DRAWING WITH SILVERPOINT

Erin Rehil, Presenter
Hong Kong Academy
ARWAE 2018
“This studio workshop will explore silverpoint, a Renaissance drawing technique that existed long before the invention of graphite pencils.

The session will begin with a brief presentation and demo. Each participant will create a piece to take home within a friendly, relaxed setting. The instructor will suggest ways to incorporate silverpoint into a secondary curriculum, while also providing a space for fellow art educators to fulfill their own creative needs.”
INCLUSION ACTIVATOR

Make eye contact with someone in the room. Join your partner and tell them about the wildest, craziest art lesson (or unit) you ever taught.
Leonardo Da Vinci’s Drawing Materials with conservator Alan Donnithorne, from the Facebook page of Royal Collection Trust.
Stylus collection of Timothy David Mayhew, photo credits of Repair the Tear art conservation blog.
Detail, Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait at the Age of 13*, 1484, silverpoint on prepared paper.
Detail, Rembrandt van Rijn, *Landscape with Two Cottages*, c. 1633, silverpoint on prepared parchment.
Silverpoint may be a centuries-old process, but what you do with it is limited only by your imagination.
Susan Dorothea White, *Gliding the Lily*, 2005, goldpoint and black and white chalk on silicon carbide paper.
Michael Nichols, *Dispel*, 2013, silverpoint on paper.
For best results, make your own ground from raw pigment and glue.

Golden’s store-bought ground is probably the second-best option.

I like this hot-pressed watercolor paper but have also used Bristol.
WHY USE SILVERPOINT?

• Unusual process.
• Students are studying Old Masters.
• Connection between precious metals and artist’s message.
• Delicate and subtle.
• Sparkling finish.
• Explore drawings that can’t be erased.
• Product changes over time as silver tarnishes and darkens.
• It doesn’t smudge!
Left: Photo from Jewelry and Metalsmithing department at Rhode Island School of Design.

Below: Photo from Fire Mountain Gems and Beads site.
EXPENSES

• One New Tradition stylus from Silverpoint Web is $14 USD, or about $110 HKD.

• Buying 20 in bulk is $240 USD, about $1880 HKD.

• Essentially a one-time purchase.

• An 8-oz. bottle of Golden silverpoint ground on Blick is $11.59 USD, or about $90 HKD.
DRAWING TIPS

- Draw lightly.
- Don’t be afraid to let your measuring marks be part of the finished picture.
- Don’t press too hard. Find out what “too hard” looks like on a separate piece of paper.
- Make a value scale to plan out your values.
James Glenn and Juniper Ekman at Silverpoint Web share a wealth of information about metalpoint drawing:
https://silverpointweb.com/history-of-silverpoint-drawing/

Silverpoint Web also has an online shop, where I purchased the silverpoint styluses used in this workshop:
https://silverpointweb.com/shop/

Jackson’s Art Supplies has a useful blog post about metalpoint as well:
https://www.jacksonsart.com/blog/2014/01/21/traditional-metal-point-drawing-materials/
Timothy David Mayhew is an artist and conservator with expertise in metalpoint and other Renaissance-area techniques: https://www.timothydavidmayhew.com/new-pages/draw-media.html

This Artsy article provides links to a number of successful metalpoint artists working today: https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-eleven-metalpoint-artists-redefine-a-traditional-technique-in

Follow me on Twitter and I’ll do the same! @ErinRehil