

MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT

FOR PET PORTRAIT &
ANIMAL ARTISTS



LEARN *my* CRAFT

CONTENTS

ARTIST: SEMA MARTIN

Materials & Mediums	3
Tools & Equipment	5
Technology & Filming	6
Studio & Storage	7
BOOKS & TEMPLATES	8





SEMA MARTIN

Hi there friend! I'm Sema Martin, a self-taught color pencil artist, and for the past eight years, I've dedicated myself to using color pencils daily to create portrait commissions and refine my skills. Throughout this journey, I've gained a lot of knowledge about various types of color pencils and discovered which ones best complement my drawing style.

When I first began drawing, I started with a small tin of Derwent drawing pencils. These were perfect for getting started and offered an affordable way to develop my skills as a color pencil artist. However, as I experimented with other brands, I realized the importance of investing in higher-quality pencils. The more expensive options provided significantly better saturation and depth, enhancing my artwork.

In this PDF, I'll share the color pencil brands I love to use, along with the other materials and must-have technology and studio equipment that are essential to my creative process. I'll also explain how I use them, based on my experiences and the evolution of my style. Remember, there's no right or wrong way to use these materials—what matters is finding your own unique approach.

With so many different brands of color pencils available, it can be challenging to determine which ones are right for you and your style. I've tried several and have narrowed it down to my two favorite brands, which I'm sure many of you will agree with.

MATERIALS & MEDIUMS

Faber Castell Polychromos

I think these are by far the best pencils I have ever used. They are highly pigmented and excellent for detail work. They are also lightfast, so the colors won't fade over time, making them perfect for combining with other textured mediums like pastels or wax-based pencils. The black pencil is my favorite for portrait commissions because it's very deep and covers the paper beautifully. I also love the variety of browns and grays, which are perfect for drawing fur and make color matching a breeze. Their cool grays are ideal for drawing white fur.

You don't need to start with the full 120-pencil set since there are many colors you might not use if you're just drawing animals. I started with the 36-pencil tin set and then bought other pencils individually.



Caran d'Ache Luminance 6901

I noticed many other artists using these pencils, and I was amazed by the bright, beautiful quality they produced. Yes, they are expensive, but I guarantee they are worth every penny. You can find smaller sets online, but I saved up and bought the full set of 76 pencils, and I'm so glad I did.

This set includes many useful colors that I had never used or even seen in other brands. These pencils are wax-based, making them excellent for creating base layers for portraits. Their soft texture allows for quick coverage of large areas. The brightness and vibrancy of these pencils truly elevate your art to a whole new level of beauty.

Caran d'Ache Pablo

I recently purchased the full set of these pencils after initially using the white pencil for highlights and whiskers in my portraits. I absolutely love how bright and pigmented these pencils are, and they layer beautifully over my luminance colors. The broad range of amazing colors is perfect for any subject.

These pencils remind me of Polychromos in terms of hardness, making them ideal for fine lines and details. They have quickly become my must-have for any color pencil artist looking to expand their collection with a fantastic new brand.



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MATERIALS & MEDIUMS

Pan pastels have revolutionized my portrait work. I use them as the base layer, blocking in mid-tones and the darkest areas. Using the soft knife tools, I apply the pastel in a circular motion, smoothing it out to ensure no white shows through the paper. Afterward, I layer on my luminance colors as usual, and finish with Polychromos and Pablos for the details.

While these pastels are on the pricier side, their high pigmentation means you only need to use a small amount. I recommend the three sets listed below, which are perfect for drawing any type of animal.

Pan Pastel Greys Set

I recommend this set for drawing any animals with white or black fur. Start by blocking in the colors, then use your colored pencils to add the fur details on top. Finish with a fixative to complete your artwork.



Pan Pastels Greens Set

I recommend this set for drawing backgrounds and landscapes. Start by blocking in the colors, then use your colored pencils to draw the fur details over the top. Finish with a fixative to seal your work.

Pan Pastel Browns Set

I recommend this set for drawing most animal fur types. Begin by blocking in the colors, then use your colored pencils to add the fur details on top. Finish with a fixative to complete your artwork.



