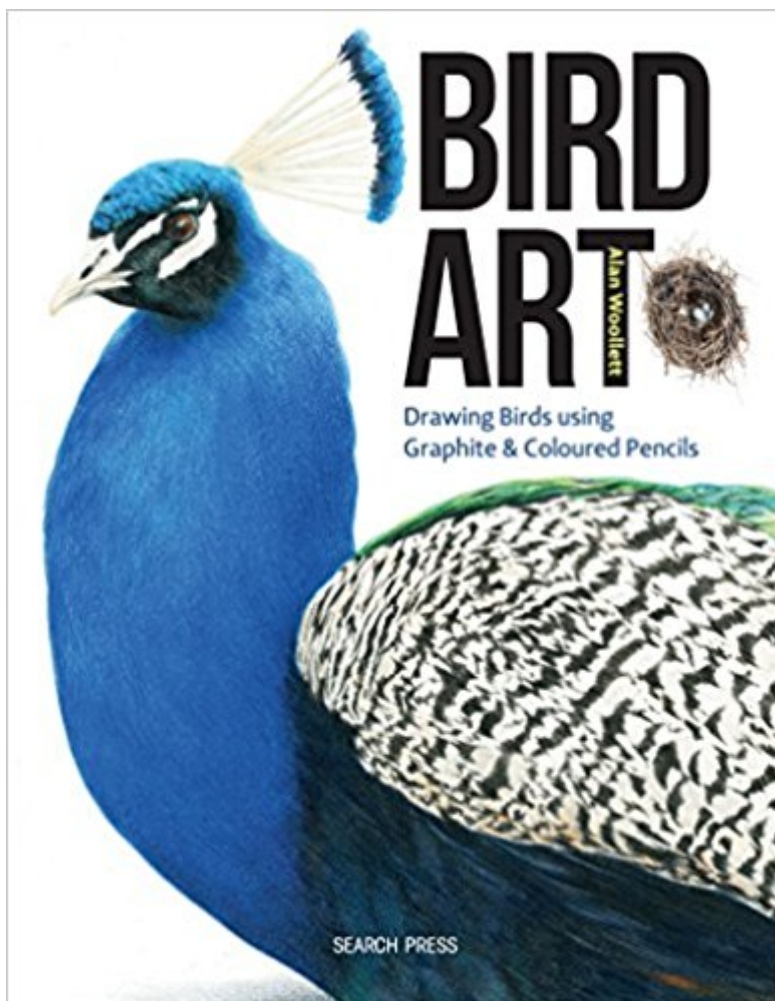


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# Bird Art: Using Graphite And Coloured Pencils



## Synopsis

Few creatures symbolize the beauty of the natural world better than birds, while their delicacy, poise and power combine to create irresistible subject for the artist. More than a teaching guide, the book is a sumptuous well of ideas and inspiration that covers everything from observing birds in the wild to photography, composition and setting. Award-winning artist Alan Woollett shows you the techniques, materials and compositional skills you need to create your own stunning realistic bird artwork using graphite and colored pencils.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

May 2017 In Bird Art Alan Woollett shows us how to create stunning bird portraits using graphite and coloured pencils. From conception to finished painting, Alan explains how to use sketchbooks and camera to produce reference material, how to use materials and techniques to create those all-important textures of feather and beak, and how to set the subject within an appropriate context. Step-by-step demonstrations are included to get you started and Alan's remarkable drawings provide all the inspiration you'll need to continue on your way. \* [yarnsandfabrics.co.uk](http://yarnsandfabrics.co.uk) \* This is not, I think it's fair to say, for the faint-hearted. Birds are a challenge to paint at the best of times, but in this detail, you need absolute confidence with your materials and techniques. If you're up for it, however, this guide will satisfy the most demanding exponent. If you think of the difference between basic flower painting and botanical illustration, you'll get the idea of what's involved. Back when I was selling books, I was always surprised by how well this kind of thing did, so I think there's a solid

