

Materials and reference

Charcoal Workshop

Paul Kane Art



Materials

A benefit of working in charcoals is the simplicity of the medium. It costs relatively little to get started. What follows is a list of materials that will be used in the workshop. These are available at all art shops. I tend to stick with well known brands rather than say Hobbycraft branded items.

- Charcoal
 - Compressed charcoal. These are the blocks of charcoal in the centre of the image above
 - Willow charcoal. These are the thin sticks of charcoal. They come in packs of varying thickness

- Charcoal pencils. Again these come in packs and can be expensive. It would be fine to buy one dark pencil as they are used for finer detail at the end. The white tinted pencil is good for final highlights.
- Erasers
 - Putty rubber. These are a little more expensive but allow for shaping of the rubber to carve out shapes or fine details
 - Normal rubber. White is better.

There are also battery powered fine erasers but I prefer not to use those as they can damage the paper.

- Paper
 - Sketch pad. I use A2/160gsm. Please bring no smaller than A3 as charcoal is an expansive material that doesn't suit itself to working on small sheets. The gauge of the paper is important. The paper has to be strong enough to withstand a lot of rubbing out, smudging and shading whilst not being too textured as the charcoal will lodge into the paper and be hard to remove. I suggest no lighter than 120gsm and no heavier than 160gsm.

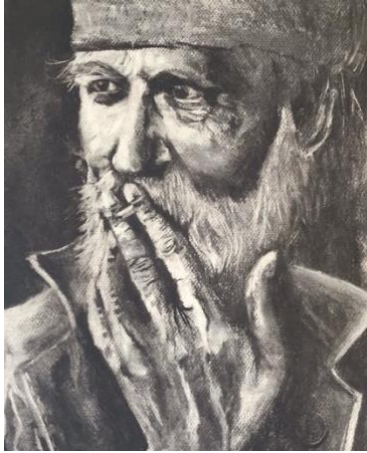
I will have spare sheets if needed. Please do try to bring a pad as we will use more than a few sheets.

- Paper towel or hand wipes. Charcoal is messy so you may want to have these to hand
- Soft cloth. This is for spreading or smudging the charcoal. I prefer to use my fingers but a cloth is a cleaner option
- Apron or smock
- Stanley knife for sharpening pencils.

Reference Images

The workshop will include a quick exercise at the beginning to help get the feel of the medium and to get the creative juices flowing! This will include an object that I will bring as a still life.

The main output for the workshop is a piece following the work I will be doing in a step by step process. At the moment I haven't chosen the image. It will be I hope one that is full of interest whilst not being too complex.



These charcoal sketches were done as a prelude to oil commissions. I tend to sketch in charcoal as it's so versatile.

Timings on the day are quite loose. The initial sketch is a bit of fun to relax the room and get to know the medium. That should take 15 minutes or so. The remaining four plus hours will include a refreshment break and me taking you through a complete work of my choosing.

The workshop will be me demonstrating each stage and you then applying that to your own work. It would be nice to complete the work but that's not the goal. I'd like you to understand charcoal and it's versatility and leave with a burning desire to use it more often!

Most important of all is to relax and enjoy the day.

Looking forward to seeing you all.

Paul