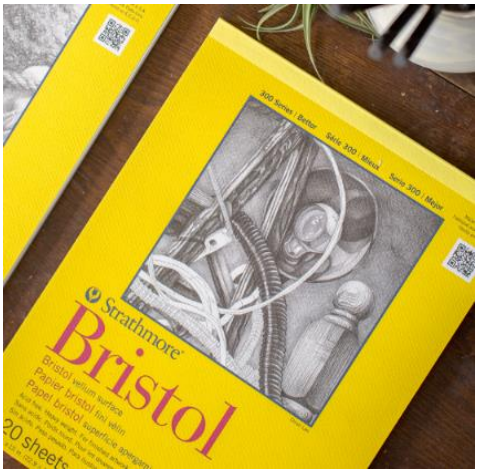
Strathmore 2019 ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES

REALISTIC DRAWING WITH CHARCOAL

with **Kirsty Partridge**

Part 2- Basic Techniques Practice with Flower Study

SUPPLY LIST



- Strathmore 300 Series Bristol Vellum Paper
- Lyra Rembrandt Charcoal Pencils 2B & H
- Lyra Rembrandt Charcoal Block
- Kneaded Eraser
- Sharpener
- Blending Stump
- Tissue
- Daler-Rowney Aquafine Brush, 4 Round
- Mono stick eraser

In this lesson we will be practicing the basic techniques that I demonstrated in part one of this workshop. We will be working on a simple flower study in this lesson, to get a feel for the materials and techniques, before moving on to more complex subject matters.

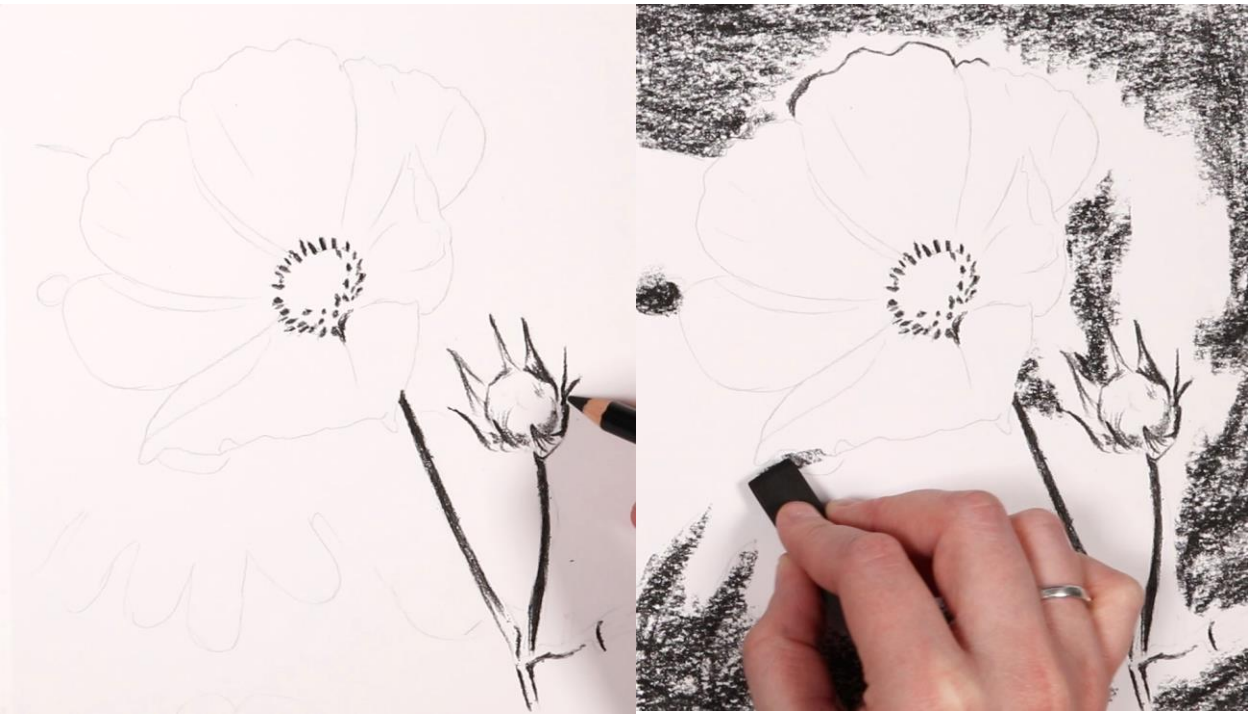
Reference and Sketch Outline

I started off by creating a basic sketch outline of the flower, which is available in the resources for you to use. I used a graphite pencil to lightly sketch out the flower. I recommend using graphite for your sketch, rather than charcoal, as it is easier to erase if you make a mistake. Also it is easier to achieve a light value with a graphite pencil. It is really important that you don't move onto working with your charcoal pencils until you are happy with the accuracy of your sketch. It is difficult to fix mistakes with your proportions once you start shading. It is best to spend a bit of extra time perfecting your sketch before rushing into the shading process.

