



jlbCREATIVE FAVORITE SUPPLIES!

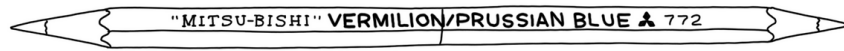
Some of the most frequently asked questions I get on my social media platforms are "what was that pen you were using in your last video?" or "have you tried those pencils? Would you recommend them?"

Art supplies are an extremely guilty pleasure for most of us, but the reality is you don't actually need a lot to get the job done.

Nevertheless, we continue to collect them, love them, obsess over them, use and abuse them.

Below are the top 10 art supplies that jump out at me almost EVERY time I sit down to mindlessly create. Tried and tested supplies that work for me time and time again, products that I recommend with the utmost confidence.

Uni "Mitsubishi" Vermilion and Prussian Blue Pencil



For the life of me, I cannot remember the art supply sherpa who sent me these beauties, but it was a happy mail package that truly changed my drawing life! I have been through about 7 of these since that packet and have 12 backups in the second tier of my craft cart.

They're a pencil that is $\frac{1}{2}$ Vermillion Red lead and $\frac{1}{2}$ Prussian Blue lead. The reason I like that is because I can sketch in red colored pencil and then render/add shadows with the blue. I'm not usually one for "double duty" products because they typically seem like a gimmick, but these pencils are not that. I've been told of many a use for them... I'm obsessed and I think they're a fabulous tool to inspire a lot of sketching.



Pilot Opt. 0.5 mechanical pencil

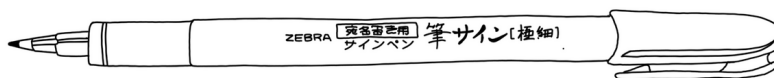


Honestly, truly, never thought I'd see the day I recommended a mechanical pencil to anyone...
What next? Highlighters?! Hahaha

There was something about this one in particular that ergonomically improved my sketching experience. I also believe that I bonded with it as it seemed to create some of my more interesting and most enjoyable pieces. There's something to be said for the "experience" of an art supply, not just the performance. It is a 0.5mm sized lead, which seems large when I think of the pens I like to use, but is seemingly perfect for dainty details in my pencil drawings. I really do love this pencil. I have 2. I'm also pretty sure I bought this at a Family Mart (konbini) in Japan on a late-night fried chicken run...



Zebra Disposable Brush Pen – Super Fine



Brush pens don't seem to be too popular amongst a lot of artists I follow... Like, no one really wants to sit with them at lunch time, and I TOTALLY GET IT! They can be really temperamental and there's a real learning curve to finding some confidence with that wayward brush tip. I originally came across its water-soluble sister at a local Daiso back in 2014 and more recently discovered the waterproof "Sign" pen version.

I have found the longer and softer the brush tip, the more difficult to handle, which makes this brush pen THE SIMPLEST! It has a very small yet firm brush tip and a jet-black pigment ink. I love that I can get a variation of line widths with the one pen and these are the PERFECT pen for drawing lashes and liner. Period.

Top Tip: when you want a line to taper to a fine point but don't trust you can flick the pen the right way, start by drawing the thin end of the line, lightly touching the brush to the page at a slight angle, then pulling it towards the thicker end of the line applying heavier pressure. I hope that made sense! If it didn't here's a link to a "line weight tutorial" Tag Tuesday video where I show it. Remember Tag Tuesday's? That was fun, I'm feeling a little nostalgic for it... *make a mental note, think about Tag Tuesday hahaha

LINE WEIGHT TUTORIAL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kG1MEddn1e8>



ZEBRA BRUSH PEN (super fine tip, 1 count): <https://amzn.to/2JiaRRK>

Pilot Multi Ball – Black, fine



This gem came out of nowhere! I thought it was just an office pen but they're INCREDIBLE for mixed media. I think of them as a thinner OHTO Fude Ball 0.5, in that they write over the top of ANYTHING and the ink is super black and waterproof once dry.

It's a gel pen but it also writes on plastic, metal, glass and cloth. It takes 6 hours to fully cure on surfaces that aren't paper, but once it's dry it's permanent (and they come in a bunch of colors, I only have the black though). They're currently \$1.65 on jetpens.com but I think their value is far greater! Basically, they're a steal and they're LEGIT.



Muji Gel ink pen – Super fine 0.25 BLACK



Ok, the tea? These are not for everyone, and sometimes not totally for me... haha. I LOVE THEM! They're inexpensive and have a SUPER fine tip which makes for the wispiest of eyelashes. My issue? They're not comfortable to hold! I have the hexagonal barrel version and it's a very hard plastic.

