

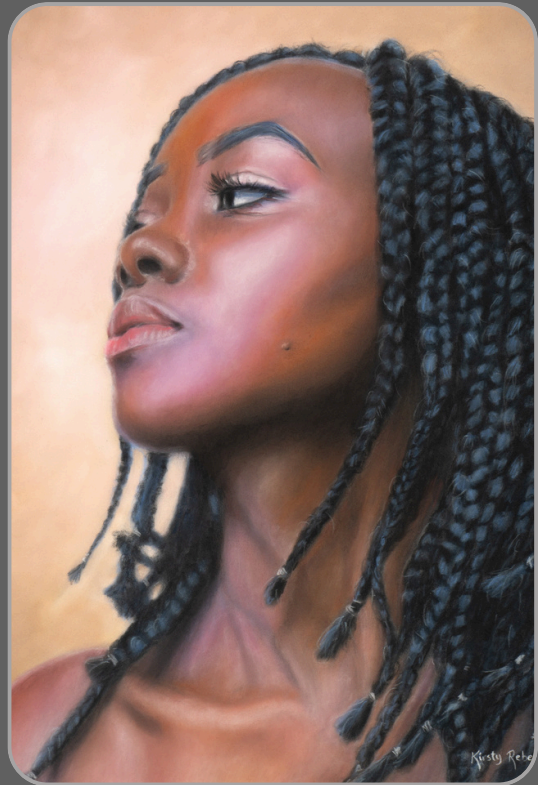
Kirsty Rebecca Fine Art

PASTEL SUPPLY GUIDE



A beginner-friendly guide to the supplies you'll need for creating realistic art, including wildlife, pets, birds, portraits, florals, still life, and landscapes

INTRODUCTION



The Beauty of Pastels

Pastels are a unique medium that combines the best parts of painting and drawing. They give you the freedom to explore a wide range of styles, from expressive, painterly abstracts to highly detailed, realistic drawings. With the right supplies, you can achieve the look you want and bring your ideas to life.

There are so many different types of pastels, surfaces, and tools available, and it can sometimes feel overwhelming to know where to start. This guide will walk you through the essentials, so you can begin your pastel journey with clarity and confidence.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PAPER

When it comes to pastels, the surface you work on is the most important supply, in my opinion. The paper has a bigger impact on your final result than the brand of pastels you use. I only use Clairefontaine Pastelmat because there's nothing else like it.

Pastelmat is a soft, velvety surface made from cellulose plant fibers, and it's completely unique. Other surfaces labeled as "pastel paper" can be made from cotton, or they might be sanded or traditional Ingres paper, but I've found that they either don't allow for many layers or make the artwork look grainy.

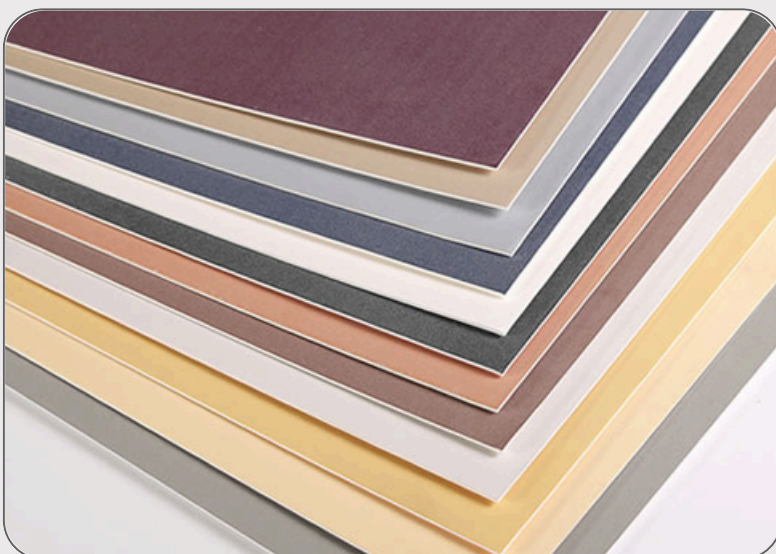


Clairefontaine

Pastelmat grips the pastel really well, letting you build lots of layers and add fine details without the surface filling up. It also blends beautifully for soft, even colors, and the final result looks smooth instead of patchy or rough.



