Visual Art Classes

Course: Pastels: Essential Techniques for Drawing and Painting
Program # #3450-18-LAAS
8 Wednesdays, March 4-April 29, 2020 (No class March 18)
7:15-9:45 pm
Humanities Building, Room 6231, 455 N. Park St.

Instructor: Brigitte Boucher
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A welcome note from your instructor:

I am looking forward to exploring the creative possibilities of soft pastel together! Whether you’re a beginner just getting started in art, an experienced painter eager to try a new medium, or a pastel enthusiast wanting to brush up your skills, this class is a great way to learn more and have fun with this versatile medium.

I will demonstrate a variety of techniques using different kinds of pastels and papers. You will get to try new things and experiment to figure out what works best for you. We will discuss color theory, light, value, and composition, and get inspired by looking at pastel works by historical and contemporary artists. I’ll also help you develop your observational skills as we work from simple still life setups and your own photo references.

Tips for success:

Pastels come in a wide variety of brands and hundreds of colors. As you gain experience, it’s a great idea to try different brands and expand the number of pastels in your collection. However, you do not need to have a large collection of pastels to begin.

I recommend 18-24 sticks as a good starting point—this will give you a variety of hues, plus some lighter tints and darker shades to work with. If this is cost-prohibitive, I recommend at least 12 sticks. Recommended brands: Prismacolor Nupastel and Rembrandt are good quality and affordable. Other high-quality brands include Sennelier, Unison, Great American, Art Spectrum, and Schmincke, some of which offer half-stick sets for a more affordable option.

Materials Fee: (Fees paid directly to instructor for course materials provided by instructor)
Basic fee: none
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Optional materials for purchase: none

Supply List: (Bring your own)
Note: All supplies are suggestions. Mention of a brand or retailer should not be considered UW-Madison endorsements. Students may make substitutions.

Required supplies:

- Artist-quality soft pastels (NOT oil pastels). At least 12 sticks; 18-24 is recommended
- Pastel paper (I recommend a pad of Canson Mi-Tientes for a good quality, affordable option. Other choices: Art Spectrum Colourfix, UArt, Pastelmat, Rives BFK). For variety, you may wish to try sanded paper (has a textured surface) as well as toned paper (colors other than white)
- Kneaded eraser and/or white plastic eraser
- Graphite pencils and/or charcoal (vine, compressed, or pencil)
- Paper towels or cleaning rags

Optional items:

- Latex/nitrile gloves (to keep hands clean)
- Dust mask
- Blending tools: chamois, blending stumps/tortillions
- Drawing board (to hold paper while working)
- Workable fixative