



IF I FITS, I SITS

Introduction

In this class we are going to be creating a hyper cute, super fluffy Christmas kitty.

Our primary goal for this class is the creation of pictorial space. While the image itself is not realistic, we can lend a sense of realism to the work through the use of implied spacial illusion.

We will use overlap, where one element clearly overlaps another, thus indicating it is in front of the element behind.

We will also use color temperature by working to keep background elements fundamentally "cooler" than elements in the foreground.

Finally, we will use edge control by combining hard and soft edges to enhance the illusion of space.

If done properly, all of these technical elements will be invisible to the viewer.

For them, experience will be an image that blurs the line between cartoon and reality.

They will know instinctively that what they are looking at is a drawing, flat and two-dimensional, but the desire to pick up and pet the fluffy kitty will be bigger than their instinct, thus creating a sense of imaginary realism.

Copic Colors Used For The Study Page

(Refer to the color conversion chart for non Copic alternatives)

W0

W2

W3

W4

W5

W6

W7

W8

R22

R27

R89

Y11

Y18

B000

B02

B05

YG13

YR24

E000

E33

E37

White Gouache

Yellow Sharpie

Black Sharpie



For this class I'll be using a disappearing line drawing. that is a line drawing that's been colored to match the colors and values of the finished work so that they "disappear" in the coloring process. Disappearing lines are critical if we want a fluffy kitty. Hard, dark lines along the edges of the fur would kill the illusion of softness.



I'll start this drawing off by indicating the basic colors and values of the eyes. I begin with a black, ultra fine Sharpie marker to color in the pupils. You can use any black liner for this step.

In this photo I left the highlights exposed...



...while here I have colored over them. Why? Because the location of the highlights is an important thing to consider. If you want your kitty to be looking off to the left, then the main highlight should be placed as indicated above. However, if you want your kitty to have a more direct connection to the viewer, you'll want to move the large highlight to either side of the eye. The eyes always appear to be looking in the direction opposite of the largest highlight.



I lay in a flat overall base color of Y11 into the circular shape of the eye.



I darken the top half of each eye with W4...



...then add W6 to the upper portions of each eye and to the contour line.



I blend the W4 and W6 together with W3, being careful to leave plenty of Y11 showing at the bottom.



I do an overall blend layer covering the entire eye area with Y11.



I add very dark accents of W7 to the upper "rim" of the eye. This step completes the initial stages of coloring the eyes.



I color the nose with R22...



...and the ears with a flat, even layer of R22 as well. I also lay in a base of this color on the tree ornaments that will eventually be red.



I use the R22 for the base color of the red ribbon as well.



I add an overall base layer of Y11 to the box underneath the kitten...



...and to the star and yellow ornament on the tree.



I add a layer of Y18 to the shadow side of the box...



...then add some geometric shapes (Y18) to the light side to indicate folds in the wrapping paper.



I blend the "folds" from the step above with an overall layer of Y11 to finish it off (for now).



I then add Y18 to the star on the ball...



...and a base color of B0000 to the main body of the ball.



I use the B0000 as the background as well...



...keeping it rough and sketchy as I move around the head...



...and down and around behind the Christmas tree.



Notice that I do not use this color on the bottom (ground plane) of the image.



I darkened a large portion of the ball with B02... Be sure to leave that light "crescent" shape on the upper left!



