



Deborah B Shaw

Botanical Art Techniques in Action Live Tutorial

Graphite and Watercolor on Vellum

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Welcome! This workshop will explore techniques for mixed media (watercolor and graphite), and graphite techniques and applications. My personal supply list is listed below, followed by some thoughts and preferences I have for different supplies.

These materials are my personal preferences, as of this moment in time. Some of them are what I consider to be “specialty” items; materials you may fall in love with and use from now on, or, conversely, materials you decide were worth the experimentation but never want to use again. Others come in large quantities that might last a lifetime.

We all have closets and drawers filled with art supplies we might never use again. If you’re interested in trying some of these materials, I highly recommend getting a group together to share and experiment, so you can try materials out and see if you like them before purchasing a large or expensive quantity.

Feel free to add your similar, preferred materials in the “strongly recommended” list—it’s always easier to learn new techniques with materials and colors you know and love.

The techniques we will cover include methods for:

Achieving a deep graphite tonal range with layering techniques

Includes tips and tricks for saving your reflected light areas and creating bloom on fruit, leaves and stems. This works well for general reflected light, and bloom on fruit such as grapes and plums, and bloom on succulents.

A fun exercise (if you want to experiment another time): use these techniques to draw and shade dark and milk chocolate covered nuts (or equivalent) and yoghurt-covered pretzels, or yoghurt-covered dried fruit (or something similar). (And use for snacking when the exercises are done.)

Embossing techniques for light on dark and interesting textures

Includes light veins on dark leaves, HAIR, and white or light prickles and spines, bright shiny bits and creation of interesting textures (like orange peels, etc.) or intense textures.

Creating the smallest dark details and broad smooth areas with powders and water-soluble techniques

Includes lifting, erasers as drawing tools, powder and water-soluble applications, covering large areas, more textures, and painting with graphite. Subjects for these techniques can include soft, smooth surfaces and velvety petals.

Materials:

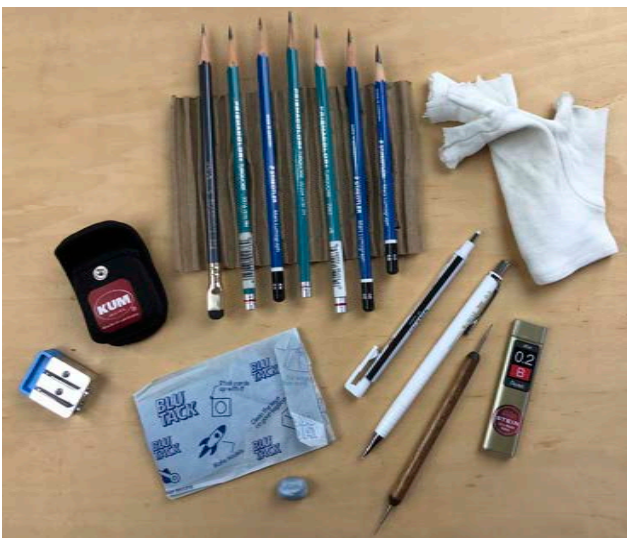
I’ve included a discussion of supplies following this list, including specific brand names and alternatives. I’ve also provided some links. I’m sure, however, you already have enough supplies to use some of these techniques right away. Equivalents are fine. Additionally, there is a wealth of wonderful art supplies out there, and I’m sure there are new and improved materials. Those are great too. If you have any questions about materials, please feel free to contact me.

