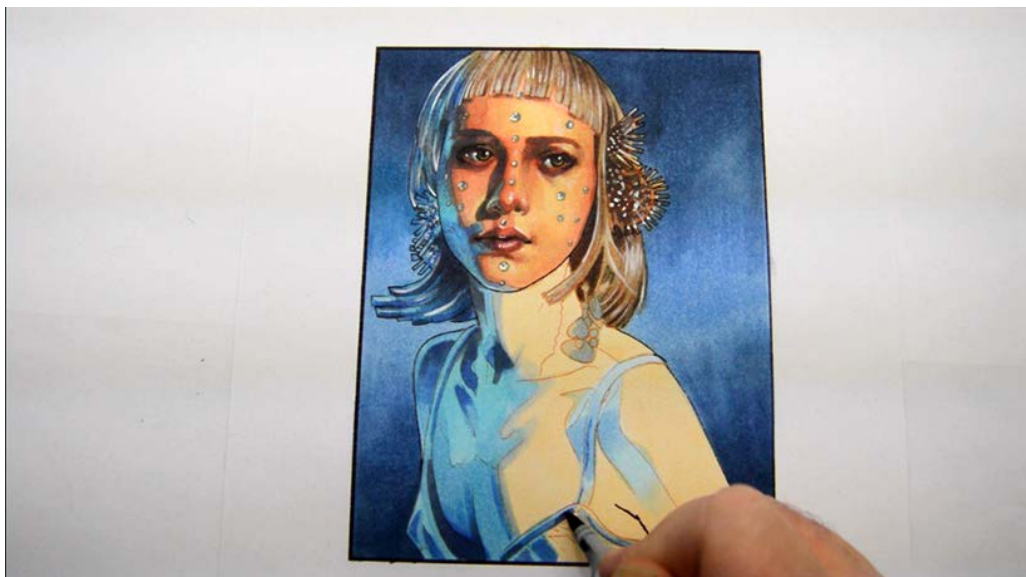
...here... (C4)



...here... (C4)



...on the neck... (C4)



...and on the clothing. (C4)



That helps a lot!



I add more saturated B97 here...



...and here. (B97)



It's subtle and probably unnecessary, but I like it.



I desaturate the vast majority of the blue area with a layer of C2...



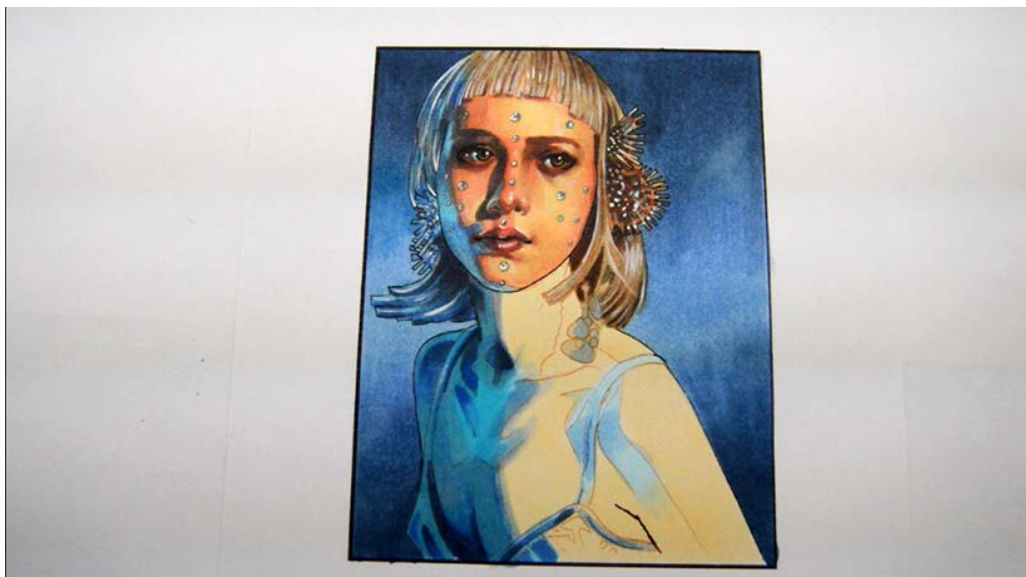
...leaving just the small area in the center of her upper chest untouched. (C2)



Using the same technique as before I work the line of demarcation with C2.



I add an overall glaze layer of B01...



...to adjust the saturation just a bit.



I add B01 to the near shoulder...



...and to the clothing... (B01)



...to finish off the blues.

Chapter Five:

Finishing The Image





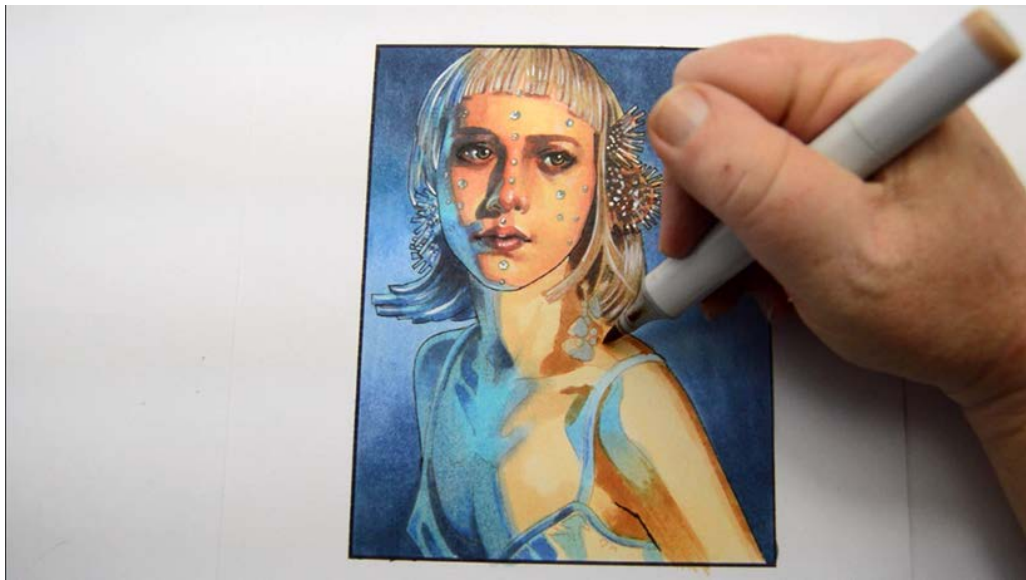
We're in the home stretch now.
Time to complete the work.



