

## Intro to Carbon Dust Materials List

Botanical Artists Guild of Southern California • LA Arboretum

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If you have any questions about any of the materials, please feel free to contact me at the email address above.

This workshop will use five different categories of materials:

- Mandatory or strongly recommended.
- Optional, but might be useful or you might want to try (see the notes below).
- Completely optional, weird, experimental—you may or may not want to try, but we'll demonstrate in class.
- Shared among all of us in the workshop.
- Supplied in your very own goody bag to use during the workshop and take home. ***(Look for the bold, green italic type below.)***  
You do not need to purchase these specialty supplies before the workshop (but of course you're welcome to do so if you would like.)

The table below lists the “Mandatory” and “Optional” supplies side-by-side. You'll be able to learn about carbon dust with only the supplies in the goody bag, but please bring the additional “mandatory” supplies and any personal favorites from the list below.

None of the products or links listed below are endorsements, and I certainly don't receive any benefit for mentioning them. They're provided here for reference. This is simply a glimpse into my cabinets and drawers of the supplies I've tried and found useful or have an opinion about or tips I've received. What works for you is best. Feel free to use your favorite online vendors or be sure to support our few remaining brick-and-mortar art supply shops so they will continue to survive!

Mandatory/Strongly Recommended (equivalents ok)	Optional
<p><b>Pencils:</b> Carbon: Wolff's Carbon Pencils: (I typically have two–three of each of the following). Be sure each pencil says “Wolff's Carbon” on it! (Wolff's also makes graphite pencils.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B <b><i>(1 in your goody bag)</i></b></li> <li>• 2B <b><i>(1 in your goody bag)</i></b></li> <li>• 4B (one of my favorite hardnesses—if you like carbon dust, you will want to try it)</li> <li>• 6B <b><i>(1 in your goody bag)</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Graphite: (for initial drawings and transfer) Your favorite—one will do, although I usually draw with the carbon pencils directly.</p>	<p><b>Optional pencils:</b> Lyra Rembrandt Carbon: some art supply stores carry an extensive line of Lyra instead of Wolff's. The Lyra come in a “jumbo” width, so be aware if you only have the “normal” pencil sharpener hole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H</li> <li>• 2B Extra Dark</li> <li>• 3B</li> </ul> <p>General's Carbon Sketch Pencil and General's Carbon Pencils (used to be the standard, but I've recently had some problems with quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faber-Castell Pitt Pastel White, and/or Derwent Drawing, Chinese White 7200</li> <li>• General's Charcoal White pencil <b><i>(1 in your goody bag)</i></b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Sharpener(s), sandpapers, etc.</b> Used for traditional sharpening or creating carbon dust. Make sure you have the correct width sharpener for your pencils!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your favorite hand-held pencil sharpener.</li> <li>• Optional: Xacto knife (my favorite is a #11 blade, but any will do). Can also be used as a drawing tool or to correct mistakes.</li> <li>• Fine sandpaper (sandpaper block <a href="https://www.dickblick.com/products/sandpaper-block/">https://www.dickblick.com/products/sandpaper-block/</a>; OR, sandpaper (800 grit or finer—automotive or “fine finish”); AND/OR, emery boards. <b><i>(Some small pieces of sandpaper will be in your goody bag.)</i></b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Optional:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bard Parker Scalpel Blade handle, No. 10 or No. 15 blade</li> <li>• Emery boards; glass or metal emery boards.</li> <li>• Slice Ceramic Knives (can also use as a drawing tool or for corrections): <a href="https://www.sliceproducts.com/collections/precision-knives">https://www.sliceproducts.com/collections/precision-knives</a>; Craft Knife, <a href="https://www.dickblick.com/products/slice-ceramic-craft-knife/">https://www.dickblick.com/products/slice-ceramic-craft-knife/</a> or Slice Ceramic Precision Cutter, <a href="https://www.dickblick.com/products/slice-ceramic-precision-cutter/">https://www.dickblick.com/products/slice-ceramic-precision-cutter/</a></li> <li>• More elaborate sharpening tools: <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Raf-fine-Artist-Reusable-Metal-File/dp/B095FNKS5M">https://www.amazon.com/Raf-fine-Artist-Reusable-Metal-File/dp/B095FNKS5M</a>). Two other nifty sharpening tools: (thank you to Gayle U for the tips!): <a href="https://www.jerrysartarama.com/pastel-shaper">https://www.jerrysartarama.com/pastel-shaper</a> and <a href="https://www.dickblick.com/products/artists-line-charcoal-pastel-sharpening-box/?from-Search=%2Fsearch%2F%3Fsearchword%3Dpastel%20sharpening%20box">https://www.dickblick.com/products/artists-line-charcoal-pastel-sharpening-box/?from-Search=%2Fsearch%2F%3Fsearchword%3Dpastel%20sharpening%20box</a></li> </ul>