Must haves (equivalents ok)	Optional
<p>Pencils:</p> <p>Can be wood pencils or leads with holder, or a mix of both kinds, whichever you prefer. Minimum selection (from hardest to softest): 9H, 4H, 2H, H, 2B, 4B</p> <p>My minimum preferred selection (from hardest to softest): 9H, 6H, 4H, 2H, H, HB, 2B, 4B, 6B, 8B But yes, I use the full range of pencils in a "limited palette," depending on the subject.</p> <p>Blackwing Palomino pencils (4): 602, Matte, Balanced, Firm</p>	<p>Optional pencils:</p> <p>Mechanical pencil(s)</p> <p>Colored graphite pencils: please check with the manufacturer to make sure they are archival and light-safe.</p> <p>Colored pencils: the techniques we will be discussing work well for colored pencils too! Feel free to try with your favorite colored pencil brands.</p>
<p>Other graphite:</p> <p>Water-soluble graphite powder</p> <p>Water-soluble graphite stick</p> <p>Water-soluble graphite pan</p>	<p>Optional other graphite:</p> <p>Graphite powder (not water-soluble). Make sure it's graphite powder, and not powdered charcoal.</p> <p>Liquid graphite</p> <p>Water-soluble graphite putty</p> <p>Water-soluble graphite pencils (I have a few of these, but they're not a favorite of mine. I do know artists who love them.)</p>
<p>Surface(s) and papers:</p> <p>Vellum (the animal skin kind, not the 'drafting vellum' found in art supply stores)</p> <p>Watercolor paper(s), hot press, or bristol vellum</p> <p>Tracing paper</p> <p>Paper to protect your drawing surface (for example, tracing paper, regular cheap bond paper)</p> <p>Wax paper (yes, the kind in the kitchen) to experiment with using as a resist and for lifting. Must be the old-fashioned kind, unfortunately, not the 'sustainable' or recycled</p>	<p>Optional surface(s) and papers:</p> <p>Other types of:</p> <p>Vellum</p> <p>Drawing paper(s)</p> <p>Watercolor paper(s)</p>

(Materials list continued next page)

Sharpener(s): Your favorite shapener(s), hand-held, manual, or electric or battery or all of the above Lead pointer, Xacto blade, emery board, fine sandpaper	Optional sharpener(s): Containers to collect and hold graphite dust (plastic baggie, old-fashioned film cannister, or pill container, for example)
Eraser(s): Blu-tak or kneaded eraser (I prefer using the Blu-tak as a substitute for the kneaded eraser) Staedler-Mars white plastic and click-style erasers (please see discussion below)	Optional eraser(s): Blu-tak Various click-style erasers Electric eraser Knives and scraping tools
Embossing tool(s): Optional purchased embossing stylus, such as Fiskars Embossing Stylus (#60373-1021, Blick), or Kemper Double Ball Stylus Embossing Tools, and/or other items found around the house and garage that can be used in their place.	Optional other embossing tool(s): Orange sticks (for nails), old ball point pens, darning needle (best to be used in a "clutch" or holder of some sort), very small crochet hook, eyeglass repair screwdriver, kitchen utensils, etc. Should have a "rounded" end, so it doesn't cut into the vellum or slice through the paper fibers.
Brushes: Your favorite brush(es), but least one #4 or #2 round watercolor brush with a beautiful point for watercolor #0 round brush Mixing brush Smaller brushes (i.e., 3/0) The same watercolor brushes to be used with water-soluble graphite, never to be used for watercolor again	Additional optional brushes: #6 round #4 flat #2 flat Your favorite watercolor "correcting" brushes Nasty, ugly, horrid, old worn-out brushes that can create interesting textures
Small palette and/or Yupo	
Water for mixing and rinsing brushes (at least 2 containers: one ONLY for water-soluble graphite, and one ONLY for watercolor)	Additional containers for rinsing and clean water
Watercolor: Your favorite brands and colors	

	Optional blenders and applicators: T-shirt scrap, chamois, paper towels or facial tissue (make sure they do NOT contain lotion) Q-tips Tortillions, or blending stumps (I don't like these, and use them sparingly, but know other artists who love them.)
Task lamp(s) for lighting subjects	
Other: Clean old handkerchief, t-shirt scrap, rag or paper towel to wipe excess lead and watercolor. Additional to, and separate from any of the optional blending tools you may have. Drawing board (optional if you have a smooth-surface on which to draw) Artist's tape, or your preference	Optional other: Cotton glove to keep surface clean, eliminate hand oils Mask Nitrile gloves (to keep hands clean)



SUPPLY SPECIFICS

Please note: none of the products listed below are endorsements, and I certainly don't receive any benefit for mentioning them. They're provided here for reference. It bears repeating: it is not necessary to have all these supplies. (I realize I may need an art supply intervention.) This is a glimpse into my cabinets and drawers.

