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[Home](#) > Oil pastels

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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!

1. Once upon a time in Japan?

In the early 1920's, in Japan, a teacher, Kanae Yamamoto, invented some color sticks for his little pupils to use for their handicraft work. He added wax to the pure pigments used for making dry pastels. These dust-free pastels yielded dazzling results and were perfectly adapted to children's hands.

In 1924, Kanae Yamamoto perfected his recipe, making his pastels more viscous for better paper coverage. In particular, he worked on the binding agent: a skillful blend of paraffin, stearic acid and coconut oil. Modern oil pastels were born! A short time later, the Japanese manufacturer Sakura started marketing them.

2. An order from Picasso

Oil pastels found true success in the Land of the Rising Sun... So much so that it reached the ears of

someone by the name of Pablo Picasso. He was already using color waxes, but was not entirely satisfied. So he went to a major Parisian manufacturer of colors, from whom he ordered some top quality customized oil pastels. No sooner said than done: The first line of oil pastels was produced in 1947!

These pastels were manufactured from wax and inert oils. A mixture of binding agents that gives them incredible hold on most supports and prevents the layers of colors from crackling. They won Picasso over? and have won over many others ever since!

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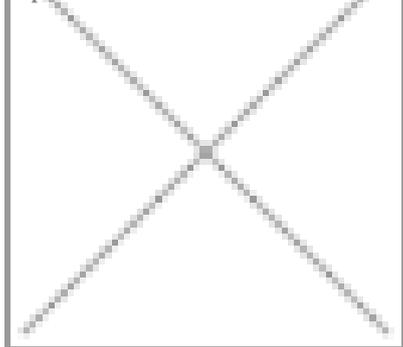


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Are pastels really just colored chalk? Infinite variations in color, different textures for developing your creativity?

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