

Useful Points to Remember ~ Soft Pastels

- 1 Avoid damaging your pastels by:
 - a) keeping them in the manufacturer's box
 - b) use a 'tool box type' or customised box with foam mattresses in each compartment
 - c) avoid mixing 'hard' pastels with very soft ones
- 2 Pastel Pencils ~ sharpen with a sharp blade rather than a sharpener. For a fine point use a small piece of sandpaper
- 3 Clean pastels by gently shaking them in a carton of ground rice or semolina
- 4 Use blu-tack to keep your hands clean, this avoid transferring one colour to another when pastelling (and stops your hands getting sore)
- 5 Vacuum up the dust to avoid inhaling it
- 6 Work upright on an easel and use a cardboard 'catcher' to collect surplus pastel and keep the floor clean
- 7 Use a piece of paper or board at least 1" larger than you need and leave an edge to go under the mount
- 8 Pastel Papers and Boards ~ these damage very easily so sandwich them between thick card, if papers do get creased then stretch the paper as you would for watercolour paper
- 9 On-going work, keep separated with a clean sheet of tracing, computer or similar 'hard' paper in between each piece, securing them firmly together to prevent rubbing ~ pressure will not harm pastel paintings, however side movement and slipping will cause smudging and blurring of your work
- 10 Fixatives ~ **avoid** using them as they **will** alter the colour and add a fine plastic sheen to your work thus inhibiting the light and eventually destroying your work. The only times fixatives are useful are:
 - a) for 'fixing' charcoal sketches as charcoal will taint any colour put over it, and
 - b) for fixing a small area, especially when using paper, to allow more pastel to be applied on top, mask out the rest of the painting
- 11 Before framing your picture, blot with pressure using a piece of fairly firm paper eg tracing or computer paper. This will 'fix' the pastel in place
- 12 Chose a mount that will harmonise and complement your painting. Experiment with coloured mounts, if in doubt choose a plain cream.
- 13 If possible use a double mount to prevent static building up under the glass
- 14 On larger pieces you could insert an inner mount $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1" larger on the **inside** of the mount to allow pastel to drop down behind the front mount
- 15 Attach the picture to the mount with 2 strips of tape at the top to avoid cockling, creasing and bending
- 16 If you do not wish to use a mount add a plastic slip or 2 layers stuck together of mount board the width of the frame recess to avoid contact with the glass.
- 17 Tape up the back of the frame to exclude as much air as possible.