It comes in a wide range of colours and sizes, so it works well for any project. Purchasing packs of larger sheets can often work out cheaper, and you can cut them down to the size you need. I prefer mid-tone colours like Dark Grey, Brown, and Sienna. While it's more expensive than other papers, it's worth every cent. If you're on a budget, I recommend buying a smaller set of pastels instead of switching paper, because you simply won't get the same results without Pastelmat.



Tip: Sometimes Pastelmat can have small quality issues, like uneven texture or tiny marks on the surface. The good news is that Clairefontaine has a very friendly customer service team. If you send photos and explain the issue, they're happy to help. Most pastel artists still choose Pastelmat even when small problems happen, because there's no other paper that compares.

TYPES OF PASTELS

There are a few main types of pastels, each offering different effects and allowing you to create a variety of artistic styles. For the type of realistic art I create, **I use PanPastels for base layers and backgrounds, and pastel pencils for finer details.** On rare occasions, I also use a soft pastel stick to add brighter highlights. These are the most common types of pastels;



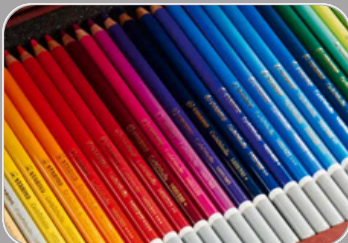
Soft Pastel Sticks

The most popular type of soft pastel, also known as chalk pastel, comes in stick form. Different brands offer a variety of shapes, and range from very soft to firmer pastels. Because it can be difficult to blend pastel sticks, most pastel artists choose to build up a large set of colours to give them plenty of options to work with.



PanPastels

Another type of soft pastel is PanPastels. These are pressed into pans and applied with sponge tools called Sofft Tools. They allow you to create both soft, transparent layers and bold, vibrant strokes. You can even blend colours much like paint, so a smaller set of PanPastels can give you a wide range of colours to work with.



Pastel Pencils

Pastel pencils are soft (or chalk) pastels encased in wood, giving you greater control and precision for fine details. They tend to be firmer than soft pastel sticks, allowing for a sharper point than what traditional sticks can offer.



Oil Pastels

Oil pastels are creamy, waxy sticks or pencils that work differently from soft/chalk pastels. They have a unique texture and produce rich colour, but behave in a way that is quite distinct from other pastel types.

Note About Lightfastness

Lightfastness is how well a colour resists fading or changing over time when exposed to light. If you want your artwork to last for many years, or plan to sell it, choosing supplies with higher lightfast ratings is important.

Most good brands use high-quality pigments similar to those in oil paints, acrylics, and watercolours, so their pastels are usually lightfast. Some colours naturally fade more than others, so it's worth checking both the overall rating of a set and individual colours. Many brands list lightfast ratings on the product or on their website for easy reference.

PANPASTELS



About PanPastels

PanPastels (by Golden Artist Colors) are professional artist-quality soft pastels that come in a unique pan format instead of sticks. They are rich in colour, very soft, and super easy to blend. They are applied dry, but they work a lot like paint, which means you can easily mix colours to create endless combinations without needing a huge set.

If you're looking for a budget-friendly option, the set of five basic colours (red, yellow, blue, black, and white) is a great place to start. It might take a little more time to mix the colours you need, but you can always expand your collection over time. For a more versatile and complete setup, the Kirsty Rebecca Complete Realism Set includes 20 carefully selected colours that cover everything you need for creating realistic subjects.



Sofft Tools

Sofft Tools are specially designed sponge tools made to work perfectly with PanPastels. Made from a unique micropore sponge, they pick up and release colour smoothly, giving you great control over blending and layering. Each tool comes in different shapes and sizes, similar to paintbrushes, so you can create a variety of marks and effects. Most sets of PanPastels include a variety of Sofft Tools. They are durable, reusable, and easy to clean, just wipe them on a paper towel between colours, and they can be washed and reused several times.

