

THEMATIC UNIT Nº 11

PASTEL AND DRY TECHNIQUES.

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11.1. DEFINITION.

The pastel paint is made of pure pigment, plaster and glue. With this mixture is made a paste which is shaped to shape of bar, and allowed to dry. Thus, the pastel belongs to the family of procedures with dry techniques that are those where the pigment is applied dry on the support, with the particularity of not depending on its setting, or the use of binders, or the prior dissolution in a liquid medium. The composition of the pastel makes it different from other types of paints such as tempera, oil or watercolor. As for support is common to use good quality and a good weight paper, neutral color usually white and light roughness, although the technique is versatile enough for been used on other surfaces. This is a convenient technique, fast and generally allowing corrections very easily, why is chosen by many artists.

11.2. A BRIEF HISTORY.

The development of pastels along the history of art is linked to the conquest of drawing as an independent technique and not only as a complement the painting. Its name derives from the word “*pasta*” dough that is formed by mixing powdered pigments with the gum that binds. The pastel begins to be used as a dry and fast medium to apply where the colour is added to the drawing to enhance the volume and move a step closer to the qualities of painting, especially in genres such as portrait and human figure. In the contemporary sense of the term, pastel is just over two hundred years. In any case, in the Renaissance are clear antecedents in these charcoal drawings enhanced with hints of gypsum, Crete, crayon or sanguine. In sixteenth century Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543) began using the pastel with some regularity being a pioneer in Germany. Other artists such as Jean François Clouet (1510-1572) in France, or Guido Reni (1575-1642) in Italy, anticipated pastel technique in his drawings enhanced with colour, in the eighteenth century in full Rococo is already one of the most used techniques, most notably among painters of the French court, leaving of been part of the drawing to become a painting medium with its own personality. Particularity of its franc colours and its capacity for reproducing truly fabrics, textures and lights made it inseparable from the art of portrait. It was the trendy medium for painting portraits, and it used to be used in a mixed technique with gouache.

Featured artists in this period, for use on the pastel are: Johann Alexander Thiele (1685-1752) in Germany, Rosalba (1675-1757) who introduced the pastel from Venice at the French court of Louis XV, Maurice Quentin de la Tour (1704 - 1788), Jean-Baptiste Simeon Chardin

(1699-1779), François Boucher (1703-1770), Jean-Baptiste Perronneau (1715-1783) and Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805).

The pastel, a symbol of the grace of the Old Regime, fell into disuse after the French Revolution in benefit of neoclassicism and oil painting. Although pastels never regained the place it occupied in the court of King Louis XV continued to be used prominently in nineteenth century pastel was a prized technique for its immediacy and spontaneity question that starts with Jean Francois Millet (1814-1875) and with a sense of vibration in pure color, enhancing the Impressionist painters. So Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and other impressionists such as Manet, Monet, Morsot or Renoir find on the pastel a very effective technique to capture so present principles in early impressionism as light, ephemeral, and the moment. Thereafter will be present and will be starring in all artistic movements to this day creating authentic partnerships around the pastel as with the French Society of Pastel in 1870 or the English Society in 1880 which contains famous names as Edward Scott (1855 -1918), Henry Tonks (1862.1937) or George Clausen (1852-1944).

Since then it will remain present in all later artistic movements that have passed through our days. If in principle pastel was a complement of drawing in portrait painting, today is a technique that knows no thematic, stylistic or conceptual barriers. In any case we must say that despite being used nowadays, the real golden age of pastel painting, was the eighteenth century.

11.3. AESTHETIC AND PLASTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PASTEL.

The pastel is a procedure halfway between drawing and painting, which has proved attractive to many artists. This is due primarily to the brightness and colour intensity, since there is a large proportion of pigment to binder ratio, which is at a minimum rate and is only a compactor to give a solid form and the powdered pigment manageable. This circumstance makes the colour of the bars similar to the colour of the pigment crude powder. Similarly, pastel has other advantages such as ease of handling, since it requires no palette, brushes, or diluents substances. The fact that the pastel is a dry technique gives the artist the advantage of speed, as they are not forced to wait for the paint to dry for applying new layers above. This painting also contains an interesting versatility allows you to paint with fine overlapping lines, obtaining colours by mixing optical vibration and also work with impasto and saturated colours.

Supports.

"Normal" support for the pastels is a good paper of uniform colour, and somewhat granular type Canson or Ingres. And if we have quoted the term "normal" is because other media are possible, as were some silk and velvet formerly used, tissues in which the cake was embedded with ease. Today we have excellent colour papers with a wide range of shades and variety of textures to choose one that best suits our future work, which we can start from the bottom intonation given by the paper and will be one or other as the subject advice. When working in a marina, for example, it is best to use a cold tone paper, a grey-blue, for instance. If the issue was a portrait, it would make sense to opt for a cream or warm part of the range of sienna or earths.

