

Alcohol markers offer alternative

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.

By David Messing
special writer

I remember when I was little, no make that young, I was never little. I think I wore the same size waist when I was 10, that I am wearing now. Every time Mom took me shopping for clothes we ended up in the "Huskies" Department. I think she had to buy short men's work clothes for me because she would always cut the hammer loop off the leg when we got home.

Anyway, I would heap my toys on the living room carpet in front of the TV. There I would play and wait with bated breath or maybe Three Musketeer breath for the Mickey Mouse Club. I remember several times my parents would pass by and say, "Boy you kids sure have the toys these days." On my way into the kitchen to write this article I passed by 5-year-old son with his Castle Greyhound and a housepayment worth of adventure figures. My 12-year-old sits in concentration as he is engaged in some video warfare. My 14-year-old is doing his math, punching a solarized calculator and all the while, wired with Walkman head phones. Believe it or not I just said to them, "Boy you kids sure have the toys these days."

"THESE DAYS" technology is producing new products at a rapid rate, and art materials are no exception. At least once a month some new item is introduced to us at the art store. And I, the 36-year-old Musketeer, am fascinated like a child with a new toy. But is it a good item, does it work, will it sell, is there really a need for it or can I personally endorse the item? Now I do sell a certain few items that I really don't think are necessary but there is a demand for them and I want to service my customers.

Cost is a big factor in considering new or alternative art materials. It is no wonder that some parents turn kind of gray as their art student off spring reaches a \$14 watercolor brush that their teacher specifically listed on the materials list. Why in the world does a first time water color student need a \$14 brush? I just worked myself up to those kind of brushes and, believe me, I get a pretty good discount at the Art Store. It is true that in art materials you get what you pay for, but to begin

artifacts

with young students rarely appreciate the quality of the items their parents are going broke to purchase. So begin with the student grade materials and work your way up to the more professional grades as you see the need.

Now when it comes to new items I, more than anyone, love to experiment. You should see the expression on the face of the representative change as I begin investigating his or her new item. Within seconds I have that few product disassembled and all attached parts are... unsatisfied. With a note of concern the representative says something like, "are you sure you can put it back together?" I also ask them about 20 questions that they never considered. By the time I stock an item I am quite familiar with it.

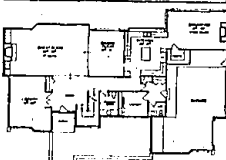
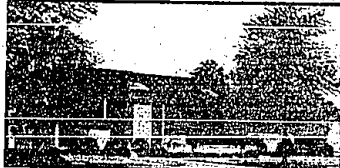
So here is something new from Eberhard Faber. No one is more aware of price increases than the manufacturer. It is, in fact, the manufacturer who is the initiator of the increase. As labor and materials increase so does the distributor who then passes the bad news to the art stores who then are forced to increase their sticker prices. Eberhard Faber is fully aware that the cost of their felt tip Design marker is retailing for \$1.75 each, when in an assortment of 12 pens comes to the tune of \$22.

SO THEY have introduced a new concept in markers and in fact the name, "Concept." Concept markers are an alcohol base marker as opposed to their more expensive oil derivative base marker. The concept marker looks the same, has a regular nib and a fine nib and behaves almost identically to its more expensive brother. I say "almost" because it doesn't bleed as readily as the oil base marker. This means that when you fill in large areas, your colors tend to streak rather than blend into a smooth even color. This, however, can be overcome with a second coat of the same color which makes the intensity twice as rich and produces a velvety smooth color.

The Concept marker is not meant to replace the more expensive Design. The Design, in my opinion, is the best professional grade marker because of the assortment of color and the possible life of the pen. Now the Concept is a good way to begin using markers. The good news is that you can get an assortment of 12 colors for as little as \$12 and singly for \$1 each.

CORRECTION: Because of a shortage of space the Observer occasionally cuts the Artifacts column. Last week I mentioned that a light copy paper sign 3 foot by 4 foot could be as little as \$15 and heavy copy could go as high as \$50. Last week's article read "light copy" \$50 (that was a mistake).

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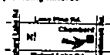


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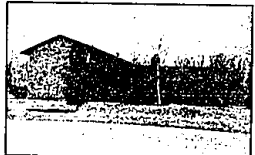
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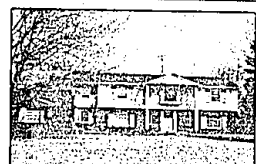
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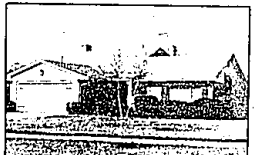
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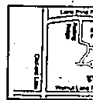


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