The Kirsty Rebecca Complete Realism Set

I've worked with Golden Artist Colours to create my own set of 20 PanPastels, designed for realistic artwork. It includes five basic colours (red, yellow, blue, black, and white) plus 15 additional must-have colours for subjects like portraits, wildlife, landscapes, pets, flowers, birds, and still life. These extra colours make it easier to achieve natural results, while the basics allow you to mix any colour you need. The set also comes with a selection of Sofft Tools, including knife tools, sponge covers, and larger sponges to get you started.



PASTEL PENCILS



Pastel pencils are soft (or chalk) pastels encased in wood, giving you greater control and precision for fine details. They are firmer than soft pastel sticks, which helps them hold a sharper point and makes them ideal for adding intricate lines and small details.

I mostly use Stabilo Carbothello and Faber-Castell Pitt Pastel Pencils. These two brands feel quite similar to work with, but each brand offers a different range of colours, which makes having both useful. Derwent pastel pencils are similar and a good option as well. Occasionally, I also use Caran d'Ache pastel pencils when I want really bright, opaque highlights. These are much softer than the other three brands, so they crumble more easily. For this reason, I use them sparingly and rarely.

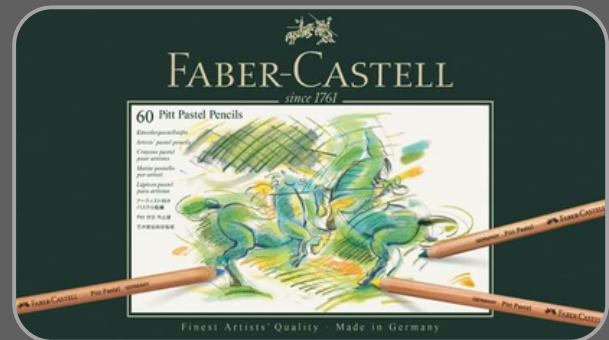
When starting out, I suggest buying the largest set you can afford. This gives you a wide range of colours from the start. Over time, you can build your collection by buying individual pencils from the same brand or trying other brands.

Keep in mind that some of these brands also make oil pastel pencils, so make sure you choose the “normal” or soft/chalk pastel pencil option. It’s also worth noting that pastel pencils, like all art materials, have different lightfastness ratings for each colour. Lightfastness shows how well a colour will resist fading or changing over time when exposed to light. If the longevity of your artwork is important to you, it’s worth checking the lightfastness rating of each colour before buying.

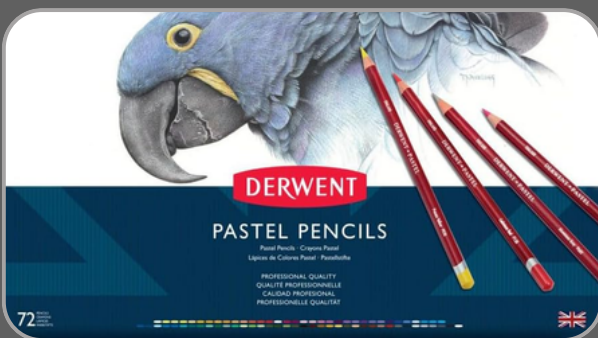
Stabilo Carbothello



Faber-Castell Pitt



Derwent



Caran D'ache



ACCESSORIES



Craft/Utility Knife or Blade to Sharpen Pastel Pencils

Using a knife/blade to sharpen your pastel pencils is recommended by most pastel pencil brands. Other sharpeners can damage your pastels and cause a lot of wasted product

Sandpaper For a Finer Point on Your Pastel Pencils

If you need a very fine point, you can use some sandpaper to gently shape your pastel pencil into a sharper point



Masking Tape / Scotch Tape / Washi Tape

Tape your art to your desk or drawing board so it stays in place while you work. It also creates a clean border around your artwork which is helpful for storing, framing, and shipping etc

Pencil Extenders for Short Pencils

Makes it easier to use pastel pencils when they become too short to hold comfortably



Microfibre Cloth or Paper Towel

Perfect for wiping Sofft Tools clean between colours, helping to avoid unwanted mixing and keep colours true

Kneadable Eraser (I Use Faber-Castell)

Soft and pliable, perfect for gently lifting pastel without damaging your paper. Great for correcting mistakes