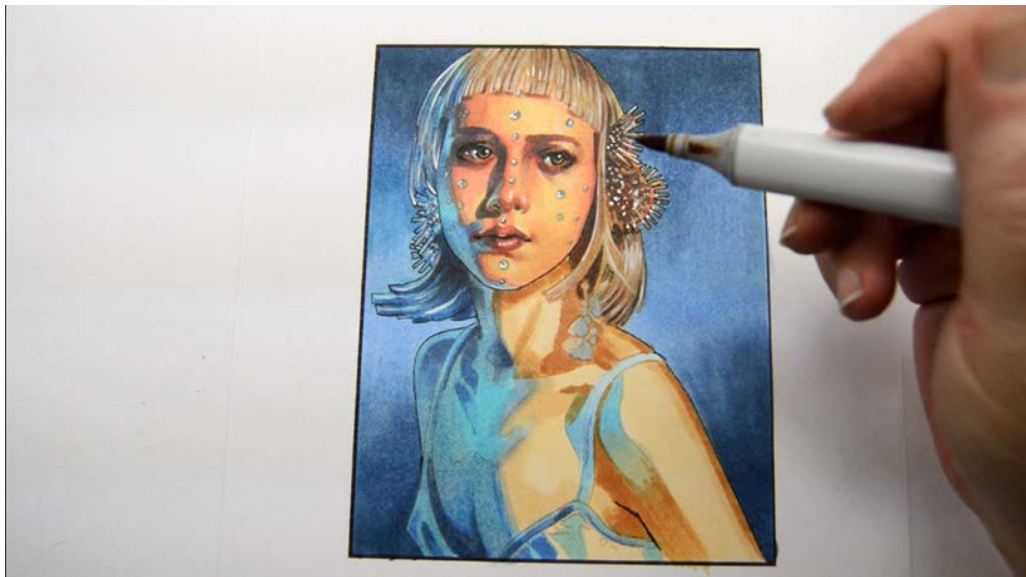
I use E30 to "model" the forms
on the neck, chest, and
shoulder.



I overlap the E30 into the blue
to help soften the transition.



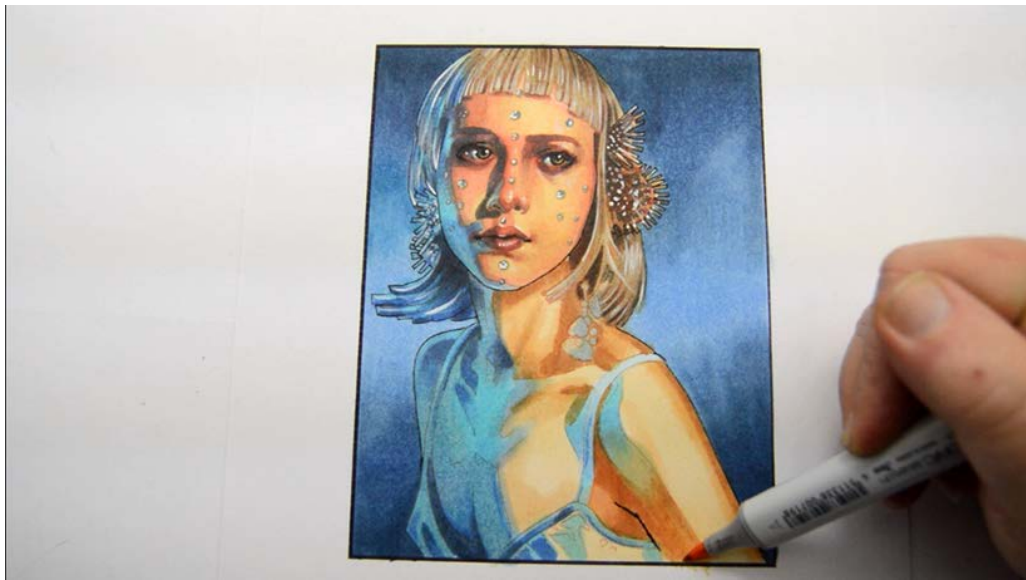
I add E34 to the neck, arm, and shoulder...



...and under the chin and above the collar bone. (E34)



I soften the edges of the E34 with E00. I'm not trying to blend them out just yet.



I add R11 here...



...here... (R11)



...here... (R11)



...and on the neck and upper shoulder. (R11)



I darken the shadow on the shoulder and under the arm with E43, then add accents on the neck...



...and collar bone. (E43)



Progress to this point.



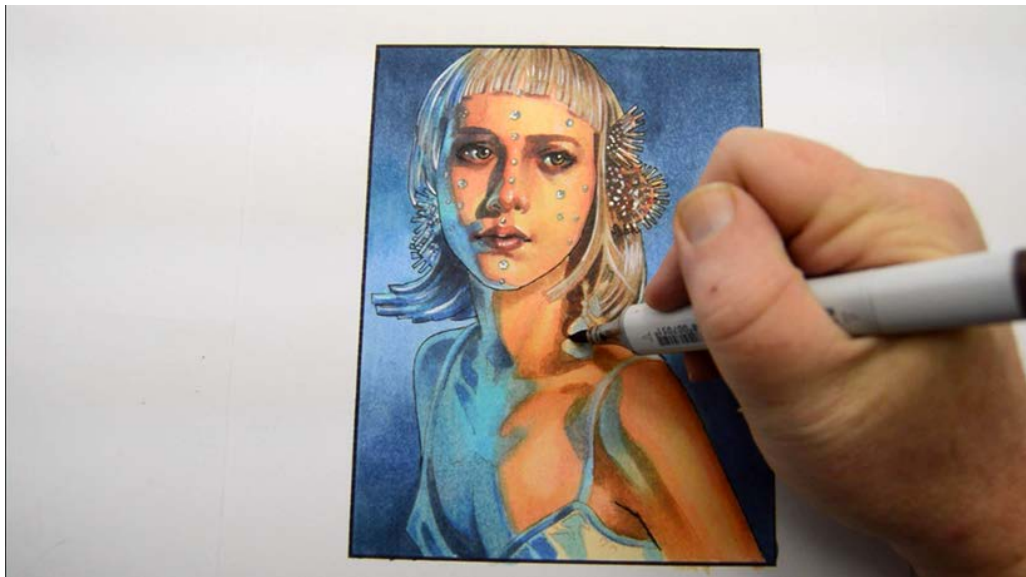
I add touches of more saturated color with R12. You can see this color clearly under the collar bone, under the arm, and on the outside edge of the arm and shoulder.



