

TIPS FOR STREET PAINTING ARTISTS

HOW TO SET-UP YOUR STREET PAINTING:

Step One: Choose the image you want to create

- There are a few directions you can take when choosing an image. You can be totally spontaneous and create a piece from scratch at the festival. Some artists like to recreate an original piece they have done on paper or canvas in the past. Others choose to recreate classic masters' paintings or other famous paintings. Still others like to recreate photographs.
- If you are creating as you go from scratch, you don't need much prep – see Step Three on preparing the pavement – then just start sketching and go!
- If you are recreating an existing piece, you'll need to set-up a grid system to transfer the image from your artwork to the pavement.
- Beware! Choose an appropriate subject. Choose a piece that will adapt well to pastels. Also look for a design that is not too intricate or detailed. You want to be able to finish in available timeframe.

Step Two: Determine the best % scale to use for this drawing and set-up a grid system.

- You'll need a ruler and a proportion wheel for this part of the process. To determine what will be the best % scale to use for your drawing, measure your original art and compare it to the finished size you have chosen. (For example: if you know your finished street painting image area is 9 feet by 12 feet and your original art is 9 inches by 12 inches, your grid will be 1 inch = 1 foot.)
- Generally you will need to make an enlarged or reduced color copy of the original art in order to adjust the size to fit a scale that is easy to work with. For example: you know your finished size is 8 feet by 12 feet horizontal but your original art is 6 inches by 9 inches horizontal. In that case, shoot a color copy a 134%, making the artwork size 8 inches by 12 inches – and a scale of 1":1'.
- Another scenario might be: your street painting space is 12 feet square but your artwork is 9 inches by 9.5 inches. In this case you'll need to crop ½ inch off the dimension that measures 9.5 inches and then shoot a color copy at 117% - making the original art 10.5 inches by 10.5 inches – and a scale of 7/8":1'. (Or you could shoot the color copy at 100%, crop off ½" from the 9.5 dimension, and your scale would be 3/4":1'.)
- The % scales that seem to work best are: 1":1'; ¾":1'; 7/8":1'; or 5/8":1'. Once you've made a color copy, measure out the grid size you've chosen and draw the grid onto the color copy. If you have a dark image, it usually works best to draw the grid with a white colored pencil. Light images work best with a regular #2 pencil or a dark colored pencil (red or black.)
- If you have an image that can not be color copied (an odd size or it's in a book, etc.) the only way to set-up your grid, is to cover the art with an acetate sheet that will accept ink and draw your grid onto the acetate. The only drawback with this system is that you can't change the size of the original art so you've have to determine a scale that works with the original size you have.

Step Three: Preparing the pavement for image transfer

- To transfer your image to the street, you'll need to prep the pavement first. Sweep away as much dirt and debris as possible (small stones, etc.) Put a border of masking tape

around the outside edge of your final image space (2 inch or 3 inch masking tape works fine.) This will give your finished piece a nice, sharp outer edge. After placing the masking tape on the pavement, use a yard stick or a measuring tape and make a mark at one foot intervals around the outside of the finished size image area with a piece of chalk. (Light blue is easy for detection.) Then using a carpenter's snap chalk line, snap a one foot grid over the whole drawing area. This usually gets a bit messy, but don't worry if you get excess chalk on the drawing area, because you'll be covering it up with your drawing anyway. Just be sure you can easily see your one foot grid. Also at this point you should be able to walk on the grid without distributing it too badly. Down the line (once you start your finished drawing,) try not to step on the pastels you've drawn or they will smudge and show footprints. One way to avoid this problem is to start drawing at the top of the space and work your way down to the bottom. That way you won't need to step on the drawing very much. If you do need to stand on what you've drawn, put down the piece of cardboard or foam core board to stand or sit on. This will help keep the image from smudging.

