

Tip #76

Working with Colored Pencils on Toned Paper

If there's any drawing technique that seems akin to sculpting, to me, it's drawing with light and dark colored pencils on toned paper! You allow the paper to provide the middle value, add darker areas for shadows and light or white ones for light-struck areas, and - magic!

Of course you can get similar effects with pastels, ink and gouache and other mediums, but colored pencils are handy, easily available, non-messy - and just plain fun.



Art 76-1, Toned Paper Montage

Use just a light and dark on the toned paper-try a midtone like tan or gray blue, or even go with black-or choose colored pencils that will complement the effect you're after, as I did in drawing my cat, Merlin, upper right and bottom, middle. Do quick sketches enlivened by white, or complete drawings-whatever you like, it's fun and effective.



Art 76-1

Art 76-2, Start out with basic shapes-and yes, still with the cats! They're such handy models...

I'd taken a photo with strong light and shadow that I really loved, and decided to try it on black paper for maximum effect. I laid in the first shapes and colors fairly simply, using very light guidelines - you can still see them near the foot and the edge of the shadow.



Art 76-2

Art 76-3, Begin to modify and develop them

I emphasized the reflected colors in the shadows under his neck and cheek as well as his shoulder, worked on the fur, and continued to develop the wood surface he was lying on. I made the mistake of using Indigo in some of the shadow areas, and it scanned much more noticeably than it showed in person



Art 76-3

Art 76-4, Adjust values and colors, and finish details

Finally, I toned down the Indigo by going over it lightly with a red brown, which helped neutralize it (though since it was really only in the scan that it showed up, I could have left it as it was.) Then I refined the shadows, and finished up the details.

When you're working with a photo with high contrasts like this one, sometimes it's difficult to see the details that are in shadow. You can tweak the exposure to a much lighter version and the details of form and shape will show-that's how I got the details in the leg that was in deep shadow at the top of the drawing.



Art 76-4

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