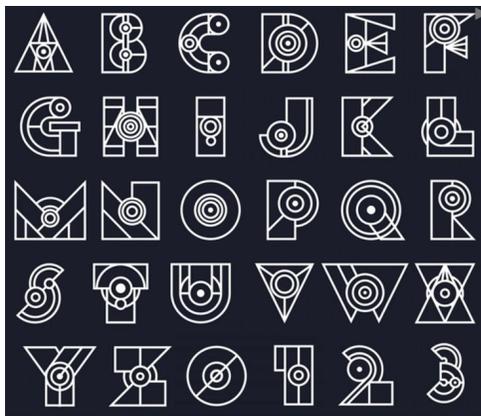


Experimenting with Scratchboard Art

FWCG November Program by Tom Campos

Scratchboard is the art form of direct engraving on a prepared board where the artist scratches off dark ink to reveal a white or colored layer beneath the paper or board. This results in mainly a black and white illustration. Scratchboard refers to both a fine-art medium, and an illustrative technique using sharp knives and tools for engraving into a thin layer of white China clay that is coated with dark, often black India ink on the surface of the paper or board.

Scratchboard Art developed from Woodcut print techniques, and has a century of influence. Though it does not produce an opposite or reverse print, it is an easier to control media.



Tools:

Choose simple engraving blades such as X-acto blades, metal nail files, pallet knife, push pins or tacks, sharp pointed wooden dowels, Dremel sculpting tools, and sandpaper. For Blades cover with drafting tape to only expose the tip.

And you can use rulers or curved stencils as guides to help make geometric forms.

What you want to accomplish is to present the highlights over a harsh black background. Some scratchboards have white or colored backgrounds with the black ink on top. By scratching the surface you can create simple or detailed illustrations and designs. One project can include: drawing a large outline of Initials or an abstract design, then fill-in with Zentangle lines and curves within the outlines. Other projects include drawing landscapes and animals or just abstract designs.



Experiment with different techniques and tools to scratch off the black ink. Cover and protect your work surface from the residue ink being removed. Practice and learn what different tools produce.



Practice Scratching Techniques:

- ** Hatching: scratch making parallel lines,
- ** Varied Hatching: scratch sequential thin, thick, thin lines

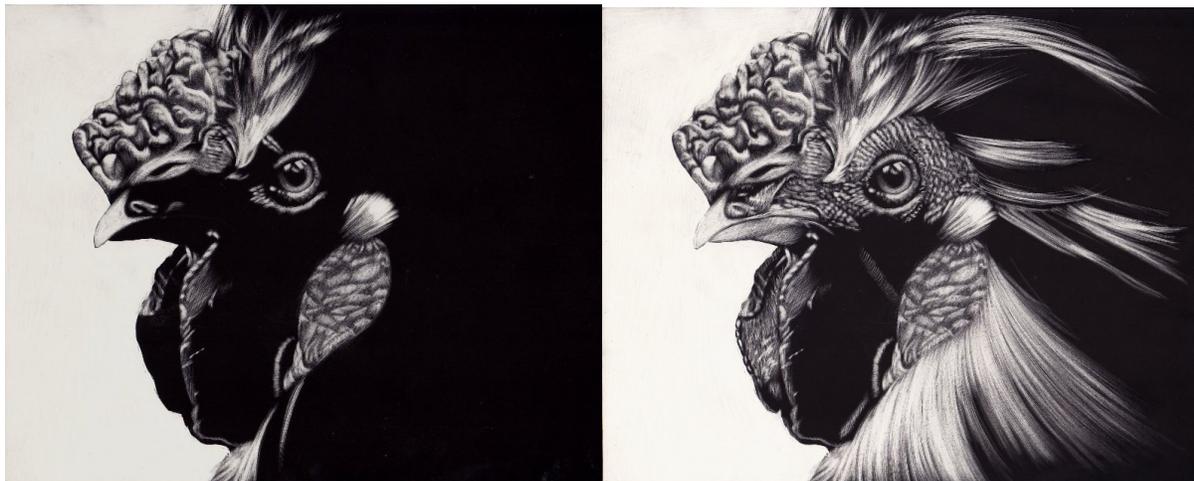
- ** Cross-Hatching: scratch parallel lines in one direction then in the opposite
- ** Contour Hatching: scratch over the imaginary surface of the object where the interest is knowing where the object faces the viewer.
- ** Stripling: scratch stripples or small drops, (though most difficult to control) depicting certain kinds of textures or parts of a picture plane. Closely placed dots create lighter areas to simulate the highlights of the object.

Choose a Method to Prepare the Drawing:

- ** Cover and protect your work surface from the residue ink being removed
- ** Lightly draw in pencil the design or lettering on the black prepared scratchboard.
- ** Tape a black/white design over the scratchboard to prevent it from moving, and you can draw with pressure the outlines which results in visible lines.
- ** Use Transfer paper to lightly copy the design

Steps in Scratching:

1. Very lightly draw in pencil where the harsh outlines indicate the lighter and lesser shadows.
2. Carefully scratch out or remove the lighter areas of the image, followed by successively removing the darker areas.
3. Using sandpaper or the flat area of a blade or fingernail file can help reveal a larger surface of the white underneath.



You can find organizations like the Scratchboard.org and International Society of Scratchboard Artists for general information and intricately drawn gallery works.

If you Google search for images there is a wide variety of scratchboard styles – some very impressionistic and others almost photo-realistic. YouTube videos demonstrate many techniques.