

A few successes dull the memory of many failures

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



By David Messing
special writer

When I was in college I was introduced to many media basic to the arts. But what really fascinated me was the mixing of media. Taking the established ways of drawing and painting and changing them a bit. Usually my instructors enjoyed the variety, or the fact that I was experimenting on my own.

Once, in a charcoal drawing class, I air-brushed in black ink, one of our assignments. The teacher loved it, and gave me an A. On the other hand I tried experiment in a painting class and my teacher didn't like it at all, and didn't get an A.

The point is, however, that if you experiment, you should expect a few successes and many, many failures. But the spontaneity and excitement of those few successes dulls the memory of those many, many failures.

So now that you have done some pen and ink drawings, how about something new? Pen and ink on colored paper or colored mat board is very nice, especially if you color in your drawings with colored pencils. The only colored pencils that I recommend for this is Berol Prismacolor or Faber Castell Spectracolor. I like their rich opaque color and they go on dark colors well, especially on black mat board.

Colored mat board is my favorite, but if you can't afford, or don't want to buy big sheets of mat board, Strathmore packages the same paper that is glued to mat board in a wide range of colors for about \$2.30-\$3.50.

TRY A PEN and ink drawing on illustration board (hot press is smooth and cold press is rough) or you could also try water

Artifacts

color paper. Erase your pencil lines, then wash in rich colors in water color. Mix your colors a little brighter because when they dry they "flatten out" or "dull down."

Also be very loose with your color. By that I mean let the colors flow together and don't be too concerned with staying in the lines of your drawing. So if you have a relatively "tight" pen and ink drawing with a "loose" water color washed over it you will probably have a very nice picture.

This type of picture in a show or on the wall brings out the psychoanalytical part of "art critics" who would probably say, "the pen and ink is so very tight and structured that I believe it speaks of his need for order and structure in life. The looseness and fluidity of the colors exemplify his desire to be free and to cross over established boundaries."

If they analyzed my artwork like that, I probably would say something intelligent like, "er... huh... yeah, that's exactly what I meant."

SCRATCHBOARD is especially made for pen and ink. The white scratch board has a clay coating, and you simply draw your main structure and details in pen and ink (or brush and ink). Then you take a scratch point and scratch off any mistakes or add texture, or lighten up any dark areas.

Familiar to most people, however is the scratchboard that is coated black and the scratchpoint produces a white line on a solid black background. I will cover this technique in more detail later.

Pen and ink on glass is always a treat. This technique offers the "cleanliness" of pen and ink and the versatility of scratchboard. Plus the transparency of glass is unique, to add a colored board for the background gives it a beautiful finished touch. The best ink for adhering to glass is Higgins Black Magic. When you use a scratchpoint this ink will not blister or "pop" off the glass. The best way to frame ink on glass is to reverse it. This protects the ink from damage.

Sometimes this is a problem, especially if there is lettering in your drawing, because you have to letter reversed. Other times your drawing just doesn't look good reversed. If you can't reverse it, then just

add another piece of glass over the top of your original.

PEN AND INK on treated acetate is a favorite with many of my students. It is similar to ink on glass in that you first do a pencil sketch on white paper then lay acetate over your drawing and trace in ink. Acetate however receives water base paint where glass requires oil.

So your work can become rich with color as you paint on the reversed surface which makes your colors opaque and vivid. I recommend Gouache for this technique. I have heard this paint called "Designers colors," "Tube tempera," "Gouache," "Gouache," and "Opaque stuff." Well what ever you want to call it. It's really Gouache and it simply means opaque watercolor. It is pigment in a casten or milk base.

There is a special paper that cartoonists and commercial illustrators use called coquille board. This is very textured and when you shade with a black colored pencil all your shades are reduced to dots. Coquille receives ink very well and with the addition of gray areas in dots your artwork is automatically camera ready.

PEN AND INK on smooth finished wood is beautiful. Pen and ink on natural smooth leather has a nice effect. I even enjoy looking for smooth rounded stones and after doing a "light" detailed drawing I varnish them to a nice gloss. So experiment. Don't just try the technique I have mentioned. My son Scott thought up something new at the age of 6. He did a felt tip pen drawing on the chest of his 4-year-old brother, Kevin.

Pen and ink is so versatile that it is fun to think up different ways of using it. Any time I or anyone mentions pen and ink it could also mean brush and ink. A pen tip limits your line width. So, if you need several line widths you need several pen tips or technical pens. The same round brush can range from a hairline to a 1/4 inch stroke.

For fine lines hold your brush perpendicular to the surface of your paper. Now press your fingers together slightly and lower the brush until the point touches the paper. Paint a quick fine line stroke, more with your hand than with your finger tips. To get a wider stroke simply lower the brush until more of the brush body is on the paper.

MY FAVORITE all-around brush is Beaux Arts by Grumbacher No. 6 to No. 4. These brushes are nicely tapered, they hold a lot of ink and best of all they are not very

expensive. For a full range of grays put a drop or two of ink on a plate or palette and add water to the ink. This will give you any gray you desire according to your mixture. So for an investment of about \$5 you can

get a bottle of ink, a pen holder and pen tip and a good brush. That small investment combined with your creativity can lead to an exciting future in art. Remember to experiment.



Q. What does "camera-ready" mean? I am just beginning to get some free-lance art jobs and this is the term often used.

A. "Camera-ready" simply means that the art work is ready to be photographed. So the artwork must be in black and white with dots for shaded of gray. Printers charge a "screen" or "half tone" charge for reducing photographs or drawings into dots. This can be done photographically. When commissioned, free-lance artists are usually asked to make the art work camera ready. This is a job I drew for Sundown Leather Co. First I did a simple pen and ink drawing then I added in "furry" textures with dots and short pen strokes. The shades of gray at the bottom of the seat are done with half tone sheets of film that you can buy at whatever percent of black you require, 10 percent to 90 percent.



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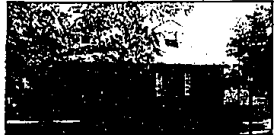
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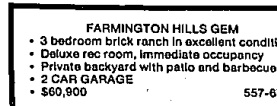
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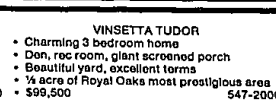
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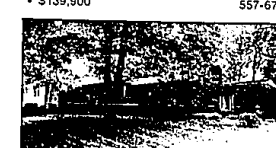
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