

Ann Swan Equipment Recommendations

PAPER – Any good quality, hot pressed (smooth) acid free paper of at least 250gms weight.

Paper is a bit of a nightmare at the moment as Fabriano Artistico and Classico 5 are no longer as reliable as they have been in the past. Papers to try are Winsor & Newton Aquarelle 100% cotton, Arches 100% cotton watercolour paper (quite creamy), Derwent Lightfast Paper (expensive but works) and Bristol Board Vellum either Strathmore or Canson.

Fabriano watercolour paper 300gms 25% cotton is from the Fabriano mill but made using a different, more consistently reliable process and is good for general work but quality work needs to be on 50% - 100% cotton. My **Ann Swan Practice Pads A3, A4, A5*** are made of this paper.

Some online artists suppliers will send out samples so it is worth getting some rather than spending a lot of money trying to find a paper that suits your style of drawing.

There is some further information about paper in the **'Members Area' on my website** and a short video clip on tests for paper on **my YouTube Channel - Ann Swan**.

Layout Paper or Marker Paper * – thin paper used for laying out designs, corrections and transferring work onto proper paper either using a lightbox or see my 'Top Tip' video on YouTube.

GRAPHITE PENCILS

- A range of good quality pencils **H*, HB*, F*, B, 2B** - I use the **Derwent Graphic Pencils***.
- A **0.3 lead propelling (mechanical) pencil* or a 2mm clutch pencil** for final outlines and detail work in a range of weights.
- A **9H/10H pencil** is very useful for resist work for veins, textures and fine details both for graphite and coloured pencil work

COLOURED PENCILS

To get good results and vibrant colours avoid the cheaper makes as they contain a lower proportion of quality pigment. Full sets are expensive and contain many colours you will never use. Try to buy individual colours that you need. I suggest a selection of any of the following:

- **Faber Castell Polychromos * - 120 colours** These are my pencils of preference, especially as this range has 7 good, natural greens, most ranges only have one or 2. They are made with quality pigments, mostly lightfast and a high level of quality control. **The 'Ann Swan Special Selection' set of 24 pencils** as recommended in my book are a good starter set.
- **Prismacolor * - 150 colours** – some brilliant pigments but generally poorly made.
- **Caran D'Ache Luminance*–100 colours** Good quality, lightfast pencils with some useful and vibrant colours but expensive.
- **Caran D'Ache Pablo Pencils* - 120 Colours** – Slightly harder, oil based pencils, they hold a point well with some good alternative greens to the Faber-Castell range.
- **Irojiten by Tombow* – 90 colours** Beautifully packaged, quite hard, hold a point well with some unusual colours. These are not rated so lightfast as the above makes but are relatively cheap.

BLENDER PENCILS * – Colourless wax pencils used for blending coloured pencil work and smoothing colour into the grain of the paper to make it look more like paint.

- The UK version by Lyra is called a **Splender** .
- **Prismacolor Colorless Blender is by Sanford** - these are harder and waxier and used when there is not too much colour on the paper or they can be used as a resist when applying solvents.
- **Caran D’Ache new wooden pencil blender**

MASKING FLUID – use to protect areas of highlights and white paper when blending colour with solvents or baby oil. Various makes are available and they can be applied safely with a fine cotton bud. Also available in felt tip and roller ball pens, useful for fine lines and details.

SOLVENTS

- **Alcohol based solvents** can be used to melt coloured pencil and other dry media to give an underpainting effect and to cover larger areas with colour quickly. This comes either in a felt tip or brush tip pen or in a bottle to be applied with a cotton bud.
Alcohol based solvents, if oil free, don’t change the surface of the paper so can be worked over with either graphite or coloured pencil.
 - **Promarker*** by Winsor & Newton
 - **Copic Clear Blender Pen**
 - **Prismacolor Blender Pen**
 - **Magic Marker**
- **Baby oil** (strictly not an oil but liquid paraffin wax or inert mineral oil) is also a very effective solvent for coloured pencil work. Less toxic and stays moist for some time so can be worked into before drying to produce really rich colour saturation. Not so good for working over with graphite. Best applied using an **empty Copic Marker*** pen which can be filled with baby oil so it dispenses a small amount, evenly or it can be applied carefully with a cotton bud.

ERASERS

- a **kneadable eraser** for lifting highlights and cleaning paper afterwards.
- A **battery operated eraser** which can also be used for creating texture and highlights. These vary from hugely expensive (£50ish) to cheap under £5.
- **Harder Plastic Eraser**

Feather or soft brush - for removing loose rubbings from work – obtain from a passing goose/duck/pheasant/ostrich.

Magnifying glass - opticians or photography shops. A good clip-on one with flexible stem is available from The Daylight Company www.daylightcompany.com

Pencil sharpener - sharp points are vital for this type of work. Either a hand-cranked one or a battery operated one (this type can eat the pencils). Whichever you go for make sure it has a proper metal **spiral sharpening blade**. **Rapesco 64*** or **94** are good and produce amazingly long points).

Scalpel and blades - for sharpening graphite pencils. I use the larger handle with a longer Number 26 blade.

Low tack adhesive film available in sheets or rolls used for lifting off highlights, veins etc. In art shops sold (more expensively) as Frisk Film or in hobby shops as low tack book covering film.

EMBOSSING TOOLS

For embossing fine lines, textures and hairs the **Pergamano Extra Fine 0.5mm*** is the finest one and you can get sets of **3 double ended embossing*** tools of varying sized nibs but none as fine as the Pergamano.

Empty, fine, roller ball pens or blunt darning needles make good embossing tools. Be inventive, search around the house but remember to test out first.

Fixative – I recommend the **Lascaux** make for coloured pencil work, it is archival and once dry you can add colour on top as it resurfaces the paper.

USEFUL GADGETS: The following are not essential but are very useful and inexpensive to buy online:

- **A Light Box** – LED lightboxes and now very light and very reasonable to buy online.
- A small **UV LED Torch** (Blue light) – very useful when applying white, ivory or light coloured resists for veins and textures as the blue light enhances the light colours so you can apply your marks more accurately.
- **A clip on macro lens for iphone, mobile or iPad** (Smart Phone Lens do a double x20 & x10 magnification and Hautik do a x15 magnification plus 4 other lenses £14) very useful for seeing what is actually going on in the centre of flowers and areas of microscopic detail on plants.
- **Flexible clamps** – small ones can be found on the internet quite cheaply. A larger one for holding stronger stems is the **Wimberley Plamp (useful but expensive)**.

Colour Swatches – blanks for Faber-Castell Polychromos, Prismacolor, Caran D’Ache Luminance and Pablo ranges can be downloaded from my website www.annswan.co.uk you will find them in the members area under ‘**Tips and Tricks**’. They can be coloured in with your selection of colours and are really useful for colour matching and building up your colour mixes.

*** indicates that the products are available through my website.**

www.annswan.co.uk