Step Four: Sketching your image

- Once the grid is on the pavement, you can start sketching your image. Just follow the grid on your original art and indicate your basic lines and shapes on the group according to how they intersect the original artwork grid. (i.e. if you have an eyeball that is placed in the upper left area of your drawing, and it is located in the 2nd and 3rd boxes down from the top left corner of your drawing and in the 3rd and 4th boxes in from the left side of the drawing – just duplicate that image in the corresponding boxes on the pavement.)
- Be careful not to use the same color chalk for your sketch as you use for your grid. I like to use the blue chalk that is most common and available for chalk snap lines (you can get it at most hardware stores) for the grid and then use a contrasting color (either white or reddish brown) chalk for my sketch.

Step Five: Laying down the color

- Once your sketch is complete, you're ready to start putting down the color. This process varies greatly. It is really up to your individual style. One thing to consider when applying the color is how you want the finished pastels to appear.
- Some artists like to just draw with the pastels and not rub them into the surface at all, creating colors by overlapping strokes and crosshatching. This style appears a bit more coarse because of the rough surface of the pavement.
- Another style is to apply colors in layers, mixing and blending them with your hands. This style gives you a much smoother image and seems to work best when trying to recreate a photo or a photo-realistic painting.
- Beware! It is hard on your fingers and hands after a few days of rubbing on the street or sidewalk! A few tricks to help protect your hands are to wear latex surgical gloves (available at most drug stores), or wrap your fingers with cloth adhesive tape. You can also use Styrofoam to rub in color rather than your fingers. Another trick is to use chalkboard erasers when trying to cover large areas with color. Be sure to get chalkboard erasers made of felt. The newer style erasers made for dry erase boards fall apart when you rub them on pavement.
- You will find that some colors stick better to the pavement than others. Lighter colors (White, yellow, tan, light blue,) create quite a bit of chalk dust on your drawing. Try not to blow or fan the dust away since it is not healthy to inhale a lot of chalk dust and you

don't want to cover your neighbor's drawing with your dust. Some people like to bring battery-operated dust busters to pickup excess chalk dust.

Step Six: The finishing touches

- After you are finished with your piece, the last step is to remove the masking tape around the outside of your image. This will create a nice clean, sharp edge to finish off your drawing. Be sure to sign your piece and also give credit to the original artist and list the title of the original piece, (if you are recreating another artists' work.) It is also customary to credit the photographer if you are recreating a photo.

RECOMMENDED THINGS TO BRING:

Equipment

- Artwork and reference materials – try to protect with lamination or acetate or it will get dirty
- Tape measure – to measure grid onto pavement
- Carpenter's chalk snap line and lining chalk – to apply grid to pavement
- Yardstick or piece of wood – to draw straight lines, if necessary
- Wisk broom or small broom – to clear pavement of stones and debris
- Knee pads or gardening kneeling pad – protect those knees!
- Masking tape – 1"-3", to apply around your image area; gives the drawing a nice clean edge
- Duct tape – to hold down artwork, if it's windy
- Mat knife or Xacto knife – never know when you need to cut something
- Cardboard, mat board or foam core board cut to approximately 24"x36" – to stand or sit on when drawing so you don't smudge or disturb what you've already drawn
- Sponge – a wet sponge will erase mistakes if necessary
- Plastic surgical gloves – some people like to use these to protect their fingers
- Cloth adhesive (sports) tape – another finger protector
- Chalkboard erasers – useful for blending or spreading color over large areas (be sure to get traditional erasers made of felt – the new erasers made for dry erase boards fall apart when rubbed on the pavement)
- Styrofoam – also useful for blending and spreading colors/test your ahead of time – not all types work)
- Battery-operated dust buster – some people like to use these to pick-up excess chalk dust

Other Items

- Wear clothing that you don't mind getting really dirty. The pastels generally wash out, but there are some pigments which are a lot harder to remove.)
- Sunscreen – especially if you are not going to be covered up with clothing
- Hat – red ears and nose are not so good
- Water bottle – to stay hydrated
- Camera – it's fun to take lots of photos periodically throughout the day to record your progress as well as getting good photos to remember your experience – you can't take it home with you!