

COLOURWHEEL Art Classes

Sketching Pencils: Crushed Cans



This session is perfect for those of you who want to improve your work on tonal values. We'll be looking at two different ways to use sketching pencils and other simple equipment. Tone simply means how light or how dark something is. If you're a beginner, a good place to start is with a value scale like the one below. These can be as large as you want but a good place to start is with seven boxes – this way you'll have a mid-value. This will also help you to see how dark and how light you can go. Quite often when we're beginners, we don't make our darks dark enough and our lights light enough.



If you have a range of sketching pencils, such as a 2H and various B pencils, do try these out in your tonal scale. Remember, the higher the number on a B pencil, the softer the core and less pressure will be needed to create a darker tone. If you don't have a range of pencils, change your tone by varying the pressure you apply.

Sometimes, it is tricky to replicate a coloured photograph when using black and white mediums. A good tip is to turn your photograph into a black and white image. This can be done easily in Word by right clicking on the image,

selecting Format Picture and then the following icon: . This will give you the option of 'Picture Colour' and 'Recolour Picture'.

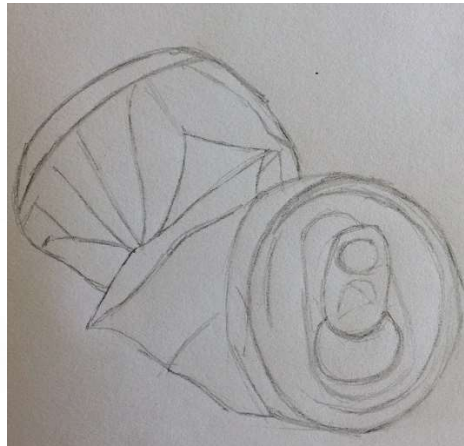


Main Task: Still Life

Equipment needed: white cartridge paper (I used A3), sketching pencils (I used a 2H, 2B, 4B and 8B), angled eraser, sandpaper, cotton pad, paper stump, hairspray to fix your work

Method One

For this method, don't be tempted to go too small. This will only lead to frustrations when you find it too fiddly trying to pull out highlights with an angled eraser. I've chosen this image to begin (it's the easiest one from the reference images) and will get me warmed up.

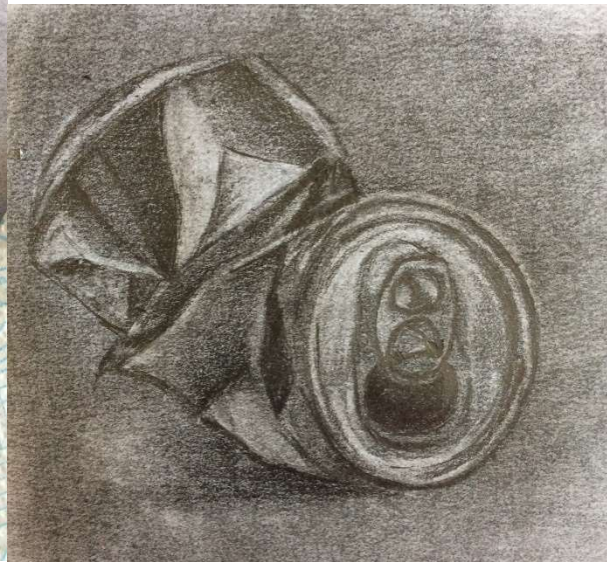
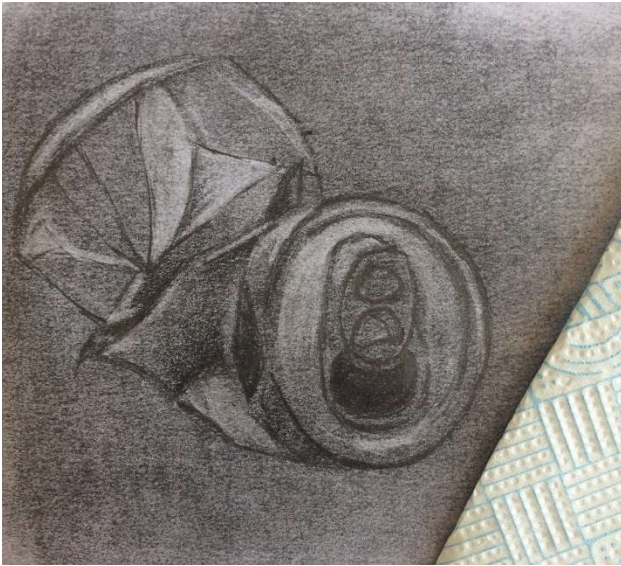


Begin by sketching out your crushed can. I've pressed on a little harder than usual with a 2H pencil as I'm going to cover this and I still want to see my marks. I draw out the shapes that the different tones make. This will be a guide when I come to add these in. Do take care at this stage, especially with the top of the tin and ring pull – if you don't get shapes/proportions correct at this stage, it'll effect your final drawing.

