



ETHEREAL ART ON TONED MIXED MEDIA PAPER

with Georgina Kreutzer

Week 1:

A Secret to Realistic Art – Highlights & Shadows



A general introduction in controlling highlights and shadows using mixed media – my primary method for realism.

We will only use black/white tones on toned paper, so you can focus on the method at hand without being distracted by colour and composition (two major elements in drawing that deserve their own separate tutorials!)

Strathmore's Toned Paper is amazing because tonally it sits in the centre of the scale, allowing you to showcase highlights and shadows equally. With practice you can use this paper to your advantage and end with some fantastic results.

Supplies:

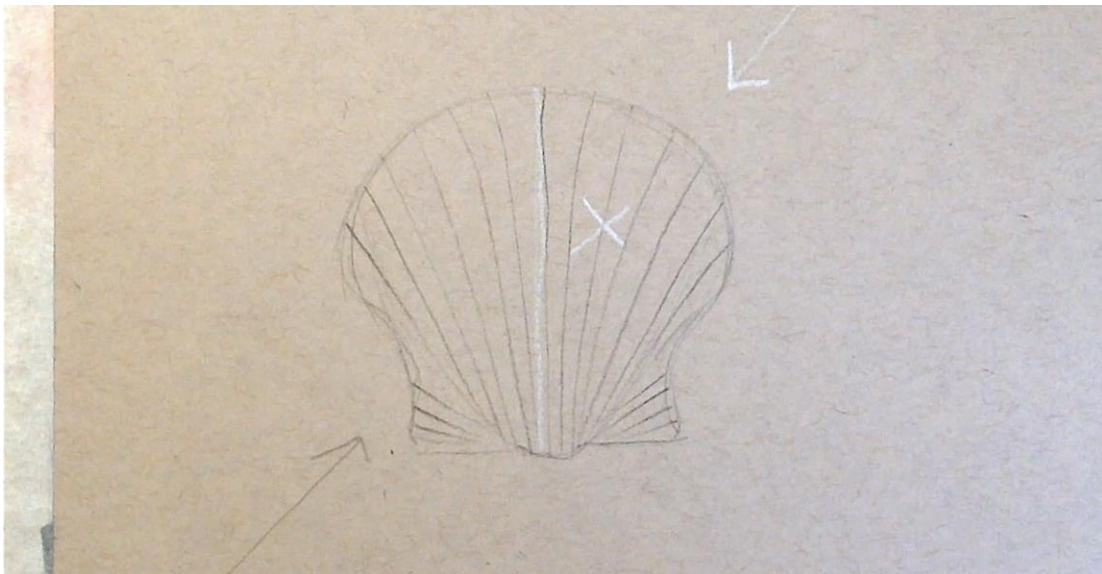
- Paper: Strathmore [400 Series Toned Mixed Media Paper](#)
- Colored pencils (including white, various light, middle and dark gray toned, and black) – Instructors also uses a silver metallic colored pencil
- White pastel pencil
- Gray marker (Medium to Fine Tip)
- Black marker (Medium to Fine Tip)
- Fine tip brush
- White acrylic (white gouache or a white gel pen can also be used)
- Workable Mat Fixative (Instructor uses Micador)
- Artist tape



Method:

First and foremost, we should all agree there are no rules to drawing, or creating art of any kind. Yet, I hope these tutorials provide you with a few new ideas to build upon your own set of techniques – take, leave, or amend them, as you like.