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**Surface(s): Choose one favorite you're comfortable using, or more if you want to experiment**

Film: If you're a fan of film: Dura-Lar .005 two-sided **matte** film *(Small piece—4" x 6" or larger—will be in your goody bag.);*

**AND/OR**

Drawing paper(s), and/or Watercolor paper(s) (140lb, hot press), and/or clay board. Professional grade is a must. You want a smooth surface so that the paper texture won't show, but with enough tooth to "grab and hold" the carbon *(Small piece—4" x 6" or larger—will be in your goody bag. Bring more if you want to work on a larger sheet.);*

**AND/OR**

YUPO can be a substitute for film or for a palette for mixing watercolor or other media. YUPO Medium <https://www.dickblick.com/products/legion-yupo-synthetic-paper-pads/> or YUPO Heavy <https://www.dickblick.com/products/legion-yupo-synthetic-paper-pads/> YUPO White is preferred (translucent is also available);

**AND/OR**

Experimental papers, such as Hahnemuhle Velour Paper (if you like a really "grabby" surface) or Yasutomo Mineral Paper. *(Small pieces—4" x 6" or larger—of Hahnemuhle Velour and Yasutomo Mineral Paper will be in your goody bag.)*

Tracing paper (for sketching and transferring). If you're using film or mineral paper, cheap white paper or board to slide under your art. *(A small piece of tracing paper and a full sheet of plain bond paper will be in your goody bag.)*

Paper to protect your drawing surface (for example, tracing paper, cheap bond paper, glassine sheets, whatever you usually use for this purpose), **OR** Parchment paper (the kitchen kind) to protect your work (my favorite!) *(A piece of kitchen parchment paper will be in your goody bag.)*

Sketchbook /notepad

**Optional surface(s):**

Film: Cronaflex (If you, or someone you know, has an ancient stash. It's no longer made.) H&E Herculene Matte Drafting Film is another tried and true film, but difficult to find and expensive.

These days, Dura-Lar is widely available and great for film lovers. Be sure to get the matte film. It's also sold in a clear acetate—carbon dust will not adhere to the clear products.

Premium drawing papers (professional grade, not student grade)

Premium drawing papers for pastels

Toned drawing papers (e.g., light grey, light colors)

Sanded or velour papers for charcoal and pastels (can be tricky to use, but can give some interesting effects (examples include: Hahnemühle Velour Paper, <https://www.dickblick.com/products/hahnemuhle-premium-velour-paper/> or Mi-Teintes Touch, <https://www.dickblick.com/products/canson-mi-teintes-touch-sanded-papers/>

Yasutomo Mineral Paper is translucent, but whiter than film. It's a nice surface for film-lovers that has the benefit of a brighter, whiter "color," <https://www.dickblick.com/products/yasutomo-mineral-paper-art-ist-pad/>