They're a very minimalistic looking pen (as is the style of MUJI) and using them for an extended period of time will hurt your hand. I think I have publicly whinged about this in a MerMay video before, but it's not a deal breaker, I think I just need a couple of pen grips and I will be fine. Having said that, I haven't bought any, months later, and I still use them almost every day... please copy and paste this evidence to me if I ever publicly announce I have RSI... Haha



MUJI GEL INK PENS (VARIOUS COLORS AND SIZES): <https://amzn.to/2w1X5jD>

Copic Markers

Alcohol Markers! I've been using them since I was 16 years of age when Gran secretly purchased me a set of Prismacolor markers (I still have some of them in my craft cart to this day!). I wanted to be a fashion designer and alcohol markers are industry standard for design sketches in fashion/architecture/graphic design etc. I got Prismacolor because we used those in Design & Tech in High School, but I didn't LOVE them because they have a large chisel tip and a bullet tip. Well, I didn't know I didn't love them until I found Copic Markers, which have a chisel tip and a BRUSH tip. I feel like the brush tip is the most versatile tip and I use it 99.9% of the time.

Copic Markers are super great because they lay down flat color and blend together like a dream. It is a great way to manually achieve gradient blending and smooth coloring, manually, that looks digitally rendered. I LOVE to color with them but they will bleed through ANYTHING (except the Rendr No-Show through sketchbook).

Copic is a Japanese brand, which means quality is assured, and they sell sets and open stock. They are SUPER expensive and I wouldn't suggest investing in an entire set until you've had a little play with them, unless you're balling outta control, in which case "wanna go shopping?" haha *wink*.

Personally, I started with a set of the Copic Ciao, another sneaky Gran purchase encouraging my teenage dreams, and they're the same as the Sketch markers I use now but with a round barrel and less ink. Copic markers are also refillable.

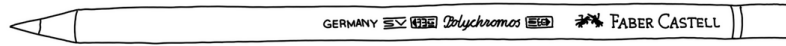
I don't want to enable you to buy alcohol markers, I love them, but not everyone finds them a necessity. My personal opinion is that they're also like wine - a \$1 marker can be just as good as a \$9 marker. They're all dye based inks so it's not like you're paying for lightfastness, sometimes you're just paying for the name, packaging, amount of ink or specific tip type... As far as formulas go, there's really a HUGE difference between all of them.

Again, not a necessity. I do find they're great for laying down base colors and then going over the top of them with colored pencil and white highlights.



COPIC CIAO MARKERS: <https://amzn.to/2LLacAd>
COPIC SKETCH MARKERS (SINGLES): <https://amzn.to/2HfhjvA>

Faber Castell Polychromos colored pencils



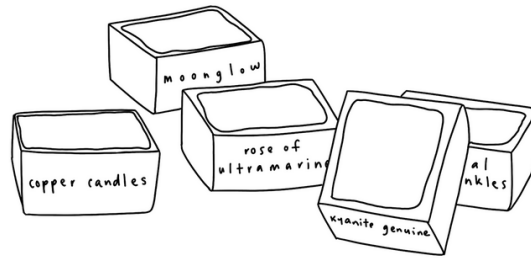
I've said this a billion times: I am obsessed with these and I got them on the biggest sale of all time, which I think might have been a big mistake... the salesperson saw they were the only set and when she scanned them, then spied the price, tried to re-direct me to other pencils so she could purchase them. Poor lady. Lucky me.

"Polychromos" stands for "many colors" and I currently have the entire set of 120. They are 120 sticks of bliss!

The Polychromos oil based pencils which I find the best for blending; you can add multiple color layers without "wax bloom". The pigments are lightfast and the experience of coloring with them is unsurpassed... completely luxurious.



Artist Grade Watercolors



I've got a couple brands to talk about here as I'm obsessed with a few right now. Basically, artist grade watercolors are divine. There's no sugar coating it, there's a difference, you pay for the difference, it just is what it is. I have had no issues making great pieces with student grade watercolors and I actually have a 48 color MUNGYO palette which I enjoy playing with for all my standard colors. MUNGYO is a Korean brand and there's been speculation that a couple of very popular "12 half-pan" sets private label from this same factory. I don't work for either company so I don't know, but I've swatched all side by side and saw no difference (except price). So-student grade, great, no issues, but that's not what I'm here for.

ARTIST GRADE! There really is a big difference. It might not be so obvious with your standard colors but when you start to play with duochromes, iridescent colors, natural mineral pigments and dual pigment/multiple pigment color mixes you will start a journey down a deep rabbit hole. I find it ironic that these are the last watercolors we might try, working our way up from beginner to "artist", yet they provide the easiest and most enjoyable painting experience... shouldn't we start with what's easiest and most enjoyable?!

My personal preference is to work from dried half-pans, then once I'm out I will re-fill the pan with tube watercolor in the same shade. A half pan might last one person a few months and another person 12 years, all depends on how hard you crush on the color and how often you create.