Next I want to make some graphite dust. You can buy this but it's so easy to make your own. I use my 8B pencil (use the highest B number you have), and use a piece of sandpaper to sand the graphite onto a plate. Tap the sandpaper as lots of it gathers here. You want to make plenty – the image shows how much I ended up with. I take up some graphite dust using a cotton pad and smear it over my image, rubbing it into the paper. **Note:** below left, see how you end up with a ghostly outline of your pencil marks. Below right I've simply gone back over these lines so that they're visible on this tutorial.

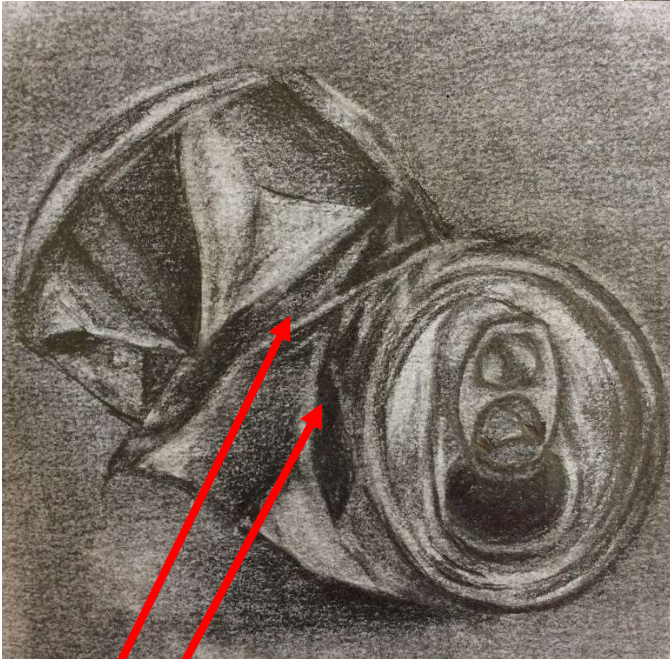


Note: you can cover the paper with graphite dust first and then draw your image if you're nervous about losing it. I just find the way demonstrated here easier, as I can erase and edit my can drawing more easily on a white background. I do like to make the covering of dust fairly dark as this will show more of a contrast when I pull out my highlights.



Top left image: Working with graphite dust can be a dirty job so I use a piece of kitchen paper to rest my hand on. I'm right handed so I begin working left to right. With any drawing or painting, it's important to start big and end small. Since tone is variable and how light or dark something appears depends on the tone that you put next to it, work around the whole image. Squint to see those darks and lights and use your tonal scale. I use an angled eraser to pull out some of the lighter areas (think of drawing with an eraser and using it in the same way you would a pencil). For darker areas, I use a 4B.

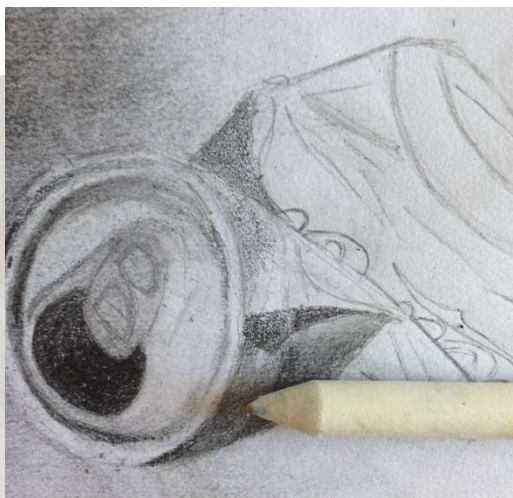
Top right image: once I've established some tone all around the object, I can then go in and start to pick out some slightly smaller detail. For example, on the area around the ring pull, I use a 2H pencil over the top of some of the highlights to pull out some of the shadows. Using a craft knife, I also sharpen the corner of my angled eraser and begin to work in some of the finer highlights.



Bottom left image: Now it's time for the finer detail. I use an 8B pencil to darken up the darkest areas and alternative between a very sharp 2H pencil and a 4B pencil to work in some of the finer shadows, such as the ones shown by the arrows. I also add a little shadow. This helps to place the can into the paper and give the illusion that only part of it is sitting on the surface.

Method Two

In this method I begin on white paper and like before, I draw out the shape of the can and the shapes that the large areas of tone make.



I start in the same way by working around the whole image, building up tone. I leave the white of the paper for the highlights and vary the pencils I use, for lighter (2H), mid and dark tones. I also use a paper stump to blend the pencil a little to try and capture the texture of the can,



As before, once I've worked around the whole image, I can then sharpen my pencils and begin to look for finer details. These are gradually built up e.g. note the ring pull detail from the top image to the bottom; the bottom of the can is first lightly built up with a 2H pencil and then in the bottom image, a 2B pencil is used to darken a few areas. Don't forget about your eraser. Highlights are drawn into areas of the pencil work.

Last of all a shadow is added. Notice how it is darker where it touches the can and how there is a little reflected light on the actual can at this point.



Reference Images – *do feel free to select your own image, set up your own composition or crush your own cans!*

(The first image is a little bit more of a challenge).

