

Techniques for Removing Pastel

from Art Spectrum Colourfix Papers * & Other Sanded & Regular Papers

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* While Art Spectrum Colourfix Papers will work with all techniques below, many papers, both sanded and regular, will not stand up to some of the procedures listed. Be sure to test a sample piece of your pastel painting paper, with pastel applied as you usually work, before using any of these techniques on a painting on papers other than Art Spectrum Colourfix. Some sanded papers are made with water-soluble glues and can not have any water applied without loss of their grit. Also note that colors of some regular papers fade.

Brush

The brush is a tool many people use for removing pastel and while it can be fairly effective, there are a number of drawbacks which make it a poor choice for many situations:

1. the dust tends to become airborne—something we always need to avoid when pastel painting!
 - a. wearing a mask would be wise when using the brush to remove pastel
 - b. you need to devise an appropriate way of disposing of the dust you are brushing off the painting
2. the brush leaves:
 - a. the edges of the removal area rough and smudgy
 - b. the paper surface filled with some usually non-descript color, where before there may have been fresh paper color showing through, which is important in many styles of pastel painting
 - c. and if you are removing color in the middle of the painting, you will likely have to ruin a portion of the successful color around the problem area getting the pile of unwanted color off the painting.
 - d. you can't easily control the layers you are removing and may destroy useful underpainting color or drawing.

Transparent Packing Tape

Two-inch wide transparent packing tape is an excellent material to remove unwanted pastel. And—it is the closest thing pastel painters have to the “Undo” command digital artists enjoy on their computers! While it can not always take an area of the painting back to a previous “pure” state every time, so often it can!

Using Transparent Packing Tape allows you to

1. take only the top layer of pastel, leaving the pastel below fresh and undisturbed
2. and lets you progress, if needed, layer by layer—down essentially to the bare paper if necessary
3. while working in an area of several square inches at a time or focused in a much smaller detail area.

—Scotch Tape, etc. can be useful when there is only a very small or long, narrow section of color you want to remove!

- You will need a burnisher such as a curved wooden sculpture tool, an etching tool or even an old teaspoon, though the latter makes it harder to remove pastel precisely. A gentle point will let you focus pressure in very detailed areas which is sometimes useful. Flatter, broader surfaces will let you remove larger areas of pastel.
- To use: cut a length of tape 3” to 8”. You will need several passes with fresh tape strips if you have built up many layers, however you can control how much you remove by the amount of pressure used when rubbing the tape into the pastel and by how many times you repeat the action with fresh pieces of tape.
- You can preserve the underpainting color or the drawing, leaving the paper color showing through in places as it is in other areas of your painting, if that is an important aspect of your work.
- For very small areas or a long, thin area to be removed, you can also use regular transparent tape from a dispenser.

Advantages of Tape:

1. it completely captures all pastel being removed for safe and easy disposal, letting none of the dust become airborne
2. you can see through the tape, putting pressure only on the area you want to remove, allowing for some precision where important
3. retains clean, undisturbed surrounding edges
4. can leave in place the drawing or undercolor or part of the early painting, taking off only latest bits or layers of color applied.

Erasers

Erasers are often at their best removing only thinner layers. At times, erasers like the brush, can leave unpleasant edges and smear neighboring areas you may want to have remain intact.

White Eraser

1. can be used with a light touch or pressed on very hard to erase quite vigorously
2. some types may leave scattered “crumbs” on the paper
3. and/or build up color on eraser surface, making it slick and difficult to remove heavy areas of color. Clean off or cut a fresh edge to revive
4. for erasing fine lines or small spots, the eraser can be carved to the needed size

Kneaded Eraser:

1. can shape into points or edges or use broadly
2. leaves no “crumbs”
3. knead often to find fresh surface
4. can smudge softer, thicker areas rather than removing pastel.

As a painting technique:

1. lay down a little color
2. smooth it in
3. then pull out portions of pastel with edge of the eraser to leave straight lines or other accents of the paper or underpainting showing through.

Colour Shapers

The Colour Shaper Chisel Angle tool can serve as that tiny finger tip you sometimes wish you had to allow you to easily pick up a slight bit of color, etc. This has become an indispensable tool in the pastel studio.

- Whether very loose, bold painting style or finest detail, this can lift off small specks quite precisely or nudge a piece of color into compliance—or lightly “mellow down” a stroke or spot that is too prominent.
- Some of the broader-edged Colour Shapers can be used to grade off heavy build-ups of pastel and/or rub pigment into the paper, leaving a thinner layer distributed on the paper.
- Experiment with your needs and style of work to discover the many other possibilities.
- The Colour Shapers, which come in many sizes and shapes as well as soft to firm qualities, can also be used for pushing and pulling larger masses of color around your painting for interesting and varied effects in pastel and any other painting medium. You’ll find many additional other uses for these lovely tools.

Little pieces of chamois can be quite useful, first in the earlier stages of the painting when sketching in the composition or roughing in underpainting color—or when working in a style that has a loose, rubbed quality.

