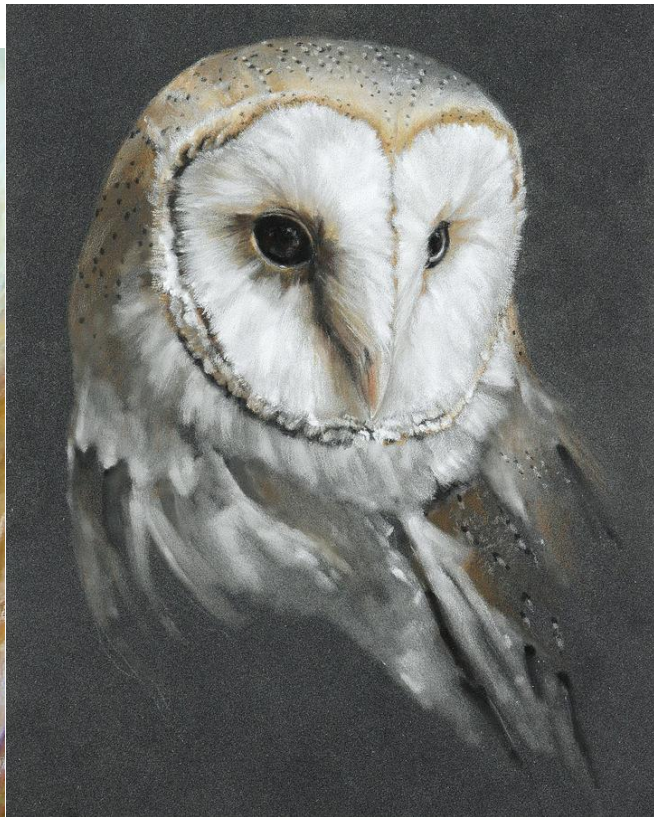


Pastel Owls

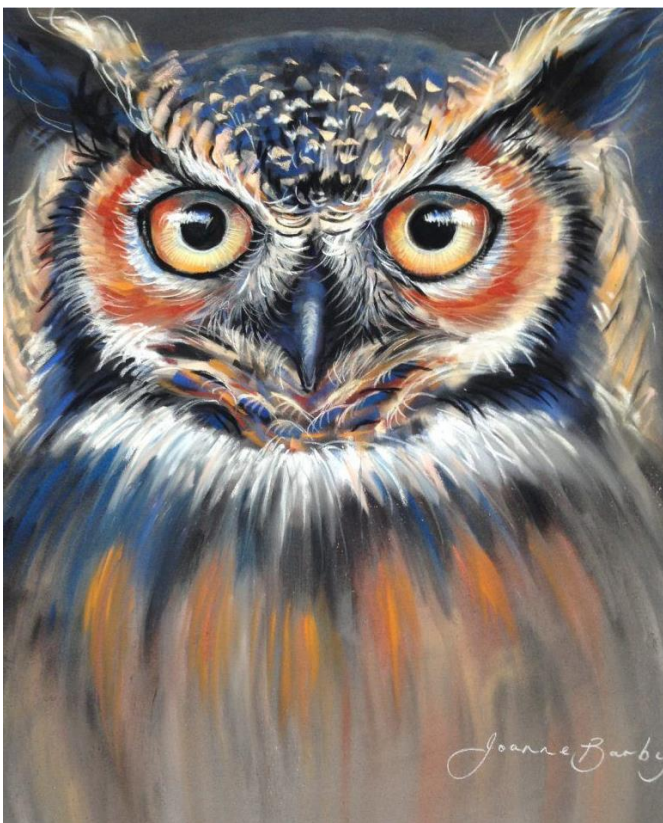
In this session we'll be looking at using pastels to create an image of an owl. I'm using soft pastels in this demonstration but oil pastels would work equally as well. Don't worry if you don't have pastels of any kind – coloured or watercolour pencils would work as well as sketching pencils or charcoal.



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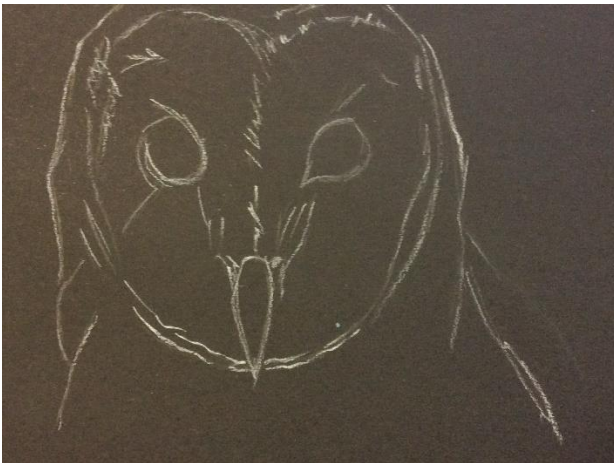
Pastel Owl

Equipment: soft pastels- colours used: white, light grey, pale ochre, light brown, dark brown, lilac, pale cornflower, purple and dark brown.



White charcoal pencil, toned paper

Additional Extras: soft coloured pencils or watercolour pencils, black charcoal pencil



1. Begin by planning out your owl. As I'm using black paper, I'm using a white charcoal pencil to do this. Not only is it visible on the black but if I make any mistakes, I can easily smudge it in to the paper. Do think about the colour of paper you want to use – different colours will create different moods. For example, if you want a more wintry feel, think about a blue. Have a look at the mood board images on the first page for inspiration.
2. Using the first set of colours as shown in the first image in the equipment list, begin to block in colour. Change the direction of your marks to follow the way that the feathers grow on different parts of the owl. Think big and don't go for detail too soon! There are only so many layers of pastel your paper will take. Use the pastel in lots of different ways to create texture e.g. on its side, edge etc. Don't add the black of the eyes yet – black will contaminate other colours if it gets smudged.



3. Part of the fun of using pastels is experimenting with colour. Introduce the colours in the second image in the equipment list to add some interest to your work. As before, don't go for minute detail, but in your second layer start to use pressure to vary the lights and darks in your image. The black of the eye can now be added – pastel can be used but I opted for a black charcoal pencil to give me a sharper line. A white charcoal pencil is used to capture the reflection in the eyes.
4. Work around the owl, building up detail. Think about the marks that you use to begin to render the marking on the shoulder area.



5. Continue to work around the owl, now thinking of smaller detail. When working in pastel, I would always recommend to go bigger; it is a fast medium to work with but also because of the size of pastel sticks, fine detail can be tricky therefore it is easier to achieve this when working larger. Soft coloured pencils or watercolour pencils can be used in tandem with soft pastel to add finer detail at the end.

If you enjoy this project, try the same image on a different coloured background – it is amazing to see the difference that this can make. Alternatively, if you've used soft pastel, try the image again using oil pastels and note the difference.

Photographic References



