

Pastel AcademyOnline

Charcoal Relief Landscape Technique



The materials for this technique are few and inexpensive.

I used an A3 piece of white pastel paper for this demonstration,

In addition I used: Cotton wool balls and a cotton bud.

A putty (kneadable) eraser—kneaded until workable.

Charcoal = natural will charcoal in extra large (scenic) size for the initial 'wash'. Ordinary willow thin sticks for details.

I also used a foamcore sheet as a drawing board so as to avoid 'brassrubbing' effects from a less smooth surface.



And the first stage is to add the layer of charcoal (using the large scenic sticks on their side) and smooth it out with a piece of cotton wool.

I then used a putty rubber to remove the charcoal from the sky area. Note I leave a margin around the edge.

The next step is to add some basic details of the trees with a thin charcoal stick. I'm right handed—so I worked left to right.

The billowing charcoal shapes on the right are the first stage of the olive trees to come,



The finished piece having tweaked and refined a few details took approx. 40 minutes.

Charcoal relief is a very fast technique—because you are laying in the main 'mid tone' when you do the initial wash of charcoal—and then smooth it with a cotton wool ball.

You can achieve a good result using cartridge paper (your basic drawing paper) but this one was completed on a piece of white Canson Mi Tiente paste paper in close to A3 size.

I did finish the piece with a thin coat of fixative—which has no ill effects whatsoever on charcoal.