- With most any style of pastel painting the chamois wrapped once around a finger tip can wipe out considerable amounts of pigment. Keep finding a fresh area with which to pick up the color. You can actually scrub down nearly to the paper surface, of course always leaving at least a bit of smudged color behind with blurred edges.
- Wash the chamois often to clean it and keep dust under control. After drying, it will be necessary to 'work' the chamois between your fingers to soften it again. The more you stretch it back and forth, the softer it becomes again. Have several small pieces on hand.

Damp Cloth

A soft damp cloth can be used to wipe off areas of pastel. This method is particularly useful for wiping off substantial amounts of color where you wish to repaint and you are not concerned about maintaining the original color of the paper or underpainting. The thicker the layers of pastel, the wetter you may want the cloth to be.

The dampness of the cloth:

1. could slightly darken surrounding pastel that remains even after drying.
 2. keeps the pastel dust being removed from becoming airborne
- In most cases, wait until the surface dries before working again.

The Kitchen Sink

Then there is The Kitchen Sink—or bath tub or shower—with a scrub brush—if you utterly dislike what you painted and want to get rid of the old pigment in order to begin again completely fresh.

Definitely test your paper before trying this!

- Colourfix can stand up to this sink—tub—shower scrubbing treatment repeatedly, which makes it a practical investment along with its other qualities.
- You can continue to make fresh beginnings on a sheet of Colourfix until you like the painting you've created. You can dare anything and know the investment in your paper will not be sacrificed.
- Some staining of certain pigments may remain, but the grain of the Colourfix is open and accepting.
- If the paper gets saturated, be sure to wet evenly front and back as you would with any fine watercolor or etching papers, press it between many layers of newspaper or blotters and weight down completely flat to dry as you would with watercolor/etching papers, perhaps changing the blotting papers in cooler, damper climates or for faster drying time.
- If you've started over again a number of times after particularly vigorous treatment, you may eventually "polish down" the surface a bit. You may enjoy the effects of applying a fresh light coating of Colourfix Primer with a fine sponge roller, either in matching or other color. This can freshen the texture and the color—maintaining economy in time and money!

Colourfix Primer to the Rescue

If you get an unsatisfactory or unworkable surface situation, such as can happen when fixative has built up with irregular layers of pastel several times over and won't be budged by any of the above methods:

1. use a bit of medium-fine sandpaper to take down the offending collections of pastel/fixative to achieve a flat surface again
 2. and then apply a light coat of the Colourfix Primer over the area to make it completely fresh again
 - a. using a soft, flat brush
 - b. or a small, fine-poured sponge roller
 - c. or combination in above order
- You can also use a bit of Colourfix Primer should you ever damage a

small area of your paper—or if, in an exuberant flurry of removing of that last little bit of pigment with the clear packing tape, you pull up a bit of the sanded surface. Thankfully, a dab of primer and it is fixed.

- Colourfix Primer dries quickly so you can proceed in 5 to 15 minutes with your painting. Keep a container of water handy for your brush or roller and immerse immediately after you are finished applying your primer.

• Which color to use?

1. For repairs, apply a small amount of the same color primer as the paper if you are letting the paper show throughout your work.
2. Otherwise, the clear or any other color will also give you back the original texture and you are off and running again, the painting saved!

NOTE: Before using any of these techniques for removing pastel from your Art Spectrum Colourfix paper, be sure to experiment on a test piece to get the feel for how this will respond to your particular touch.

- If working on other sanded or non-sanded papers, be sure to learn if they are waterproof and/or strong enough to endure some of these techniques.

Art Spectrum's Colourfix Papers are • fine-surfaced • yet very tough • water-proof • erasable • sandable • plus lightfast • & archival!

- These papers take a tremendous amount of punishment from artists who like to work their painting heavily or for those experimenting with their imagery or technique, making constant major and minor changes.
- For artists who paint gently and/or flow directly through the painting process with few changes or "surprises", the paper provides an enduring, trustworthy support that you can count on for consistency time after time!
- Early-stage artists will also appreciate the economy of this paper since they can wash off unsatisfactory beginnings and continue to make new paintings until they have a "keeper." Please refer to The Kitchen Sink above.

The Art Spectrum Colourfix Papers and Primers offer the artist many additional advantages including:

1. being able to splice additional paper on to a painting when the composition needs more space
2. sanding down the Colourfix surface with various fine or med-fine grades of sand paper
 - a. to slightly soften the texture
 - b. or sanding more to create a velvety surface, letting you create many of the effects of velour or similar papers—but in this case being certain of:
 - lightfast color
 - durable surface for the most vigorous strokes
 - waterproof, washable, scrubable surface
3. adding variation in texture to the surface with Primer:
 - a. in the same color
 - b. contrasting or analogous color(s)
4. mix Colourfix Primer colors together for variations of colors
5. or tint one to create a particular color
6. cover your own choice of archival support in any size you prefer using
 - a. 100% rag watercolor or etching papers
 - b. 100% rag board
 - c. sanded, untempered masonite
 - d. wood
 - e. endless possibilities!
6. use the various colors of Colourfix Primer to lay down a quick underpainting of the composition—working quickly and briskly since it will be dry for you to begin your painting within minutes.
7. excellent surface for watercolor, oil, colored pencil, graphite, charcoal—and perhaps something no one has thought about yet but **You!**

COMPLIMENTS OF

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