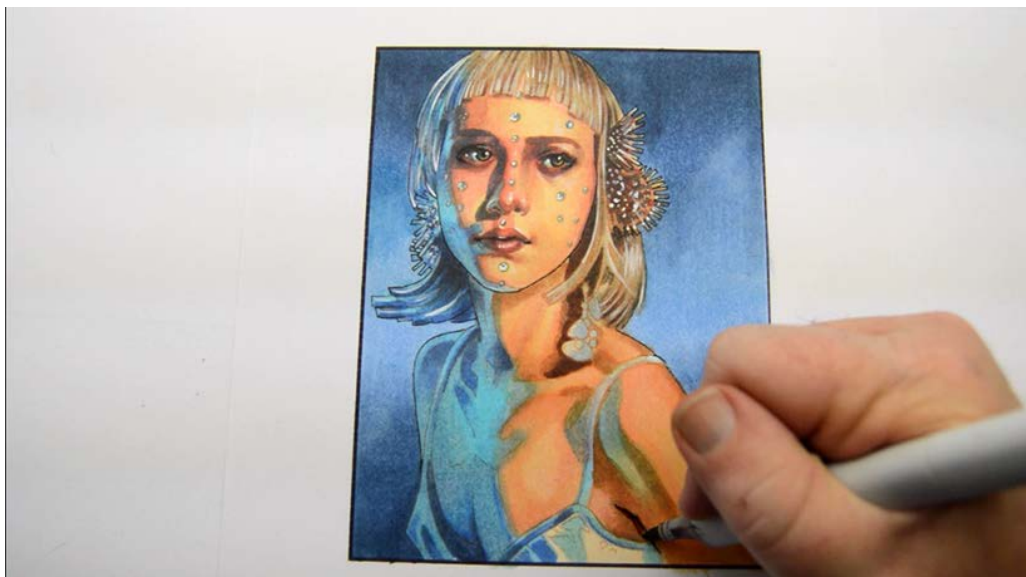
I soften the R12 with R11.



I blend all the colors together with a heavy layer of E51.



I touch in shadow accents with E27...



E27



After the E27.



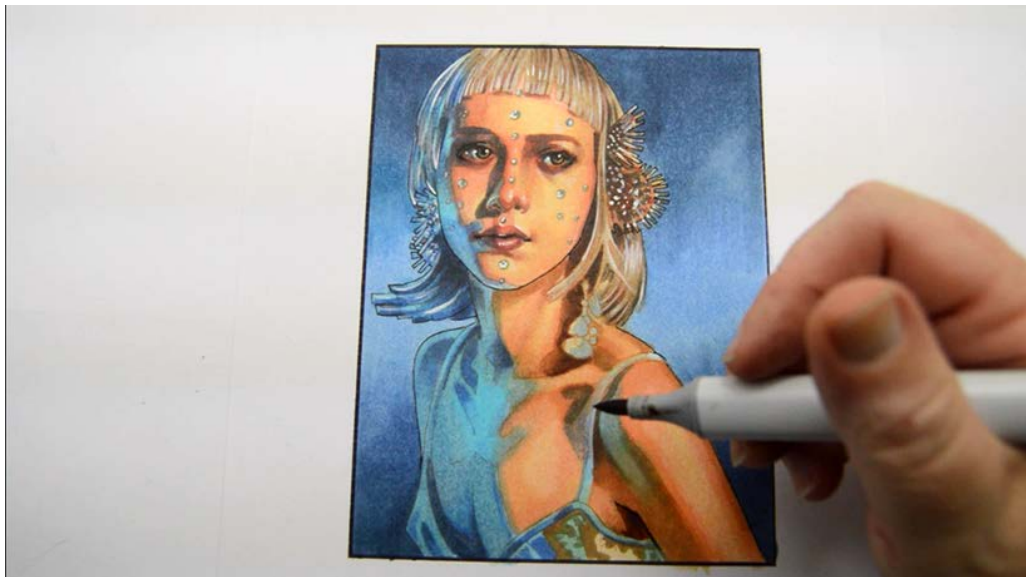
I then desaturate the underside of the arm with W3.



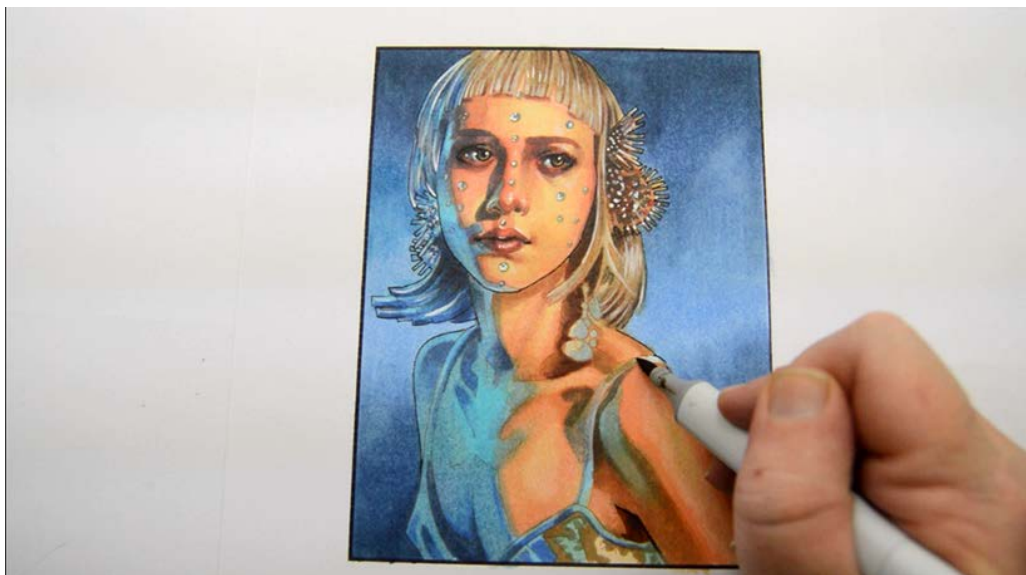
I use R11 to soften the areas of W3.



