

“Animals and the Colored Pencil” A Colored Pencil Demonstration
by SHARON TIETJEN PRATT

If you love art and animals, this colored pencil demonstration should offer you yet another exciting and dynamic approach in creating the visual “telling of a story.”

Drawing or painting animals usually leaves the artist with many choices on many levels. For example: if the image is part of the artist’s collection or series, infinite freedom can be used in the interpretation of environment, composition, design, and technique. However, if the image is for a commission or for a client requiring acute realism, the likeness must be as near exact as possible. Truly, the artist can add some creative touches for impact, but the personality and attitude of the animal is paramount.

The following demonstration addresses the latter as above. I will first introduce the products that I have used. Then, I will take you step by step through four initial research phases and seven production phases.

“You are in for a treat! Sharon Tietjen Pratt walks you through a step-by-step rendering of an animal portrait using our Museum Mounting Board and colored pencils.”

– Paula Rogalski, *Editor-Strathmore Artist Newsletter*



MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS

Paper: Strathmore Museum Mounting Board, White
Tracing Paper
Transfer Paper

Miscellaneous:

2B Drawing Pencil	Drawing Board
Exacto Knife	Embossing Stylus
Kneaded Eraser	Masking or Artist’s Tape
White Facial Tissue	Drafting Dust Brush
Pencil Sharpener	Clear Blending Marker
White Gouache	Small Water Container
Size 1 or 2 Liner or Rigger Brush	
Medium Size Blending Stomp	
Prismacolor Blending Pencil	

Pencils: Prismacolor

Apple Green	Dark Umber	Pumpkin
Beige	Deco Pink	Sepia
Black	French Grey	Sienna Brown
Blush Pink	Goldenrod	True Blue
Burnt Ochre	Indigo	Ultramarine
Canary Yellow	Jasmine	White
Cream	Light Peach	Yellow Ochre
Cloud Blue	Light Umber	Yellowed Orange
Crimson Red	Limepeel	
Dark Brown	Orange	

Prismacolor Verithin

Black	Golden Brown	Pumpkin Orange
Dark Brown	Green	Terra Cotta
Dark Grey	Orange Ochre	

Stabilo Aquarellable

Black
White

Lyra Rembrandt Polycolor

Cinnamon

RESEARCH PHASE

**1 Reference Photographs:**

Assemble a considerable number of photographs documenting the animal you wish to paint. This is primarily to accomplish two objectives: to capture personality and to have a solid reference visual for extreme close-ups so that you will be better equipped to recreate those important features that bring paintings alive.

2 The Image:

Select one of the photos that you feel has the most “spark” and that “speaks” to the viewer.





3 Detailing Reference:

Have an enlarged laser copy made so that you can see each tiny detail with more accuracy and definition. It is wise to **not** use this enlargement for color referencing. Imaging from laser printers is very susceptible to color imprecision due to climatic conditions, i.e. humidity, temperature, etc.



4

Value Study

Make a black and white copy to use as your value study. If the copier's automatic setting creates an image either too light or too dark, adjust it so that you will have strong, interesting, and dramatic contrasts.

THE PRODUCTION PHASE**Before you begin.....**

In transferring or freehanding your image to your final ground, use very light pressure so as not to leave impressions on your museum board. If you opt to transfer from tracing paper, test out your pressure as you trace onto the board. While this museum board is extremely tough and takes a lot of abuse, the surface is a bit "spongy" and is sensitive to impression and embossing lines.

Be sure to remove as much of your graphite as possible with a kneaded eraser so that it will not mix with or show through the translucency of the colored pencil. You may opt to draw a finished colored pencil line directly next to your graphite line, then removing the graphite.

Work with a very sharp point on your pencil.

Use your dust brush *continuously* so that the pigment granules and eraser debris will not become a permanent part of your work.

After sharpening, wipe the point of your pencil off on a clean cloth or tissue so that debris from the sharpener will not be left on the pencil point and transferred to your work.

Use a piece of tracing paper to cover and protect completed areas while you are working on adjacent sections.

When using solvents to create an "underpainting", or to achieve "painterly" effects, make sure to discard used cotton swabs, sponges, etc. as soon as you have finished using them. Keep your container of solvent or blending pen tightly closed.

Make it a practice to study your work in progress from different angles and distances; allow yourself "breaks" to re-establish your objectivity.

Refer to your value study frequently to reinforce a powerful "Value Mix".

Remember, as you study your photographic image and your work in progress, **"FEEL WITH YOUR EYES"**.

**5 Transfer Process:**

Make any compositional adjustments, either freehand or transfer your image onto the museum board (be sure to leave adequate margin and matting space around your layout). Tape to your drawing board.

