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Artist's Palette

No 50

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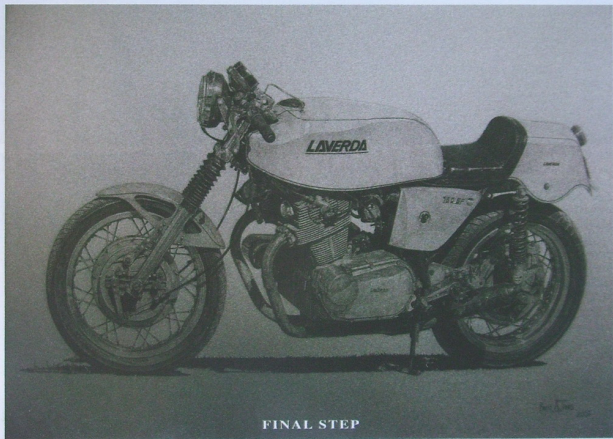


Graphite

Clockwork Orange

By Brett A. Jones

This meticulous drawing took the artist 572 hours to complete, over a period of nine months.



FINAL STEP

INTRODUCTION

You can't draw like this quickly. Choose your subject carefully as you will get sick of looking at it long before you finish drawing it. You can draw anything, but some subjects are more suited than others to the technique of *chiaroscuro* (light and shade).

The photograph should be substantially smaller than the drawing. In this case the paper is 590 x 385 mm (approximately A2) and the photograph is 300 x 200 mm (close to A4). This makes it easier to judge sizes and proportions.

You should work completely freehand, and not be tempted to trace or measure

anything (anyone can do that, and it's a slippery slope to projector use).

STEP ONE

Don't have your pencil too sharp at this stage. Concentrate on centring your subject on the paper. Decide how much of the paper will be taken up by the

MATERIALS

- Arches hotpress 640gsm watercolour paper.
- 2B pencils (good quality).
- Staedtler Rasoplast rubbers.
- Two sharp knives.
- Spray can of workable fixative suitable for graphite.

subject. Press very lightly on the pencil. Draw from the shoulder (wrist doesn't move but elbow and shoulder do). Don't be scared to adjust lines again and again; just keep your lines super light so the ones you don't use can be removed completely.

STEP TWO

Check the big proportions. For example, height against length; wheel size compared to engine size; wheel sizes front to back; angle of the forks; length of the tank. Take notice of anything that looks wrong and constantly refine your curves and proportions.

STEP THREE

Add more and more detail but be ready to backtrack. If something is wrong, it will become clear as more detail is added. If you must rub something out, work with the rubber as carefully as the pencil (continually trim the end of the rubber with a very clean, sharp knife). Sometimes you can put a new line right next to an old one and then rub out the old one.

Be honest. Don't fool yourself – your brain tells you if it's wrong. You just have to admit it. Sometimes it's hard if you find a major fault, but mistakes not fixed early on become more and more noticeable (and regrettable) as the drawing progresses.

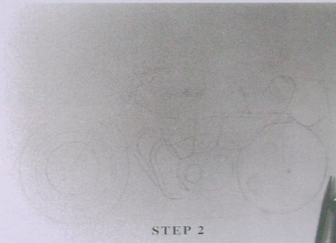
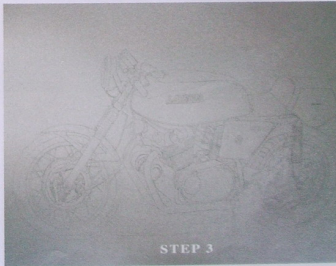
This stage is what I call the bare bones. No more detail can be added without introducing darker tones, which are much harder to remove if wrong. The finer the detail, the sharper the pencil has to be.

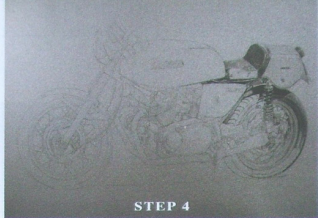
STEP FOUR

Being left-handed, I start adding darker tones high and right on the drawing. You can't touch the darker tones without a high risk of smudging. Continually re-evaluate the drawing as a whole with its different parts. You'd be surprised how part of the drawing you've stared at for hours can suddenly reveal why it's wrong. For me, it's very satisfying fixing a difficult problem – even if it takes a week or more.

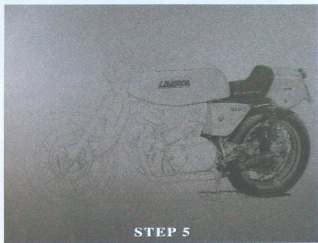
STEP FIVE

I finish the far right of the drawing as I progress (before I can't reach it anymore without touching dark tones with my hand). I lay a couple of pieces of clean paper over the light detail to lay my left hand on. As parts of the drawing darken and take shape, you will notice optical illusions becoming apparent. Perceived (mind's eye) sizes of objects change depending on their tone

**STEP 1****STEP 2****STEP 3**



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7

MASTER HINTS AND TIPS

- Carefully consider your subject matter and take your time with the angle of view and direction of any light sources. It's worth investing some time in this very important aspect.
- Make your drawing position comfortable. You won't go into the zone if something's bothering you. Loud music helps me clear my mind.
- Your drawing should be placed on a board stiff enough to sit flat on a table or easel but thin enough to pick up easily. I use 6mm painted Masonite. Cut a piece 10mm bigger than your paper, and tape paper down around the edges. The drawing then stays on this board until finished. You can move it around easily to find the best position to draw particular lines.
- Only you can set your commitment level and search your spirit for something special. Art is the ultimate journey of internal self-discovery. It's what separates us from the animals. Have a good trip.

(light or dark). Be ready to change light detail at the last minute as the dark detail reveals its truths.

STEP SIX

Don't rush it; you're in for the long haul. The harder and more challenging it becomes, the bigger the rush when you get it right. Keep your eye out for changing proportions as the dark tones spread across the drawing. For me, fine detail is quite often made up out of tiny shapes of different tones. You can compare these shapes against each other for tone and relative position and slowly build up an overall maze of different toned shapes that form into realism when you pull back far enough to focus on the big picture. You're drawing from the wrist now, with the arm held still.

STEP SEVEN

Take your time. It would be a shame to blow it now. It's easy to make the paper darker; much harder to lighten it (impossible once you go dark enough). The rubber can be a useful tool to lighten – as opposed to rubbing out altogether – but regard it as a last resort rather than a planned technique.

FINAL STEP

Take your time and focus on it being correct, not finished. Once you think it is finished and have signed it, very carefully inspect the entire piece of paper – removing any foreign debris or tiny bits of graphite (ongoing housekeeping is a good idea throughout the drawing). The end of a sharp blade is useful for picking things off the surface. Some will have to be gently erased with a rubber. Write some details on the back of the drawing – title, date and dimensions. Spray both sides of the paper with matt workable fixative.