Cotton Tips

Useful for blending layers of PanPastels or pastel pencils throughout a variety of stages of the process



Extras to Purchase Now, or Later Down the Track

Caran d'Ache Pastel Pencils

Especially white and black, which are useful for bright highlights and deep shadows. These softer pencils offer intense colour but crumble more easily, so they are best used sparingly

Soft Pastel Sticks

I use a small set of Rembrandt pastels, which are firmer than other brands, and blend well with PanPastels and pastel pencils. White and black sticks are especially useful for creating strong highlights and deep shadows

Daylight Lamps / Daylight Bulbs

Provide accurate lighting so you can see colours clearly and work more consistently, especially in low-light conditions

Mini USB Rechargeable Vacuum Cleaner

Useful for cleaning up pastel dust and keeping your workspace cleaner

SHOPPING LIST

Below is a condensed shopping list of all the supplies I have recommended in this guide to make getting started easier

If you prefer to shop online, you can visit the supply list page on my website. It includes all the materials I use across every medium, with direct Amazon links for the US, UK, and Australia (these are affiliate links)
<https://www.kirstyrebeccafineart.com/supplylists>

Essentials

Surface

- Clairefontaine Pastelmat in Grey or Dark Brown (larger sheets are more cost-effective and can be cut down to size)

PanPastels

- Recommended: Set of 20 “Kirsty Rebecca Complete Realism”
or
- Budget option: “5 Starter Painting Set”

*Sofft tools are included in both sets, but you may like to purchase additional tools as well

Pastel Pencils

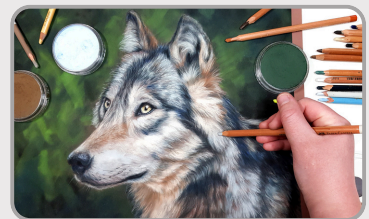
- Stabilo Carbothello Pastel Pencils (largest set you can afford)
and/or
- Faber-Castell Pitt Pastel Pencils (largest set you can afford)

Accessories

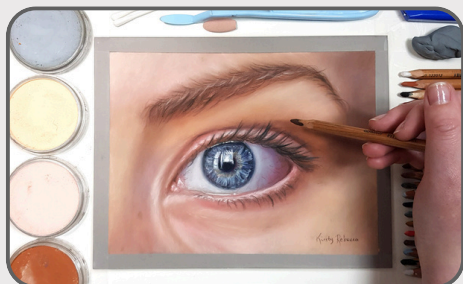
- Craft Knife/Utility Knife/Blade for sharpening pastel pencils
- Sandpaper for finer point on your pastel pencils
- Masking tape/scotch tape/washi tape for taping your work down
- Pencil Extenders for short pencils
- Microfibre cloth or paper towel to wipe Sofft tools on
- Faber-Castell Kneadable Eraser
- Cotton tips to blend your pastel layers

Supplies to Add Over Time

- Caran d’Ache Pastel Pencils – especially white and black for bright highlights and deep shadows
- Soft Pastel Sticks – I use a small set of Rembrandt pastels. White and black sticks are useful for adding bright, opaque highlights and rich shadows.
- Daylight Lamps/Daylight Bulbs for consistent, natural lighting
- Mini USB re-chargable Vacuum Cleaner to keep your desk clean



NEXT STEPS



Now that you have your pastel supplies sorted, the next step is to start creating with confidence. The KR Fine Art Academy is designed to help you take everything you've learned here and turn it into real results!

Imagine feeling confident every time you pick up your art supplies. Knowing exactly what to do, which colours to use, and how to make your work stunningly realistic.

No more wasting hours on one piece, no more confusion over supplies, and no more wondering where to start.

Whether you're a beginner dreaming of creating realistic art or an experienced artist ready to improve your skills, the KR Fine Art Academy gives you everything you need. Join now to transform your art, boost your confidence, and truly enjoy the process of creating art you're proud of!



[CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT MORE](#)

You might be surprised that most of my students had never touched pastels before creating these drawings! And many of them had never even picked up a pencil in their lives!

With just one beginner's pastel pencil lesson, they discovered how to turn a blank page into something beautiful. They gained confidence, learned essential techniques, and created artwork they never imagined possible!

...and **YOU** can too!