<p><b>Brushes:</b> <u>To be used forever more <b>only</b> for carbon or graphite.</u>  <i>(One 1/4" Angle Shader brush will be in your goody bag)</i></p> <p>Round and flat brushes in a variety of sizes. Natural is wonderful, but can be expensive; synthetics work well. Great brush finds can be had in the "bargain bin". Just a few to start is fine.</p> <p>Round, with good, sharp points, in a variety of sizes: 00, 1, 2, 4 are all great for applying charcoal dust and adding fine details with charcoal dust, watercolor, wet charcoal dust, instant coffee or white gouache. If covering a huge area, sizes 6, and 8 or even larger are handy.</p> <p>Flat, "cat's tongue" and "sword" or angle shader brushes in a variety of sizes: 1/8", 1/4", 1, 2, 4. If covering a huge area, 1/2" or 6 or 8 are great.</p>	<p><b>Additional optional brushes:</b></p> <p><u>To be used forever more <b>only</b> for carbon or graphite.</u></p> <p>Double Ended Colour Shapers, <a href="https://www.dickblick.com/products/double-ended-colour-shapers/">https://www.dickblick.com/products/double-ended-colour-shapers/</a></p> <p>Pan pastel brushes.</p> <p>Your favorite watercolor "correcting" brushes. (Never to use with watercolor again.)</p> <p>Worn-out, bristly or weird brushes to create textures. All those brushes that you used for watercolor (but no longer have a good point) can be perfect for carbon dust applications.</p>
<p><b>Eraser(s):</b></p> <p>Blu-tak. I prefer the original blue (they also have white). Can be found everywhere now, including WalMart, etc. <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Bostik-Multipurpose-Reusable-Adhesive-Non-Toxic/dp/B0001OZ170/ref=sr_1_7?keywords=blu%2Btack&amp;qid=1706648744&amp;sr=8-7&amp;th=1">https://www.amazon.com/Bostik-Multipurpose-Reusable-Adhesive-Non-Toxic/dp/B0001OZ170/ref=sr_1_7?keywords=blu%2Btack&amp;qid=1706648744&amp;sr=8-7&amp;th=1</a></p> <p><b>OR</b> Kneaded eraser (I prefer using the Blu-tak as a substitute for a kneaded eraser). <i>(There will be some Blu-Tak in your goody bag.)</i></p> <p>Various click-style erasers: Staedler-Mars white plastic and click-style erasers, OR, General's Factic Mechanical.</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>Tombow Mono eraser (or equivalent) (Mono Zero refillable), <a href="https://www.dickblick.com/products/tombow-mono-eraser/">https://www.dickblick.com/products/tombow-mono-eraser/</a></p>	<p><b>Optional eraser(s):</b></p> <p>Electric eraser (with white plastic eraser fill). WARNING: be very careful! It's easy to damage your surface!</p> <p>Staedler Mars Plastic Eraser or equivalent.</p> <p>Mr. Clean Magic Eraser (original <b>only</b>)</p> <p>Cork from wine or champagne bottle (plus something to cut it with and something to hold it, such as locking forceps)</p> <p>Westcott Erasing Shield, (not an eraser, but definitely useful!), <a href="https://www.dickblick.com/products/westcott-erasing-shield/">https://www.dickblick.com/products/westcott-erasing-shield/</a></p>

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**Blenders and other applicators:**

Chamois (small), approximately 5" x 7". <https://www.dickblick.com/products/natural-artist-chamois/> Check the package to see if it needs to be washed before first use. *(There will be a small piece of pre-washed chamois in your goody bag.)*

Tortillions, OR blending stumps, various sizes, AND/OR Q-tips. *(Two sizes of gray blending stumps and a Pan Pastel Sofft Tools mini applicator will be in your goody bag, along with a few Q-tips.)*

T-shirt scrap, clean, preferably white. *(In your goody bag.)*

**Optional blenders and other applicators:**

Pastel blending brushes (for example, Sennelier Le Pastelliste) in a variety of sizes, 4, 8, 12. <https://www.dickblick.com/products/sennelier-le-pastelliste-brushes/?fromSearch=%2Fsearch%2F%3Fsearch-word%3DBlender>

Double Ended Colour Shapers, <https://www.dickblick.com/products/double-ended-colour-shapers/>

Additional Pan Pastel Sofft Tools, <https://www.dickblick.com/products/panpastel-sofft-tools/?fromSearch=%2Fsearch%2F%3Fsearchword%3D-Blender>

Make up sponges and make up foam applicators.

