

Pets in Pastels

Contributed by Nola Clark

A talented artist whose work has previously been featured in our pages has prepared some helpful demonstration material outlining her approach to portraying pets on paper.



In Issue 45 of Artist's Palette magazine, we featured some of the work of pastel artist Nola Clark. We also presented a demonstration of pet portraiture. Nola described seven steps for creating her picture of 'TC' – a handsome feline who happens to be one of her family cats. Beginning with a simple outline, she crafted a warm illustration infused with character.

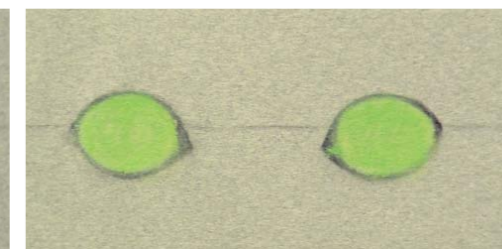
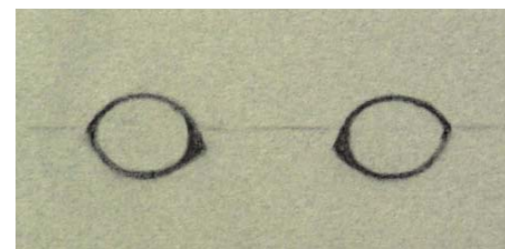
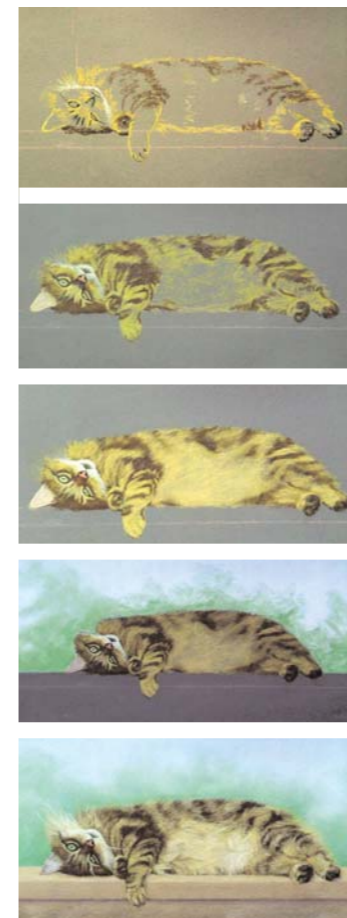
Nola also created a small panel of cat and dog eyes to highlight the difference between two of the world's most popular domestic animals. Many requests stemmed from this particular segment and Nola has expanded the theme to include eyes, noses, ears, paws and hands from dogs and cats. She has also included features of the possums who visit nightly at the Clark residence.

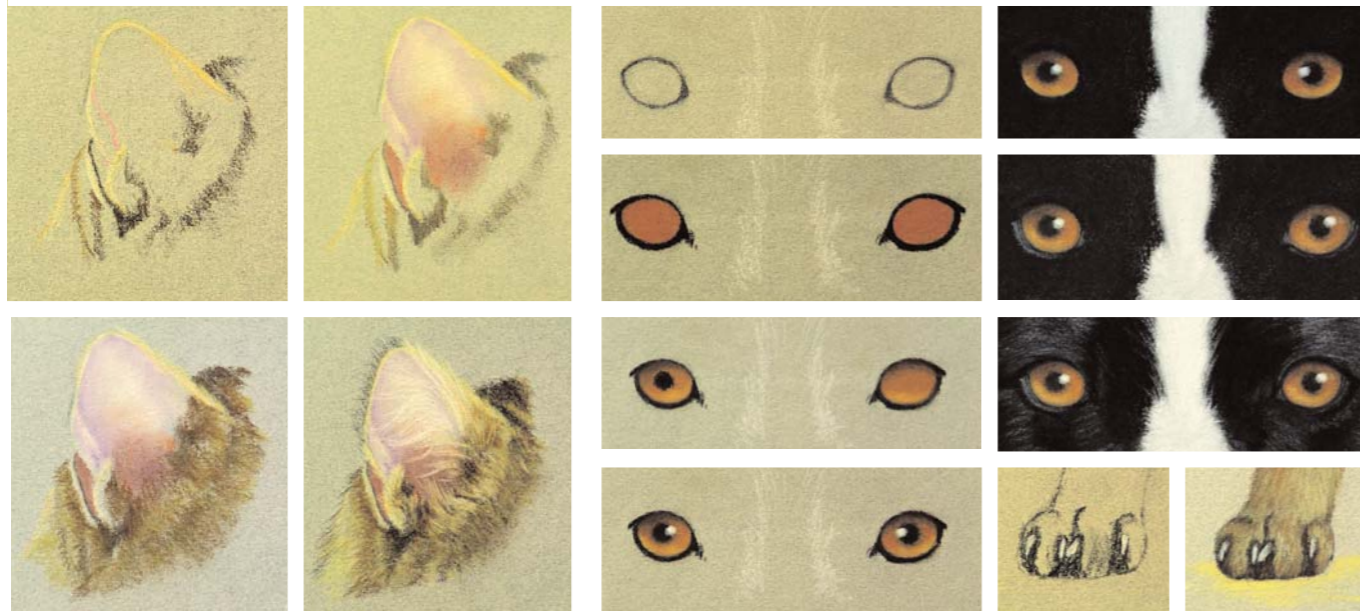
For those who love their gardens, one picture incorporates both feline and flowers. Nola believes we would all be well advised to emulate the subject's attitude, and stop to smell the roses.

Nola Clark completes this pictorial demonstration with some worthwhile hints for those who would like to turn their favourite pet into a work of art.

The four dogs depicted within this demonstration all live together – they represented an interesting challenge in capturing their individual profiles and personalities on paper.

You can judge for yourself ... but we understand that the owners of the cheeky four were absolutely delighted with the end result





IMPORTANT HINTS FOR ANIMAL PORTRAITURE

- Study the animals you wish to paint at every opportunity. It is valuable to 'know' your subjects.
- After getting your drawing correct, run a 'paper stump' over the lines with a little pressure. This will set the lines in place without fixative, and stop them from smudging.
- Don't be afraid to erase pastel, but there is a secret to doing it well. First, you need to remove the loose pastel with a brush, paper stump or rag; then use a plastic eraser, just like you would on a pencil drawing. You can use a plastic eraser in a holder, like a mechanical pencil – this makes it easy to use and keep clean.
- Take particular notice of the shape and size of the pupils in the eyes of the animals you draw. Domestic cats go from a vertical slit to round, but big cats have

round human-like pupils. Frogs and goats have slit-type pupils that are horizontal, not vertical.

• Both animal and human eyes have many colours in the iris, but the KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid) principle seems to work best in a painting. Too much detail looks overdone.

• You can never measure too much.

• Generally it is a good idea to place your 'Focal Point' about one-third of the way across and one-third of the way either up from the bottom or down from the top in the painting. In my picture titled 'I've Stopped to Smell the Roses', I have placed the cat's head one-third down from top and one-third in from the left edge. This was not possible in the portrait of the dogs, where the client requested four dogs with head and shoulders only.

