

Pastel Academy Online©

Pastel – The Basics

MODULE 4 – Unit 5

Materials for working in pastel

This is not a definitive list but it is a good starting list.

- * A smooth board - to use as a support for your chosen paper. I use foamcore 10mm. Basically a very lightweight smooth surface. Pastels can be light brass rubbing - any texture on a board (eg hardboard) will come through to pastel paper.
- * Clips to attach paper to board - bulldog preferable.
- * Charcoal - willow (natural) charcoal is a great medium to draw or block out your painting. It also mixes well with pastel, as a very soft 'black'.
- * Hog hair brush - sizes to suit yourself - to brush off loose pastel ('mistakes').
- * Sharp blade to remove mistakes from sanded surfaces on occasion.
- * Blending tools - rubber ended tools of different shapes to help blend very small areas. Also, small polystyrene 'peanuts', which usually are used for packing, can be useful to blend pastel. Foam pipe lagging from DIY suppliers is also cheap and effective.
- * Putty rubbers - to clean up stray marks on papers and mounts.
- * Fixative - comes in many varieties - a useful 'in process' tool. Very rarely used to spray the work when finished.
- * Denatured alcohol (isopropyl alcohol)- can be used to spray onto initial pastel layer to 'melt' it into an underpainting (more or which later).
- * water can be used to spray onto initial stages as an underpainting,
- * some form of sharpener for pastel pencils. (I use a Stanley knife)
- * Pastel cleaning equipment (See Pastel Hints & Tips)

b) Studio Equipment:

- * An easel is important. Photos of my studio set up.
It doesn't have to be a large studio easel – a portable one will do – the idea is to get your work more vertical and also to make it less likely for you to smudge work by rubbing the surface accidentally.

- * Something to collect dust as it falls on the easel tray.
A great time saver (and also a way to keep the pastel dust to re mould into pastels.) Some artists make a shallow tray from tin foil – and others use a piece of mount card – the width of the paper you are using (or to fit the easel width) and fold it in half lengthways so that it catches pastel particles as they fall.

- * Storage for pastels. (I keep mine flat in drawers)
Do you need just indoor storage or outdoor 'plein air' storage too?
Plein Air equipment will be covered in a separate module.

- * Storage for paintings. – polypropylene sealable bags.
- * Lighting.
- * Ventilation.
- * Soft carpet/rug - washable - for beneath the easel to catch pastels if they fall - without breakage.