

A PASTEL PRIMER



James Southworth

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website: [http:// southworthjames.comcast.net.com](http://southworthjames.comcast.net.com) The entire days workshop is online!

This is a hands-on workshop with the premise that we learn by doing! After today you should be ready to tackle your own projects with some confidence!

We will be doing several exercises or studies together so lots of hands-on pastel time is in store! Be sure to ask questions....

One goal of the workshop is to give maximum time using the pastels. I may have planned more projects than we have time for, so if we don't finish everything, that's OK. It just means there is a reason to paint tomorrow.



“Taos”

What are particular areas you'd like to make sure we touch on?

A Pastel Primer at the Southworths

9:30-10:00	Welcome Papers Pastel sets Set up
10:00-12:30	Introduction to Pastels “Color Strokes” exercise “Blend Strokes” exercise “Hatch Strokes” exercise “Side Strokes” exercise “Grass Strokes” exercise Lunch!!! “X” Strokes exercise “Putting it all Together”
12:30-1:00	Lunch:
1:00 – ?	After lunch Slide Show Supplies, Gallery, Books “Cool Strokes” exercise “Black Paper and Warm Flowers” 3 techniques: a demonstration

Why pastels are fun to use

- Reason One:** Spontaneous and fun
- Reason Two:** Very bright saturated colors
- Reason Three:** Easy to control light/darkness
- Reason Four:** Show expressive strokes
- Reason Five:** Easy to change in midstream
- Reason Six:** Dry Pigment, no mixing, what you see is what you get
- Reason Seven:** Immediate, covers large areas quickly
- Drawbacks:** Expensive and need to be protected from damage by framing.
Allergies, pigment dust, addictive!



“The Cutting board”

Pass out the PASTELS!

Safety note: Do not blow on pastel paintings. Tap pastel dust into paper bag.

Soft Pastels are the purest form of artist color, formed almost exclusively from pure pigment with only enough binder to allow them to be formed into useable sticks. They vary from hard (Nu pastels) to very soft (Schmincke) with many variations in between. The extensive color lines like Sennelier allow artists a choice of many subtle color variations.

We are going to use a twenty-color set by Sennelier. The sticks we're using are ¼ sticks, just right for expressive strokes. If you run out of a color ask me for a replacement.

Sennelier extra-fine soft pastels are the Rolls Royce of pastels. Their intensity of pigment and exceptional softness have been appreciated by pastelists since the turn of the century.

Their world famous beauty made them the preferred pastels of Degas. They are produced the same way today: by hand. Sennelier's are so highly concentrated and velvety that the most gentle strokes deliver a solid, powerful line of brilliant color. Fine variations of shading and the mellowest of tones are possible because of their high quality composition, complimenting every surface.

Over the years the original 700 color range narrowed down to the present 552 colors, presently the widest range available in the market.

Ours is a very limited palate. If you want to explore pastels in the future, consider buying at least an 80 stick ½ size set, for about 60 dollars online. By far the best deal available in soft pastel line.

We will talk about other pastel brands later

Paper

Pastel paper has either a sandpaper-like surface or a heavy texture to hold pastel on its working surface. We will be using both types today. The Canson pad costs about \$11 or \$1.5 a full sheet, and a full sheet of La Carte runs \$9. Art Spectrum paper runs \$5 dollars a sheet and Kitty Wallis about \$18. In my finished works, I usually use La Carte Pastel Board since it holds more layers of pastel and feels wonderful. Up front is a sample of most major other brands. More and more of my work have been done on the Art Spectrum paper that has a wonderful yellow, Salmon, or deep blue color.

CANSON MITIENTES

Canson MiTientes can be used for pastel, graphite, colored pencil, gouache, watercolor, acrylic, offset printing, silk screening, laser printing... just about any time that you need to use paper! Canson Mi-Teintes has long been a standard colored paper surface for pastelists, and one of the few offered in rolls for large scale work. It is a 67% cotton and 33% cellulose fiber, acid free, machine-made 160 gm weight paper. The surface has a very fine tooth, one smooth side and one textured side. The rolls are 59" wide and 11 yards long.

