

HAND TINTING PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo tinting adds elegance and a personal touch to old or new photographs. You can create colour highlights and texture, thus adding a new look to art projects, memory albums, cards or gifts.

MATERIALS:

- oil pastels
- coloured pencils
- oil paints
- watercolour paints
- cotton swabs
- cotton balls
- soft hair brushes
- masking tape
- turpentine, turpensol or citrus thinner
- rubber gloves

When choosing a photograph to hand tint it is important to choose one with a large tonal range. The tonal range in a picture refers to the amount of black, greys and white in the print. If the picture is predominantly black many of your colours will not show. Conversely, if there is too much white space in the photograph the colour you apply will overpower the picture leaving little or no contrast. Glossy resin coated paper is harder to hand tint with watercolours than resin coated matte, pearl or fibre-based paper. This is primarily due to the coating on the paper which is more likely to cause colour to bead and not be absorbed as easily. In general, all resin coated and fibre-based papers work fine when using oil pastel, pencil crayon or oil paint methods.

HAND TINTING WITH WATERCOLOURS

Before tinting a photograph with watercolours it is best if the print is soaked in warm water for fifteen to twenty minutes. This makes the paper more receptive to the absorption of colour. If necessary, a wetting agent such as ox gall can be used to help the



print stay wet longer. Remove the print from the water and blot with a towel to pick up any excess moisture.

Next, tape the photograph down to a drawing board or table top. Apply the colour in even strokes. It is best to apply the colour in thin layers at first, and then add further layers until the desired intensity is reached.

Once you have completed the tinting, allow the print to dry naturally. You may want to protect the print with a clear matte or glossy spray once the print has dried. This is an important step to consider if the print is to be handled or you are worried about protecting the surface from grease or dirt.

HAND TINTING WITH OILS & PENCIL CRAYONS

When tinting a photograph with oils or pencil crayons, it is not necessary to soak your photograph before use. First, tape the print to a rigid working surface to keep it from moving around. Tape can also be used to protect the white border of your photograph. Solvent such as turpentine, turpensol or citrus thinner is needed for this method of tinting. We recommend that you wear gloves when using either cotton swabs, cotton balls or tissue to apply the solvent. Also, if you are sensitive to strong odours consider using a respirator and odourless mineral spirits.



First, apply a light coat of solvent to the areas of the print you intend to apply colour to with a cotton ball – be sure to remove any excess with a tissue. If you are using fibre paper, only coat the portion you are working on. Fibre paper is very absorbent and as a result the solvent will dry quickly. Next, add the colour using either oil paints, oil pastels or pencil crayons. The use of light pressure with your drawing tool will produce a sparse covering of colour. If the colour appears streaky or uneven simply use another cotton swab or ball in a circular motion to even out the applied colour. At this stage the use of cotton swabs

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and balls can also be used to lift excess paint off the surface. When applying colour, remember that heavy drawing pressure will build up dense colour very quickly, and as in watercolour tinting you should apply colour in successive light layers for the best results. Although it is easy to remove excess pigment when using oil paint or pastels with solvent, it can be somewhat messy and harder to control.

You can experiment with different degrees of pressure to create a range of effects. Colour application doesn't have to be smooth or translucent – it can have varying degrees of density and intensity. Oils can be used to build up the surface and create an impasto look, or layered colours can be carefully scraped away to reveal the colours beneath.

Staff Tips:

~Be sure to use a low tack tape when taping down your photograph. Try painter's tape. This will help to ensure that the tape doesn't ruin the edges of your photograph when it is time to remove it. If you don't have access to low tack tape simply stick the adhesive side of the tape to your clothing a few times to remove some of the tack! — Jenn

~ Work in a well ventilated area when using any type of solvent, even if it is labelled "odourless". Just because you can't smell it doesn't mean it isn't in the air. — Alison

~ Experimenting and using different tools to apply paint is a great way to extend this project. For example, try combining Colour Shapers with brushes. — Nadine

NOTES:



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