6 Refinement:

Once the layout is completed, lightly redefine all lines for accuracy. Using the kneaded eraser, lift any smudges or “blips” on your image. Replace graphite with color if desired. Create a frame using masking or artist’s tape. This will allow for a crisp, clean edge around the entire image. When removing this tape upon completion, use a **quick** burst of warm air from a hair dryer to soften up the adhesive before you begin peeling. Using the stylus, emboss lines for moisture dots around the eyes and the most prominent whiskers.





7 The Eyes:

Layer (light pressure and small circular strokes) the iris of both eyes with Cream followed with a layer of Jasmine. Burnish (heavy pressure to blend layers together) with Prismacolor White. Begin contouring at the outer edges with Goldenrod. Burnish with Prismacolor Blender Pencil. Apply a “float” of the Stabilo White Pencil. This will create a waxy, slick surface and will serve as the beginning of wet, shiny eyes. Outline the pupils with Verithin Green; fill in the centers with Verithin Black.

Preserve the highlights.

Burnish the iris with the Prismacolor Blender to soften the “blend.”

8 Developing Depth

Apply Canary Yellow, Limepeel, and Apple Green around the pupils. Remember to shape with these tones. Punctuate with True Blue and Ultramarine where you see these colors in your reference piece. Subtly add the tracking or texturing around the outer edges of the iris with Burnt Ochre. Use Cream or the Prismacolor Blender Pencil to blend tones as you see fit. Layer the pupil once again; this time with the Black Stabilo. Brush carefully, as this pencil is very soft and can smear and/or leave a residue. On the eyelid ledges (upper and lower) layer with White Prismacolor followed by Cloud Blue. Burnish with the White again for a “slick” appearance. Outline the eyes with Black Prismacolor. Begin adding color, Beige with a light overlay of French Grey 20%, around the immediate narrow perimeter of the eyes.





9

The Muzzle:

Layer a very light coating of Verithin Golden Brown on the orbital bone above the eyes, and on the side planes of the nose. Extend this outward over the cheekbones and onto the forehead (Apply only where you see color on the reference photo. Where there is white, preserve the white of the paper).

Layer Light Umber in darker contoured areas. Wrap a tissue around your index finger and rub these colors independently in order to break down the pigment granules (Be sure to retain the shapes). This process will create an “underpainting” effect.

Use Verithin Brown to etch in tiny pods where whiskers originate, and to deepen some dark values in the shapes above the eyes and on either side of the bridge of the nose.

Layer the nose with Light Peach.

Burnish with Blush Pink, then Prismacolor White.

Nostril openings should be first shaped with French Grey 50%, and darkened later on with Prismacolor Black.

Contour the nose with additional layers of Peach and Deco Pink if needed. Remember the texture of these little noses: leathery, but refined and waxy in appearance.

Progress downward to the mouth using the same colors. Layer Prismacolor White directly below the nostrils and on the upper and lower lips. Remember the shapes, and blend the edges as if you were a sculptor.

Add freckles on the nose with French Grey 70%.



Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

10

The Coat:

The Four Step Guide in Image Number Ten will give you a progressive “how-to” in creating a dense and interesting coat.

Step 1 Apply a soft, but thorough, layering of Beige over all coat areas not previously toned with the Verithin Golden Brown (Exception: white tufts of hair).

Step 2 Work from light to dark. Layer in Verithin Orange Ochre throughout. Add darker values beginning with Yellow Ochre, Orange, Pumpkin, Light Umber, and Lyra Cinnamon. Keep the embossed whiskers as clean as possible. You can lightly edge these with Verithins – Orange Ochre and/or Pumpkin Orange.

Step 3 At this point work all pencils and blends in the direction of the coat growth. Introduce even darker values with Verithin and Prismacolor Dark Browns, Dark Umber, and more Cinnamon. Burnish the lighter convex

shapes with Cream and/or Prismacolor White. Edge in soft curves and turns of hair tufts with French Grey 20%. Use the Prismacolor Blender whenever you feel soft edges are needed; and appropriately colored Verithins to carve out hard edges (but not to burnish). Layer the wooden banister section (lower right corner) with Verithin Pumpkin Orange and top with Prismacolor Dark and Sienna Browns, and Sepia. The small triangle of wallpaper can be layered in Beige.

Step 4 Values and textures are intensified. Stripe in the wallpaper with Light Umber; add a light toning of Crimson Red to the wooden sections. Layer with more Prismacolor Dark Brown. Use your Exacto Knife to create grain lines in the wood. Burnish Prismacolor and Stabilo Whites to emphasize lighter areas and shapes in the cat's coat. “Straggle tufts” can be edged with Verithins for more definition. Drag the Exacto Knife blade in quick, jerky strokes down from the chin to emulate tiny hairs.