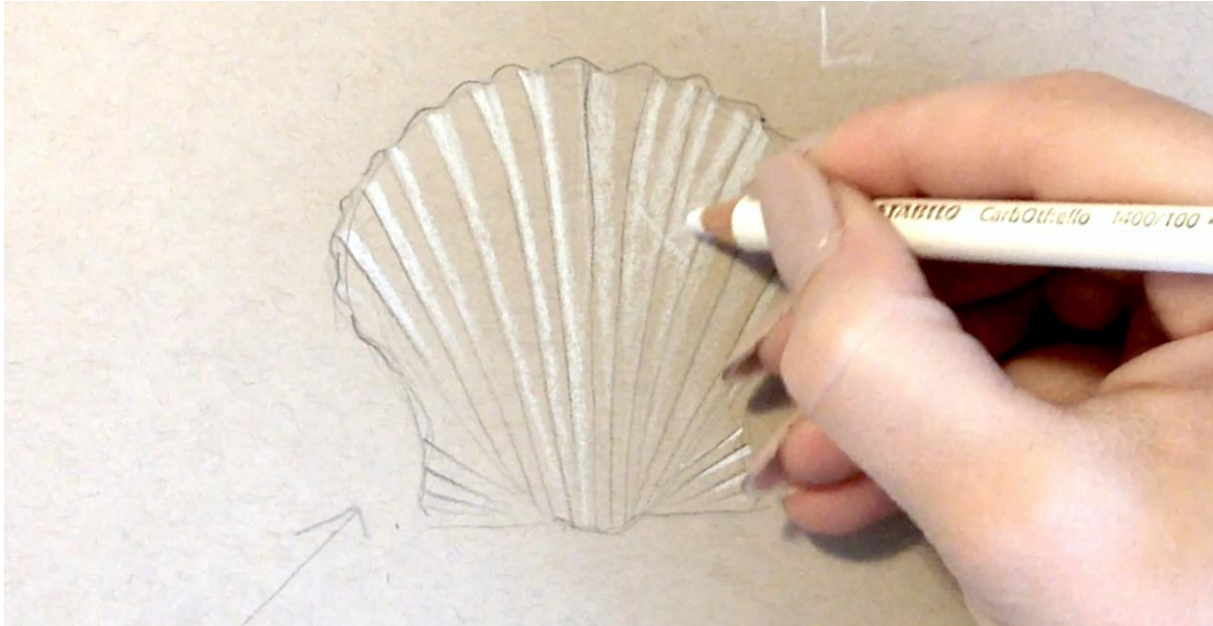
I always like to secure the art paper to my desk with masking tape – a useful trick is to run a light layer of white pastel along the border with a tissue or blending sponge. When it comes time to remove the tape, it will peel away without tearing your page, and excess pastel is removable. However, a good artists' watercolour paper masking tape won't do this – you can find them in art stores.



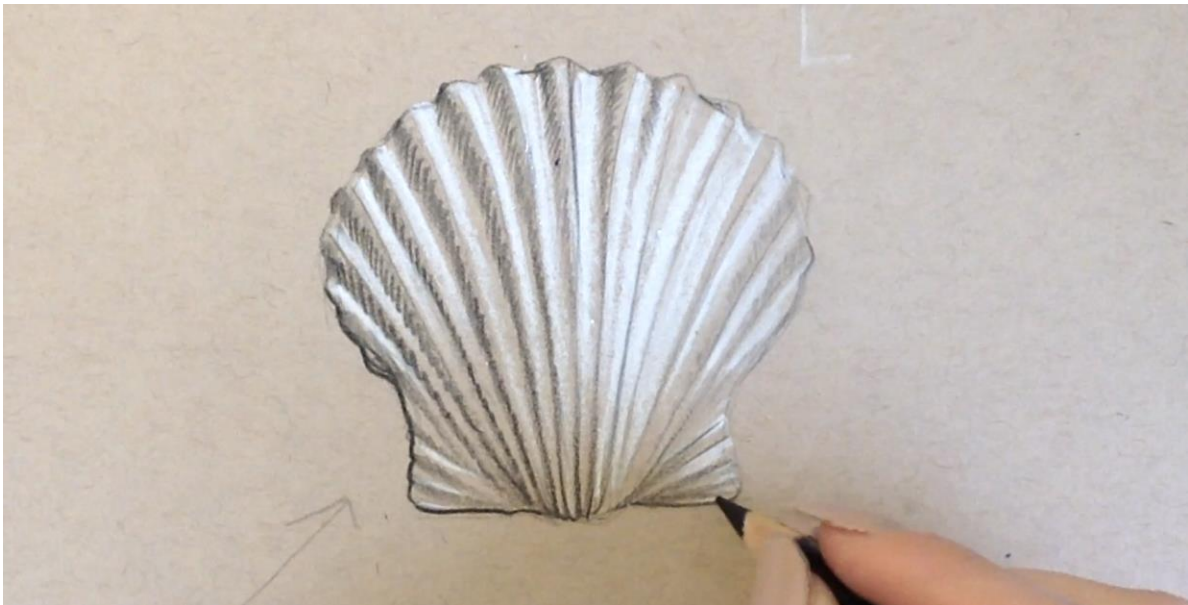
Starting out:

Set out some gentle line work to guide you for the remainder of the tutorial. I am using Strathmore's Toned Tan Mixed Media paper.

