

Product Review: Masking Fluid

by Jan Jones

Heaven only knows what possessed me, but I took a photo that I liked and decided to make a colored pencil painting out of it. Well, what's different about that, you say? Raindrops, that's what, my photo was full of raindrops. To make realistic-looking raindrops with colored pencil, each one needs to have a highlight that is the white of the paper. Thus, my dilemma – how to make sure I leave a white highlight in each of the numerous raindrops throughout the photo transfer and value mapping process. I immediately thought of masking fluid and remembered that I had a bottle of it that I had purchased years ago. Hooray for me, I managed to find it -- Supernib by Masquepen. They may have changed the applicators in the years since I purchased mine, but this one is similar:



I love the applicator for making narrow lines and small dots. Mine also has a wire that remains in the narrow applicator tube to keep it from blocking up when it is not in use. However --- my masking fluid NEVER DRIED! It remained tacky for weeks and when I attempted to remove it, it left color on the paper. Obviously, not what I needed for my raindrops. *(I have since found out that I may have a bottle of faulty fluid or perhaps it deteriorated with age -- hmmm, just like me!)*

Well, a trip to DK Art Supply solved my problem. Dennis introduced me to a Molotow GrafX Art Masking Liquid Pump Marker.



Although the applicator is not as precise as the Supernib, it worked well for my purpose. I was able to put down lots of small dots for my raindrop highlights or enough for a complete raindrop and was pleased to find that the fluid dries immediately upon applying. I was careful when applying colored pencil over the top of the masking fluid because the sharp point can easily remove it, but I was able to see the small dots with no trouble because the fluid is blue. Once I completed the area surrounding a drop, the dried fluid was easily removed to reveal the white of the paper. On occasion, I used a Grafix Rubber Cement Pick-Up eraser to remove dried fluid that had been applied too thinly.

Bottom line: I can only recommend the Molotow. Keep it in mind for protecting small areas in your paintings while you complete the area around it.