

5 Tools I Use In Every Colored Pencil Portrait Drawing

Sharpened
Artist

Here are the 5 secret tools I use in every colored pencil drawing. I wish when I had started drawing someone would have told me about these. I want to get this in your hands and I hope it helps you like it has me. I came by this through trial and error and from other artists along my journey. Lots of error I might add! Mistakes. All the way from damaging paper to mixing the wrong colors!

Is this the only way to create a portrait or colored pencil drawing? Of course not. But it's the method I use now and I love it! I like the results I can get.



1. **I have a secret weapon pencil!** The pencil I use first every time is a very dark color- usually blue or brown. I use a very light touch and an extremely sharp point. I use it every time as my very first pencil and I start with the darkest areas (shadows) of the drawing first.

2. **I use a secret sandpaper pad.** Ok, maybe it isn't a real *secret*. But the *way* I use a drawing sandpaper or emery board I think helps my drawings a lot! One of the most important parts of the execution in colored pencil drawing is keeping a sharp pencil. Even after I sharpen my pencil I gently refine my point with the sandpaper 3 short strokes at nearly a vertical angle.

Then as I keep going back to the sandpaper instead of sharpening every time- and that saves my pencil.

3. **I use some “hush-hush” erasers.** I use the Tombow mono-zero eraser and a good kneadable eraser and poster sticky tack, and I always have magic tape to lift pigment if needed. I always want to “lift” and not scrub the paper so that I protect the tooth.
4. **I use a divider and ruler.** I want to make sure that my proportions are correct. So from time to time I will use the ruler and divider just to make sure everything is lined up properly.
5. **I make secret soft shadows.** I think about the nearly subliminal qualities of each facial feature being curved and 3 dimensional and not flat. The eyeballs are a ball shape, not just round they are a sphere. Everything in the portrait has the ability of convincing the viewer they are looking at something that is popping off the page. Not in a cartoon kind of way, but in a nearly subliminal quality by using a middle value, light-handed shading with the pencil. What a difference that can make!
6. **I use a winning mindset.** This is a bonus! I only promised 5 secrets! But this one really should have come first! If I start to feel overwhelmed by a difficult area I talk to myself about what needs to be done and keep myself on task and motivated. I stay motivated by thinking of past successes and how I want the end result of *this* drawing to look. By envisioning the finished portrait from the very beginning I know all I have to do is be careful and intentional in my execution. Planning makes all the difference!

Remember the only wasted paper is a page with nothing on it! Draw something today.

I would love to hear what your biggest struggles are with drawing in colored pencil? Maybe you've not started yet. Why not?