Pastel Tools

Soft Knives - Soft Knives are one of the ways you can apply the pan pastel on your chosen surface, they give the most accuracy with the application and I prefer it rather than using a sponge or brush. Applying in a circular motion helps them blend into the paper well.

Covers - You can buy extra covers for your soft knives. Use a separate cover for each colour when applying to your paper.

Soft Mini Applicators - These are perfect for those little details and there are so many of them you don't have to worry about muddying your colours.

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

Tools

Papermania 3-Piece Embossing Tool - indent tools are perfect for creating whiskers and stray hairs.

Derwent rechargeable eraser - Small end perfect for eye reflections and whiskers.

Zest It Pencil Blend - perfect for creating a solid base layer to work from. Make sure it is left overnight to completely dry before you work over the top. Cannot use indent tools with this process.

Faber-Castell Dusting Brush 1600 - This is the best tool to keep your paper clean and avoid any smudge marks and fingerprints all over your beautiful artwork.

Frog Tape - I use this low tack tape for securing my portraits to the table as I draw. This doesn't leave any residue and comes off really easily once I am done.



Sharpeners

Jakar Electric Pencil Sharpener - automatically stops when the pencil is sharp. cannot sharpen certain pencil brands such as Caran d'Ache and Derwent.

Jakar Brass Double Hole Sharpener - This is such a beautiful piece of equipment. I love the weight of it and it is very easy to use. It creates a beautiful sharp point and can fit all brands.

Faber Castell Trio Sharpening Box - It has three separate-sized holes but I don't think it is useful for sharpening the Luminance pencils. Very helpful for when your pencils are too small for the other larger sharpeners.

Paper

Daler & Rowney Smooth Heavyweight - Thick, good for layering, off-white, affordable for beginners to practice.

Winsor & Newton Bristol Board Extra Smooth - brighter paper, high quality, and very smooth.

Clairefontaine Bristol Extra White - brilliant for holding many layers and very bright.

Strathmore Bristol - high quality, US sizing, totally in love with this paper as it can hold a lot of layers.

Canson Imagine Mixed Media 200g - Available in very large sizes and good quality paper.



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TECHNOLOGY & FILMING



Technology

Super Thin A3 Light Box - This is used to trace the outline of my pet portraits. The A3 size is best for me as it covers most sizes that I offer. For larger sizes I trace in sections.

Samsung Galaxy Tab - I love to use a large screen like a tablet to draw my portraits from. This is so I can easily zoom in and out of my reference photos and see all the details I need for my realistic work.

Canon Flatbed Scanner - This is a small A4 scanner but you can scan larger artworks in sections and automatically join them together in Photoshop. I scan in 600 dpi so I can make high-quality prints of my artwork.

Filming

Sony ZV-E10 - This has been an incredible camera for filming tutorials and videos for the [Learn My Craft](#) platform. You don't need to get anything more expensive than this unless you are making a movie!

Canon EOS camera - This is a great budget-friendly camera for product photos, progress photos, and videos.

Manfrotto Camera Arm - I use this to set up overhead filming. It is a very strong arm and can easily carry my DSLR and my Sony cameras.

Neewar ring light - For portable filming around the studio and for reels. It is very bright and fits both my phone and either of my cameras.

Hyperx S Microphone - Used for recording audio for my tutorials, reels and any other voiceovers. It is really easy to use and you can get an adapter that connects straight to your phone.

Softbox lights - I use these when I am filming reels, YouTube videos, and courses. They are great at lighting up a room.

Camera Desk Mount - This is perfect for securing my camera or phone to my desk for filming.



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STORAGE & PACKAGING



Pencil Storage

Perspex pencil/pen holders - I keep the pencils and pens in the main sections and pan-pastels underneath. For years I have used wooden pencil drawers. They are good, but it was time for a change. I wanted something where the pencils could be the star of the show, visible and on display and easy to quickly access whilst I drew. When you have as many pencils as I do now, that isn't easy to achieve.