Getting close!



I add E43 to the clothing...



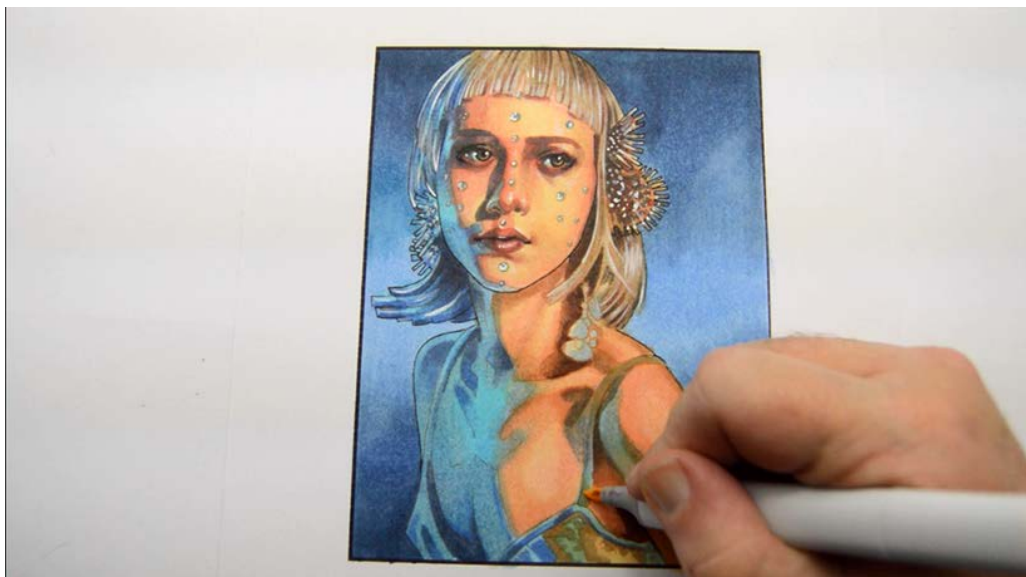
E43



E43



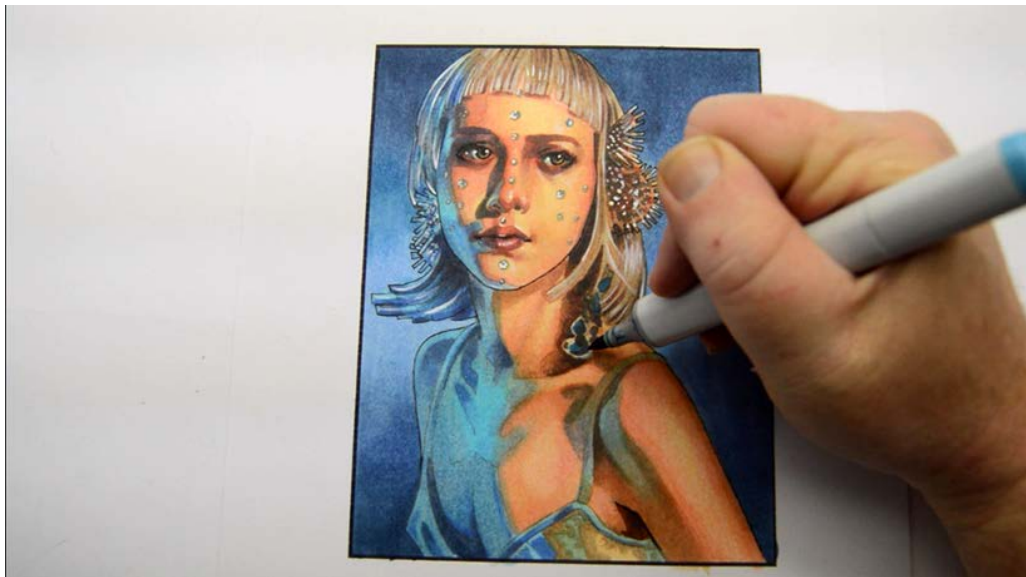
After the E43.



I add a layer of E51 to the clothing to blend it out.



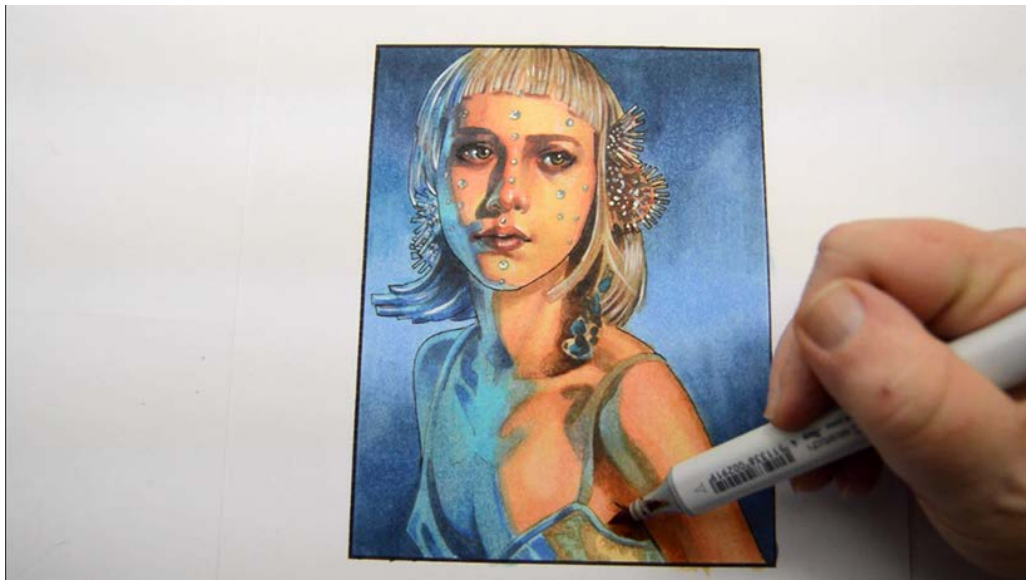
I add dark abstract shapes to the earring with W6.



