

Finding the right colors took artist time, patience

This is another sixth 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. Questions and comments may be addressed to him at his store or c/o Observer Newspapers, 23353 Farmington Road, Farmington MI 48024.

By David P. Messing
special writer

I had pictured my last day at Wayne State University many times during the years it took me to graduate.

I would be waiting on the overpass to the vacant lot where I parked laden down with books, portfolios and my brief case. Behind me would be the enormous campus. I would put everything down, then turn around and, with a sigh of relief, wave goodbye.

But, as it turned out, I was so glad to graduate I didn't even turn around. I did, however, manage to catch a last glimpse as I changed lanes on the expressway.

As a matter of fact, my drawings are

still rolled up in a tube somewhere in my attic. Even though I walked away with a degree in art, I was unhappy with my ability to do color drawings. Oil seemed too slow and watercolor seemed to loose. Colored pencils were very weak and felt tip pens streaked or bled too much.

I EXPERIMENTED for a long time because I liked the richness and speed of the felt-tip pens. Finally I found how to blend color pencils over felt-tip pens to produce photographic realism or watercolor freedom. I began using this technique even in cartoons for magazines.

Then a printer friend of mine invited me to a show where different art suppliers had their products displayed. Pantone showed many works of art using their felt tip markers. It was then I realized that my own drawings seemed to be a better use of the medium. I asked one of the representatives if I could show them my work and they liked them so much that they sponsored me for one year.

What a dream come true — draw all I want, using any materials I want and it was all supplied by the company.

Here is one of my favorite techniques for a realistic use of felt tip pens and color pencils.

Find a picture full of detail and color. Then on drawing paper do a light pencil sketch. One of the best papers

Artifacts

for this is "Drawing new No. 400" by Strathmore. Now reduce all your "sketchy" lines to one clean line. Don't do any shading at this point, merely outline as many shades and shapes as you can see. This stage is very similar to a paint-by-number painting.

NOW TAKE a very fine line felt tip pen and carefully outline, using the appropriate color. Pantone's "rasp point" is my favorite. They are only about 80 cents and come in good range of colors. For example, you would use a blue pen for a blue jay or fish. Brown for a deer or shack and black for just about anything. Give this ink about 10 minutes to dry and then erase your pencil lines with a kneaded eraser or a white rose eraser.

Now pick out a color which is close to the main color of your subject. If, for example, you are drawing a butterfly you would notice his color ranges from black and brown in shadowed areas to almost white or light yellow in highlighted areas. His base color is yellow. Make him all yellow with whatever marker you choose.

I'll tell you a secret if you don't tell. When I was sponsored by Pantone I

constantly had to go buy markers by other manufacturers because they were so limited in their browns and tans. So I recommend felt tip pens by Design. They come in a terrific assortment of colors and they are only about \$1.49 each.

One other good aspect is that you can buy them in a set of 12 for about \$30 and with that comes a tiered base so the markers are not rolling all over the place. The best assortment to buy first are the No. 300-1, the pastels, wood tones and gray tones. Any of these will be a good start.

AFTER YOU have base colors of yellow, black and orange, the butterfly should look good but rather two dimensional. Any artwork without highlights and shading appears very flat. Now the next step moves you very close to realism depending on how well you look at your model.

Change every color with color pencils. By that I mean where there is yellow make it light yellow by using a white pencil and where there is dark yellow or brown use a tan or brown color pencil. Every color must be highlighted and shaded with color pencils.

In real life, color alters drastically according to light, shadows, reflected light and color. If you have a red apple, for example, it's color appears to be white where the light reflects on it and

Q. Where is the best place to sign a painting or drawing?

A. I tell my students to sign their work in the media they use. That is to say, pencil sign in pencil, ink sign in ink, paint sign in paint etc. As far as the location of your signature, I suggest you take a good look at your art-

work and place your signature where it would balance your work, but not be too noticeable or demand too much attention. Always sign in the artwork or at least very close to your artwork. If your signature is too low, it may be covered up by the mat or frame, also if your work is printed in a magazine or catalog it would surely be lost.

