

## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

### **Other Tools, Materials and Some Processes for Drawing and Painting**

Chinonyelum Okonkwo

#### **Introduction**

Different tools and equipment are used for drawing and painting. These tools and equipment are required to make painting and drawing easy. An art tool is an object, device or equipment used to transform the art material or medium into creating a finished work of art. Art tools and materials are essential because they help in the interpretation of emotions and feelings while making art.

A variety of tools, equipment and materials are used in painting. These tools require some special care and maintenance for effective usage, and to gain a long-lasting result.

Painting materials are substances used by the painter to create a work of art or painting. Another name for painting material is painting medium or media. Artwork can be made with a singular material or with varieties of art materials, depending on the artist's choice and what the artist tend to achieve.

According to Zhiqiang Chen, "painting is the expression of emotional spirit and style". Owen (1997) asserts that painting is the expression of ideas and emotion, with the

creation of certain aesthetic qualities in a two-dimensional visual language. Painting is a tool for preserving, promoting and showcasing a people's culture. It serves as a means of social communication and commentaries. Painters are commissioned to execute a painting for moral values, social functions and entertainment purposes.

Getlein (2002: 162) opines that "paintings usually are full of colour which is a potent visual stimulus. Painting is an exercise done for its own sake which can be its theme or other purposes than to give visual pleasure. Painting like every other human activity has its root in the basic needs of man's nature and it provides one of how these needs derive satisfaction.

Hence, Carpenter and Graham (1971: 87) agree that "painting deals with human actions". When the elements of painting are merged, they form expressive decorative motif that represents real or supernatural phenomena interpret a narrative theme or create an entirely visual relationship with society. Each painting has its style and material used in executing it. The material used in painting includes;

Graphite pencil, ink, charcoal, paper, pastel, watercolour, oil colour, acrylic colour.

Painting materials form the part of painting at the end of the work while the painting tool remains as is. It does not form part of the painting at the end. Some painting tools include;

*Other tools, materials and some processes for drawing and painting*

Drawing board, pen, brushes, pallet knife, easel, sketch pad, paper, hammer, canvas, board, nail, staple gun tacker, stretcher, pallet, scrapper.

## **Drawing and Tools for painting**

**Pencil** – Pencils are the slender rod of a solid marking substance, made from a graphite or plastic lead stick, surrounded by wood easing. There are varieties of pencil lead. They include hard, medium and soft pencils.



Plate 1: A set of pencils in a pouch. Source:  
<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/product-recommendations/best-graphite-pencils-1202693099/>

## **Types of pencils**

**Soft pencils** – are graded with the letter B and numbered from B to 6B. The larger the number before the B, the softer the pencil material. Soft leads are used for sketching and shading.

**Hard pencils** are graded with the letter H and numbered from H to 6H. The larger the number before the H the harder the pencil material. The hardest leads are used to create sharp, lines. Pencils are used in writing, drawing or marking on surfaces.

**Coloured Pencil** – Coloured pencils are used to draw fine colourful lines or to shade areas in colour. The artist blends two or more colours to create beautiful artwork.

**Charcoal** – This is the oldest drawing tool. It is obtained from burnt wood and it has dry and dusty nature. Charcoal can come in different two forms, for example, in pencil form or its natural form. A variety of its values and hardness produces different kinds of effects when drawing or painting

**Conte crayon\pastel** – Conte is a highly compressed form of chalk. It comes in different densities, ranging from hard to soft ones. Its colour is derived from earth tones. For instance, white, black, brown and grey colours.

Pastels are obtained from compressed chalks. There are two forms of pastel chalk .they are oil pastel and chalk pastel. oil pastels are obtained from chalks that are compressed with oil. Chalk pastel is pastels that do not contain oil.

