

# Albright Art Supply

## Sketching with Charcoal

There are basic tools one can use when sketching with charcoal. The various charcoals include charcoal pencils, which come in various hardness; compressed charcoal blocks; and charcoal sticks.

### Basic Mark Making

An artist can create any type of mark needed to create a representational or abstract piece. There are various marks a person could try. They are:

- Parallel hatching: a basic form of hatching where parallel lines are drawn closely together.
- Contour hatching: the hatching marks are not in a parallel line but follow the curve of the object being drawn.
- Cross-hatching or 4-way hatching: this type of mark making is well-known by many artists. The artist creates hatch marks (either parallel or contour) then another set of hatch marks are drawn on top. The new marks are usually perpendicular to the original marks.
- Loose circles.
- Marks of varying widths.
- Pointillism: small dots (though small strokes could also be used) are applied to a surface that visually blend together from a distance.

### Common Blending Techniques

When working with charcoals, an artist will want to blend charcoal on the surface at some point. An artist can use blending sticks, tortillions, and a chamois cloth. Other items that have been used are cotton swabs and the artist's finger to blend. As with pastels, some artists choose not to use their finger to blend. The oils on your hand may affect the area you are blending. Also, the crystals may get crushed by your finger and lose their luminosity. Instead of your finger, an artist may choose to use a piece of Insulation Pipe for blending.

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#### Classes:

Interested in instructional or online classes? Remember to check out Concord Art and The Umbrella Arts Center.

#### References for Extra Reading

Albright Art Facebook Live Presentation: Charcoal Sketching  
<https://www.facebook.com/141264825912953/videos/1520852987954123>