



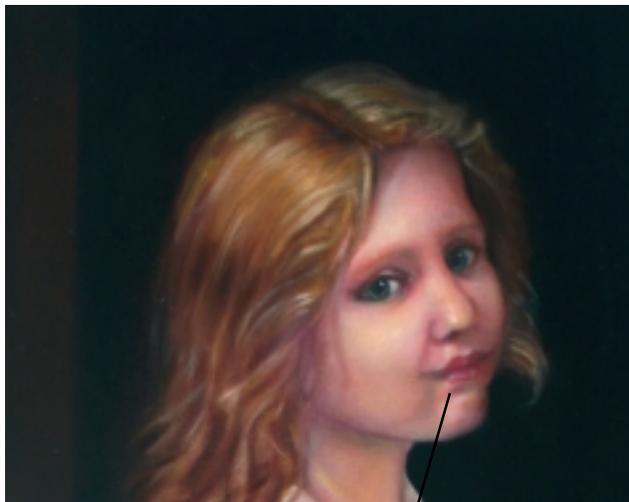
## Painting Shadows: Cast Shadows and Form Shadows

### The difference between the two kinds of shadows

There are two different types of shadows — cast shadows and form shadows. Identifying these and approaching them differently, rather than just painting a generic ‘shadow’, will enhance any painting. So what is the difference between a cast shadow and a form shadow?

#### What is a Cast Shadow?

A cast shadow is what we generally think of as a shadow. It’s a shadow created by something blocking the light source. For example, the shadow of a vase, created by the an artificial light source, that falls on the ground. Or the shadow of a lip falling on a chin.



cast shadow



cast shadow

A cast shadow is the darker type of shadow, because it’s created by the light source being blocked. It has quite a sharp or more definite edge to it. But it’s important to remember that a cast shadow isn’t a solid thing that’s the same throughout: the further a cast shadow is from the object that’s creating it, the lighter it gets and the softer or less defined its edge becomes.

### What is a Form Shadow?

A form shadow is the shadow on a subject on the side that is opposite of the light source.

A form shadow has a softer or less defined edge to it than a cast shadow. It is lighter than a cast shadow because it's created by light not reaching around the object rather than a shadow being thrown by the object where it directly blocks the light source. Form shadows are subtle shadows, essential for making a subject appear three dimensional rather than flat. The changes in forms shadows requires very careful observation — squinting at the subject often help you see them more clearly. If most of the subject is in direct light, there will be very little form shadow in it.

Think, for example, of a bowl on a table, where the light source is at about two o'clock. The top edge of the bowl is in the direct light and there will be a cast shadow made by the vase on the table. The parts of the vase not in direct light are in form shadow.

### Shadow Painting Tips:

- Squinting at a subject helps make the areas of light and dark clearer.
- Remember, shadows are not simply 'black'. Use darker values of the colors in the objects, or dark complements of the object



form shadow that helps create the volume or dimension of the object

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