If you can find the old-fashioned coffee stirers (plastic, with two open small channels) please bring some for everyone. We can make a great blending/erasing tool with them. You can also bring tools that can clamp onto a small piece of chamois, such as locking forceps, etc.

Paper towels or facial tissue (make sure they do NOT contain lotion). *(Supplied in the classroom.)*

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**Other:**

Small lidded container(s) for the dust. Any will do, including old mint tins, etc. ***I strongly recommend***, however, using containers with a screw-top lid or an easy opening lid. Little containers with strong snap top lids keep the dust safe and secure, but are a sure-fire way to spray black carbon dust all over everything when trying to open the containers. ***(Small screw-top plastic holders will be in your goody bag to get started. If you have tiny sample jam jars, those are my favorites.)***

Good task lighting.

White artist's tape, or your preference. ***(I'll bring a roll to have on hand to share.)***

Drawing board.

Mirror, for checking for black dust on your face before leaving the studio :-))) Trust me on this one.

**SUBJECT:**

We'll talk about different types of subjects, and I'll bring some fruits/vegetables/seeds/leaves. You may already have something in mind, in which case it's great to bring your subject and any preliminary sketches and drawings you might have done.

Carbon dust can be used to illustrate anything, but it immediately lends itself to soft, velvety surfaces, matte tonal values, or wet, shiny liquidy surfaces. It was originally invented to depict surgical procedures, internal organs and surgical instruments depicted in old anatomy books and medical illustrations.

**Optional other:**

Your favorite watercolors, pan pastels, pastels, colored pencils with all the bits and pieces you like to use with them.

Cotton glove to keep surface clean, eliminate hand oils.

Grafix Frisket Film, low tack masking film, <https://www.dickblick.com/products/grafix-all-purpose-frisket-film/?fromSearch=%2F-search%2F%3Fsearchword%3Dgrafix%20frisket%20film>  
AND/OR removable tape.

Nitrile gloves to keep hands clean while sanding carbon. ***(In your goody bag.)***

Mask (Any mask that you wore during the pandemic is good safety to wear when sanding/creating carbon dust if you prefer).

Pop up hand wipes.

**Optional other, experimental:**

Workable Fixative, or fine mist atomizer bottle for alcohol (In the olden days, they used a mouth atomizer to blow a mist of alcohol!) I tend not to use either, but we'll discuss if and when an application might be useful. ***(We will NOT use fixative in the classroom, but I'll bring a can to share if the Arboretum can designate an area outside we can use.)***

White gouache, and/or Pro White, or Titanium White (PW4) watercolor.

Japan Sakura Gelly Roll 05 pen, white.

Charcoal powder. ***(Will have a small container in goody bag.)***

Schminke Liquid Charcoal, (NOTE: I have not yet tried these—these fall in that “experimental” category). <https://www.dickblick.com/products/schminke-liquid-charcoal/?fromSearch=%2Fsearch%2F%3Fsearch-word%3Dliquid%20charcoal>

Small porcelain palette and water container for mixing and using carbon dust wet. OR use a small piece of YUPO.

Instant coffee, damp coffee grounds, damp tea bags or damp tea. Do not bring to the workshop. Instructions will be sent to all participants well in advance if you would like to try this experimental, fun technique. ***(A packet of instant coffee will be supplied in your goody bag.)***

Black ink or lamp black watercolor.