



BLENDING ABSTRACT

with Roben-Marie Smith

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SUPPLIES LIST

BASIC STUFF

Sketchbook paper
White gesso
Paint brushes
Soft pastels
Crayons
Pencils - I like using water
soluble
Oil Pastels*
Black acrylic paint
Deli paper
Watercolors
Pastel spray fixative

*Optional

BONUS PROJECT – MOUNTING ART TO CANVAS PANEL

Soft Gel Gloss
Iron
Parchment Paper
Canva Panel - I used 5x7
Wrapped Canvas - I used 4x6
Exacto Knife
Cutting Mat

BONUS PROJECTS – ART JOURNAL PAGES

Glue stick
Your favorite journal
Collage fodder

NOTE:

This course covers a variety of art supplies and tools that I have in my stash.

I will be showing and using many, but you don't need all of them. Inside the classroom, I will provide a detailed list with sources of as many of the items I use for those who wish to explore the specific ones I use.

MOST PRODUCTS ARE LINKED ON THE SUPPLIES PAGE INSIDE THE CLASSROOM.

SOFT PASTELS

You know those art supplies that look so yummy, you could eat them? I feel that way about soft pastels. Years ago, I was introduced to pastels and I found them too messy. I didn't like the powder they left on my fingers. Yuck! I stored them away and didn't give them a second thought.

When I began The 100 Day Project in 2020, I found myself reaching for charcoals and after mixing them with water, one thing led to another and I pulled out those soft pastels, "dusted them off" and the experimentation began.

As a mixed media artist, it isn't uncommon to explore different ways to use my art supplies. You probably do it, too! I have had plenty of failures, but mixing water with soft pastels was not one of them.

I LOVE the chalky, watercolor"ish" finish offered by the pastels when they are dry. Plus, I don't always have to seal them with a fixative, because the water acts to set them...most of the time.

There are many pastels from which to choose and I want to share several that I have tried and give you the low down on each. The pricing ranges from high end to budget friendly.

DIANE TOWNSEND PASTELS



Diane Townsend's Soft Form Pastels are one of my favorites, but they are at the high end. The colors range from classical artists' to an exotic and vivid range of modern pigments.

All Soft Form Pastels are formed by hand, which I would totally love to see done in person. The size is appealing and these sticks contain no chalks or fillers. Newly formulated Soft Form Pastels adhere better and produce less dust than previous formulations. Now heavier and stickier, each pastel incorporates a binder and less pumice than before. This reduces the amount of dust released into the air, onto fingers, and onto other surfaces — extending the life of the pastels and making them more economical to use.

Each pastel is wrapped and are available as singles or in sets. The richness of color and the way these become so creamy when mixed with water rank them at the top of my list!

SENNELIER PASTELS



Sennelier is another top contender on my favorites list. In researching these soft pastels, I discovered that they were commissioned by Degas. Used by Cézanne, Gauguin, Monet, Bonnard, Soutine, Picasso, Modigliani, Kandi. How cool is that? They boast the purest colors, using only the best natural pigments and the finest chalk known in the world.

How are they made? The use of the gum arabic creates a soft pastel that can also be wetted once on the substrate, and spread like a watercolor. The results are a lovely textured watercolor effect. With a total of 525 colors and the largest chromatic range offered in soft pastels, their vibrancy and brightness can attributed to not containing clays, like other brands. For a soft pastel, I have found these more resistant to crumbling.

They are available in full, jumbo and half sticks.

MUNGYO PASTELS



The value-priced sets from Mungyo...Gallery Handmade Soft Pastels are hand-rolled in the finest artist's quality with a very soft, almost buttery consistency. As they are individually hand rolled, less binder is needed to hold the color together, making for an exceptionally soft pastel ideal for subtle blends, rich color lay down, and lush layering.

I recently acquired a set of 40 Mungyo pastels and I am quite impressed with their vibrant color. They are soft enough to provide a smooth color when laid to paper while being strong enough to resist crumbling so easily. This would be a great starter set if you are interested in dabbling with pastels. Mungyo stocks are the of the highest color brilliance and vivid colors thanks to the best artist pigments; pastel sticks glide smoothly across the paper surface and colors can be mixed together.

*NU*PASTELS



NuPastels have a rich, creamy texture that blends and shades easily. NuPastels are stronger than ordinary soft pastels, which means less breakage and easier cleanup. Use them to create broad strokes and fine lines.

NuPastel sets by Prismacolor offer artists a rainbow of hues which may be further mixed to produce clear and unique tones. In addition, these pastel sticks offer a variety of different color intensities that may be controlled by using a firm or light touch.

Cleaner, stronger NuPastel sticks are designed to be more durable and to crumble less. While I do enjoy using these pastels for mark making, they are harder to blend with water and don't achieve that dreamy watercolor affect created when using soft pastels.

UNISON PASTELS



Over a decade ago, in the hills of Northumberland, England, artist John Hersey began hand-making his own pastels. Gently hand-rolled and air-dried, each stick is as much an organic sculpture as it is a tool. Hersey's unique color formulations contain only pure pigments in a cycle of related hues, instead of adding white or black to the colors.

I am quite intrigued by the process of hand making pastels and would love to visit a factory one day to watch or even try rolling one to see how it feels.

Unison Pastels are slightly smaller than the Townsend brand and a little firmer, but are comparable in price.

REMBRANDT PASTELS



The history of Royal Talens goes back to 1899. In that year, Marten Talens founded the "Dutch Factory for Paints, Lacquers, and Inks" based in Apeldoorn, Netherlands. Rembrandt Soft Pastels have since become one of the most popular artist pastels in the world.