Identify where the light source is on your object before drawing – if you are using this reference image and following along this tutorial, the top right is the direction of our light source, so it's important to keep this in mind for the duration of sketching. Having light bounce in the wrong direction, or all directions, is cause for a pretty unconvincing final sketch.



Highlights are first. I am using a sharpened white pastel pencil to stroke lines down the shell ribbing, concentrating our highlights to the upper right, but without neglecting the diffused, bounced light on other parts of the object. Apply a coat of fixative.



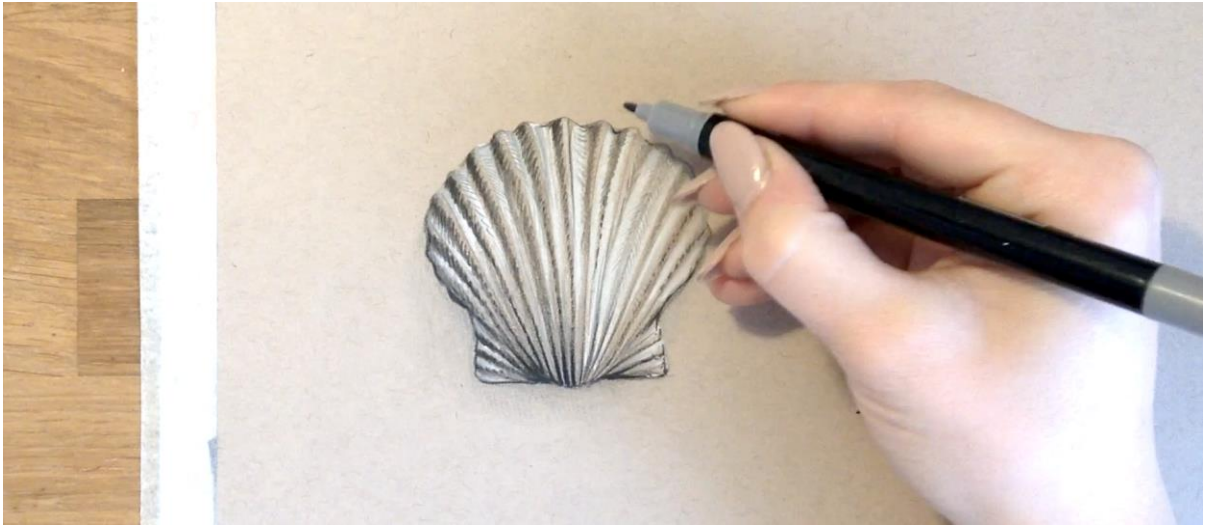
Shadows are next. Using a black/dark grey pencil, build up shadows on the left hand side, concentrating them at the lower end. (Again, do this without neglecting the subtler shadowing created by the ribbing even around the densely highlighted areas.)



Bulking up and filling in: The next step, which will take the lion's share of your drawing time, is to alternate layering shadows and highlights using pencils. Keep an eye on the reference image, but allow yourself some creative liberty. (Eventually, I will usually stop relying on the reference image altogether, and instead sense where needs more shadow/highlight, in accordance with what I want the final image to look like.)



Blending: Using a light-grey pencil, begin lightly blending the shadows, from the base upwards, but without mottling the highlights too much. (A fine tipped tortillon applied in gentle, circular motions could substitute.) We still want to retain detail; too much blending between the lines can result in an undefined, blobby form. So small circles applied with gentle pressure is the trick!



Using a grey marker (with a medium to fine tip), gently work over and deepen existing shadows, being careful not to apply too much colour at once – obviously wet media is much more difficult to reverse! Work the marker in small strokes along the lengths of the ribbing to further add texture to the surface. Concentrate your deeper shadows to the base and left side. Feather in the ink layer using another layer of grey pencil shaded along the ribbing, and input any details you like (I spend this step darkening with black pencil, more ink, and the sharp tip of a dark graphite pencil).



Final highlights: The final step is simple, yet contributes greatly to the overall look of the finished piece. Take the fine-tipped paintbrush and cautiously apply very small strokes of white acrylic (or gouache, or opaque gel pen ink) along the areas of most intense highlight (the upper-right, just offset from the edge),

Seal your artwork once over with fixative, and you are done!