As for the support preparation for painting with pastels, you can if desired, prepare a hand applying very thin starch paste, and when it is still cool, sprinkle powdered pumice. Thus is obtained a more adherent surface facing better fix the pigment of the pastel bar.

The low binding capacity pastel's technique, makes it one of the techniques more fragile, but if you look to preserve it also loses some of its aesthetic qualities. One solution may be not to fix the cake and protect it with a glass that is not in contact with the painting. In case of using fixative, it should be fast evaporating as the alcohol base, never water.

11.4. TYPES OF PASTEL.

As mentioned, pastel painting is composed of pure pigment, plaster and glue. The quality and type of pastel are conditioned by the proportions of this mixture in the paint; high quality pastels do not contain plaster in its composition, since it is virtually a pure pigment bar of the highest quality possible.

For this reason, the colors of pastels are clean, intense and saturated, allowing the artists make beautiful works of high contrast and brightness. Today it is not advisable to produce your pastel colors, since there are many commercial brands that distribute, and manipulating powdered pigments can cause health problems if not taken adequate security measures.

OIL PASTEL, FATTY OR SOFT WAX.

Oil pastels are more like the wax crayons that soft pastels, ie in the preparation of the bars in place of aqueous binders such as tragacanth

gum, used oils, soaps, waxes, hydrocarbons or animal fat. Fatty pastels are more flexible and contain more amount of pigment than wax crayons but are difficult to handle at high temperatures, and tend to dissolve between the fingers when it's hot. The appearance of oil pastel unchanged until subjected to heat or diluted with white spirit or turpentine (it dissolves in cold).

Pastels can offer several shapes, such as scraping or textured finishes, overlapping colours which are then removed with tools to remove previous layers of colour to find the effect we want.

You can also get mixed colours, polishing the colour, but to create softer effects can be used turpentine.

The behaviour of oil pastels is completely different from the pure pastels, and more related to oil painting. Useful for sketches and notes in the open air, and easy to combine with watercolour washes, creating interesting effects of repellence reserve lean-fat.

11.5. OTHER TYPES OF DRY BARS.

The pastel shares with other types of bars, the particularity of been applied always dry. I.e., it is not necessary dissolvent for application. Into the dry procedures can list a number of techniques that have been associated more commonly the drawing but according to the intention of the artist and the treatment used may have rich hues of pictorial character, this is the case of the art of pastel. Here we name some of the most widely used dry bars:

CHARCOAL

Charcoal has been in use since men in the cave covered the walls with drawings using burned sticks. It is the simplest medium to get no longer just is burnt wood and usually comes from a willow or vine branch and can have varying thicknesses. These branches, subject to combustion end charred been still effective to stain any surface with ease, providing a deep black. This technique is very dirty, but can be erased and fade easily. It is used especially in the early stages of the work and to learn to draw. This technique can be used for more elaborate designs as does Jim Dine (1935), but it is natural to use the ease and vivacity of charcoal, like the more free drawings of Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) and Jean Francois Millet (1814-1875) that focused more on capturing the atmosphere, light and colour of the field. Edgar Degas (1834-1917) uses it to demonstrate the importance of line and form and with Henri Matisse (1869-1954) expressed their interest in shaping the movement.

Despite being one of the most ancient and primitive mediums to be used for drawing, in our days is made with very sophisticated methods, using usually willow cane as feedstock.

Types.

- Thin willow charcoal.
- Medium sauce Charcoal.
- Thick sauce Charcoal.
- Charcoal for decorations.
- Compressed charcoal rods, are made of compressed charcoal dust into bars with a binding medium.
- Vine Charcoal.
- Pencil coal, is a thin rod of compressed carbon covered with timber. There are also charcoal pencils made from rolled paper instead of wood, which are less messy and easier to handle. Its range goes from extra soft 6B 4B down the middle 2B, down to the hard HB and H.

Supports.

Most good quality papers are suitable for this technique, but the best are soft and grainy, they retain more carbon and better support rubbed and deleted.

Smoother surfaces' papers are good for compressed carbon, but to ensure their stay is more appropriate to use fixatives.

Technique.

The coal is suitable for both line to spot and is excellent for preliminary sketches, for ease of adjustment through a cotton cloth. Another manner of attaching the charcoal is parallel to the paper to create different thicknesses of lines. To achieve tonal effects can make use of the stump. When drawing with compressed charcoal, stumps serve to space the charcoal and create incremental or mixed tones.

GRAPHITE PENCIL

Graphite is a natural carbon such as coal, is created by the earth pressure on the wood. The coal is formed only by pressure, but a combination of pressure and heat to crystallize the amorphous carbon in sheets of graphite crystals. The graphite pencil is a graphite rod wrapped in a handle which can be wood, cardboard or secured within

a chuck. Does not give a black as intense as charcoal, but not smears so much, and above all, provides a more narrow and precise stroke. The pencils are graded according to its softness or hardness on a scale ranging from 8B to 8H: The letter B designates the softness and H hardness. The number prefixed to these letters indicates the degree of softness or hardness relative. Thus, a pencil 7B is softer than a 5B or 3B. The same numerical relationship is used to indicate hardness.