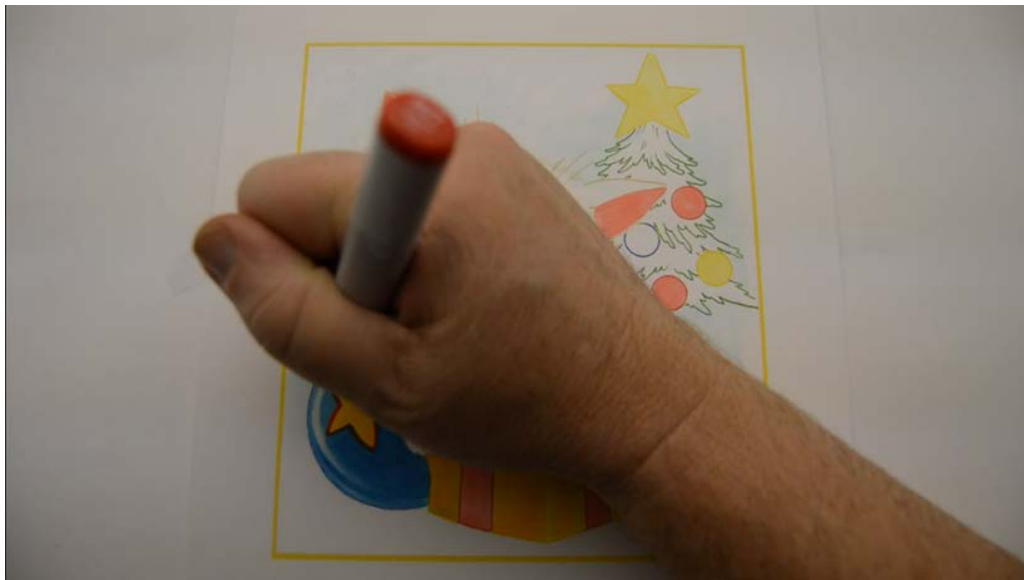
I darken the lower and "back" portion of the ball with B05, leaving it rough and sketchy and making sure to color "into" and over the lines for the kitten's fur.



I blend the B05 with an overall layer of B02 (excluding that crescent shape!), being careful to avoid the yellow star so as not to turn it green!



...a final overall blend layer of B0000...



...and a contour line of R27 around the star finishes it off.



Still using the R27, I add stronger red to the tops and bottoms of the ribbons on the box, leaving the original base color to show through the middle.



I add areas of R89 to the tops and bottoms of the ribbons...



...then soften it all together with an overall layer of R22.



I restate my "purest" red with R27...



...to finish off the ribbon (for now).



I add shadow accents under the paws and to the "folds" in the wrapping paper with Y24...



...then blend the shadow side (left hand side) of the box (excluding the ribbon) with an overall layer of Y18.



The box is finished except for white highlights.



I use W2 to add a shadow under the ball and bottom edge of the box.



I extend a light W0 cast shadow from the shadow side of the box, along the ground plane, and to the image border.



I soften the cast shadow of the ball (W0)...



...then add W4 in a thin line to the bottom edge of the box...



...and just beneath the ball (W4) to finish off the ground plane.



Notice how the combination of cool background color (B0000), white ground plane, and soft shadows make the image look "deep" and spacial.



I use YG13 to lay in a base color on the Christmas tree, being careful not to color the star or ornaments.



I add mid-value accents under the star and "branch bunches" with W3.



I also use this color (W3) on the trunk.



I strengthen the W3 mid-values with W5...



...and add very dark accents with W7.



I blend the entire tree (excluding ornaments) with W4...



...then restate my "green" with an overall blend layer of YG13.



I add some form to the star with YR24, first by indicating the geometric shapes...



...and then filling them in (YR24).



I blend the entire star with Y18...



...and again with Y11 to finish it off.



I add a mid-value red (R27) to the red ornaments, leaving some of the original color to show through in the spots where my reflected lights and highlights will be.



I soften and blend the R27 with R22...



...then add dark shadow accents with R89.



I blend the R89 with R27 (excluding the highlights) to finish off the red ornaments.



Moving on to the yellow ornament I use Y18...



Y24 for the shadow and blend with Y11.



The procedure for the blue ornament is the same, the colors are B0000, B022, and B05, with a final blend of B02.



I add a layer of E33 to the trunk...



...then add texture with E37.



Dark accents of W6 finish it off.



I lay in a base color of R22 for the tree skirt.



I add darker geometric shapes with R27...



...and blend it all out with R22.



I add my darkest accents with R89...



...then blend it all together with R27.

For now, the background elements are more or less complete excluding highlights.

We can now turn our attention to the kitten.