A caveat: I have been noticing more and more quality control issues with art supplies, even with expensive, "best" brands. What I'm using today might be disappointing with my next purchase. As artists, unfortunately, we need to test continuously and give the manufacturers our feedback. And there are always new discoveries!

The rock-bottom basic requirement is a pencil and some paper. If limited to one pencil, some artists would choose a 2B, others a 2H, or, my favorite, a 6B.

The basics (top photo): If I were only allowed to bring a bare minimum of graphite supplies plus vellum or paper, and yet be expected to complete a finished piece, this would be the kit. These are my current most-favorite supplies: (R to L) a KUM "Master-piece" pencil sharpener; Bostik Blu-Tack wall putty (covered in the "Erasers" section below); a Tombow MONO Zero eraser; Orenz 0.2 mechanical pencil with B leads; Blackwing 602 pencil; and a cotton glove, fingertips cut off.

I have been enamored with the **Pentel ORENZ 0.2 mechanical pencils** for some time now. I have multiple pencils so I can have H, HB, B, and 2B leads handy at all times. My Japanese friends tell me "orenz" translates to "no break" and it's true. I use them in the studio for initial sketches and drawing, and in the field. They're with me at all times. It used to be they could be found only in Japan, but they are now available online at: <https://www.jetpens.com/Pentel-Orenz-Nero-Mechanical-Pencil-0.2-mm/pd/20434> Orenz also makes a mechanical pencil in a 0.3 and 0.5 lead, but I already have lots of those in other brands, so I stick with the 0.2.

Lastly, the **Palamino Blackwing 602** pencil. My hands-down favorite. I'm old enough to remember being heartbroken (along with everyone else) when the company went out of business and they were discontinued. Everyone was elated when the rights were purchased and they were re-manufactured in the same formulation. I always have a minimum of: the Blackwing 602 ("Half the pressure, twice the speed"), a favorite of John Steinbeck's; the Blackwing Pearl (a "balanced" lead); and the Blackwing Matte (soft drawing). They can be found at <https://pencils.com/collections/blackwing/products/blackwing-602-pencils-12-pack> While there, take some time to explore the rest of the site for information about graphite and other lovely products, in addition to an Educator Discount Program if you teach.

THE BASICS PLUS ROOM FOR A LITTLE MORE

(bottom photo on previous page): To the list above, I would add some additional pencils, 9H, 4H, 2H, 2B, 4B, 6B and my favorite stylus (sometimes called an embossing stylus).

The pencils in the photo on the left are resting in the ridges of a piece of cardboard. This is my lightweight, travel pencil holder to keep them from rolling around on the table or, (horrors!) falling off the table. In the studio, I have a variety of brush holders and pencil holders. My favorite is a ridged soap dish.



BEYOND THE BASICS: ALL THE PENCILS

I use everything, from 10H all the way through to 10B. In all different brands.

I don't, however, use every hardness in every artwork. I pick out a "palette" of perhaps a half-dozen pencils for each drawing, depending on the effects I want to achieve.

I do mix brands within a drawing. I also use lead holders (clutch pencils) and mechanical pencils, with a variety of leads. It all depends on the types of effects I want to achieve.



Orenz 0.2 pencils (mentioned above) and at least three Palomino Blackwing pencils (also mentioned above): soft, firm, and balanced.

The Blackwing pencils have removable erasers that can be swapped out per your preference.



