

## Color Pencil Tutorial

Here are some tips that I use when I do art in colored pencil.

First off, I just want to say that depending on what type of pencils you use, this can either be frustrating or very easy. I say this because there are many types of colored pencils on the market. Tiffanie L. Gray has a really good beginners guide in the Fantasy Art Resource Project (FARP) section of Elfwood. She explains the different types of colored pencils available and how you can use them. You can find it here at this link:

[http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/farp/col\\_pencil/](http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/farp/col_pencil/)

If you are at all interested in reading other tutorials regarding other drawing or painting techniques, FARP is an excellent source. The normal link is found here:

<http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/farp/index.html>

Now, let's get started shall we? \*smiles\*

I use the Prismacolor series mostly for my work. I like them simply because they are very soft and you can blend and push real hard on the lead to get a nice thick color. Keep in mind, you don't have to use a professional grade pencil, the cost can get ugly. But in my own personal experience, I get the best results using a higher grade of pencil .

The one downfall to the Prismacolors is that they tend to break easily because they contain wax (which makes them soft). I have no idea how many pencils I've purchased at the local art store only to have bought a broken pencil (meaning the lead in the inside of the wood casing is broken, not the whole pencil itself) Most generic colored pencils ie Prang, Crayola contain clay. Because clay is a harder material, creating rich color is next to impossible. It can be done, but it takes lots of layering to achieve the effect.

Pencils used in this tutorial:

Canary Yellow

White

Orange

Crimson Red

Ultramarine



Sketch: With that knowledge in mind, let's get on with the drawing itself. Firstly I started off with this really rough sketch I did (see image). Not too clean, so I traced it onto a piece of blue colored paper.

Note: I find using colored paper is much more fun than using normal white paper. Firstly, it causes the colors of the colored pencils to pop out more and appear more rich and vibrant. Secondly because with the colored paper acting as a base color, it can unify your images colors better depending on if you allow color to show through. And lastly, because for me it's a lot of fun to experiment with! You can get a huge range of appearances depending on what type of paper you use. For this project, I used paper by Canson.



Step 1: With my trace now transferred onto the paper, I start by coloring in my darkest darks and lightest lights first. I do this as the first step because it is hard to go back over an area with a light color once you begin building up your color layers. If you try to go back over a dark area with white, the color wouldn't be as bright and you may smear the dark colors underneath! Here I blocked in areas of the horse with Crimson Red and the background with Ultramarine.

Note: If you are going to have a really dark area, avoid using black. Black is a very flat and uninteresting color and you can get the same effect by using a dark green, red, blue, or any other dark color and blending them together.



Step 2: Once I have established my lights and darks, I then lay down my midtones. Now, I'm not too sure on your knowledge of art terms, so if I confuse you in any way, please mail me back and I will explain things further. Basically, there are three elements to light and form: Highlights, midtones, and shades or Darks. Highlights are the brightest spot a light reflects off of a surface, shades or darks are the farthest location from a light source, and midtones are the shades inbetween highlight and shade/darks. I first apply Canary Yellow to the horses body to give it a foundation on where I want the brightest part of the horse to be. I'm not too concerned if I accidentally blend the red to the yellow, I can cover that up later on when I begin layering.



Step 3: After I finish the foundation, I now begin layering more color on top of the horses body. During this step I also added more blue (ultramarine) to the background to get the blue to be more rich in color. Now I start adding more color, such as the orange, to give the horse more depth and form, plus adding more red to the flames in the mane, underbelly, and tail.



Step 4: At this point, you can see how much that layering is paying off. The colors are becoming rather bright and bold.



Step 5: Now this is starting to look about finished, save the border of the picture. The richness in the horses color looks rather catching. And I also added more blue to the background. The key to all of this is layering your colors. You can see just how much it makes a difference! My next task will be focusing on the border...



Final: Once I have decided on the border, I block in the color I want. Since I don't want the border to distract from the main image, I want to keep it as simple as I can. I colored this area using a lot of pressure on the pencil to make sure I got a nice rich color out of the pencil. After adding the yellow, I then added a little blue on the insides of the circles to unify the piece.

Note: Some of the colors look a bit different from piece to piece, that is because of the scanner I used. The final piece is more true to the original.

I hope this helps you in your quest to improve technique with color pencils! If you need further assistance, you may contact me at:

[artist\\_freak@hotmail.com](mailto:artist_freak@hotmail.com)

Good Luck!

-Melissa Hitchcock