11 The Background and Finishing Details:

Complete the balance of the coat, but stay within 1/2" of the background. You will want to carefully merge the coatline into the background making it appear that the coat is actually conforming to the shape of the head. In other words, moving towards the back of the head. Layer the background with Indigo, then Prismacolor Dark Brown, then Sepia. Use the Clear Blending Marker as a solvent paintbrush. This will eliminate "drawing lines," and will fuse these three colors into a painterly ground. "Scrub" with a tissue when dry. Repeat any color as needed. You should have no gloss or shine to the background.

As you integrate the fur into the background, carefully place pencil strokes of Indigo, Dark Brown, and Sepia in a negative painting mode...between the hair tufts. Blend edges with the Blender Pencil. Layer the outer edges of the ears with Beige. Shape with Umbers. Apply a liberal coat of Prismacolor White to the middle of each ear. Tone with Blush Pink towards the base of the ear, and Cloud Blue towards the center.

Add details: Use any colors that you would like to enhance intensities, or to brighten/deepen pigments. In this particular piece, I have used more Crimson Red, Orange, Yellowed Orange, and French Grey 70% for this purpose, rubbing edges with a tortillon to merge shapes and colors.

Redefine embossed whiskers with white gouache and a rigger brush, and freehand additional subordinate whiskers (end points of whiskers should fade away as they narrow in width). Apply tiny dots of white to redefine highlights in the eyes that may have been sacrificed. Pencil in with French Grey 20% or Cream, or paint with gouache the wisps of hair growing from the base and interior of the ears, and elsewhere throughout the coat as needed. Be cautious! This is a prime example of "less is more." Practice using the brush and gouache if you are not familiar with them.

Scratch out any little defined hairs throughout.

IN CLOSING

Allow your painting to "rest" for a day. Fresh eyes can be very objective. You may need to make a few minor adjustments. In addition, I have found that making a black and white copy of my finished piece is also an invaluable

report card. Values that have become managed and sometimes "bullied" by color are reduced back to basics.... black, white, and grays. It tells you if and where you need to darken or lighten an area... Enjoy!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sharon Tietjen Pratt is an artist whose passion for art has developed into an evocative tool that stirs emotion in the eye of the beholder. Experimenting with an endless ensemble of techniques, papers, and materials, Sharon has developed and refined a startlingly detailed style of precision painting – one that she refers to as “macro-realism.” The strength of her work is achieved through high-impact interpretation of light and shadows, shapes, intense color, and extreme value and texture contrasts.

Born and raised in Great Falls, Montana, Sharon first discovered her affinity for art at age six. She developed her talent throughout the following years, earned a Fine Arts Degree at Colorado Women’s College in Denver, and established a career track as a fashion illustrator and advertising executive in San Francisco, California. She later relocated to the Puget Sound area in Washington State, and developed and implemented a Fashion Marketing Program at Highline College in Seattle. In spite of professional career demands, Sharon continued to nurture her love of fine art by refining her drawing and painting techniques, and exploring various mediums and studying in Paris, France. Now as a full-time professional artist and workshop instructor, Sharon works primarily in colored pencil and watercolor focusing upon animals, florals, and still life.

Sharon interprets the most prosaic of subjects in very unusual and unconventional ways: “let me show you...,” tousle haired children intently scrutinizing a book as they sprawl on a carpet bathed in ribbons of sunlight; “Great Expectations I,” a handful of ripe and meticulously grown cherries carelessly tossed on a field of wet tile; “you promised to protect me...,” the haunting face of a cougar – a single teardrop streaming down one side of its muzzle as she peers cautiously from behind a tree- wondering why her den has been destroyed by man and machine. All transcend the ordinary. “I am constantly striving to tell a story, and to make people feel an emotion. I want them to question, to remember, to realize that there can be poignant meaning, and yet beauty, in the most familiar of places and things,” says the artist.

An accomplished painter and juror, Sharon is a Signature Member and Merit Award recipient with the Colored Pencil Society of America, Past President of the CPSA Seattle District Chapter, and is affiliated with several art associations. She participates in juried, solo, and group exhibitions, and conducts workshops across the nation. She has authored and illustrated a Fashion in History textbook; is featured in the Best of Colored Pencil 4 and 5; and has been published in *Art Calendar*, *American Artist*, and *Artist’s Magazine*. In addition, Sharon has received fourteen national and international awards since 1998.

To contact Sharon for her schedule of workshops, call her at 425-337-6736 or e-mail her at artiste98@hotmail.com.