Daniel Smith watercolors are gorgeous paints and go through rigorous testing to assure lightfastness and archival quality. Their natural mineral pigments are such a joy to paint with and the effects you can achieve with granulation are something magical (that is a struggle to replicate with synthetic pigments). I have been gifted the majority of my DS watercolors which makes my palette feel even more special. My OG's are Kyanite Genuine and Moonglow but I have a whole DS swatch video you'll see a preview of soon with a bunch of fave color recommendations.

Designs By RachelBeth Handmade Watercolors. These were a gift from Mindy Lacefield to use when I guest taught in her Goodie Gumdrops class last Christmas. I don't know if Mindy quite knew what she sparked in me... hahaha!

I have been a massive fan of the watercolors since that first play and now have a few palettes with the most insanely gorgeous half pans and a some full-pans! They're in super high demand so I'm going to apologize now if you find it difficult to get your hands on them. They're very worth the wait though! My must haves are the Happy Birthday set and Cupcakes and Cocktails.

Xanadu Art Studio Handmade Watercolors. These were actually sent to me for review and I have been really taking my time on these ones. I developed a nice rapport with the lovely owner who sent them to me and we were discussing first impressions and colors/packages etc. Her focus is less on packaging and branding, but rather providing super interesting color mixes with hard-to-source pigments, in the most economical way. I know that might not be important for some but there are a few consumers out there that buy with their eyes, and really rate packaging as a part of the purchase experience. Beyond all of that, the watercolors themselves are stunning. There are some really fantastic pigment mixes that are totally unique (Like a light pink/beige with purple iridescence). She also has some new Japanese pigments that are NEEEEEOOONNN and a color called Rose Gold Deep that I would like to cover my body in. No joke. I'll have a swatch video on YouTube soon that you will see in your Patreon First-Look, but if you do head over for some Rose Gold Deep tell Margaret "James says hi!" haha.

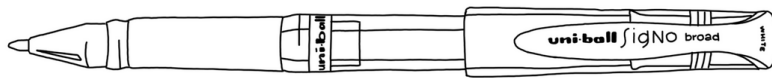


DANIEL SMITH WATERCOLOR (238 dot card sampler): <https://goo.gl/2Df87j>

DESIGNS BY RACHEL BETH WATERCOLOR: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/DesignsbyRachelBeth>

XANADU ART STUDIO: www.xanaduartstudio.storenvy.com

Uni-ball Signo white gel pen



How many of us have been on the search for the perfect white pen? We want to believe there's got to be the PERFECT one, but I think this one is it for now!

There's a version of this pen with a finer tip that I've found doesn't work so well, but the broad always seems to be smooth and opaque in my mixed media work. I used to really enjoy the POSCA pin type white paint pen, which is a paint pen (not a gel pen) but it was a little hit and miss in terms of performance. Some were great from start to finish, others clogged and weren't as opaque.

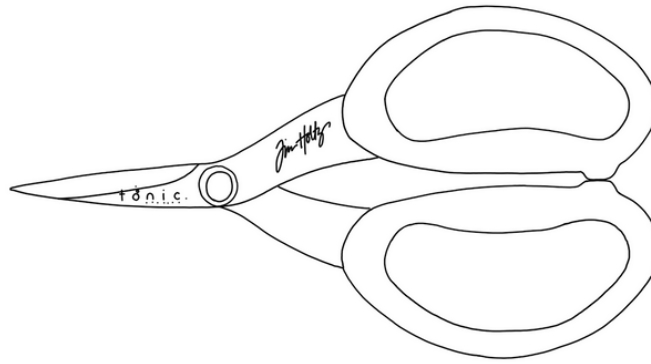
I think if you need a white pen, save yourself the effort and just use the UniBall signo broad. I will keep trying every new one I come across, but this is it for now. I am currently enjoying the POSCA brush tip in white though! I don't brush letter but I've still had some fun with it when I'm feeling fancy-free and easy with the mixed media haha.

Fun Fact: adding white highlights at the end of my pieces is my favorite part :)



UNIBALL SIGNO WHITE (3 pack): <https://amzn.to/2GpMZtJ>

Tim Holtz / Tonic Studios mini snips



Scissors. These are THE scissors for fussy cutting. The end.


Well, not the end, I actually have all 3 sizes and they all come in handy, but for fussy cutting nothing else quite compares.



TIM HOLTZ MINI SNIPS (5 inch): <https://goo.gl/318Amq>

Let's be honest, there were about 5 million more supplies I could have detailed in this list, but for fear of our financial securities I'll leave the rest of the enabling to my YouTube videos! I don't know if you noticed but I didn't even say "washi tape"... Like, is this all a lie? Am I even me?!

Haha. I just wanted to mention supplies I grab almost EVERY time I sit down to create with at present; tried and tested products that come highly recommended from not myself and a bunch of my mixed media peers.

If you have any of these products and want to vouch for them in the comments below, feel free to enable your fellow Patrons 

- J



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