Rembrandt pastels are made from the purest pigments and mixed with the finest quality kaolin clay binder. These pastels are harder in consistency than many soft pastels, allowing for more control and definition in your painting.

While these are harder than the others mentioned in this article, apart from the NuPastels, they surprised me with how well they blended with water. They are available in half stick sets or full size sticks.

RENEANS PASTELS



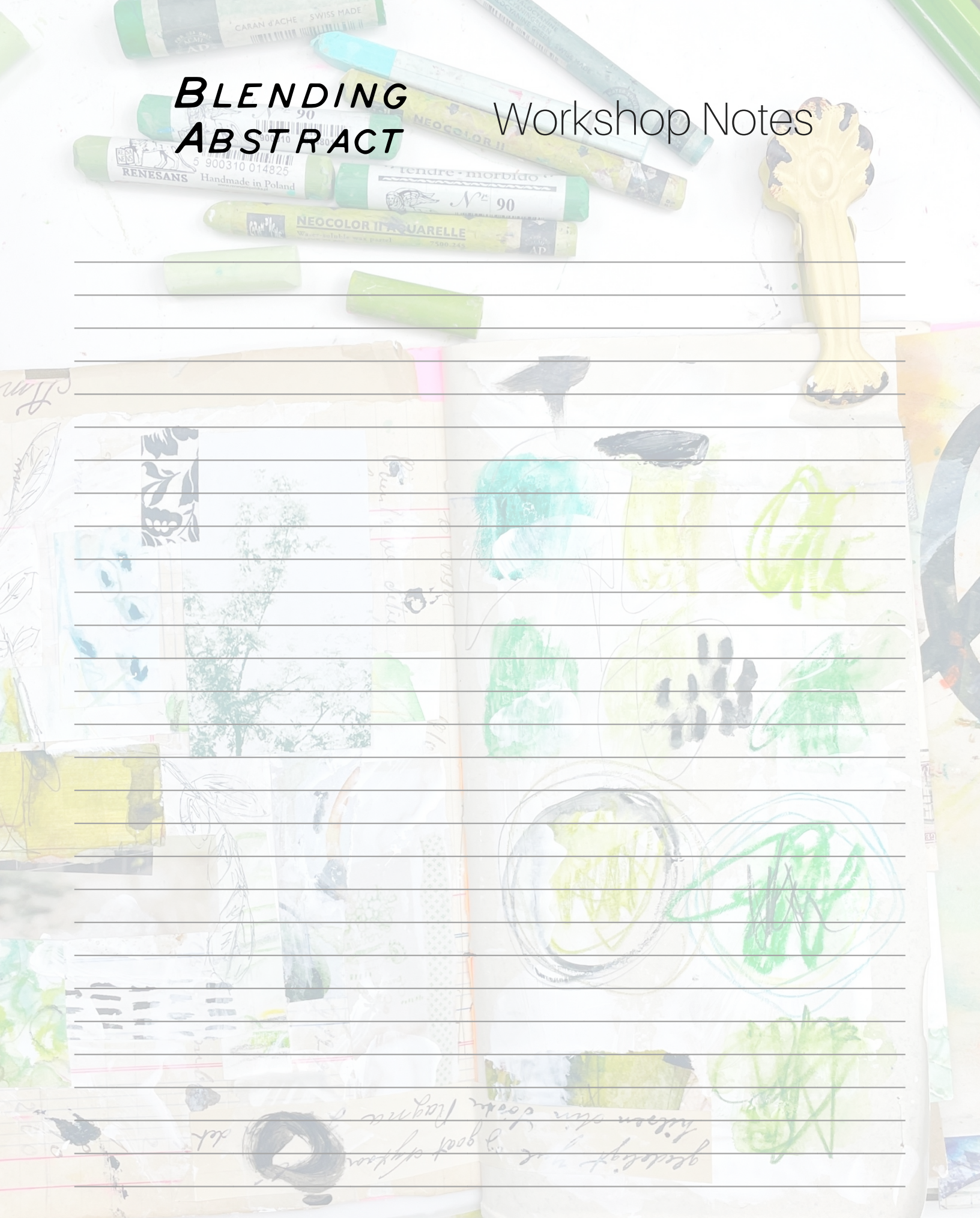
I discovered Renesans soft pastels after April Mathis, owner of A Little Creative Me on Etsy reached out to me. She shared the story of how she discovered them on a trip to Poland only to find they were not available in the US. She is now the US vendor and has since visited the factory in Poland, which is a small family owned business. I was surprised by how soft these pastels were when I tried them. They remind me of a cross between a crayon and a pastel.

The product range is available in 119 colors of Renesans dry pastels individually or in sets.

Only available in the US via A Little Creative Me Etsy shop.

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Workshop Notes





YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Roben-Marie Smith

My name is Roben-Marie and I provide ideas, inspiration and quality instruction for hobbyists and art entrepreneurs. I teach artists from beginners to those making a living from their art through my blog and my popular online workshops.

As an artist, blogger, woman of faith and the owner of Paperbag Studios, LLC, my mission is to serve others and help them get the most out of their art as a hobby, or as a business. My own desire to learn and unquenchable curiosity keeps my fingers messy and my heart happy.

I have been a working artist for the last 16+ years, and am self-taught, so I believe that anyone can cultivate their creative spark. I've taught mixed media art workshops and retreats across the U.S. and my work has been featured in countless books and industry magazines.

XO

Roben-Marie

