

# Pastel Drawing & Painting — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into reps. Each section maps to one module, with exercises to do at the easel, worksheets to plan your pieces, and checklists to keep your method honest. Work through it alongside the lessons and you will finish with a logged, repeatable pastel practice and three completed pictures.

## Materials, Surfaces, and a Working Setup

Choose a focused kit, test surfaces, and build a dust-safe station with truthful light before you paint anything serious.

### Exercise: Make a Value-and-Hue Stick Map

Lay every soft pastel you own on a mid-gray sheet. Sort them into hue families and, within each family, line them up lightest to darkest. Photograph the result in color and again in grayscale on your phone, then note the gaps.

- Which hue families are missing a true dark (a near-black version)?  
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- Which families are missing a true light, forcing you to leave paper showing for highlights?  
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- Which of your sticks are very soft accent sticks you should reserve for final highlights only?  
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- List the three to five sticks you would add first to fill the worst value gaps.  
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### Worksheet: Surface Test Card

Cut small squares of two or three surfaces (for example UART 400, PastelMat, Canson Mi-Teintes). Layer the same color five times on each and record how many layers it took before color stopped covering. Fill in one row per surface.

Surface name and grade  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ground color used  
\_\_\_\_\_

Layers before tooth filled (count)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did it accept an alcohol or water wash (yes/no)  
\_\_\_\_\_

How it felt: grippy / smooth / dusty  
\_\_\_\_\_

Best subject for this surface  
\_\_\_\_\_

Keep, use for studies, or skip  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Checklist: Dust-Safe Station Setup

- Easel or board tilted near vertical so dust falls to the tray, not the surface
- Masking-tape strip or foil trough catching dust at the bottom edge
- Daylight-balanced lamp (5000 to 5500K, CRI 90+) or north window light
- Sticks stored in trays sorted by value within hue family
- Damp cloth on hand for wiping fingers and surfaces (no dry brushing dust)
- Room ventilated; no food or drink at the working area

## Layering, Blending, and Value Control

Drill the dark-to-light method, blending choices, and edge control that keep pastel clean and luminous.

### Exercise: Nine-Step Value Scale and Notan Block-In

First, with one dark hard pastel and one white, paint a nine-step value scale from black to white on gray paper, blending each step even. Then pick a simple subject and reduce it to a two-value notan with a black marker. Do both before any color exercise.

- Where on your value scale do most of your own sticks naturally fall (the middle, the extremes)?

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• In your notan, is the design readable and interesting in just two values?

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• What is the single darkest dark and the single lightest light in your subject?

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• Where will your lightest light and darkest dark meet, to mark the focal point?

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### Exercise: Broken-Color vs Blended Patch

Paint the same green field twice at three inches square. In the first, blend one green smooth. In the second, scumble three greens, a yellow, and a touch of violet side by side as broken color. Compare them at arm's length.

- Which patch looks more alive and luminous from six feet away, and why?

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• Where did blending dull the color, and where did broken color keep it bright?

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• Which approach would you choose for grass, and which for a distant misty hill?

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## Worksheet: Edge and Temperature Plan

Pick a subject and plan its edges and temperature before painting. For each listed area, decide hard, soft, or lost, and warm or cool.

Light source type (warm sunlight or cool overcast)

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Focal point area — edge type (hard/soft/lost)

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Focal point area — temperature of lights and of shadows

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Background area — edge type and temperature

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One edge to deliberately lose (merge into background)

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Where the single brightest, purest accent will go

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## Checklist: Anti-Mud Discipline

- [ ] Started from an alcohol or notan underpainting, not bare paper
- [ ] Worked dark to light, dull to bright
- [ ] Avoided blending complementary colors directly into each other
- [ ] Reserved very soft sticks for final accents only
- [ ] Stopped and laid fresh crisp strokes instead of over-blending
- [ ] Checked progress as a grayscale phone photo

## Composition Across Three Subjects

Design with thumbnails and focal hierarchy, then complete a still life, a landscape, and feel oil pastel.

### Exercise: Three Thumbnails Before Every Piece

For your next picture, make three two-to-three-inch thumbnail value sketches testing different placements of the focal point and big shapes. Then convert your favorite to a two-value notan to confirm it works.