Caran d'Ache Grafwood pencils, 4H all the way through 9B. The Caran d'Ache pencils seem to be “more” than any other brand. All of the ‘H’ pencils feel a little harder than their label. For example, the 2H feels more like a 4H in other brands. Likewise, ‘B’ pencils feel softer—the 4B acts more like a 6B.

Then again, it could just be this particular set.



SHARPENERS

(R to L across the bottom): Lead pointer; glass emery board for sharpening lead points; M+R Studio 2-Hole Brass Sharpener; the KUM Masterpiece sharpener (which creates the longest point of any hand-held manual pencil sharpener ever!); and the Faber-Castell 9000 pencil sharpener (which has two holes—one for standard diameter pencils and one for jumbo). It also has a receptacle for holding the waste.

The Panasonic electric is another cult item, no longer made, but still sought after. Battery-operated sharpeners frequently lack oomph. And chew up too much pencil.

(Continued next page)



STYLUS (OR EMBOSSER) AND BLENDER

Everything and anything that can mark and indent the paper is fair game for creating interesting textures, veins and patterns. Make sure it has a rounded end so you're not cutting into the vellum, or slicing through the fibers of the paper. Using tracing paper between the incising (stylus) tool and the surface will soften the marks so they appear more delicate. A ball point pen on tracing paper on top of your surface can create some wonderful, subtle textures.

Personal preference: I do not use blending tools for graphite; I prefer to burnish with a different hardness of pencil. (To be discussed.) Some artists love blending tools. Your choice.

I use a paintbrush (see below), or blending sticks and tortillons for adding powdered graphite to a drawing. I sometimes use a stubby-haired brush and various burnishers (pictured to the right in the photo on the previous page) for colored pencils, but not for graphite. Many graphite artists do use these tools, however.



ERASERS

My erasers aren't erasers at all; they're drawing tools first and foremost, rather than "correction" devices. The **Blu-Tack** replaces a kneaded eraser. It's "tacky-er" and holds any shape into which I sculpt it. It used to be available only in the UK and Australia, but now can be found on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Blu-Tack-So50Q-Reusable-Adhesive-75g/dp/B001FGLX72> and probably other sites as well. Each blob has a life-cycle. It starts out being used on artwork: then, as it becomes dirty is used for holding up specimens; then, it moves to anchoring artboards or strategically placed matboard screens; and, then, finally, the trash.

Knives and scraping tools are useful for creating textures too. X-acto makes a retractable blade that's useful for taking into the field and sharpening pencils and dissecting plants. Interestingly, when traveling, I've had TSA confiscate sharpened colored pencils, but no one has ever questioned or looked at the retractable X-acto blade those times I've forgotten to put it into my checked luggage.

On the right in the photo above are the new Slice ceramic blades, which can be used to create texture by gently scraping away watercolor, graphite or colored pencil without damaging the surface. <https://www.sliceproducts.com/catalog/ceramic-scalpels>



POWDERED GRAPHITE AND WATER-SOLUBLE GRAPHITE

Of all the brands and products that have come to market, I've settled on the ArtGraf water-soluble sticks and graphite powder for the deepest darkest blacks to a full value range as well as ease-of-use. It is messy. And great fun. And messy.

ArtGraf used to be available at almost all art supply stores. I'm finding that some (including my favorite local art supply store) are no longer carrying it. It is still my personal preferred brand. If you can't find it at your favorite local store, it is available at Blick (and you can support ASBA at the same time!)



A FEW MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES

(L to R, top): holders for pencils when they get short; another view of cardboard pencil holder; cheap soap holder for pencils and paintbrushes; synthetic paintbrushes for use with graphite; mixing dishes for water soluble graphite.

