

Drawing the Collection Lesson 13 – Pastels

Gnarled Tree In Blossom by American artist Walter Tittle, is a lovely example of a pastel painting from the Museum's permanent collection. The artist used soft pastel on a medium brown paper surface to render a loose and soft composition of a fruit tree in bloom. Pastels come in a few different forms – soft, hard, oil, pan-pastels, and pastel pencils. For this lesson, we'll be doing a study based on Tittle's piece while using hard pastel sticks.



I'm using a Prismacolor Nupastel set of twelve colors. It is a great set for beginners, as it creates less dust and mess than the more costly soft pastels.



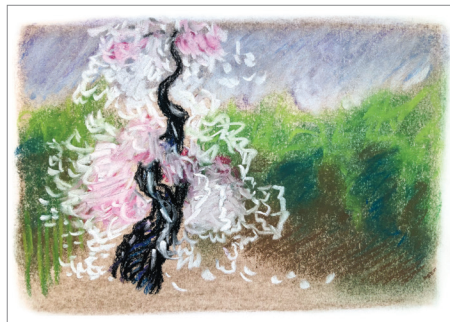
1. First, use the broad side of the dark brown stick to lightly add a layer of color for a general background (or you can work on brown paper). The dark green and dark blue can be used to create the tree line that is behind the blossom tree. Leave a gap so we can add the tree later. Smudge the colors to soften the lines using your finger or a paper towel.



Walter Tittle | GNARLED TREE IN BLOSSOM | pastel on paper | 1943



2. Next, add some more to the background trees using the light green, dark blue, and brown sticks. For the sky, you can lightly add violet, light blue, and white, then smudge to get a smoother effect. The trunk of the tree has been added using the black stick, leaving gaps for the lighter blossoms.



3. Now use the broad side of the red stick to very lightly add a hint of color around the

central parts of the tree. Layer white over top to get a pink hue and draw the rest of the blooms using the white stick. Fill in the tree trunk with black, dark blue, and violet. Tip: if the pastel layers are heavily built up, making it difficult to add more, give it a light spray with regular aerosol hairspray (or drawing fixative if you have it) and allow to dry. This will help the new pastel material grip to the previous layer.



4. Finally, use the black to draw the smaller limbs and branches of the tree. Light and dark green, light brown, and yellow can be used to add the details in the foreground at the foot of the tree.



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