I then add touches of B14 to the earring.



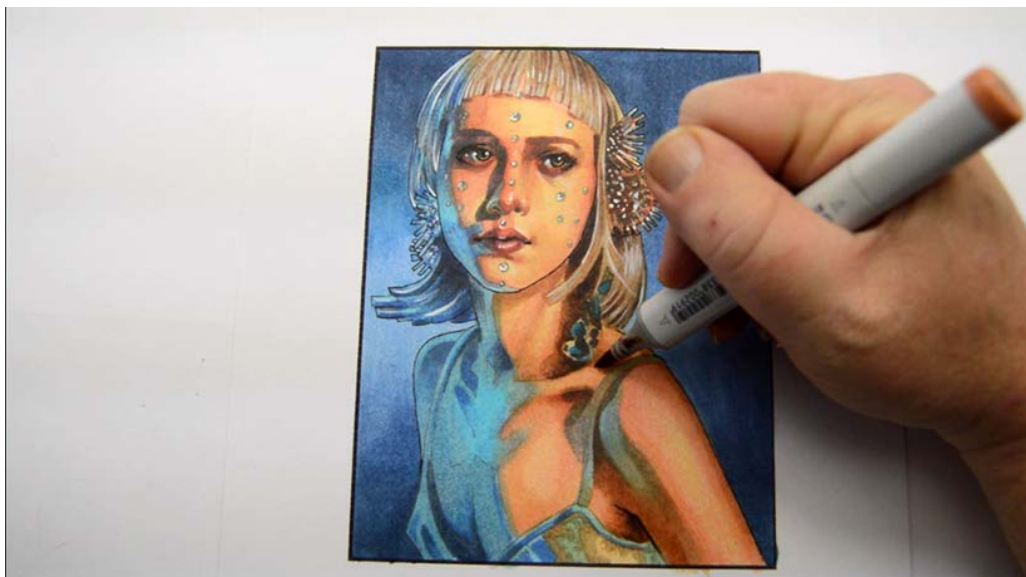
That looks nice!



I make some final adjustments with E13 here...



...here... (E13)



...and here... (E13)



...to finish off the coloring portion of the work.



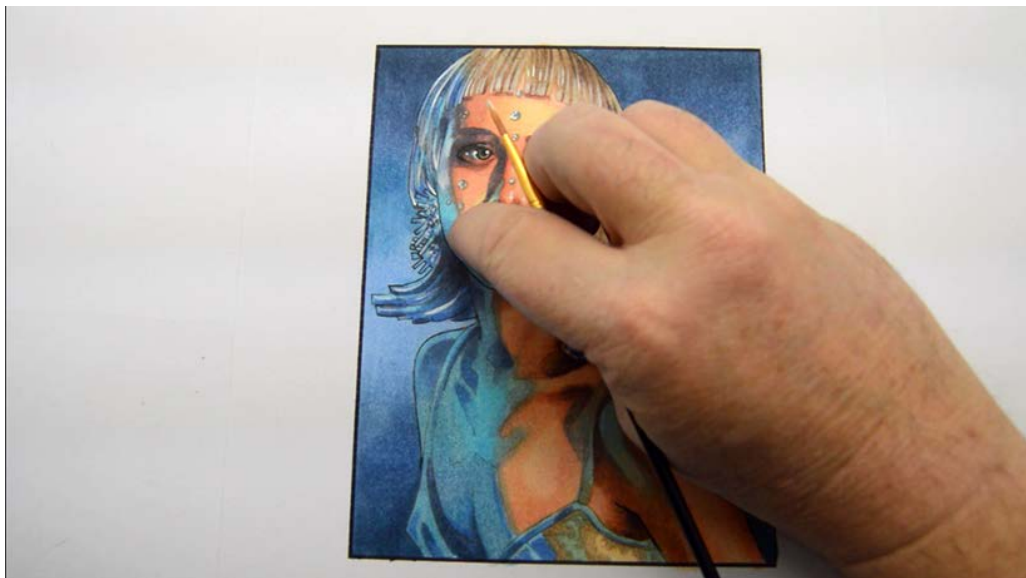
I add white gouache to the blue side of the face...



...softening it with my finger when necessary.