Surfaces

Drawing Desk - I love this drawing desk because I prefer to draw on an incline. I used to use a tabletop drawing board but this built-in version is so much better and more stable. I added plexiglass over the top to protect the surface and to make it more durable.

Bookcase Desks - I've used these for either side of my drawing board and then placed my pencils on the shelves so I can easily see all of my colours as I draw.

mini table bin - I use for pencil sharpenings, gives a pop of bright orange and gold



Inserts & Packaging

When packaging and sending commissions, I include a variety of printed materials such as:

- **Certificates of Authenticity** - To authenticate the commission.
- **Artwork Care Guide** - Useful information for the customer on how to take care of their artwork.
- **Business Card** - For the customer to give out to friends or relatives.
- **Thank You Notes** - To thank the customer for their support and trust in commissioning your art.
- **Sticker of Logo** - To use for wrapping the commission in acid-free tissue paper, or on the front of the box. Something extra.

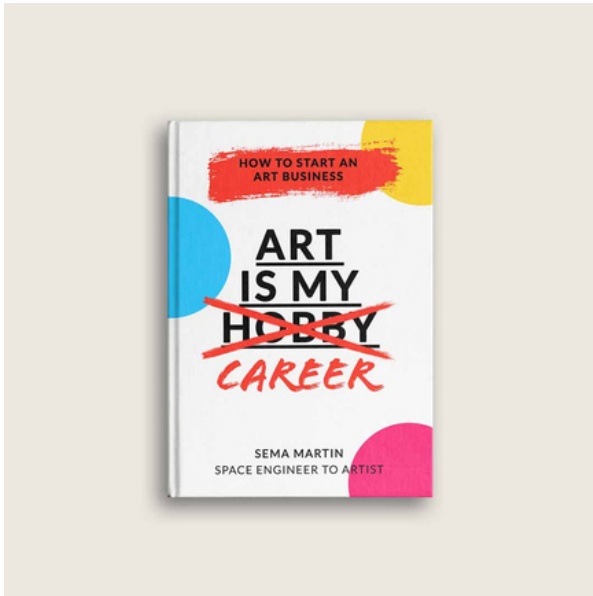
Presentation Folder - This is where I put all my inserts so they are not loose within the packaging.

Packing & Sending - Click [HERE](#) for all my packaging materials used to send my pet portrait commissions.

Black boxes - I am collaborating with [Tiny Box](#) who sell the black presentation boxes. They go up to size A3 and are available in 3 colours. You can use the code **ARTISTS10** for 10% off.

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BOOKS & TEMPLATES



Art is my career - How to start an art business.
Learn how to make money from doing what you love.

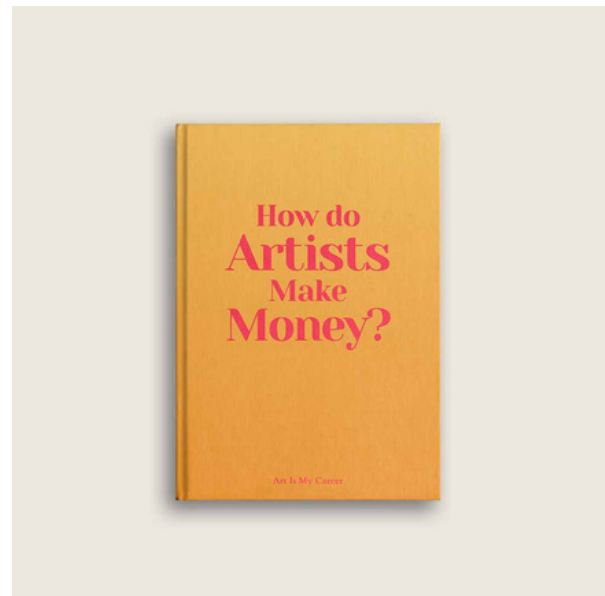


Practice Journal Pet Portrait Edition
100 Daily Exercises for Artists.



Commission Ledger for Artists

Keep track of your art commission sales and coordinate your waiting list.



How do artists make money?

25 Revenue streams for artists to thrive and grow.

Tag us on social media and get a share by using the hashtag #learnmycraft

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