

Drawing and Painting Tips from Don Conroy for Sightsavers 2011

1. Some of the best pencils for drawing are HB, 2B and 3B, which gives a softer line. b'H' pencils give a harder line so are mainly suitable for buildings etc.
2. Cartridge paper is very useful for drawing. It's often used in sketch pads.
3. Putty rubbers are great for rubbing out pencil lines without damaging the paper.
4. Dip pens and felt-tipped markers can be very good for sketching.
5. Using a dip pen and brush with watercolour paints can be very effective. Lightly sketch the subject you plan to paint. Lay your watercolour on it. When dry, go over pencil with black ink. This will create a strong image.
6. Watercolour painting became popular in the 19th century and is still very popular today. There are lots of inexpensive water colour sets to get you started. Good brushes tend to be expensive. Ask for advice in an art shop.
7. When creating a watercolour painting use watercolour paper or watercolour board. Have two containers of water. Clean your brush with the other container. Never leave your brushes bristles down in the water as it will knock the bristle head out of shape.
8. Remember, there is no one right way to paint or draw. Look at other artists in art books or galleries. See how they can tackle different subjects like trees, the sea, people etc.
9. Some people like to dampen the paper first before layering paint. This is called wet on wet. Others prefer working on a dry surface. Try a few practice runs before beginning your painting.
10. If painting a landscape scene, work from left to right with a broad brush. Remember the sky is always darker at the top and gets lighter as you near the horizon line.
11. Again, when working up a painting some people lightly sketch the scene before painting it. Some prefer to rub out the pencil lines when the painting is dry. Others leave them in. Both effects can work successfully.
12. Some advice on mixing paint:
 - a. Mixing colours: it is a difficult skill to master in any painting medium but here are hopefully some useful tips:
 - a.i. Primary colours are red, blue and yellow. They cannot be produced by mixing colours so that's how they get the name primary.
 - a.ii. When mixed in pairs one gets what's called secondary colours e.g. blue & yellow creates green, red & yellow creates orange, blue & red creates purple.
 - a.iii. When two colours mix with a third, this is called a tertiary colour. These are then known as neutral colours examples include browns, beiges and greys. It's all in the mix of colours.
13. Paintings and drawings can be achieved by many mediums; poster paints, coloured pencils, crayons, pastels, acrylics, gouache or oils. Find what appeals to you and enjoy the fun of creating your very own original painting. Good luck!