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Pastel & Colour: Preparing your material

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Because pastels are a dirty technique, they require some methodical organizing. Here are a few suggestions for preparing your material so you can draw cleanly, with peace of mind!

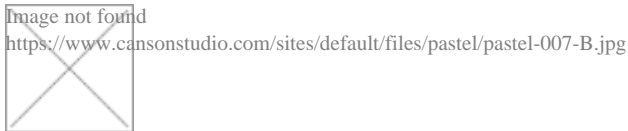
1. Paper

Whether light or heavy weight, your paper should be fastened to a drawing board. This is also the case for papers and boards originally designed for other techniques (watercolor paper, laminated paper, etc.).

How to use:

-  <https://www.cansonstudio.com/sites/default/files/pastel/pastel-007-A.jpg>
Choose a smooth board slightly larger than your sheet of paper: this will make it easier for you to attach the sheet of paper and hold the board without running the risk of soiling your work with your fingers.
- Attach the paper to the drawing board with:
 - either drawing clips
 - thumbtacks
 - or wide gummed kraft tape (it won't damage the paper when you remove it).
- Set the board on a support so you can tilt it while working. Tricks of the trade: wedge it between your knees and the edge of the table; set it on a pile of books. Ideally: use an easel.

What you need to know: By tilting your drawing board, you keep the dust released by the pastel sticks from making your piece dirty.

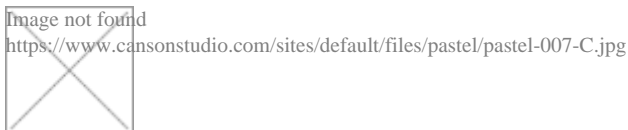


2. Colors

Since there is an incredible number of colors available, you need to make your choices ahead of time. You will save time and space!

Do a movie-style casting!

- Observe your subject carefully and ask yourself some questions: warm or cool colors, bright or pastel ones?
- Choose your shades and avoid using too many shades.
- Because the sticks are extremely crumbly, you need to them in a compartmentalized box or one filled with grains of rice. What are the advantages? Keeping your sticks in good shape, instead of finding them in bits and pieces; the shades won't get mixed with each other. Some advice: break the sticks into two equal pieces to make them less vulnerable.
- Organize your sticks by color and gradation of shades, so you can quickly look over your chromatic assortment while working.



3. Additional tools

Save time and energy by organizing all the tools you'll need for completing your work on your work surface. This way, you can concentrate on your work.

- **For erasing your mistakes Pastel-007-B:** a kneaded eraser (also called a putty eraser) and a clean rag.

- **To work on your colors:** a stump, a roll of paper towels, a box of cotton swabs.

Trick of the trade: Fresh crustless bread is a perfect soft eraser replacement for erasing pastels without damaging the surface of the paper!

- **To sharpen sticks:** a sharpener or a utility knife blade.
- **To fix highly volatile colors:** fixative spray.
- **So you can wipe your fingers regularly:** a clean, slightly damp, cloth.

Suggested products

Canson® Mi-Teintes®

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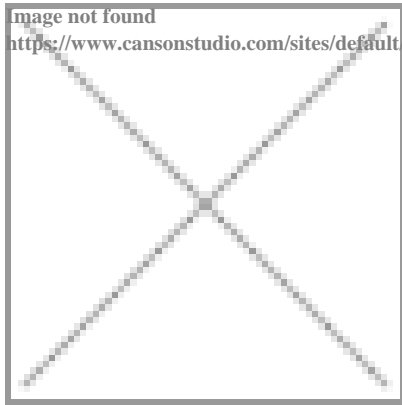


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See also

Pastel & Colour: Cleaning, maintaining and preserving your material

Nettoyer, entretenir, conserver son matériel pastel

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You don't need to be a cleaning fanatic to keep your pastels in shape? But watch out, they're fragile and messy, so you need to take some precautions! Overview.

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Oil pastels

Secret de fabrication Le pastel gras

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These little round sticks with a soft consistency when held and a creamy texture on paper are sure to make any novice artist happy. Let's travel back into time, to the ends of the Earth, to find the origins of oil pastels!

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