

How To Handcolor A B&W Print

HANDCOLORING HELP (FAQ)

What if I want to have my colors be less transparent?

One of the beauties of the Marshall Oil Paints is that they also come with an opaque titanium white oil. When you add this to the other colors it helps to make them less transparent. When dry you can add more paint again. Works wonderfully if you are trying to block out an electrical plug on a textured wall as in "The Blue Room".

Can you color images just with toners?

Yes. Besides the most commonly known, such as sepia or selenium, there are a variety of toners on the market including blue toner, copper, gold etc. It is wonderful to experiment using more than one in an image. "Danielle Toned" is an example of five different toners to color the image.

Generally, how archival (permanent) are handcolored images?

It depends on the medium you have chosen. Many handcolored images are very permanent and stable. The Marshall oils will hold their color and not fade.

The issue is to be sure you have properly washed and fixed your image to start with. It is also possible to use a fixative spray on the final image, but always test the compatibility first and make sure the medium is dry. This may not help make

the image more permanent, but it can help protect the surface.

I can't get any subtlety from my coloring. My medium soaks into my paper.

This can occur when using oils on water-color-style or other toothy, fiber based papers. Use some PM Solution before you start: Saturate a cotton ball and evenly coat your print. Then thoroughly remove any excess with a clean, dry cotton ball.

Recommended Text:

Handcoloring Photos Step by Step
by Laird & Chambers

The Art of Handpainting Photographs
by Cheryl Dorskind

Photo-Imaging: A Complete Guide to
Alternative Processes
by Jill Enfield



Elizabeth Opalenik is a member of the Freestyle Advisory Board of Photographic Professionals.



"Camelia and Hair" © Elizabeth Opalenik

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Freestyle Advisor #5

INTRODUCTION

Handpainting of photographs has been around since the beginning of photography. It allowed the creative, artistic nature of the photographer to add, alter or completely change the feel of the photographic image. It allows the photographer expression and interpretation in creating their own personal style. Though it is possible to create similar handpainted images each time, due to the hands on approach, no two will ever be exactly alike. Why should they be? Like you, they are unique works of art.

This booklet is offered as an introduction to the possibilities for changing the feel of your darkroom-made, gelatin-silver print. With very few supplies, you can begin on your discovery of this timeless medium and find your own visual voice. The final results are only limited by your imagination and willingness to experiment. Though there are many media for handcoloring, including dyes, watercolors and dye pens, we will focus on the use of oils and pencils. However, many of the concepts remain the same no matter what you color with. As you learn to work with the media discussed here, you will understand that the possibilities for blending different paints, pencils and toners are endless.



"Dance with Matador"

You will also learn that you can create works of art that bridge the gap between photography and painting, and have the best of both worlds without knowing how to draw.

YOUR PHOTOGRAPH

The "feel" you wish to create will help determine the type of print that you should start with. The first rule is to work with an image you like. If the original image is bad or uninteresting to you, what you will end up with is a well painted, boring print. Also, you will find that some images just want to stay black and white. Ultimately, this is your art and your expression.

Start with a well-printed image made on a matte or pearl finish paper. Prints that are slightly lighter than normal, but still with detail, tend to color well.



Kentmere offers excellent papers for handcoloring.

The best images to paint are the ones with details throughout the photograph, so shading and contour will not have to be added by layering the paint. You may use either fiber based or RC papers, though each will absorb medium a little differently.

This is especially effective for portraits when you use a toner that adds warmth, like sepia. This will take experimentation as each toner will react differently to each paper that it is combined with. You can also use multiple toning and split toning for added effect. Results can work wonderfully toward achieving your unique style. Some colorists use the warm brown tone as the base for skin, applying very little color to the portrait, but using it as their finished style.

If you are going to tone your print, do it before handcoloring, and wash the print thoroughly. An added benefit of some toners is that they can increase your print's permanence. Consult a good supplier, like Freestyle, for details on various toners.

RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS

Color Sets

Marshall Learn to Color Oil Set (Includes 9 colors)	13187
Marshall Hobby Oil Set (Includes 15 colors)	13198
Marshall Portrait Oils & Pencils Kit	131767
Marshall Advanced Oil Set (Includes 20 colors)	13102
Marshall Extra Large Oils Set Group #1	132500
Marshall Extra Large Oils Set Group #2 (Extra Strong Colors)	132600
Marshall Master Oil Set (Includes 46 colors)	131646
Marshall Intro Oil Set (Includes 5 colors)	13165
Marshall Pencil & Oil Activity Set - Petunias	131615
Marshall Deluxe Pencil Set - 14 Pencils	131614
Marshall Starter Pencil Set - 9 Pencils	1316199
Prismacolor/Berol Colored Pencil Set - 48 pencils	88955
Prismacolor/Berol Colored Pencil Set - 72 pencils	88972
Prismacolor/Berol Colored Pencil Set - 24 pencils	88953
Prismacolor/Berol Colored Pencil Set - 12 pencils	88952
Conté Pastel Pencil Set of 24 Gift Tin	482182
Conté Pastel Pencil Set of 48 in Gift Tin	482184

Papers

Kentmere Art Classic 8x10/25	99382
Ilford Multigrade IV Fiber Base 8x10/25	833892

You'll Also Want:

Marshall Pre Color Spray 11 oz.	355001
Marshall Artist Wipes - 70 pack	131611
Marshall Matte Spray	3011022
Marshall Marlene 4 oz.	13167
P.M. Solution	13166
Marshall's Image Guard 14 oz.	355002
Arista Spotting Brush #00	119200
Marshall Blend All Pencil	131618

All handcolored images in this booklet ©Elizabeth Opalenik.

by applying different pressure in different areas. You also help to create depth with in the image.

Also, be familiar with your subject: while trees may look generic green, inspecting the leaves will show color variety in each one. Often, it is good to have leaves, flowers, rocks or bits of nature in front of you for inspiration.

The Marshall's brand handcoloring system has a set of compatible oils and pencils designed to work well together. The pencils are great for details or even for using alone. If you are applying the pencils directly to the print, without an oil color base, first apply a PM Solution base or Extender to the print. This will help pencil medium blend more easily so that you do not see the strokes – unless that is your intention.



"Camelia and Hair"

You may also dip the tip of your pencil into the PM-S to soften it a bit for blending. Using pencils over oils makes detail work and adding shadow intensity easier. Experiment, and look forward to being pleasantly surprised.

Shadows & Highlights

Colors in shadows bring to life the object they surround. The key is to remember that shadow colors contain the complementary color of the object and not just a darker version of the colored object.

Highlights should be sparingly colored and cleaned well. They help to provide depth and contrast. Work instead on the mid range tones, building up density where needed. Once you begin coloring, you will become more aware of how things really look reflected off a shiny surface – and whether there should be color there or not. It is your choice: color the image completely or only make some portion stand out.

Toning

Many colorists use toners to enhance an image first. Toning can also provide a base color and even change the way your color looks. The same color on a warm-brown base can look very different from one on a cool black one.



"Danielle, Toned"

Always begin with a well-washed and thoroughly dried print that has been spotted for any dust marks or scratches. Because most of the media discussed are transparent, any flaws in the original image will show through.

Generally, you may make objects in your photograph any color you desire, regardless of reality, but be aware that something black cannot be made yellow, or something very pale cannot be made totally black. The tonal range of the print helps to determine the tonality of the final painted piece.

It is best not to print all the way to the paper's edge so that you can tape the image flat onto another surface while working. If the image is fiber-based and curling, flatten it first in a dry mount press or by letting it sit with some weight on top of it.

THE TOOLS

It is best to begin in a clean, well-lighted place that is as dust free as possible. Natural daylight is good, or use a daylight corrected lamp to better see the colors that you are producing. Be sure you are working on a surface that is steady. It is also good to attach your print to a solid smooth base such as plexiglass or 4-ply mat board. This can then be set aside in a dust free place while drying, thus freeing your space for other prints. Please note that it is important to work on a smooth surface as the texture of anything under the print can transfer patterns onto the print as you are rubbing the oils into the surface.

Drafting Tape

Use white drafting tape to hold your print in place while you work. It removes easily and will not damage the print surface. There are a few other suitable tapes on the market, too. Tape the corners at least, or go around the border to ensure that the print is secure.

100% Pure Cotton

Fine quality, 100% pure cotton is best for applying and buffing down your colors in larger areas. Twirl them around wooden skewers or solid toothpicks to make your own "Q-Tips" for fine applications. You may also purchase cotton swabs, but again, purchase those of the best cotton fiber so you won't be leaving particles on your wet print.

