



**REEVES**  
S I N C E 1 7 6 6



# Instructions

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**T**he Reeves Studio Oil Pastel Set is the ideal first step for the beginner to discover the delights of this practical and versatile medium.

The oil pastels have been carefully selected to form a comprehensive range, from which all the most frequently used colours can be blended.

Every artist has an individual style, but there are certain rules of drawing that the beginner should follow in order to achieve worthwhile results.

If you are new to this medium, the following tips may be useful.

### THE NATURE OF OIL PASTELS

Unlike chalk pastels and watercolours, which have existed for centuries, oil pastels are a relatively new medium. Whereas normal pastels can be diluted with water, oil pastels are soluble in turpentine, and can even be used in conjunction with oil paint. The advantage of oil pastels is that they are completely dust free, and form a strong, durable bond with the paper. This gives the finished piece a waxy sheen, which is quite different to the matt, powdery look of a traditional pastel drawing.

The strong, vibrant colours are ideal for creating quick, impressionist-style work and can be used both for drawing and colouring. The density of colour is determined by how lightly or heavily the artist applies the pastel to the paper. Oil pastels can be applied straight from the stick, or they can be blended together to create new colours and tones. It is possible to use the length of the pastel stick to create broad slabs of colour, or the tip, to draw as you would with a pencil. Choice of paper is an integral part of oil pastel technique. Textured and coloured paper will help to add interest to your work.

### PREPARATION

Oil pastels create very little mess, and are not dusty like soft pastels, so they are very practical for use in the home. Ideally, your paper should be taped onto a drawing board, which can then be angled to suit your posture. You may need a jar of turpentine, a small brush and perhaps a knife for scraping the picture, depending on the techniques you use. If you are indoors, make sure you have enough light to the front or side of you.

## BASIC EXERCISES

Before you begin a picture, it is best to practise a few basic exercises. An oil pastel stick is a very simple drawing tool, yet it is amazingly versatile.

Colour can be applied in broad slabs by using the length of the stick, or in delicate, thin strokes with the tip or corner of the stick.

Colours are blended by using a variety of tools, such as burnishers, spoons, ballpoint pen caps etc., depending on what effect you wish to achieve, or colours can simply be laid on top of each other to create new colours and shades.

When dipped into turpentine, oil pastels dissolve and become very soft, making blending easier.

Turpentine washes are similar to watercolour washes, but dry very quickly. Surplus colour can be scraped off using a palette knife or similar, either to remove mistakes or to create highlights.

Practise blending and overlaying colours, and also try to achieve a full tonal range from a colour, from very pale through to full strength, by gradually applying more pressure to your strokes.

Once you are familiar with how your oil pastels perform, the next stage is to begin a composition.

## COMPOSITION

Choosing subject matter is a very personal thing. If you are inexperienced, avoid complex compositions. You will become frustrated and abandon the picture! It is better to tackle a simple scene and do it well. Before committing yourself to paper, consider the scene from different angles and distances until you settle on the best viewpoint. Work out which section of the scene you are going to draw and sketch out the basic lines of the composition with the tip of your oil pastel. You can use one pale colour to do this [as in the illustration below] or change colours according to what you are drawing. i.e. A blue outline for a blue book, a yellow outline for the lemon etc. Alternatively, you can use a normal graphite pencil. Do not concern yourself with too much detail at this stage. Correct any mistakes with a soft putty eraser to avoid scuffing the paper surface.



## DRAWING

Whether you are drawing a still- life, a figure or a landscape the same rules apply. The pictures opposite show how a traditional oil pastel picture is built up in stages.

**1** Simple sketch of the composition, using a yellow ochre for the land and a pale blue for the sky area. The artist has made a feature of the dramatic sky by keeping the horizon line low in the composition. The farm building provides a useful focal point.

**2** The sky area is blocked in using pale blue and yellow. Areas of darker blue and purple are sketched in on top of the pale areas, and the whole of the sky is blended together by using the white oil pastel. The basic tones of the trees, buildings and foreground are blocked in. The distant fields were blended with blue and white to give them a soft, out of focus look and a lightness of tone, to

make the middle distance trees more prominent.

**3** Finishing touches are added to the large tree and the buildings, using a sharp corner of the pastel for detail. The white fencing, and various highlights on the buildings etc. were created by scraping off the pastel with a sharp craft-knife, or similar.

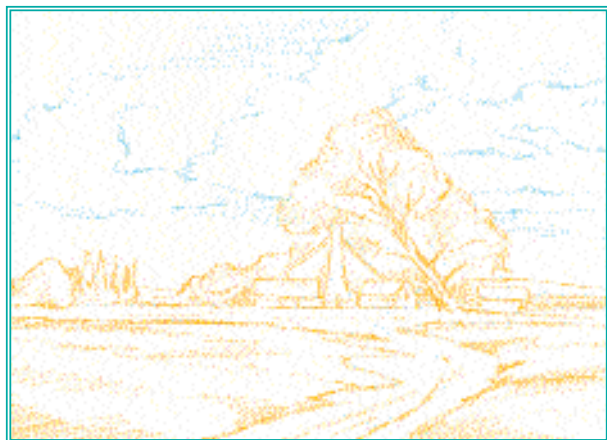
**4** More texture and colour has been added to the foreground and path by using a sketching, rather than a blending technique. This adds interest to what could have been a very flat area of the composition, and contrasts with the out of focus, blended look of the distant fields.

## FINISHING TOUCHES

Oil pastel pictures are traditionally framed under glass, with a bevel-cut mount card. This prevents the surface of the picture from touching the glass and causing damage. Most professional artists allow a margin around their work rather than drawing straight to the edge. This space is useful for testing colours prior to drawing, and also helps the framer to site the mount.

## CARE OF OIL PASTELS

Oil Pastels are very easy to look after. Simply keep them in their protective box, and try not to drop them, as they break very easily! Avoid extremes of temperature, especially heat.



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2



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4



$$\text{Red Circle} + \text{Green Circle} = \text{Brown Circle}$$

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$$\text{Red Circle} + \text{Yellow Circle} = \text{Orange Circle}$$

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$$\text{Red Circle} + \text{Blue Circle} = \text{Purple Circle}$$

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$$\text{Blue Circle} + \text{Yellow Circle} = \text{Light Green Circle}$$

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$$\text{Blue Circle} + \text{Light Green Circle} = \text{Teal Circle}$$

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