It is many, many shades and tints of red everywhere else. If you look closely, you will probably see little yellow dots, tints of green and maroon in some areas. This apple can also reflect the lights and colors of objects nearby.

YOUR HAND merely follows the orders from your mind. So your subject must be clear in your mind so that it can become clear on your paper. One approach to making your subject clear in your mind is to verbally describe it or write a detailed description of it.

This butterfly has black structured veins, waxy in appearance with slate gray highlights. The body of the wings look like stretched silk dyed in a full range of colors. His fuzzy body, all black with white dots, seems too plump to fly. The antennae seem to sparkle like black fishing rods whipping back

and forth in the air. Use your model and don't be limited by it.

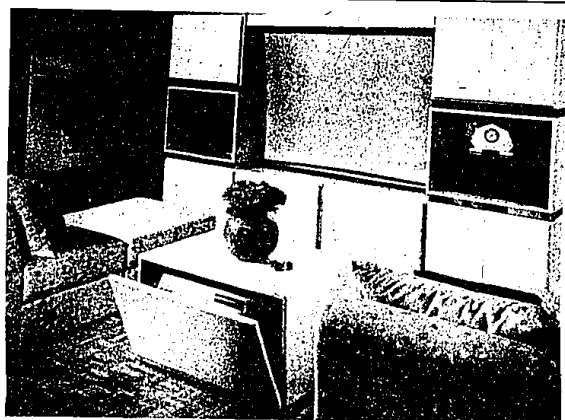
For instance, if this particular butterfly had the tip of its wing broken off it would be better to draw the wings whole than to draw it broken. If you drew it broken, it would look unusual and you would find yourself answering questions like "How come this here wing looks funny?"

Here the artist is one up on the photographer, but he is rarely asked such questions because people do not question a photograph.

So the hardest part of drawing the butterfly was getting to the fine line outline. Coloring is merely a step up from the coloring you did as a child. Remember to never be satisfied with just the base colors. Always study your model and copy those same colors, highlights and shades.

Media system

This media wall system and projection cocktail table are representative of a new line of contemporary furniture. The wall system, designed by Milo Baughman, houses a Sony projection TV with a 72-inch screen between acrylic-finished, modular cases. The cocktail table has a hinged side for the projector lights. The units are available in an almond-lacquer acrylic finish. The manufacturer is Thayer-Coggin.



International Institute shows display of universal symbols

Seventeen universal pictographs in more than 250 different ethnic forms highlight a new exhibit at the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit.

The exhibit, which opened this week and runs through May 1984, is designed to give "a total ethnic experience in terms of music, dance, games and folk tales," according to Cyril Miles, a Highland Park Community College art teacher who helped coordinate the exhibit.

"We selected 17 universal pictographs," Miles said. "Of course there are 2,017 we could have selected, but we chose ones that appear to have the most common universality, that give you a sense that the human beings over there are looking at images similar to what we are looking at over here, that we have something in common."

The 17 universal symbols include the sun, moon, stars, trees, fish, birds, the cross, triangle and wheel.

The institute is part of a nine-year exhibition schedule that debuted last year with an exhibition of universal body adornment. Future exhibits will highlight number systems, alphabets, proverbs, folktales and mythology.

MILES, WHO has taught art, art history and design for 42 years, credits her husband, Arnold, and Institute staff members Pamela Stots and Frank Stalans with helping to coordinate the exhibit, which "presents pictographs in encyclopedic or dictionary form," Miles said.

"We have no funds, so we just do what we can. Where we couldn't get actual artifacts, we replicated them as best we could."

Miles said the exhibition will be used in conjunction with teaching activities, with groups of school children from throughout the metro area visiting the institute.

The function of the International Institute, a Torch Drive-supported agency, is to "communicate a sense of understanding between all people of the world," Miles said.

The institute is at 111 E. Kirby at John R. in the Detroit Cultural Center. The exhibition is free. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Phone 871-8600 for more information.



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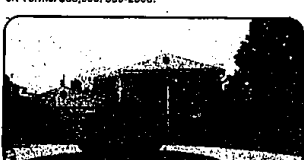
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