

## PT 7 COLOURED PENCIL TOPICS      DRY POINT Techniques section 1 basics

As I remarked earlier, Dry Point pencil work is that done with non soluble pencils, those often referred to as WAX PENCILS - though more often than not they are actually OIL BASED PENCILS. Referring to them as 'Dry Point' saves having to explain every time !

It is possible to use solvents with these pencils to dissolve the pigment binder, but we will come to that later.

### LAYERS

The trick in getting a satisfactory finish with coloured pencils is to use a very light touch and build up a number of layers of colour on the paper. The colour from Dry Point pencils is frequently transparent and at the least will be semi transparent, so successive layers of thin colour will build up and each layer will act as a filter on the colours beneath.

You need to remember that the first layer that hits the paper is the most important. I don't think we can be sure of an accurate figure, but I often say 70% of the finish colour is determined by the first colour to hit the paper.

If you apply green to the dry fresh paper surface, that will be the majority shareholder in the company, all other layers placed on top will merely adjust that green, so that yellow will make it a yellowish green and blue will make it a blueish green. Put the same green over the same blue and you will get a slightly different result as the first layer will be the majority of the resulting colour. Thus it follows that you don't need to have every colour in your box that you will require for the painting. Where you would mix pigment to get the right shade with watercolour, you will layer colours to reach the correct shade with Coloured Pencils.

See Dry Point Techniques 2 - Application of colour - for fuller details

### PENCIL SHARPENERS

First of all you need to keep your pencil sharp (unless you are doing delicate background shading and wish to avoid all lines at all costs). I use a power sharpener which keeps the point at a good standard of accuracy. If you allow your point to get blunt, you may well find that the lines you draw become less accurate. A good tip is keep rotating the pencil as you work so that you keep the fine point refreshed. If you are buying a sharpener you have a basic choice between a low cost one with a blade that removes a thin strip of wood and pigment from the pencil or a more expensive model which uses a spiral cutter which takes off very fine shavings. The bladed one is cheap and works very well whilst the blade is fresh and sharp. Once the blade becomes blunt, you have to go out and buy another one - replace the blade - or put up with the sharpener keeping breaking off the point as it stresses the pencil. The spiral cutter pulls the material off the pencil in the direction the pencil was made so there is no stress. You can find manual spiral cutters ( with a handle) on the Internet for under £10 and sometimes in places like Lidl for around a fiver.

A top quality electric mains sharpener ( Jakar ) will cost up to £30 and I would suggest steering clear of battery models unless you have shares in Duracell

### PRESSURE

Try out your ability to apply different pressure on the pencil point by doing a test strip. If you consider level 1 of - say - 10 is just resting the pencil on the paper and moving it with no actual hand pressure and making virtually no mark, is level 1 and applying pressure on the point up to the situation where the point would break if any more was applied, is 10, then it should be possible for you to grade the 8 stages in between. I would suggest that you should hardly ever be in the top half of that range - certainly not until the very end of the picture when the surface is fully polished and is taking virtually no more pigment

### THERE ARE MORE SECTIONS FOLLOWING THIS PAGE

Which look at Particular Areas of Technique

Such as

[The Application of colour](#), [Density of Colour](#), [Choice of Pencil Mark](#),

There is a separate section entitled TECHNIQUES

which covers a wider range of general technique topics. this includes :

[Techniques for Landscapes](#), [Ways of Working the Surface](#), [Clouds and Blurred Backgrounds](#), [Colour Matching](#) , a wide range of notes on four pages entitled [Composition](#),

[Complementary Colours](#) and more to follow

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