

# Choosing the right paper takes some study

By David Messing  
special writer

"I'd like a bottle of Coke to go with that carry-out order please!"  
The man behind the counter said, "Sure, what kind?"  
"What kind?" I asked in wonder.  
"Yea... ya want the new Coke, Classic Coke, or Cherry Coke?"  
"Oh, I got you now," I exclaimed. "Just give me a diet Coke."  
"Well, ya want low sodium, caffeine free or just regular diet Coke?" he asked patiently.  
Feeling like a dummy, I said, "Well, gee, I guess I'll try low sodium, caffeine free."  
He turned and said, "One liter or 1/2 liter," and watched as I took the first slug.

## artifacts

"It's good!" I said, "but if it hasn't got any calories, has no salt and doesn't even have caffeine... what in the world am I drinkin' it for?"  
We both laughed and I turned to go out the door thinking, "Boy... I never knew there were so many choices when it comes to just buyin' a Coke."  
You know I see that same bewildered look in some customer's eyes when they come into the art store and say "I was just looking for some art paper." Believe me there are many more types of art paper than there are kinds of coke. So let's take a week or two and

talk about the papers and boards and what media they are best suited for. Wow! I just started listing some of the basic papers and boards and there are over 30 names on my list... this may take three weeks. First let's look at some basic papers.

**SKETCHING PAPER:** When a pad reads "sketch" it is usually a very thin, medium toothed paper. It is intended for light and loose sketching and development of ideas and concepts. If a drawing begins to develop quite nicely you really should transfer it to a better quality paper. Sketch paper is best suited for pencil/colored pencil, charcoal pencils and fine point felt tip pens.

**DRAWING PAPER:** It is good for pencil, charcoal pencils, colored pencils, technical pens and all felt tip markers. "Drawing" is even OK for

charcoal, pastels and oil pastels. However, it lacks the sharp tooth often appreciated in charcoal papers. It is probably the best single pad of paper you can buy.

**LAYOUT BOND:** Layout or bond is really just cheap paper. It is thin, light toothed and slightly transparent. This is throw away stuff. When you do a quick layout or sketch, if part of it is good you trace it through to a new sheet then throw away the first sketch. Continue with this process with layout until you have developed your design or sketch. Like "sketch" this paper is not suitable for finished art. But it is excellent for developing an idea.

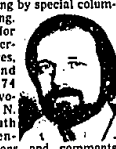
**TRACING PAPER:** This paper is similar to layout bond. Tracing is, however, much more transparent than bond. So if your layout or sketch is too intricate to trace through layout bond then use tracing paper. Tracing paper is useful in line art for silk screen photo emulsion technique and several other special applications. Best of all it is good for... tracing.

**MARKER BOND:** Marker bond seems a lot like layout bond. But place a marker on a layout pad and it will penetrate several sheets. On marker bond, the felt tip ink will not even penetrate a single sheet. It usually can accomplish this feat by being either a high rag or 100 percent rag paper. This accounts for its cost, being somewhat higher than bond papers. Marker bond has a nice tooth to receive colored pencils over felt tip marker base colors.

**NEWSPRINT:** This is again a pad of throw away paper. It is intended for quick gestures and is best suited for charcoal. It is also an excellent pad to practice airbrush as it is very absorbent. I have framed finished pastels and drawings on newsprint. Although the paper looks fine for several years I doubt that it will stand the test of time. Please remember that if any drawing seems to be developing nicely, hurry and transfer it to good paper or board before your inspiration lifts. I probably wouldn't put any more effort or inspiration on newsprint than I would on a chalkboard with a piece of

chalk. All papers are good for the media and use that they are intended. What they are intended for is what I hope to talk about for the next few weeks. Gee I'm thirsty, I think I'll have a low sodium, caffeine free, half liter of diet Coke.

This is another in a series of lessons on art and drawing by special columnist David Messing. He has taught for 10 years and operates two art stores, Art Store and More, 18774 Middlebelt, Livonia, and 265 N. Main, Plymouth. Messing encourages questions and comments from his readers. You may write to him at his store or in care of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 33203 Grand River, Farmington, Mich. 48024.



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