LA CARTE PASTEL BOARD

This pastel board is made on a 200 lb. pH neutral stock. The surface is a finely ground pH neutral vegetable flake which is applied by hand. The surface is very uniform and slightly abrasive which promotes excellent pigment adhesion without requiring a lot of pastel for coverage. The binder used for the surface is water soluble, so care must be taken to keep it dry. La Carte has a soft 'touch' when compared to other sanded pastel papers. There is a nice subtle color range of 14 neutral colors. Six of the colors are available in an intermediate sheet size.

Colors available:

We are using Salmon and the Blue-gray color paper because they are both good medium values. The Salmon works well with both warm (reds, yellows) and the Gray with cool colors (green and blues).

Later on I list a few other papers. The paper is considered the "ground" and by having a toned paper the composition can have some unity right off the bat.

ART SPECTRUM COLOURFIX PAPER

Art Spectrum Colourfix papers are produced on acid-free 300gm watercolor paper. Art Spectrum Pastel Primer is screen printed on the paper surface, leaving a border of approximately .5" on all sides. The acrylic based primer has a deep tooth and can handle many different mediums, extensive reworking and over painting. The papers are listed in order from light to dark. Colourfix paper is produced in six colors in a large size of 27.5" x 39".

SOMERSET

Somerset Velvet is made by St. Cuthberts Mill-Inveresk in England. This mould made paper has a softly textured finish, is 100% cotton and neutral pH. The soft surface is very receptive to pastel and conducive to blending. Somerset Velvet is 22" x 30" and available in four colors. We sell this paper in packs of 10 sheets. The very rich, deep black sheet is slightly more expensive than the other sheets

Exercise 1: Color Strokes

Goal: To begin feeling comfortable using the pastels

Demonstration: Use the sides of the ¼ sticks as I am demonstrating. Think of the side as a wide brush!

Pearl: Block in approach vs. “classical approach”

- Use a piece of (warm) Salmon La Carte paper.
- Make geometric forms using each twenty pastel; don't overlap between colors. Some great effects are achieved by leaving areas of the paper showing between colors.
- Leave ½” or more of untouched paper around borders
 - Tap off dust into paper sack every so often, Remember: don't blow!
 - Start with light colors and wipe fingers with Kleenex as needed. Diaper wipes work great for a final hand cleanup
 - Repeat exercise using a full piece cool (blue-gray) Canson paper



Think about nice looking shapes and interesting relationships between colors. Don't copy this example but make up your own

There is a whole lot written about color theory but we must first start by observing for ourselves. Learning to see take time and practice.

- Note that the light blue/green is very soft and may crumble.... **When a color is used up I have replacements.**
- The Canson paper has two sides: one smooth and one textured...take your pick!
- Expect your fingers to get colored! It's part of the fun, but do use Kleenex when going from a dark color to a light color...
- How use your finger to blend the salmon colored “block in” you just did. Now overlay this with a second layer of pastel

Bonus: Extra pastels and Canson paper for doodling if you finish before the group

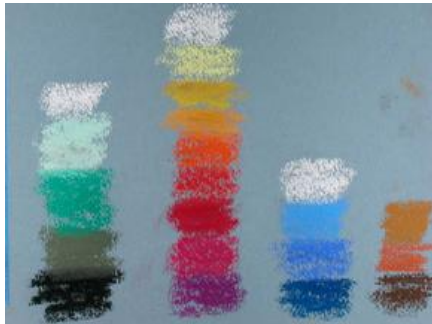
Exercise 2: Blending Strokes

Lets do this exercise 3 times using ½ sheet of gray, then sienna Canson paper, and finally on the blue gray La Carte Paper

Place one inch blocks, as I will demonstrate. Let's go from dark to light and make a color gradient.

Divide the palette into 4 columns: greens reds, blues, and earth tones.

This is a good way to understand some basic blending possibilities and color ideas.



blends of green, reds, blues, and earth-tones

Tips:

- The colors are darker in value at bottom so add black here if you want and also add white at the top of column for fun.
- The green also goes well also with the earth tones and the light blue/green goes nicely with the blues
- Try blending the columns with your finger going from light to dark

Fixative: I use Krylon Workable Fixative throughout the painting process. If used, the color will darken some but future layers can be overlain very cleanly.