*Other tools, materials and some processes for drawing and painting*



Plate 2: Chalk pastel of different colours. Source: <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/product-recommendations/best-chalk-pastels-1234575136/>

**Easel** – This is a wooden frame used for holding an artist's work in a vertical position while it is being painted. All easels serve the function of keeping the canvas secure and upright



Plate 3: An Easel. Source:

**Scraper** – The scraper is a tool used for removing dirt, paint or other unwanted matter from a palette. A palette knife is a thin steel blade with a handle, used for mixing colours or applying or removing paint. It is used to mix oil and acrylic paint and to apply paint to a canvas, board or any other surface.

**Palette** – A palette is a thin board or slab on which an artist lays and mixes colours.

**Cutter** – It is a sharp and small knife used in sharpening the pencil for drawing or sketching the object to be painted.

**Hammer** – This is a tool with a heavy metal head mounted at right angles at the end of the handle. It is used for driving the wall into the wood when constructing the stretcher for painting.

**Nail** – A nail is a small metal spike with a broadened flat head, driven into the wood to join it together when constructing the stretcher for painting.

**Staple Gun Tacker** – or staple gum is a hand-held machine used to drive staples into the wood of a stretcher to hold the canvas or board to the stretcher before painting.



Plate 4: A staple gun tacker. Source:  
<https://amazon.com>

**Saw** – This is a hand tool used for cutting the wood to the required length when making the stretcher.

A brush is one of the most important tools in painting. Brushes come in a wide variety of materials, shapes and sizes. They are made of a fibrous tip, a connector called a ferrule and also made of wooden or plastic handles. A brush has a very fast-drying nature which can make it difficult to mix colour well at a slow paste. More, it requires several coats to achieve the desired colour.

The fibres of a paintbrush may be made of hair, bristle or synthetic material. A brush is judged by how well it can retain paint and hold colour.

## **Paper**

Paper is an important material for artists. Different types of paper create different effects. Understanding how paper is made and its different properties allow artists to choose an appropriate paper type and to create new designs using a variety of media. The sizing of paper using substances such as starch or gelatin adds body to paper and makes it water repellent. Artists choose the most suitable paper to use for their paintings.

## **Board**

It is a multi-use tool that allows the artist to hold paint in handy. It is also a platform for mixing paint. Its shape makes it easy and comfortable to hold for long periods moving the paint close. Board is a panel made from hardwood such as oak, cedar, birch, walnut, and mahogany. Boards can be used for painting in place of canvas. Boards for painting should be primed undoubtedly to avoid the colour from leaching. The priming of board follows the same procedure as the canvas.

## **Drawing Board**

Any flat, square-edged surface can be used as a drawing board. The best boards are made of white pine with carefully squared corners and edges. Boards come in



*Other tools, materials and some processes for drawing and painting*

various sizes. A 50cm x 65cm board is an acceptable dimension.

**Canvas** is a strong, coarse unbleached cloth made from hemp, flax, used as a surface for painting preparation of canvas for painting.

### **Materials for Painting**

Materials come in a huge range of colours, textures, strengths, flexibility, level, costs and availability level. Some material requires the use of specific tools and equipment to work with them. There are two types of materials for painting. They are dry and wet materials.

**Dry Material:** This includes pencils, pencil crayons, charcoal, conte crayon, pastels etc.

**Wet Material:** This includes ink. Ink is a fluid used for drawing, painting, writing etc. inks are found in a variety of colours. All inks can be used at full strength or diluted for wash drawings. A variety of tools are used to apply ink. Examples are nibs, pens, brushes, feathers, rollers and sticks and twigs.

**Paints or colours:** There are different types of paints or colours and each has its specific property. The artist makes his or her choice of a particular type of paint based on the colours and effects it produces, its drying time, and the painting surface to which it will be applied.

**Oil colour or Paint:** Oil colours are colours that are mixed with oil in the course of production.

### **Features of Oil Colour**

- It produces rich colours at the end of the work.
- It can be used to create lighter and softer colours when mixed with linseed oil.
- It can be used to colour creational variations.
- It is available in tubes.
- It is easy to blend and easy to cover errors.
- It takes a long time to dry.
- It requires the use of chemical solvents for cleaning the stains and drips of paint. Paint brushes are used for the application of oil paints.