White gouache



White gouache



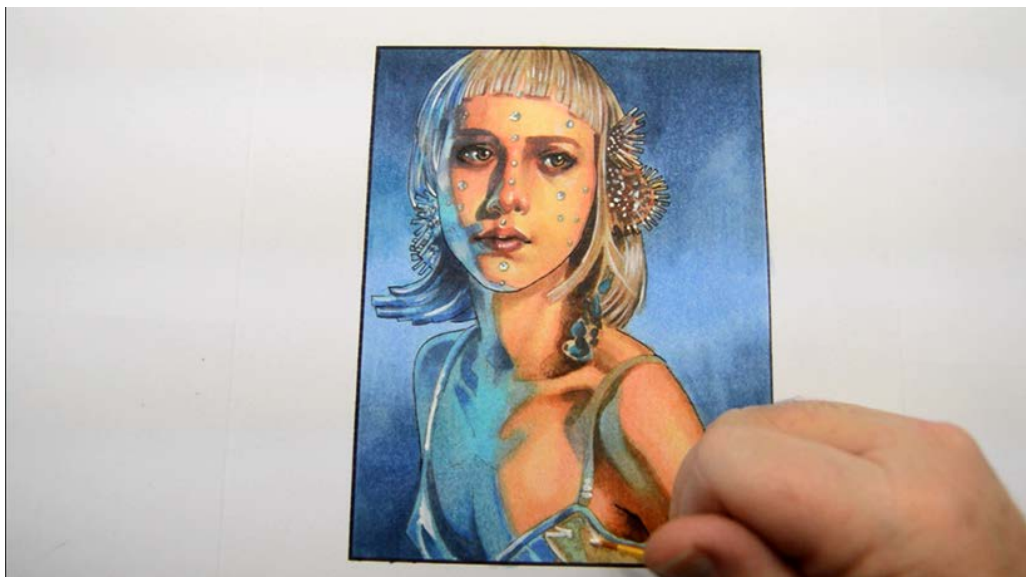
White gouache



White gouache



White gouache



White gouache



White gouache



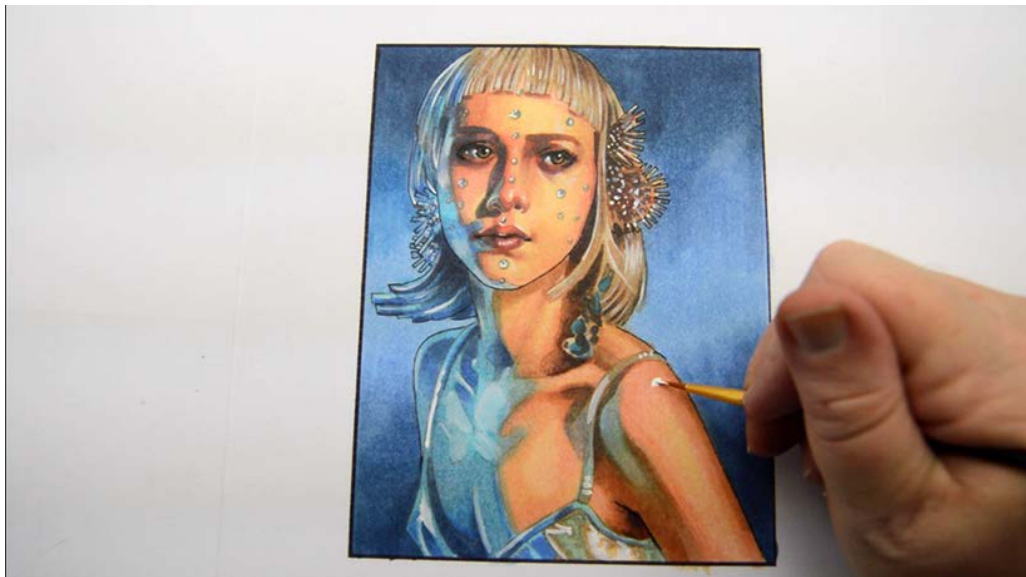
White gouache



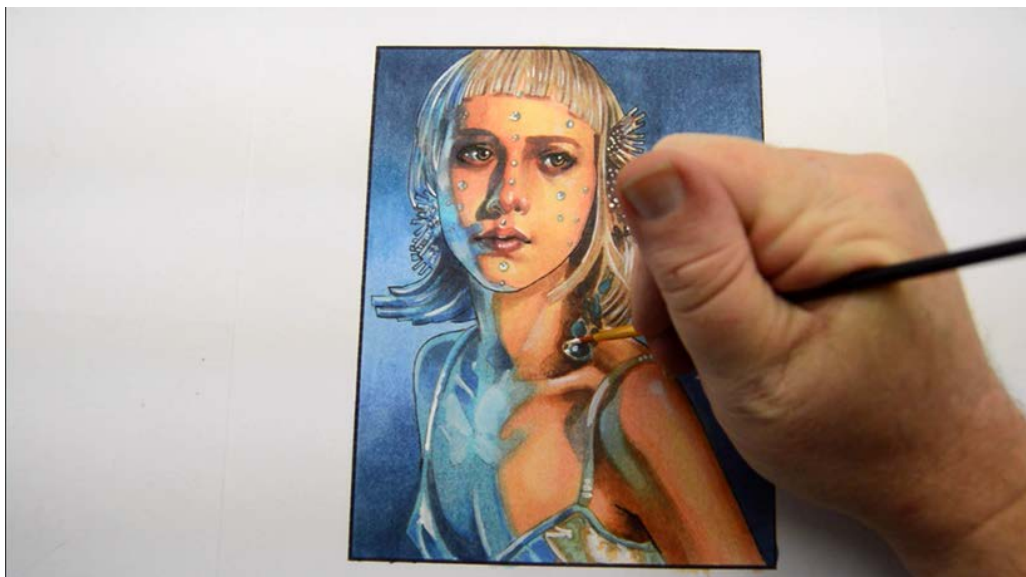
White gouache



White gouache



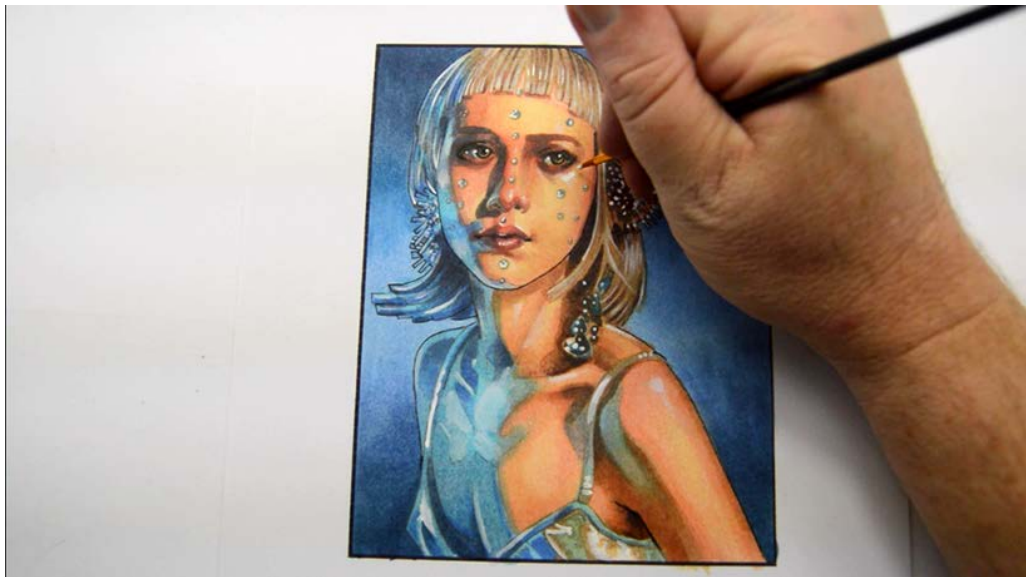
White gouache



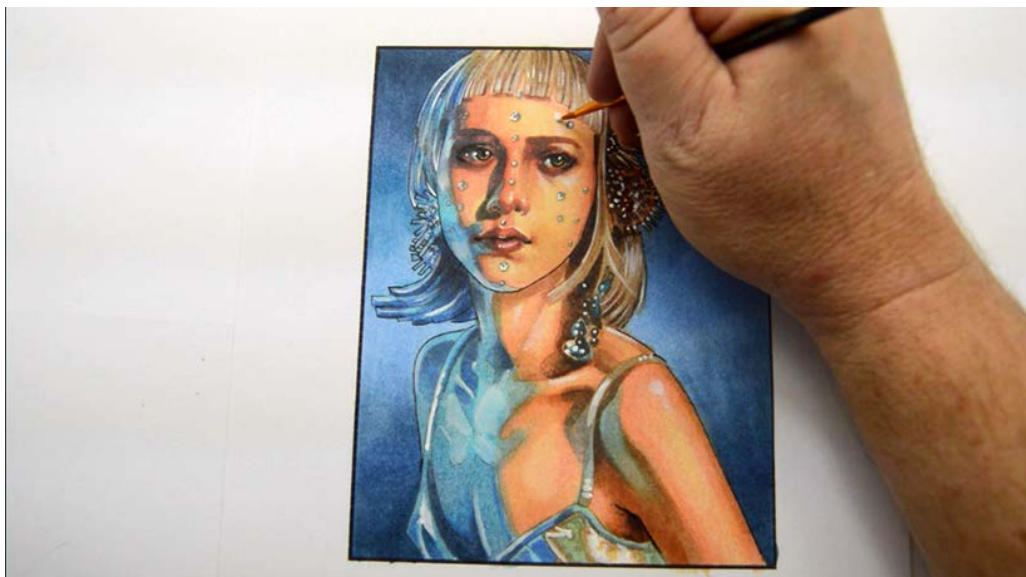
White gouache



White gouache



White gouache



White gouache



With highlighting complete the image could be done, but...



...I decide to strengthen my black contour line just a bit.



