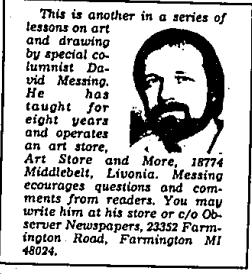


Felt tip pens are invaluable for cartooning



This is another in a series of lessons on art and drawing by special columnist David Messing. He has taught for eight years and operates an art store, Art Store and More, 18774 Middlebelt, Livonia. Messing encourages questions and comments from readers. You may write him at his store or c/o Observer Newspapers, 23352 Farmington Road, Farmington MI 48024.

I wanted that pen as much as I wanted a mousetrigger hat. It was then I learned that if a child really wants something, he simply has to pray for it — aloud at the table when he is asked to say grace. Parents can't resist. Within minutes after getting my felt tip pen I discovered they write on anything. I wrote my name on almost everything I owned. After vandalizing everything in the house I decided it was time to do some serious cartooning. So I drew Don Martin cartoons till the sun set.

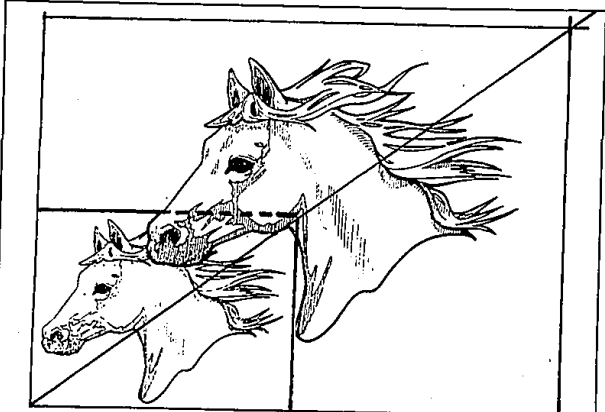
BACK THEN felt tip pens came in an assortment of one width and one color — black. But I didn't care. I cherished my felt tip pen. I placed it in the most hallowed place in my room, which was also the only clean place in my room — a small spot on top of my dresser in the middle of all the debris. That was the place for my dunce yo-yo and my felt tip pen. The one gloomy day the ink started running out. My beautiful black lines were turning into shades of gray. I felt like I did when my dog was sick. Then it finally happened, the ink was gone. But the future looked bright because the talk was that felt tip pens were coming out with an assortment of four colors — red, yellow, blue and black. Of course everyone at the dinner table knew

Artifacts

how badly I wanted those felt tip pens. Well now I am over 30 and I still cherish felt tip pens. Who could have guessed that they would be available in hundreds of colors. I have used every brand name available and my favorite is the "Design" line of pens, By Eberhard Faber. They come in an assortment of regular, fine and extra fine nibs. The color selection is more than adequate with 86 colors to choose from. There might be manufacturers that offer more colors but this is not necessary. All felt tip pens issue transparent ink which allows you to overlay color upon color. Design's best feature aside from the color assortment is the way it is packaged.

A SET of 12 markers, comes with a black plastic cube terraced to show the color and number of the markers. Each set costs around \$20, which is not bad when you consider the cost of a couple tickets to an amusement park. These pens will entertain you long after your roller coaster stomach has settled. My favorite sets are first the beginning assortment of 12 basic colors, then the pastel assortment. There are also a wood tone assortment and a gray assortment. With these four sets you can produce just about any color you desire. How much can you improve on a felt tip pen? Every once in a while a salesman will come in with the latest innovation. He will say, "Dave, this pen is laser corrected. It is color coded and has a comfort fitted design. It has a triple seal cap with a multifaceted tip design made of, not felt, nor nylon, but a new blend of space age fibers which will never become soft nor break down." And I just say to myself "Design, just stay the same."

WHEN I drew my first cartoons with my first felt tip pen the only paper I had was my spiral notebook paper. I soon learned that the ink bleeds through paper quite easily. Now, virtually every paper company makes paper for felt tip pens. These papers are light weight and do not allow the ink to bleed through. The softer papers with less or no rag content allow bleeding which is not always bad. These papers absorb so much ink that it gives a velvety look to the color. This is the look I often prefer for my cartoons. The permanent ink pens bleed on paper but the water base fine line markers do not. So I like to fine line water color marker my cartoon, then I erase any pencil lines and flood it rich colors with felt tip pens. The permanent ink (which bleeds) has no effect on the fine line water color ink. Many people are turned off to markers because they bought water color markers and since they do not bleed they show every stroke. So when you try to fill an area with color it looks like your drawing is made up of multicolor pieces of corduroy.



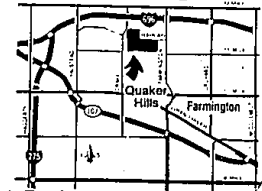
Q. Lately I have been asked to do commercial art jobs that are very specific as to size. I have trouble blowing up the artwork large enough to draw and still be the right proportion. A. Most of the time you can just double or triple the size of the art desired. For example: If the customer needs it to fit a three-inch by five-inch space than double it and work on an area that is six by ten or even triple that. If there is still a problem, then measure the finished size on the lower left hand corner of your illustration board. Draw a diagonal line thru the lower left and the upper right hand corner. Now you can simply choose any point on the diagonal and draw a line perpendicular to the horizontal and vertical line.

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