



Tip #125

Unusual (Found) Drawing Tools

Other than a burned twig you pull out of your campfire and use like vine charcoal (yes, I HAVE done that, in a pinch!), all of the unusual drawing tools we're exploring this time require a liquid to dip them in ... ink, diluted paint, even berry juice. (Why not? Our ancestors did.) You don't have to buy the latest tool, you can MAKE it.

Pat Southern-Pearce uses sticks she picks up off the ground, sometimes, dips them in ink or watercolor and makes stunning, crisp, clean paintings and drawings with them. (She also uses a palette knife to delightful effect ... check her Flickr set, here, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/37479296@N06/sets/72157623887333087/>)

You can also use a chopstick, a bamboo skewer, or a piece of dowel rod sharpened to a point. Pick a dead branch off one of your bushes. Have fun!

125-1 Bamboo Skewer



I did this little demo for one of my newer North Light books, *Watercolor Tricks & Techniques*, located at <http://www.cathyjohnson.info/bookpages/watercolortricks.html>. Pretty versatile for a freebie, isn't it!

125-2 Ent Pens

Cut your own pen! They don't have to be made from a quill (though you can buy those in the calligraphy section of some art supply catalogs.) Bamboo and reed pens have been around for a long time -- you can find them in the Asian or Sumi section of most big art catalogs.



If you wish, cut a pen from *living* bamboo if it's available, but what I did was use one of the thin bamboo garden supports I got for trellises for my cucumbers! One of these long, whippy sticks would make a dozen pens. I just made two, and they work beautifully. Choose the pen length you like, then cut the nib as if you were doing a quill pen. (You may want to soak your uncut pens in water for a day or two to make them easier to cut.) You may have to cut several or re-cut to get the angle you like, but it's very liberating! Use a very sharp blade—craft knife, box cutter, X-acto.

(Check out tip #124 for a demo on how to cut quills. You may want to soak your uncut pens in water for a day or two to make them easier to cut.)

125-3 Ent Pen



I cut this one from a honeysuckle bush, and then just had to draw with it. It helps if your twig is hollow, like this or the bamboo. I wouldn't really recommend leaving the wild growth of twigs though ... it was just FUN!

125-4 California Beach Shack

Put your new toy to work. Just make a nice rich puddle of watercolor and dip your sharpened brush end in it, then draw – either on a plain sheet of paper or as a linear accent, as I did here.



125-5 Bristle Brush



I often sharpen the end of my brushes, particularly those I travel with. I always have a small double-duty bristle brush like this one, so I can draw with paint with one end and spatter or scumble with the bristles. I used that on the painting above. Handy!

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