

My Favourite Method for using Blendable Pencils. Copyright Judith Maslen

I always begin by choosing my coloured backing card before I begin. Because it will show through the parchment, it seriously affects how the picture will finally look. Whilst working with my pencils I occasionally slip the card under the parchment to check how it is altering the colours laid down by the pencils.

As well as my pencils, I need a blending medium (I use Zest-it) and a 'torchon'. *A torchon, or paper blending stick, is a stick made from paper rolled up tightly to form a point. This means you can get into very small corners and areas on your picture. After blending darker colours I may wish to blend lighter ones, so I snip off the used tip by using scissors at an angle until I have a clean tip for the next colour.*

You can make your own 'torchon' by tightly rolling a piece of paper towel and folding in the end to make a point.

I usually emboss my picture first, working on the reverse in the usual way. The first part of the colouring is also done on the reverse. The colour will show through where the parchment has not been embossed.

If I have a large area to fill, I gently rub the pencil over it and then take very little blending medium on a tissue and smooth it out. To move the colour into smaller areas, I rub the point of the torchon on the tissue so it is slightly damp with the blending medium, then work the colour to where I want it. To deepen areas of colour, I use the pencil and then smooth it out either with the tissue or the torchon, so there are no hard edges.

I then turn the parchment to work on the front and this is where I begin to slip my piece of coloured backing card underneath the parchment to see how it is affecting the colours. Still using the torchon, I deepen the colours where necessary, blending them so there are no hard edges. At this point I try to avoid any of the white embossed areas. **HOWEVER** one handy tip is that if you have made any part of your picture too white by over-embossing, you can smooth a little colour over the top to tone it down.

If you've never used this method before, you'll find it gives a smoother, more 'painterly' look to your work. Judith.