market. The medium used is graphite and coloured pencils, which are capable of great subtlety of shading and record fine detail readily. The book has, as you'd expect, plenty of step-by-step demonstrations, but the way they're incorporated into the overall instruction is interesting. Rather than an introductory section on materials and techniques that is separate from the main work, Alan plunges pretty much straight in. There's no real "basic" section, but rather considerations of composition, colour, structure and the overall shape of the finished work: "leaving space" is some of the soundest advice here. There are more words in this than you sometimes get in instructional books, but also plenty of illustrations and this betokens the fact that Alan is under no illusions about the magnitude of the task he has set himself. Although I said that this is not a book for the beginner, he doesn't short-change the student and explains both the technical and ornithological considerations absolutely as much as is necessary. This is a major work and Alan carries it through rather magnificently. \* Artbookreview.net \* If you want to learn how to draw birds - in graphite or coloured pencils - then 'Bird Art' a new book by renowned bird artist Alan Woollett, was designed for you! One of the well known 'secrets' of wildlife art is that birds sell fast! Twitchers not only like to 'collect' birds via their binoculars, they also like to have birds on the walls in their homes. This may well be the reason why more than a few artists have dedicated themselves to drawing and painting birds - and all the ones I know are also fabulous artists too! Most paint and a few draw. One such bird artist - who draws in graphite and coloured pencil - is Alan Woollett. Alan wins awards for his bird art; has his drawings selected for international exhibitions of bird art; teaches internationally, and even manages to sell his drawings before he's even finished them. In other words, he knows a few things about how to draw birds! Alan has an amazing talent for making a very striking image. I suspect this talent has been hard won. He lives near Maidstone and trained at the Kent Institute of Art and Design and has been a professional artist for a long time. He's always focused on wildlife art and for the last few years has been drawing in his studio at the bottom of his garden. Latterly he's also been writing his new book about how to draw birds. This is as much about Composition and Colour as it is about the overall approach from beginning to end that he uses and the stages of his drawing process. Full review:

<https://makingamark.blogspot.co.uk/2017/04/review-bird-art-by-alan-woollett.html> \* Making a Mark \* Capturing wildlife in art is a popular choice for primers, but this one has a difference because it is not dealing with paint but pencils. If you associate graphite pencils with sketching and colored pencils with children then the illustrations in this book will soon show you what both are capable of. Colored pencils have truly come of age and are hugely in style right now due to the popularity of adult coloring books. There is room on the market for a book showing the beginning artist (or

colorist) how to get the best out of budget and mid-priced pencils but this book does not deal with these. This is a book for those who own the artist's quality pencils rather than the cheaper alternatives, and they certainly fooled me as I thought the image on the cover was painted! You would never guess that pencils were the media for these wonderful, lifelike works of art but they are and this book shows you how to get the best out of them. You can expect all the usual sections you find in this type of book: what to buy, how to use it, composition, color, working from photographs etc plus plenty of facts about pencils and why they have been chosen. There are six projects to work through and are all helpful in building up a repertoire of pencil knowledge and experience. This artist works by drawing a sketch on cheap paper then transferring it with tracing paper to the chosen surface. Then the picture is built up gradually area by area. If you are total beginner and want to learn basic drawing skills this book is not for you; it is more aimed at artists who want to branch out into working with pencils and depicting birds in particular. These are very detailed, highly professional pieces of work which would be daunting for any beginner but ideal for the intermediate artist and a real challenge. Projects have mostly written steps with some staged photographs but not as many as in one of the more basic art primers. Depict a merlin, geese, magpie, arctic terns and a gray heron and if your skills are up to it you will have a picture anybody would be proud of. \* myshelf.com \* On being asked to review a book on Bird Art, I immediately thought of flicking through pages showing the usual recipe of circles and shapes gradually interlinked by a myriad of lines to create a bird's profile, with stuck-on beaks and feet. I was pleasantly surprised to find a book that was more based on the techniques of the medium than the image itself. 'Bird Art' is split into 3 main sections; firstly the introduction, comprising an insight into materials and watching birds; secondly general chapters on creating a drawing, dealing with composition, colours, texture etc.; and thirdly 'workshops/ tutorials'. The level of information in each section was concise and to the point. I found the section on materials very useful as the author specifically named the manufacturers of the various pencils that he used and left the reader with no doubt about the quality of the materials that were necessary. The old adage of 'a bad workman blaming his tools' is only half true when it comes to illustration, as using good quality materials and papers does have an impact on the final outcome. The introduction section touched on all aspects from birdwatching equipment, photography, and watching birds, to the importance of sketchbooks and making notes as you observe. The 'Creating a drawing' section was very informative both for the novice and more accomplished artist. It covers certain pitfalls that can be found in many finished art works such as making sure your subject is in scale with its surroundings and, if shown with prey or food, to make sure the subject actually eats what is shown. I particularly like the inclusion of the 'key questions' summary box in the composition