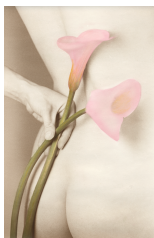
Also, wear lintless, white cotton gloves to protect the print from oily fingerprints while handling. A good photo store has both economical, short-use and washable, long-lasting versions.



Marshall's line, called the Photo Coloring System, is wonderful. They offer everything you need.



Webril cotton pads, long a standard in the darkroom, are often used for handcoloring.



"Pink Callas"

Artist's Palette

You may work directly from the tubes of color, but it is generally better to use a palette so you can mix colors as you go.

A non-absorbent surface such as glass or plexiglass make great palettes. The dimpled palette dish that watercolorists use is quite effective because it can be put into a ziploc bag to keep the oils moist should you need to return to your print hours later. My favorite palette is one you make yourself from a commercial color guide like the one that comes with the Marshall Oil Colors. Insert the guide into a ziploc bag and put dabs of color on top of the bag. This guide can then be wiped clean and used again.

Marshall's PM Solution

If you are using oils, it is not necessary to pre-coat the surface of print unless it has been handled excessively and needs to have finger prints removed. However, precoating the print with Prepared Medium Solution (abbreviated "P.M. Solution," or just "PM-S") prepares the surface so colors are not absorbed too strongly. Apply a small amount to a cotton ball and rub gently over the entire print. Use a fresh cotton ball to wipe off the excess until you can no longer see any residue when viewing the print from the side. PM-S can also be used to clean excess color from the print by applying a very small amount to your cotton skewer.

Extender

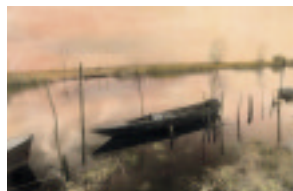
Extender can be used to clean small areas in the same way. It is essentially the base for all the oils and used to dilute their strength by mixing it with the color.

Other Equipment

A magnifying glass helps you see detail work more closely. When cleaning the small areas of a print, this tool proves vital (along with a well-lighted work area) to having an image that is suitable for handcoloring. Flaws not visible to the naked eye will stand out when magnified. Many colorists choose either the type attached to a goose-neck holder or one attached to a headband that can be pulled into place as needed.

High quality plastic erasers are also good for clearing color from highlights. Some companies make white erasers in pencil form which work well for fine detail. Test to see that your eraser does not flake excessively or leave marks on your paper.

Have an extra work print nearby while you are working. This will also help you to see how the paper color effects the medium you apply.



"Veneto Boat"

Warm tone papers are generally more creamy white in tone and cold tone papers have a brighter white base. These factors, along with toning, discussed later, all help in determining the "feel" of the final image.

TECHNIQUES

Preparation

It is important to work from a clean print that is free of dust and contaminants. Use either PM-S or Extender to completely clean the print if necessary.

If you have the choice, work on a print made on matte paper, because it has better "tooth" for holding the oils and pencils.



"Blue Room"

Worse, glossy papers take much longer to dry, oils just sit on top and pencils tend to scratch the surface.

If you have to use a glossy paper, you'll want to use a pre-color spray. This becomes your paintable surface and it is more delicate than the paper. During rub-down or cleaning the pre-color coating may lift from the print surface, making it harder to blend the oils. So some care needs to be taken.

Start Big: Establishing A Base Color

Look at your print as if it has three layers: foreground, middle, and background. With this in mind, work from the top of the print down to avoid smudging finished work by having your hand resting on it. With this in mind, work large areas first, such as the sky in a landscape or the background of a portrait. This will establish your base color. As you go, do not worry about colors going into other areas. These can be corrected by rubbing down or applying another color directly over the surface. They can even be cleaned-off entirely.

For landscapes in particular, having your sky correctly colored is crucial as it will set the color tone of the image or reflect in any water present. Apply a small amount of overall color to your cotton swab and gently buff in a circular motion to form your base. To add depth to the sky, multiple bands of color can be applied and overlapped in a horizontal direction and then buffed in that direction. Use a soft circular motion to further blend the colors, following the energy of the image. Cover broad landscapes in the same fashion to get the base color.

Detail Work

Once your base color is determined, you can begin working on the details. If you decide to continue with oils, use your cotton swabs. Remember, adding multiple colors gives depth to an image. The more variety you have in the landscape colors, the more interest your image will have. These colors can all be blended softly, and