Historical reviews.

Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) used "silver tip" to get pictures very subtle, but had some drawbacks for the need to prepare the base. Therefore continued seeking, to find means of drawing more immediate and convenient to use as graphite.

Over the centuries artists have used the pencil in different ways: Ingres with minimal lines and subtle gradients. The Pre-Raphaelites, in great detail and precision. Degas with great ease, Picasso, with firmness and great expressive content.

The pure line drawing, perhaps the most difficult drawing technique, since it is not rectified. Great masters like Henri Matisse have excelled in this particular mode of graphic expression showing an amazing ability to solve in tones, colours, textures and shapes in a few lines.

Types of graphite pencils.

- Hexagonal standard pencil.
- Round drawing pencil.
- Chuck pencil.
- Hexagonal large pencil.
- Rectangular sketch pencil.
- Graphite bar.

Support.

Preferably white or clear coloured papers. The paper type depends on the absorption, weight, and texture.

Erasers.

Graphite is characterized by its ease of being able to delete, so we use different types of erasers. The most common are bread rubber and

standard eraser. In any case, personally recommend MILAN eraser mark because less greasy than other brands and therefore less messy.

COMPOUND PENCIL, CONTÉ AND SANGUINE.

Nicolas - Jacques Conté (1755-1805) was a painter, militar and pioneer aeronaut, although it is known, however, for having invented the modern pencil, the named Conte called on behalf of Lazare Nicolas Marguerite Carnot. The French Republic suffered from late XVIII century an economic blockade prevented import the graphite from Britain, the main producer of this material. Carnot asked Conte to create a pencil that would solve the dependence on imports of graphite. To fix this, he had the idea of mixing graphite with clay and a wood surround cylinder, the shape of the current pencil, which reduced the amount of graphite by pencil. Conte received a patent for his invention in 1795 and founded the Soci  t   Cont   to produce these pencils.

With regard to compounded pencils have the charcoal mines mixed with a binder which gives greater fixedly on paper. There are three grades of hardness: hard, medium and soft. Combining colour of the bars with paper and pencils will give different sensations of brightness in the drawing.

The sanguine can be considered a variant of the pastel, i.e., a bar powder dry pigments. What the difference to the pastel is the origin of the pigments that give the characteristic colour. It is an iron oxide, known as hematite. The variety of red shades of this red stone ranges from scarlet to crimson red to an acid brown or a tone close to the red plum. Its characteristics are similar to those of charcoal and, therefore, the technique is analogous to it. Very good results are obtained when working on coloured substrates such as brown, gray and cream papers. The warmth and softness that brings the sanguine to the drawing is one of its main features, making it a suitable medium for drawing the human figure, essentially for the study of human figures, because it provides a variety of refinements to the flesh tones. This technique can achieve the effect of creating a full colour image using only three, sanguine, white and black. It can blend with stumps and/or cloths, besides washing, which comprises diluting the sanguine with a wet brush. One of the most famous sanguine corresponds to Leonardo da Vinci self-portrait done in 1512 and preserved in the Biblioteca Reale in Turin.

COLOUR PENCILS

Colour pencils for artists, been insoluble or soluble to water or turpentine, are made of unalterable pigment and embedded in wood. In the past, artists did not use colour pencils for their poor resistance to light. At present this has been improved and so has the choice also introducing water-soluble pencils and soluble in turpentine. Among the contemporary artists who have worked with coloured pencils is David Hockney.

The colour pencils are manufactured in the same way as graphite, except that the mines are not heated in an oven for not shattering pigments. Pigment bars are dipped in molten wax to acquire the necessary properties for drawing.

Colour pencil bars consist of:

- Pigment
- Fill (chalk, talc or kaolin)
- binder (cellulose gum)

The colour pencils are very sensitive to the nature of the support surface. The cold-pressed paper does not give different results to soft papers (H.P.). The well-primed white paper made from 100% rag and HP surface is best for their permanence and detail.

11.6. ELABORATION OF PASTEL.

If you wish to manufacture, the pastel can be prepared using binder some tragacanth gum base extremely relieved (3 grams per 1 liter of distilled water), the purpose of this binder as already mentioned is only to maintain compacted pigment in stick form. We can find bars, soft, semi-hard and hard, depending on the amount of binder incorporated, more binder, the harder the bar and therefore marks less. Finally we repeat the need for making pastel of pigments, high purity and insensitive to solvents, because otherwise we run the risk of landslides in the fixing. In no other painting technique pigments are so exposed to the attacks of ultraviolet rays, and should not be relied upon to the filtering action of the glass is sufficient.

11.7. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND WEB LINKS.

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