Pearl: Broken color and scumbling

Exercise 3: Hatch Strokes

Goal: Learn the strokes and the feel of our pastels

Hatching or side by side strokes:

Place vertical or oblique strokes of each of the 4 color pastel groupings from the last exercise, on to ½ sheet of red/gray and sienna Canson paper. Again, we will do four areas on each paper: warm colors, cool colors, earth tones, and greens. Use color chart exercise as a guide.



Note; let some of the paper show through for sparkle

Again Try:

- Using edge of pastel not wide side
- Try adding the green to the earth tones as this green is really a toned green so blends well

Notice how some colors vibrate next to each other. There is no right or wrong here. We are just having fun. If pastel pieces get other colors on it, wipe it with a Kleenex. Fill in most of the page but leave at least ½ inch untouched paper around the border. As dust builds up, tap your paper off into your paper bag.

Finally, blend several of the areas with your finger. See how this softens the surface

Tip: Blending earth tones with other colors: this may “muddies” them so use these color spots carefully! Of course mixing black with a color may not be pretty but laying colors over black that has been “fixed” is a super idea. More on this latter

Exercise 4: Side Strokes

Let's repeat the same color blends but now use the side of the pastel sticks. The paper is gray La Carte paper. This ¼ size piece is perfect for these strokes. Be bold in your strokes.

Goal: Learn to make more expressive strokes. Again, if your pastel crumbles, get a new piece.

Demonstration!



Why side strokes?

Answer: By using the sides we keep the surface painterly and avoid the distraction of fussy details and overworking the composition. On finished paintings, I add detail to the center of interest that blends in with the rest of the work. I also blend areas that eliminate the strokes, especially for a soft background.

This can also be used on an otherwise "dead" area to enliven it

Note: In a single painting I will use several types of strokes for visual variety.

Tip:

- Keep alternating the direction of the stroke to add interest to areas.
- Add yellow/orange, yellow, and light yellow to the top of the earth tone column
- Don't worry about fingerprints on your paper: they are better than a signature!
- If you must try and remove a mark, try a stiff brush followed by a kneaded eraser. It's probably better to fix the surface and add a new layer of pastel

Exercise 5: “X” Strokes

Tip: Use a color paper that is the major color of the foreground.



Place “x” strokes of each of the color pastel groupings on bluish and yellowish Canson papers (thus four areas on each paper: warm colors, cool colors, earth tones, and greens)

Note:

- This time we are not making columns!
- Have strokes look random... various lengths, sizes, thickness
- Make sure some of the paper shows through

This stroke can be used in warm colors to suggest foreground vegetation or in cool colors suggesting movement in water or foreground shadows

Exercise 6: Grass Strokes

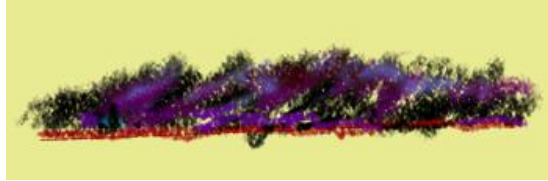


- We will do this exercise on yellow Canson paper, then Salmon La Carte
- First, we use yellow to red from left to right. Blocking in major shapes adds to vibrancy of color unless color is earth tone or back.
- Now add strokes building up nice grass shapes
- A few strokes of blue adds a complimentary color note as does the blue/green foreground

Exercise 7: Dark Strokes

Pearl: Dark heavily blended then strokes of SCHMINCKE QUINACRIDONE VIOLET and COLD GREEN DEEP

Lets use yellow Canson paper and peach La Carte paper for the next mountain exercise!

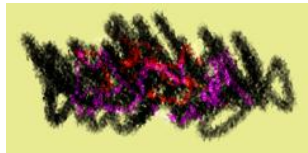


Now try some mountains.

- Black first....let some of the paper sparkle through
- Purple over the top,
- then blue over that
- and finally, a red line on the shore for warm contrast.

In some of my paintings, I use a metallic black that sparkles, adding life to the dark areas

An idea to try: The “sprinkle” technique



To do this, scrap some shaving off the pastel with a palate knife, then press them on the paper

Exercise 8: Trees

- Art Spectrum Dark Blue and Salmon LaCarte
- Blend in green, blue/green, light blue/green for sky
- Sketch black shapes for the fir trees
- Purple over trees



Exercise 9: Putting it all together

Goal: To combine our grasses with trees and loose foreground

I'll demonstrate first, then have you do this study three times. Try not to fuss.