**Acrylic Colours:** Acrylic colour is a water-based colour.

### **Features of acrylic colour**

- It can produce a very rich colour like oil colour when it is not diluted with water.
- It creates a soft effect like water colours when it is turned with water.
- It is available in tubes, bottles, large containers or cans.

*Other tools, materials and some processes for drawing and painting*

- It dries quickly and permanently into a water-resistant, flexible and plastic-like finish.
- It can be used to create transparent or opaque colours, by varying the amount of water added to it.

**Water Colours:** They are water-based colours with a transparent medium.

- It is quick in drying.
- It can be opaque or transparent, depending on how much water is added to it.
- It allows the colour and texture of the painting surface to show through the colour.
- It can be used freely to create soft designs and colour tones.
- It can create opaque, transparent, and translucent colours.
- The dried paints can be reused by adding water to them.
- Brushes are used for the application.

### **Tempera or Poster Colours**

It is a water-based colour, and it can be bright, opaque or softer, depending on the amount of water that is added to it.

- It is available in powder or premixed liquid paints.

- It can produce very bright vibrant colours and effects.

In conclusion, the artist does not create paintings just for his consumption, but for society to appreciate, critic and patronise them. He strives to satisfy the aesthetic thirsts of his spectators, according to Chuta (1997: 23) the aesthetic urge of his client which if achieved, will result in giving him his satisfaction. That is why every artist strives to make use of good art materials and tools for a very good result.

### **Preparation of Canvas for Painting**

The preparation of canvas for painting can come in two processes;

Construction of the stretcher and stretching of canvas; Construction of stretcher, the stretcher is produced using pine wood. Good pine wood is resilient and prevents intrusion and destruction by insects and termites. The dimension of the wood for a stretcher is about 2 inches in thickness. This is to avoid cave-in of the stretcher due to pressure from the stretching of the canvas. The sawing of the wood to create a standard dimensional length is done meticulously.

Angular split ends of the woods are shaped at the angle  $45^{\circ}$  hinged at both ends using adhesive and a staple gun tacker.

### **Canvas stretching**

When stretching a canvas on a particular stretcher, an extra 2 inches is added to both ends. The purpose of such extra dimension is to provide space for overlapping required for dragging and attaching the canvas. The attaching of the canvas begins the fastening of the long side of the set-up. This is accompanied by sizing and priming of the canvas

### **Priming of Canvas**

This involves mixing top bond and emulsion paint in equal quantities and applying it evenly on the surface of a well-stretched canvas using a wide flat brush. The reason for this exercise is to cover the tiny openings in the canvas and to ensure that the canvas is not porous. This process will make the canvas ready for the next layer of paint. Also, it helps to bring out the brightness of the colour, thereafter, the painter mixes some quantities of oil colour with little kerosene and runs it through the canvas using a big brush. This will make the colours assimilate well into the background in the course of the painting. In the painting stages, the painter engages his or her skill in the creation of visual forms using paints, paint brushes, pallets, and pallet knives on the canvas surface.

## **Concept Development**

This procedure entails studio creative production processes which systematically begin with thumbnail sketches, of the object or theme that the artist intends to produce on sketch paper. At this stage, many sketches could be done in which the artist will later select the one that would best suit the topic. Some additions and alterations could be made at this point. Then after, the artist transfers the sketch to the already primed canvas or any other medium of his or her choice and commences with the painting. The essence of the thumbnail sketch is to guide the artist. In the painting stages, the painter engages his or her skill in the creation of visual forms using paints, paint brushes, pallets, and pallet knives on the canvas surface.

## **References**

- Getlein (2002). *Living with Art*. New York: McGraw Hill Higher education.
- Carpenter and Graham (1987). *Art and Ideal – An approach to art appreciation*, London – Mill and Boom.
- Knowledge and empowerment studio (2006) *Art, design and communication*, Canada