Because the kitten overlaps every other element in composition, it was important to color each of those objects first to avoid any accidental white spaces that would have occurred had we tried to color the background around the kitten.

To achieve the effect we are after, it's important to color the kitten's fur into and over the background. I begin with a W0 on the outside contour of the fur, pushing this color into and over the edges where the fur and background meet.



I also use this color (W0) to separate the head from the body and down the center of the nose.



Notice how rough and jagged the edges are. Also notice how they go outside the lines. We want those lines to disappear, so we will continuously be coloring "outside the lines" :)



I add a loose "stroke" hair texture with W2. Each stroke follows the curve of the head.



I do the same thing with W4, leaving plenty of the W2 still visible.



I add more "hairs" with W5...



...and E33...



...then add dark patches around the eyes and accents on the cheeks with E37.



I add W7 directly above and part way around the eyes...



...and in small accent areas around the face.

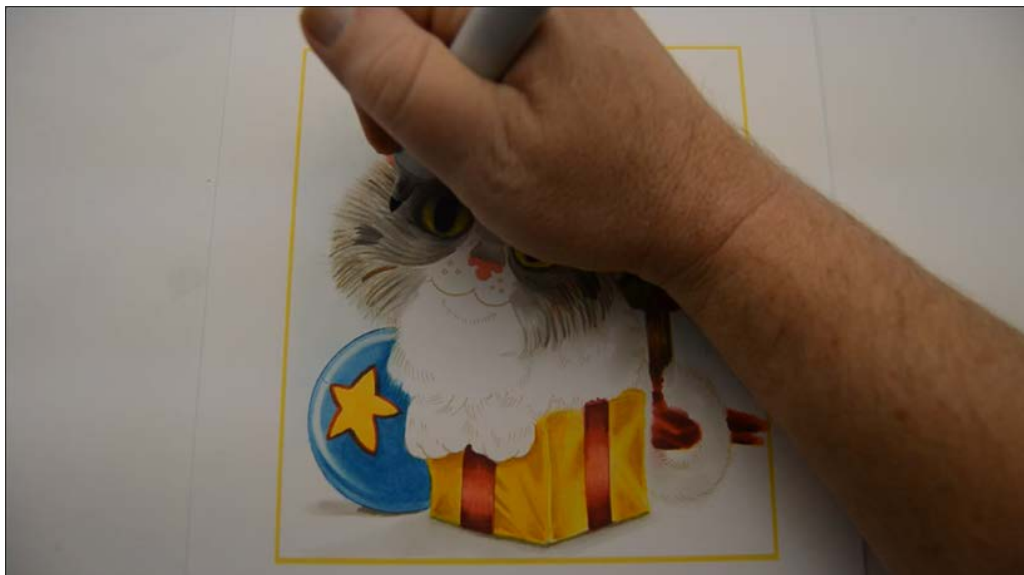
Note: It's important to realize that there is *no* way to match every stroke or placement of every color *exactly* the way I've done it, nor should you try! Understand your kitten will be unique and may need different colors in different areas to look the way you want it to. Use my steps as a guide, but the final choices *have* to be yours based on your own work!



More hair strokes with W5...



...even more hairs with W3
(notice the nose)



Stronger strokes with W4...



...and dark accents with W8 around the eyes.

Notice how rough and unblended the strokes are. We are creating layers of texture over each other... it's ok if it looks a little ragged right now!



I add rougher, stronger strokes with W6...

Be careful, don't go overboard here!



I do a light overall blend with W3.

Again, don't overdo it and smooth out all the work you've done! This is a very light layer to fill in any gaps, nothing more. You may or may not need to do this.



I add E37 to the tips of the ears...



...then blend it out and color the rest of the ears with W3.



I add accents to the sides of the nose with E33...



...then strengthen the inside corners of the eyes with W5...



...and top of the nose with W5 as well.



I blend the W5 with W3... lightly!



I add E000 to the muzzle in a heavy layer, and to the fur under the chin in a light, patchy layer.



I add a shadow to the bottom of the nose with E33...



...and add nostrils with E37.



