



LISA'S STEPS
FOR CREATING
GREAT PASTEL
PAINTINGS

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STEPS FOR GREAT PASTEL PAINTINGS

Key Points:

Paint what you see and not what you think you see.
Constantly refer to your reference.
Work from hard pastels up to soft pastels as much as possible.

Key words: Color, Value, Shape

1. Sketch

Lightly sketch your composition. Use a pastel pencil in a light-middle grey or other neutral color. No need to put in every detail. Pastel is opaque so you will probably cover parts of your initial drawing.

2. First Color Layer-middle values

Apply a middle value local color on all sections of your painting, including background in most cases. Example: If your lemon is yellow you will apply a middle value yellow.

3. Shadow-darker values

As a general rule, begin placing the darker values. Pay attention to color, shape and value as you paint the darkest sections of your painting. Most people do not use dark enough colors at this stage but this is what creates nice contrast in a painting.

4. Lighter Colors-lighter values

Put in the colors and values that are lighter than the initial middle value color (step 1). IGNORE the highlights as you place the slightly lighter values on your painting. Pay close attention to the shapes relative to each other as you apply your color.

5. Fine tuning-detail and observation

By now you have the basic structure of your painting and your paper is covered with color. At this stage reassess the placement of shapes, the values of the colors, and the colors themselves. Smaller details will be added as you check your work carefully and compare it to your reference.

6. MORE OF STEP 5

Going the extra mile is what distinguishes a great painting from a good one. Go get a cup of coffee and then come back and look at your painting. Demand excellence. Does something bother you? Put it in!

7. Highlights

This is the icing on the cake! This is the stage at which your painting comes to life. Whether you are painting a landscape, a still life, a portrait, or wildlife, this is the most rewarding step. This step is reserved for the very lightest values. With pastel, for the lightest areas you will be using the softest pastels.

Congratulations! You have completed a pastel painting!