

Libby Fife-Libby Fife Fine Art

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Results: Neocolor 1; Cretacolor water soluble crayons and Dick Blick Pastels

Results- Neocolor 1's:

*The crayons are wax based water *insoluble* oil pastels. They come in a large variety of colors at what I thought was a fairly reasonable price. I'd say that they are professional grade crayons with lightfast/permanence ratings as opposed to straight up Crayolas intended for the non-professional artist. Either one seems fine to me for straight sketching and coloring. I'd use the Neocolors though if I were going to sell a piece or keep it in my portfolio. I'd take the Crayolas out and about for sketching. Why not?

* Tested out on both gessoed and non gessoed cold press watercolor paper. Both papers produced interesting textures with the white of the paper showing through. One color can be laid down as much as you like. Depending on the texture of the paper, your crayon may be eaten up a bit.

* Colors don't layer well (cleanly). Blue on top of orange produces a muddy brown. Using white in between layers helps a little. The tips of the crayons when used will pick up some color from the last layer put down.

* I didn't use any solvents or heat the crayons which apparently you can do.

* I also laid down a colored ground using paint and clear gesso. The Neocolors went fine over the color and produced a nice texture. You do get optical blending, i.e. blue over orange isn't as pure and vibrant but the colors don't physically intermix because of the gesso barrier.

* I also tried the powdery pastels over this crayon and that of course didn't do well because of the waxiness. There isn't much tooth for the pastels to grab onto.

**Lines made using the crayon and then using the pastels over that worked pretty well. I went back in to strengthen some lines with the crayons over the pastels and that worked OK too. (I used Canson Mi Tientes Pastel paper.)

Cretacolors:

* These came in fewer colors and I think they aren't available individually, only in sets. I could be wrong.

*I used the Cretacolor crayons over the Neocolors and that had some good results, particularly if I had a layer of clear gesso on top of the Neocolors first. That provided some tooth for the Cretacolors used dry. The Cretacolors can be made wet both on the paper with a brush and by dipping the crayon in a little water. If you don't use any water to blend, the end results sort of look like a "tweed" pattern, particularly if you use opposite colors. The Cretacolors built up fairly well though I didn't get the results I wanted.

* I had a hard time keeping the colors "clean" and also achieving vibrant tints using white to lighten things up. Tints aren't generally vibrant I guess but things just looked muddy to me.

*The best results came when I painted the watercolor paper first with paint and clear gesso. I layered the Neocolors first, added some clear gesso and let it dry, then went in with the Cretacolors going back and forth from light to dark, dark to light, and using the white to do that sort of well.

Pastels (Dick Blick)

* I don't have any experience using soft or hard pastels other than just some general use in sketches. I'll say that this medium would take some getting used to. Layering didn't work super well for me though like colors layered better than opposites. Dark to light of like colors was OK but on the Canson paper, the layers built up quickly and I lost some tooth. Could be that a lighter touch and greater texture is required.

* The pastels didn't go well over either of the crayons as far as coverage is concerned but when the crayons were used to make lines, the pastels went over them nicely enough.

Impressions:

*Finding materials with properties that work well together is the key. So, you have to learn about the properties and test things out in combination. As an example, for my experiments the best results occurred when I put down the most permanent medium first: acrylic paint with gesso, clear gesso, or Neocolor1 crayons. Then, Cretacolors and then pastels. Gesso or water on

top of the Cretacolors caused them to blend. (This could be OK if that is what you want.)

*Covering large swathes of paper with crayons is not so great. It's tedious, actually and I didn't enjoy it.

*Having some idea of the finished look is important. Happy accidents are great but you could be spinning your wheels if what you are using simply won't produce a look that you desire. The properties of each medium may not cooperate no matter what you do.

* It took me some time to figure out that I should be using the Cretacolor crayons in the way for which they were intended: as a wet medium. I failed to exploit that early on and when I eventually figured it out, I got a sort of look that I liked.

*At a distance, multiple layers of color read as only one color. Texture tends to disappear. (Unless of course the piece is huge and the texture itself is rather large or uses great contrast.) It pays to stand way back from what you are doing to see what the effect is. The layers and layers of mediums may not be necessary to get a look that you want.

*Standing at my easel or sitting down coloring hurts both my hands and my shoulders.