Let's get started!

Shading

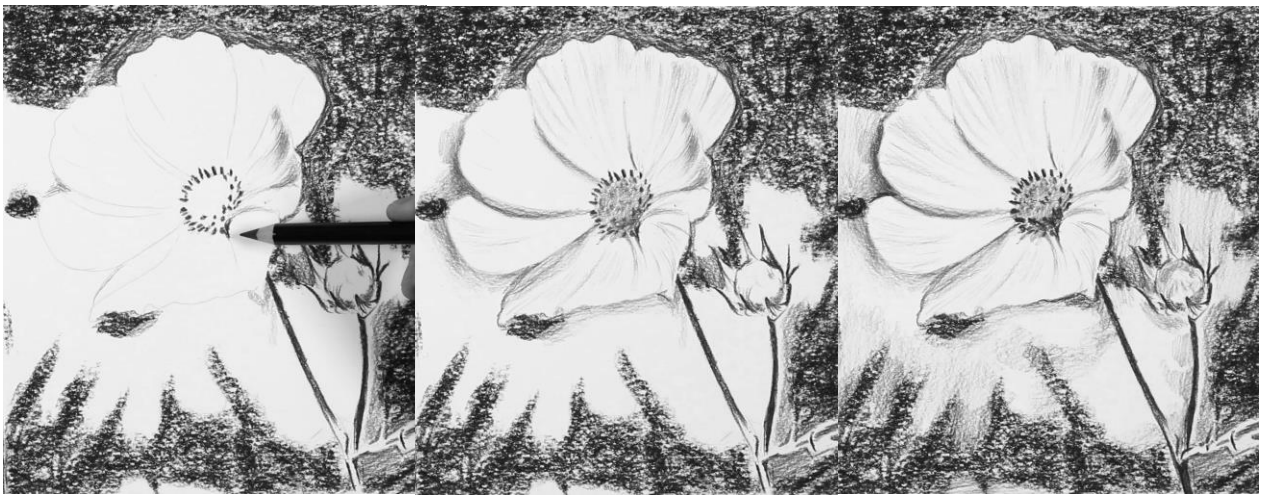
I start my charcoal drawings by blocking in the darkest values first, as I find that it then makes it easier to judge the others values. It is important to analyze your reference image before you start and identify where the darkest values of the flower and background are.



I first use the 2B charcoal pencil to block in all of the darkest values within the flower. I shade in the stems, the centre of the flower and parts of the buds. Remember, at the moment we are only adding the 2B pencil to the **darkest values**. Keep your pressure light. It doesn't matter if your shading looks grainy, as we will be blending everything out.

Next, I use my charcoal block to shade in the darkest values within the background. I am using the charcoal block, rather than the pencil, as it makes shading large areas a lot faster. I am using the side of the block to shade with. The charcoal block is good for shading large areas, but it isn't great for going around small details. Instead of using the charcoal block up against the edges of the flower petals, I switch over to my 2B pencil.

Adding Midtones



Once I have blocked in all of
the darkest shadows, I switch over to my H charcoal pencil and shade in the midtones. I start working on the petals, using a hatching method. In the reference the petals shadows go in lines that curve with the shape of the petals. I also add layers of shading all over the centre part of the flower and parts of the flower bud.

I finish off this step by shading in the midtones for the background. Making sure to hold my pencil further back and use the side of the pencil to get even, smooth shading. Remember to preserve any highlights by not directly shading charcoal in those areas.

Blending

I move onto blending out the first layer of shading with a paintbrush. I work the paintbrush lightly in circular motions. I blend over the whole drawing, even brushing some of the charcoal over areas we left white.

I then smooth out the shading even more using a tissue. I wrap the tissue around my finger to give me more control over where I am blending. I blend over any areas that are still too grainy. Blending with tissue can lighten up your darker shading too much, so I use my fingers to blend over the darker areas instead.

Finally, I go in with my blending stump and lightly blend over the shading on the flower petals, as I want these shadows to be very soft and subtle.

Darken up the Background

The background still needs to go darker. I build up a second layer of shading using the charcoal block and 2B pencil, just like I did in the first layer. Again, I use my finger to blend out the darkest areas and use the paintbrush to soften out the lighter values (like the blurred out flower petals in the background.)

Once you are happy with the background it's time to start adding more details to the flower.

Final Details & Highlights

I start by adding some final shadows to the flower, stems and the flower bud. I darken up the centre of the flower, the shadows in between the petals and I add more of a defined edge separating the petals from the background.

Finally, I add the highlights to the flower using my tombow mono eraser, but any stick eraser will work for this. I use the eraser to neaten up the edges of the petals and pull up lots of highlights throughout the petals. I also add highlights to the sides of the stems and to the flower bud. There is a bright highlight in the centre of the bud and highlights on the tips of the small leaves around the bud.

On the left is the drawing before I added any highlights. You can see how much more the final drawing on the right pops because of those few extra highlights I added in. That is because adding highlights increases the drawings contrast.