- Which thumbnail has the most interesting big-medium-small shape variety?

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- Does your focal point sit off-center, near a rule-of-thirds intersection?

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- What path leads the viewer's eye toward the focal point?

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- Did the chosen design still dominate when reduced to notan?

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### Worksheet: Still-Life Five-Zone Map

Set up two or three rounded objects under a single side lamp. For the main object, locate and note each of the five zones of a lit form, plus your plan for ellipses.

Highlight: location and size (small/large)

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Light plane: temperature (warmer/cooler)

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Core shadow: where the form turns away

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Reflected light: where bounced light glows in the shadow

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Cast shadow: darkest point (at the base) and soft outer edge

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Ellipse check: top and base symmetrical (yes/needs fixing)

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### Worksheet: Landscape Depth Planner

Plan a landscape using aerial perspective. Assign value, temperature, contrast, and detail level to each distance band so depth is built before you paint.

Sky: value near horizon vs overhead

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Far ground: how cool, pale, and soft

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Middle ground: focal point and its contrast

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Foreground: how warm, dark, and detailed

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Where sgraffito or impasto texture will go (if using oil pastel)

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Medium chosen: soft pastel or oil pastel, and why

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### Checklist: Oil-Pastel Landscape Run

- Board or paper suitable for oil pastel (no sanded soft-pastel paper needed)
- Thin solvent wash toning the board, flashed off before building
- Big masses blocked: sky, far hills, mid-ground, foreground
- Underlayer washed with odorless mineral spirits to unify
- Foreground built thick with warm impasto strokes
- Sgraffito used to flick grasses and twigs over dried-down layers
- Distant areas kept thin, cool, and soft for contrast

### Portraits, Fixing, and Finishing for Display

Render believable skin, diagnose and repair faults, then fix, sign, frame, and protect a finished pastel.

### Worksheet: Head Proportion and Skin-Temperature Plan

Block in a head using the proportion averages, then plan skin as shifting temperature rather than one tone.

Record placements and your color logic before layering.

Eye line position (about halfway down the head: yes/adjusted)

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Nose base and mouth placement checked against averages

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Forehead: cooler note planned

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Mid-face (nose/cheeks): warmer, redder note planned

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Chin/jaw: cooler or reflected-warm note planned

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Shadow-side underpaint color (muted violet or green-gray)

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Where the lightest, slightly cool highlights will sit

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### Exercise: Fault Diagnosis Drill

Take a study that is not working (or deliberately overwork a small patch). Diagnose the cause using the course's fault list, apply the matching fix, and record the result.

- Which fault is it: tooth full, values too close, complementaries blended to mud, or overworked paste?
  - What is the specific fix for that cause?
  - After fixing, did the area improve when viewed small and in grayscale?
  - What will you do differently next time to avoid that fault?
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## Checklist: Finish, Frame, and Protect

- [ ] Underlayers fixed during work; final bright highlights left unfixed
- [ ] Loose dust tapped off before framing (away from your body)
- [ ] Glazing kept off the surface with a mat or hidden spacer
- [ ] Anti-static acrylic or glass used to avoid lifting pastel dust
- [ ] Acid-free archival mat and backing used
- [ ] Signed quietly in a corner with a hard pastel or pencil
- [ ] Frame back sealed; piece hung out of direct sunlight

## Your Action Plan

1. Assemble a focused 30 to 48 stick set sorted by value within hue family, plus a few sheets of UART 400 or PastelMat in mid gray.
2. Set up a near-vertical, dust-safe station under daylight-balanced light.
3. Drill a nine-step value scale and one two-value notan until both feel automatic.
4. Paint two small broken-color vs blended patches and decide where each belongs.
5. Complete a side-lit still life using the five-zone method and dark-to-light layering.
6. Plan and paint a landscape with aerial perspective, then repeat it once in oil pastel with sgraffito.
7. Block a portrait from proportion averages and layer skin as warm-cool broken color.
8. Deliberately create and then repair one of each common fault to learn the fixes cold.
9. Take one finished piece fully through: fix underlayers, mat with a spacer, glaze, sign, and hang.
10. Log every piece in the tracker and review your value and edge notes before starting the next one.









