

Coloring fabric with colored pencils

Supplies:

White or light colored fabric. Sateen or plain white cotton works well. It doesn't need to be ready-to-dye fabric.

Colored pencils, any brand

Textile medium--Michael's or Walmart--and a small brush

You'll have a lot of fun using colored pencils as an easy way to add color and design to fabric. For a quilted item, the fabric can be layered and quilted before the color is added, or the coloring can be done first and then the quilting. I prefer to quilt the design first.

Technique-- take a piece of white/light fabric and draw a design with a regular pencil, just dark enough so you can see it. Layer with batting and backer and quilt on the lines. Tracing a copyright-free line drawing from a coloring book is a good way to have a simple picture for a first project. Or use a stencil to draw with, for a quilting-style design like feathers. If you are a confident freehand stitcher, the design can be stitched without drawing first.

Use the colored pencils to add color to the quilted areas. Adding an even layer of color all over one area works well. Then shade the edges with more applications of color using the same pencil. Intensify the color by adding more of the same color or another color close to the first on the color wheel--like blue and adding purple. Blending of color is easy by using your knowledge of the color wheel. Blue and green work great together. Adding red to yellow will give orange contrasts. Carefully apply a brighter color to a lighter color until you see how they will blend. Purple edges on a red petal are pretty. Greens in leaves look better when you use several greens. Remember the complimentary color when using primaries. When you color with blue and want to tone down or make a shape more natural looking, use a light hand and an orange pencil to areas of the blue. This will "muddy" the color a bit. Experiment to get the effect you want. Red/green, yellow/purple, and blue/orange are the primary colors and their compliments. Any color in the green family can be contrasted with any other color in the red family.

Once your coloring is finished, thin the textile medium to two parts water and one part medium. Brush onto all the colored areas of the fabric to seal the colored pencil and let the piece dry.

Use your fabric to make a pillow or a purse. Or bind it for hanging on the wall. If you color first and quilt after, use blocks to build a quilt. Use your drawn/colored lines as a guide for your quilting. Find Irena Bluhm on Pinterest to see some fabulous designs using pencils or ink.

Sherry Rogers-Harrison is another great artist using mostly inks for her pieces, but shares lots of inspiration and uses beautiful symmetrical designs in her work. Have fun!

