
Course Title: Underpainting For Pastels

Saturday 22 & Sunday 23 November 2025 09.30am - 4pm

Tutor: Karol Oakley MP PSA

Course Description:

Underpainting the tone is about exploring the technicalities of creating a painting so that it looks real and not flat or like a photo. We'll discover the best ways to utilise a tonal underpainting, using tone and colour to create the mood for realistic but painterly artwork. We are workshopping through exercises with the aim of crafting a shortcut to the pastel build up. This is about using underpainting tones for depth, that allows our pastel work to be minimal and effective. There are daily demonstrations, step by step explanations in manageable size chunks, one on one tutoring and group chats.

Skill Level: this workshop is for those with some pastel experience and love the idea of learning more.

Outcomes:

- Exciting colour combinations to suit the mood and story of the artwork
 - Underpainting techniques that are fun to explore
 - Discover how to set the painting up for success
 - Setting the tone ready for pastel
 - Layering pastel on the underpainting for impact and vibrancy
 - A valuable method to use with confidence
 - Loosen up for a fun start to a soft pastel painting
-

Content Plan:

Day 1: Sat 22 November; Based on the reference supplied by the Tutor, we create the underpainting to support the pastel work. There are hands on exercises using colour as tone and types of wet media. Step by Step demonstrations and discussions are part of the day.

Day 2: Sun 23 November; Based on a seascape or landscape of your choice, we are setting this painting up to glow by using tonal underpainting techniques from day one. We are defining the movement within the changing tones and colours to set us up for some beautiful pastel mark making . References are supplied for the exercises and participants are asked to bring their own photos as per the instructions on the Materials List.

Suggested Materials List

Paper: Two full sheets of ArtSpectrum Colourfix original medium tooth paper or Canson brand Touch/Tex. Size ~ 70 x 50 cm. Colour is White. One sheet of glassine or tissue to put finished work into.

Cut the paper into half on the short length to make two sheets of 35 x 50 cm.

Pastels: bring what you have including the bright scary colours. A starter's set of pastels is shown here. These are a selection of minimum colours which I will be using in the workshop.

If you are buying pastels make sure you get the letter and the number codes correct.

Swap the brands but match the tone and colour.

526 N Ultra Blue	540 P Yellow Ochre	512 P Crimson	500 P Titanium White
Schmincke 064 Cobalt Blue Hue O and Hue M	502 P Lemon Yellow	508 P Spectrum Red	579 N Greenish Umber
534 T Indigo	504 P Spectrum Yellow	552 V Burnt Umber	552 D Burnt Umber
573 V Grass Green	535 T Turquoise	570 D Phthalo Green	YOUR FAVOURITE
527 T Blue Grey	554 T Caput Mortuum	501 P Warm White	YOUR FAVOURITE

Bring as many colours as you like, bring what pastels you have!

Everything Else:

One stick of willow charcoal.	Craft Knife.
One pastel pencil in dark brown. CarbOthello No. 1400/635	Backing Board 60 x 40cm size that is waterproof and not flexible, with no dents or scratches in it. (To take a half sheet of Colourfix Original paper.)
Easel standing or table top.	Colour Wheel and Tone Bar.
An old towel for the table top and a drop sheet for the floor.	Container to put pastels being used into.
Putty Eraser.	Paper towel or cotton rag.
Masking Tape 18m wide cream colour	Two Letter style bulldog clips
One old bristle brush: long flat, about a size 8.	Visual diary A5 size and pen or pencil for writing
Drinking water.	Chocolate for the tutor.
2 Small Spray Misting Bottles with Water	Paper Towel or Cotton Rag
Brush synthetic square flat 25mm wide (or any old flat brush you have)	Old bristle brushes x 2 size small (4) and medium (8)
Water Jar with a lid	Watercolour Palette for mixing paints
Watercolour Tube Paints Bring what you have. Share with a friend or use the class set at \$5	

Supplied Things: Starting Reference photos, Artists quality Inks, Disposable Gloves.

Reference Photos: For the purpose of the workshop, and copyright law, all your photos have to be ones you have taken and remember being at that place.

Bring a selection of at least 4 photos of your favourite landscape or seascape subjects. These photos can be any size, 5x7 is ideal or A4 printouts from your computer.

Please bring a black and white photocopy of every colour photo you select for the workshop. Try to get the black and white to an A4 size photo copy. Don't print it as a photo because we are going to write on it.