I add E33 to the insides of the ears...



...and to the "lips". (E33)



The finished face before adding white.

I know, I know, it looks kinda rough! Poor, poor pound kitty!! But don't worry, the white is going to do wonders!



A Note About Wet White Gouache

In this class we are going to be relying heavily on the "wet" white gouache technique. The mechanics of the technique are simple - add water in varying amounts to a small pool of white gouache to create different strengths and opacities.

White gouache with lots of water added will go on very wet and be translucent. Depending on the water content it will dry almost invisible. This is a good thing! We will use this quality to help "blend" the hair strokes.

A combination of approximately 50% water and 50% white will go on smooth and wet and will dry slightly translucent. We will use this to create lighter hairs.

White gouache applied with a damp brush goes on thick and heavy and is fully opaque. We will use this to create highlight areas to make the coat look healthy and shiny.

Throughout the following steps I will be alternating between these variations to create the right effect in the right areas.

Striking a balance between just right and too much white is a fine line. Fortunately, white gouache can be removed from the drawing surface after it's dry with a cotton swab dipped in water!

Finally, if you want to practice before adding white to the real thing, simply scan and print your coloring page just the way it is right now and practice on the print.



I add a mixture of wet white, approx. 30% white and 70% water, to the large highlights in the eyes.



I add full strength white for the smaller "catch lights".

Notice how the large highlights have faded as they dry.



I add smaller, full strength white to the main highlight. If you look close you'll see it!



I'm using wet white, approx. 30% white and 70% water, for the hair strokes on the nose... it looks bright...



...but dries just right.



I continue with the 30/70 mix...



30/70



30/70



30/70



I pull these marks into the background, and over the ears and Christmas tree to make a super soft edge on the fur.



I add full strength white accents under the eyes, and on the nose and cheeks in small areas around the eyes.

Use your best judgment based on your own work!



As you can see, there are little bits of each "white type" everywhere.



I use a very wet white on the muzzle above the mouth (15% white, 85% water)...



...and smooth it with my finger to modify the E000 underneath.



I add 50%/50% white to add shape and form. I'll make final adjustments from here when I add white to the body.



I use W3 to indicate the fur pattern on the body...



Darker strokes with W5...



Even darker with W6.



I add a touch of "color" with E33...



...then lightly blend with W2.



I soften the transition between the darker fur of the face and body and the lighter fur of the cheek and neck with W0.



More hair strokes with W5.



I add a very dark W7 to the border of the fur on the right cheek to separate it from the body.



I also use this color where the fur meets the box.



Getting there :)



I use W5 on the paws...



W2...



W3...



and E33 to color in the paws.



I use E000 in the area under the chin and in the white of the paws.

...I actually do the paws a bit later but you can do it now since you already have the caps off :)



I darkened under the chin with W2.



Wet white gouache.

I'll be using the same method as previously described.

Use your best judgment on what strength goes where in your own work.



Wet white...



Wet white...



Wet white...

My work here includes the head as well as I make adjustments to further blend the head into the body and background.



I use a very wet white on the chin...



...and rub it out soft.



I "load" the neck area with a heavy layer of *very* wet white...



...which dries nice and translucent, modifying the E000 underneath.



I lay in stronger white to finish it off.



OH! Now I color the paws!!
(E000)



I outline the bottom of the paws with E33... now all that's left is the tail...



...which I'm gonna let you do on your own!

By this time your drawing is sure to be different than mine and will need different solutions to finish it off.

You can do it!

Just start like this...



...and finish like this and you'll do great!



I add highlights to the star...



...and the ornaments...



I add faux snow to the tree with full strength white.



I add wet white highlights to the box...



...and ribbon...



...which fades nicely as it dries.



Finally, I add highlights to the ball...



...and paws.



I then carefully add black Sharpie accents...



...to finish off the work.

Conclusion



This is a super fun drawing to do and was formatted to be used for card making.

The techniques we learned can be used to create fur of all types and even human hair!

So experiment... enjoy... and have a happy holiday!

Christopher Kerry