

## **The Different Types of Underpainting in Pastel Painting**

### **Adapted from Facebook Live Presentation**

This handout is a supplemental guide to the discussion on surfaces used for pastels, types of soft pastels and how to blend pastels. A demo on UArt paper was presented on our Facebook page.

**There are three ways to do an underpainting.**

**1. Completely Dry**

The artist lays down color without adding any liquid such as alcohol or water. On top of this layer, Nu Pastels or pastel pencils could be used to create details. Completely Dry pastel artwork can be done on charcoal paper or pastel paper such as Canson Pastel Paper. It has a bit of a tooth to the surface to grab onto the pastel pigment.

**2. Dry Underpainting**

It is also known as Smeared Underpainting. You lay down colors (local or complementary) then using a blending stick or piece of insulation pipe to rub the pastel into the surface.

**3. Wet Underpainting**

Like the Dry Underpainting, the artist lays down the pastel (Nu Pastel, Soft Pastels, or Pan Pastels). The artist uses alcohol or water to set the pigment into the surface thus creating a painting. The artist chooses to use local or complementary colors in the underpainting.

With the Dry Underpainting or Wet Underpainting, the artist locks in the color into the paper surface. It is done so the top layers will not mix with the color underneath. An underpainting can be used for many reasons. Some may want to get past the blank page by putting some color on to it. Others will use it to plan out color placement and establish values and tones. It will also help with the composition of the work.

Wet Underpaintings are best on a paper such as Mi-Teintes Touch Paper, UArt paper, or papers on a board, which gives an even sturdier base because they are heavier and accept water or alcohol without buckling.

### **Local Color versus Complementary Color Usage**

An artist can use local or complementary colors when working on an underpainting. Local color is the color you see such as the sky is blue, and the grass is green. Complementary colors are colors on the opposite side of each other on the color wheel. For example, green's complementary color is red. Some use complementary colors to enrich the surface color that is placed on top of it. It can add depth as well as increase visual interest in the entire piece.

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## Texture in Pastels

An artist can add texture a few ways. First an artist can use excess pastel dust and press it into the surface. Another way to add texture is to drip acrylic paint on a heavier surface then apply a pumice gel to the surface for the pastel to adhere.

## Examples from Demo Artists at Albright Art Supply

We've had a few pastel artists present demos at Albright Art Supply. The first artist, Sonja Majstoravich, exclusively used Pan Pastels. She used Canson paper. It has a tooth or texture to the surface but is not sanded. She used the Pan Pastels as her base color then applied Nu Pastels or Pastel Pencils for details.

Our other artist, Kim Morin Weineck, tried Pan Pastels as an underpainting. It was her first-time trying pan pastel at least as an underpainting. She used water instead of alcohol and experienced the water balling up on the surface. She wasn't expecting it and let the paper completely dry before proceeding. She was able to put other layers on top and finish the artwork.

Larry Grob visited Albright Art Supply in early March 2020. During his visit, our attendees got to view Larry's set up for his pastel box. In one of his boxes, he arranged the colors like a color wheel. Some artists will do this or arrange them by one color in a row ranging from lightest to darkest value.

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## Classes:

Interested in instructional and/or online classes? Check out classes at Concord Art and The Umbrella Arts Center.

## References for Extra Reading

How to Draw with Soft Pastels – Art Tutorial

<https://www.fabercastell.com/blogs/creativity-for-life/how-to-draw-with-soft-pastels-art-tutorial>

Painting Mini-Lessons with Marla Baggetta

<https://paintinglessonswithmarla.com/minilessons/>

Pastels

<https://www.art-is-fun.com/pastels>

## Video Reference

Albright Art Facebook Live Presentation: Pastel Supplies

<https://www.facebook.com/141264825912953/videos/1477812195591536>

Pastel on our new UArt paper—Albright Art Facebook Live Presentation

<https://www.facebook.com/141264825912953/videos/1483891961650226>