IMPORTANT: Any tool used with graphite should only be used with graphite. Never mix graphite and watercolor tools! My favorite brush for painting fine detail with water-soluble graphite are the short-handled Interlon 1026, 3/0 brushes, which can be found at: http://www.bestfromjapan.com/moreinfo.cfm?Product_id=15946

Other brushes I sometimes use to pick up dry graphite powder for initial application are synthetics I find in the "bargain bin" at my local brick-and-mortar art supply store. The Interlon 1027 flat brush is great for applying graphite powder: http://www.bestfromjapan.com/moreinfo.cfm?Product_id=15945

Also notice the foam around one of the paintbrushes. It hurts to hold a skinny pencil or paintbrush for a long period of time. Foam pen holders from the office supply store help, as does the foam from those old-fashioned pink hair curlers, or a small styrofoam ball from the craft store. Anything that will make the pencil or brush wider and easier to hold, and softer.

(L to R, bottom): brush wipe (old cut-off sock to wear around wrist); cotton glove and nitrile glove (powdered graphite is MESSY—did I mention that?); spoon for portioning out powdered graphite.

AND DON'T FORGET THE COLORED PENCILS

Almost all of the graphite techniques work with colored pencils as well.

CURRENT WATERCOLOR STUDIO PALETTE (PLUS MORE...THERE'S ALWAYS MORE)

Although this is an absurdly long list, I usually end up with around six – eight colors in a selected palette for each artwork. (I never use all of these!!) I do use convenient greens, although I always mix something else into them, but I always mix my grays. There are other colors in the drawers, which come out of rotation depending on my subject. My preferred manufacturers are: M. Graham, Daniel Smith, Winsor Newton, although I do have paints from other manufacturers.

- Hansa Yellow, M. Graham, PY3, leans green
- Bismuth Yellow, M. Graham, PY184, leans green
- Winsor Yellow, Winsor Newton, PY154, mid yellow
- Permanent Yellow Deep, Daniel Smith, PY110, yellow-orange
- Gamboge, M. Graham, PY151 + PO62, yellow-orange
- Quinacridone Gold, Daniel Smith, PO49
- Azo Orange, M. Graham, PO62, mid orange
- Scarlet Pyrrol, M. Graham, PO73, orange-red
- Pyrrol Red, M. Graham, PR254
- Quinacridone Red, M. Graham, PR209
- Quinacridone Fuschia, Daniel Smith
- Ultramarine Pink, M. Graham, PR 258, red-violet
- Quinacridone Rose, Daniel Smith, PV19, violet-red
- Quinacridone Magenta, Daniel Smith, PV202, violet-red
- Quinacridone Violet, Daniel Smith, PV19, violet-red
- Maroon Perylene, M. Graham, PR179
- Cobalt Violet, Winsor Newton, PV14, red-violet
- Dioxazine Purple, M. Graham, PV23, violet
- Ultra Violet Deep, M. Graham, PV15, violet
- Cerulean Blue, Winsor Newton, PB35, leans green
- Maganese Blue Hue, Daniel Smith, leans green
- Cobal Blue, Winsor Newton, PB28, cool
- French Ultramarine Blue, Winsor Newton, PB29, warm (slightly warmer than Ultramarine Blue)
- Phthalo Blue, M. Graham, PB15:3, mid to leans green
- Green Gold, Winsor Newton, PY129
- Permanent Green Light, Daniel Smith, PY3 + PG 7
- Sap Green, M. Graham, PG7 + PY110
- Olive Green (the new version), Winsor Newton, warm
- Oxide of Chromium, Winsor Newton, PG17, yellow green
- Transparent Yellow Iron Oxide, M. Graham, PY42
- Yellow Ochre, Winsor Newton, PY43 (almost never use)
- Raw Umber, Winsor Newton, PBR7 + PY42 (almost never use)
- Quinacridone Burnt Orange, Daniel Smith, PO48
- Transparent Orange Iron Oxide, M. Graham
- Quinacridone Sienna, Daniel Smith, PO49
- Mummy Bauxite, Daniel Smith
- Transparent Red Iron Oxide, M. Graham, PR101
- Light Red, Winsor Newton, PR102