Sharon Tietjen Pratt primarily uses Strathmore Museum Mounting Board for her colored pencil paintings. Generally this sturdy board is used for matting artwork, but the lightly textured surface is great to use with dry media such as pencil, colored pencil, and charcoal. It is manufactured with 100% cotton fiber and is buffered with calcium carbonate to help neutralize acid compounds in the atmosphere. It is museum grade because it satisfies the standards set by the US Library of Congress for Museum Mount Boards.

If you have a project that you would like to include in the Strathmore eNewsletter, please contact us at paula.rogalski@ipaper.com. We would love to hear about your project.

Strathmore Artist Message Board

Ever have a question about the medium you are using, the best paper to use for a project, or just need an artist’s perspective? Strathmore Artist Papers has opened their message board for just that purpose. Visit our message board and sign up today to start getting the answers you need.

Holiday Projects

Make your holidays special with two great holiday ideas available in the projects section of our website.

Nothing says Seasons Greetings better than sending a personalized, hand-made card. Our Gold Deckle Edge cards combined with the Vellum Overlays and Reflections Pure Paper make a card that friends and family will cherish. Change the design and colors used in the project to go with any of this seasons holidays. Visit our website to create the Holiday Greeting Card project.

Don't wrap that special gift in plain old wrapping paper! Create your own colorful, hand-made gift box using our heavyweight Pure Paper Reflections and let that special someone know how much you care. Reflections come in an assorted pack of colors so there is a color that corresponds with the many holidays celebrated this time of year. Visit our website to create the Square Gift Box project.

Keep these projects on file because they can be used at other times of the year. Change the color of the paper and add decorations appropriate for the occasion and you can make personalized greeting cards and gift boxes all year long.



Announcing
Strathmore Art Contest 2004.



Call for Entries!

Over \$10,000 in Prizes.

Call for Entries

The 2004 Strathmore Art Contest has begun. Artists 18 years and older can submit entries in the category of their choice for cash prizes given to first, second, and third place winners. Over \$10,000 in prizes will be awarded.

Entries will be accepted in three categories; general art, student art, and digital art. There is no entry fee and the artwork must be created using Strathmore art papers.

This year's contest has begun to receive entries in these categories and will continue to do so until March 31, 2004. Be sure to check out the contest rules on our website and download an entry form today. Visit our past winners page and view the winning artwork from the previous two years.

Your artwork is complete, now what?

You have completed your drawing/painting and now it is time to mat and frame it. There are so many mats to choose from, they come in many different colors and formats. What should I choose?

When choosing a mat/mounting board, color is, of course, a determining factor. However, how long you would like to preserve your artwork should be the first criteria. For most artwork a standard wood pulp/high alphaselulose board will do. When you want to preserve your artwork like the professionals, only the best is acceptable. Strathmore offers only the best type of board, Museum Mounting Board.

The standards we use on our board meet the Preservation Directorate of the Library of Congress standards so that your painting will remain beautiful for years to come. You can purchase less expensive boards, but you have put a lot of time into your artwork and you will want to mount it in the board that will preserve it the longest. Be sure to choose a board that is acid free or archival. Museum boards are called that because museums choose them for matting and preserving art.

Museum Mounting Board is manufactured with 100% cotton fibers which are naturally archival because they do not contain lignin. Lignin is the natural agent found in wood pulp that adds to the aging process of wood based paper. Museum boards require cotton fibers so that it will resist aging. It is also buffered with calcium carbonate to help neutralize acid compounds in the atmosphere.

Another feature of museum board is color fading. Many colored papers are manufactured using dyes to color the fibers. These dyes will fade within a few years changing the color of the mat quickly. Museum board is colored using pigments to help lengthen the time before color fading is visible. It is tested in an artificial environment that accelerates fading and museum boards must meet a fade test of 80 hours. This means that when the board is subjected to this test, the color fade isn't evident until 80 hours have passed. This is the maximum fade resistance. The result is, the color of a museum board will last for many years before noticeable fade is seen.

The color of the board is the same through the core as well. Museum Mounting Board is sheets of the same color paper laminated together to make a solid, heavy weight board. It comes in 2-ply and 4-ply weights. Some mat boards have a color face sheet mounted to a board which may be white or black. When the opening of the mat is cut, the color of the core shows along the edge of your painting. The color you see on the surface of Museum Mounting Board will be the color you see next to your piece of art.

Strathmore Museum Mounting Board comes in various shades of white and gray, as well as black. Visit Mat Boards under the Fine Art Papers section of our product listing to see the colors and sizes we have available at http://www.strathmoreartist.com/product_boards.html

strathmoreartist.com

Don't forget to check back often for Contest Updates & Announcements, News Updates, Products Announcements, Artist Tips & Techniques, Project Ideas and more!

While you visit us, register to use the new Strathmore Artist Message Board.