Multi liner



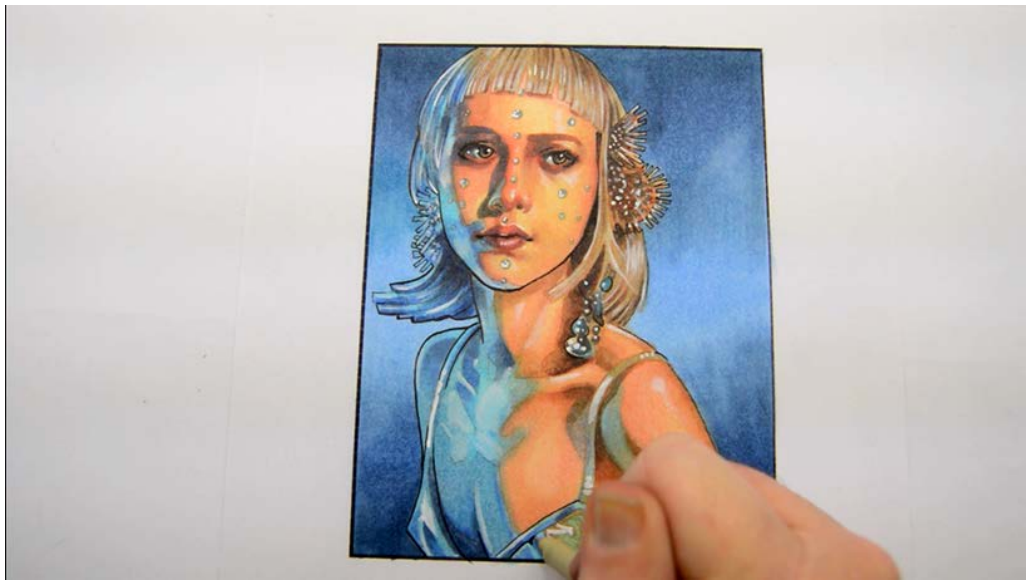
Multi liner



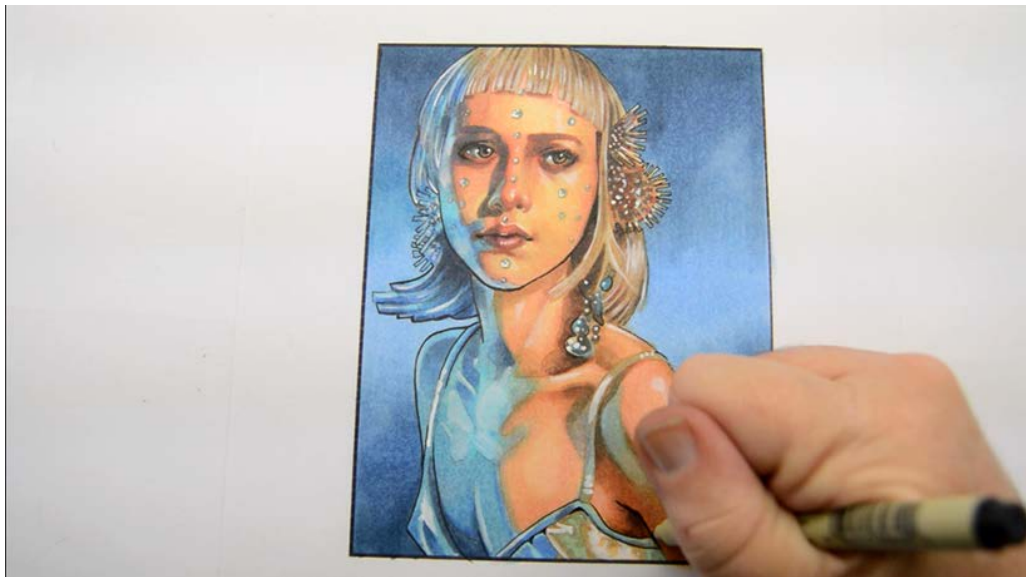
Multi liner



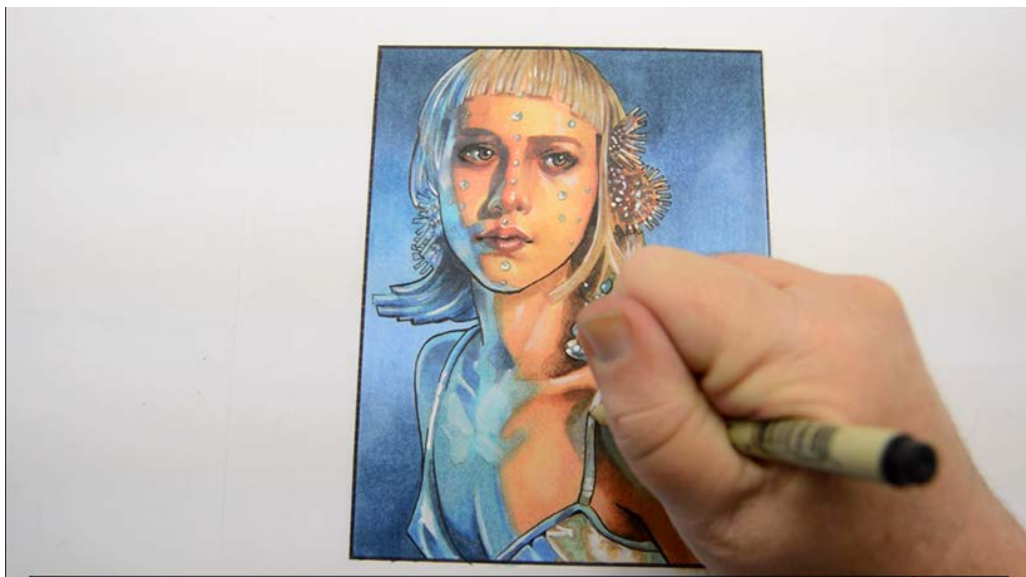
Multi liner



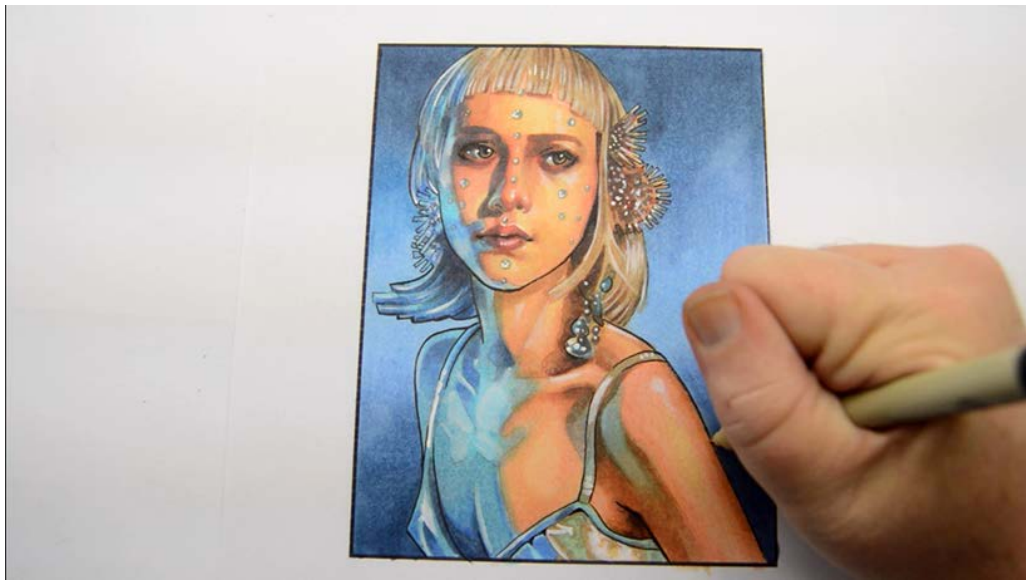
Multi liner



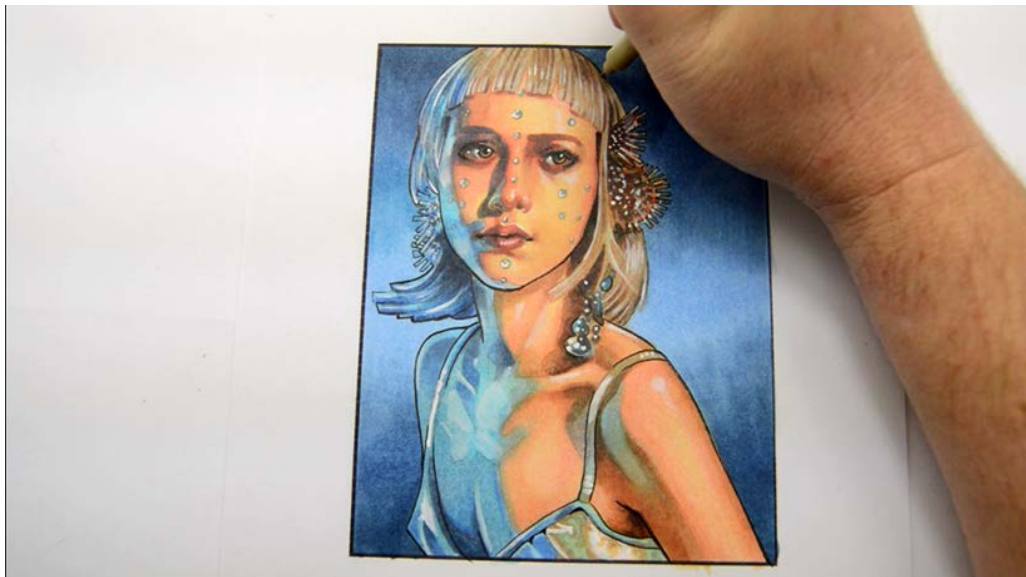
Multi liner



Multi liner



Multi liner



Multi liner



...and done!

The Finished Image



This has been a fun page and it just goes to show that any color can be believable in skin under the right conditions. So the next time you are wondering what colors you should use for skin, remember... you can color anything any color and have it be believable.

Until next time...

Christopher Kerry