Use a warm and cool Canson paper and salmon La Carte paper. Notice how each colored paper changes the feel of the piece.



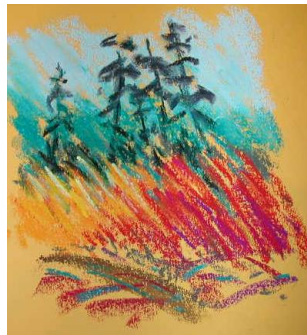
Grasses



Sky & Foreground



Tree Trunks



Finish Each Area

SLIDE SHOW!!!!

Here is an outline of my general process. This tends to change constantly since I'm always thinking new ideas to try. Remember this is supposed to be fun

Design composition from digital photo or plain air. I always use my own references. I try to simplify shapes and eliminate unwanted detail, except at center of interest

Organize values, shapes, and center of interest usually using Adobe Photoshop

As a values scheme I sometimes use light and dark against mid-values with intense spots of color/white/black near center of interest.

Pick a paper that will help "carry" the painting. Warm/cool/rough/smooth etc

I usually work on the center of interest first as this needs to really gel.

Block in colors with a hard pastel such as Rembrandt or Nupastel. I'm going for blocks of color only now with little detail. Paint color shapes, not individual objects!

Blend, rub, and layer as needed

Fix. I fix my painting with Krylon workable fixative. After fixing I can scumble or layer a new color over the top, such as a Unison pastel, hopefully without muddying the surface.

•Finally, the last 25% of the painting, I don't look at any reference just adjust values, colors and composition. This is when all my organization goes out the window and my studio becomes a mess.

I always finish one painting before going on to a new one.

I buy my frames online at www.framefit.com and cut my own mats

Exercise 10:Flowers

Demonstration then we will do it ourselves. Remember Have Fun!

- This is really a high contrast exercise on black Somerset paper
- Yellow/orange centers...yellow orange white pedals
- Greenish yellow red stems
- Purple deep red green vase
- Dark blue background



- Block in color spots
- Finish (no fixative was used)

Normally I'd fix then add and blend until done

Isn't this fun? Organizing colors into a composition is the ultimate goal and one that may take some time. Art is not a competition. Enjoy the journey and keep painting.

Exercise 11: Still life

Each table will have an assortment of fruit to practice with

Techniques: Basic Approaches

All of these techniques I'm describing begin with block-in of colors but are finished differently. By blocking in color we are establishing color and values at the same time

Blended Color: After laying in the color strokes then rub entire piece with finger. Rub darks carefully not to smear into lights too much. Another idea is to fix painting, let dry, and then blend.

Scumbling Color: Blend color as first example then fix, dry. Now add selective sidestrokes over piece to fine tune colors and value, if pastel skids across paper then you need to fix more

Feathering Color: Line strokes built up in layers with fixing as needed. Some final blending of background will help it recede

Block-in: Paint in color patches. Now use a palette knife to press dust into the paper if desired

Resume

Awards:

Canson Award 2005 Pastel Society of America
Show, New York

Best of Show 2004 Artist in Action "Red Show"

Best of Show 2003 Northwest Pastel Society
International Show

Best of Show 2002 Northwest Pastel Society
International Show

First place amateur division 2001 Oregon State Fair
Salem Oregon

Best of Show 2000, 2001, 2002 Marion County Fair

Education:

Graduated high honors University of Oregon 1980

Graduated high honors Oregon Health Science
Center Dental School 1984

Member of Phi Beta Kappa Academic Fraternity

Art education: self taught

Professional Director Skyline Dental Clinic

Posters:

Salem and Food Festival Poster 2004

Keiser Iris Festival Poster 2004, 2006

Salem Art Fair Festival Poster 2006

Visual Art Judge for:

2005 Westminster Presbyterian Show

2004 Marion County Fair

2004 Keizer Iris Festival Art Show

2003 Oregon State Fair

Other:

Art Website <http://southworthjamesr.tripod.com>

Signature member Northwest Pastel Society