

How to set up your “Workspace” before creating your painting!

An Artist sets up the workspace before beginning to create their artwork. It is similar to the Chef in the kitchen = get all of your tools for cooking to be placed near the bowl, mixer, ingredients, measuring spoons, etc must all be within your reach as you prepare the mixture for cooking. So, the Artist must do the same procedure.

The Cook does not take out only 1 spoon to begin cooking and then get more utensils, ingredients as the Cook goes along!!! YET - I will see people using just 1 pencil to begin their work instead of setting out ALL of the necessary colored pencils, eraser, sharpener, cloth, etc. How you set up your Workspace is an important beginning step to get yourself ready and focused on how you will create the painting. Building the layer of colors, deciding if the values are correct or changes need to be made, means you must be “ready” to grab different pencils, add light and dark pencils as you work during the creation of the painting. Therefore, you must have ALL tools near your paper and ready to be used as you create.

Here is how to begin to set up your workspace properly:

- 1.) Place the paper onto the Plexiglass sheet. No tape is necessary (or use white only)
- 2.) Choose All of the colors of colored pencils for the area you are beginning to work in.
- 3.) Arrange these colored pencils from light to dark, then include White + Indigo Blue.
(This order will allow you to begin with the light layer and work to the darker layers)
- 4.) Place a Sharpener near paper, a Cloth to wipe the pencil, a Brush to sweep the area.
- 5.) Place the Eraser near the paper and the reference photos close to be easily seen.
- 5.) Use an Ott Light to see your blending and pressure and even coverage of layers.
- 6.) Any other tools needed - Q tips, Solvent, and all of your colored pencils nearby.

An oil painter will use a “Palette” which is an oval board where the colored paints are placed so that the painter can mix with the brush, using white or black to create values.

As a Colored Pencil Painter, you are “painting” with colored pencils because of the layering of the colors to create values, shades and hues of color. Therefore, you should place all of the selected colored pencils in a row, near your paper, in order of light to dark. This is your “Palette” - you layer each pencil as you choose,

deciding which color is correct or remove a pencil if it is not correct. This Palette of colored pencils near your paper, could be the Palette only for a particular small area of your painting. Then for another area, you may need a totally “different color Palette” as color areas change.

Sometimes I will have the White Colored Pencil and the Indigo colored pencil near my paper so I can “add” these when I want to change the light to dark value. The “darkest” colored pencil usually is the Indigo Blue, but could also be Dark Green, or Tuscan Red.

Also, I would get as many reference photos as possible before I begin my painting. One picture is not enough to get the range of values of light/dark colors. You should try to have multiple photos of the same subject to really study the color /light values, and to convey the accuracy of shape and space.

It is important “be in the Zone” before you create a painting. Setting up your workspace, gives your mind the time to think about your painting, to reflect on the colors, and what parts of the image you want to begin withit is this process to set up your workspace that allows the Artist to focus on the creation of the painting.