chapter, which is a great resume of the key issues of that chapter. It would have been great to have more of these throughout the chapters to give precise reminders of certain important points. The chapters covering the use of photographs as reference material were well written and very useful. The practice of recomposing an image on a reference photograph is not touched upon in many other books and it was good to see a worked example with the author's simple and precise explanation as to why he changed the original composition. Each tutorial consists of three stages. 'Stage 1 - The initial drawing' gives a very detailed insight into the preliminary drawing, even down to the grade of pencils used to transfer the image to the finished drawing sheet. I found all the sections sufficiently detailed that even the novice reader wouldn't have to stop and pause to work out the steps or try to figure out how something was achieved. 'Stage 2 - Creating an order of work' was the author's own way of planning the way he would tackle the artwork, though he does accept that this probably varies from artist to artist. 'Stage 3 - Mark making' gives a numbered guide to putting the colour on the paper and building up the finished drawing, featuring quality close-up photographs of various areas of the picture. 'Stage 4 - Completion' shows the finished artwork. I would have liked to see a mount on some of the completed artworks as I wasn't always sure whether we were seeing the entire image or whether the edges of the sheet had been cropped. In summary this book is not just for people who would like to draw birds. The techniques shown would benefit any person wishing to master coloured pencils. As an illustrator myself I started to read this book as a reviewer but after several pages was consumed, particularly in the workshop section, as to the artist's method and technique in creating a finished image. My only criticism is a small one, which is that I would have liked to see more of the summary boxes which appear in the chapter on Composition. The insight into composition, use of photographs, and creating the final image could be used for any medium. This is an excellent book all round, and relevant to the use of pencils for many subjects - not just birds. The final sections or tutorials were very informative. It was very comforting to me to see that I am doing things right as many of the techniques used to compose the pictures are ones I use myself, especially the use of overlays! The use of close-up detailed photographs to show certain points was useful, particularly as they also included the artist's hand and pencil for scale. Other pluses in these sections were the materials list for each drawing and the odd tip box next to the close up photographs. The tutorials are split into useful sections starting with the reference material, which was different from chapter to chapter, some multiple photos and some a single photo reference. \* Jackson's Art \* May 2017 Just as coloured pencils are ideal for capturing fine detail in botanical illustration, so it is with the complexities of birds and feathers. This is not, it should be said, an introduction. I'd go so far, in fact, to say that it's more of a masterclass. You need

to be pretty committed to your subject and also confident with your tools and techniques, to make the most of it. If you are, though, you'll find much to enjoy here and little to regret the lack of. It's about as thorough as it gets and Alan's explanations are patient and comprehensive. There's a good mix of species from domestic to exotic and in size from a sparrow to a goose. Alan also looks at settings, so that each painting includes its main subject in its proper habitat, which can be a simple bare branch or the camouflage of undergrowth, Although there is a complex subject, and one take seriously, Alan is breaks the instruction down into manageable stages and the result is a book that you can learn a great deal from, as well as simply admire for itself. \* SAA Paint \* Summer 2017 This is not a book, for the beginner, and perhaps not even for the faint hearted. Alan Woollet's work is as precise and accurate in its detail as that of the botanical illustrator, a fact reflected in the choice of medium, graphite and coloured pencil. The instruction, however, is as thorough as the work itself and you shouldn't have to worry about truncated explanations or missing stages. The first half of the book is taken up with explanations of methods and ways of tackling form, structure, features and feathers. The rest is a series of full scale demonstrations of familiar species that bring everything nicely together. \* The Artist \*

Since childhood, Alan Woollett has drawn inspiration from the natural world, drawing and painting the birds and animals he saw around him. After graduating from the Kent Institute of Art and Design, Alan has concentrated on wildlife art. A member of The Wildlife Art Society, Alan regularly exhibits around the UK, including with the Society of Wildlife Artists. He has won a number of prestigious awards including winner of the 'Earth's Beautiful Creatures' category in the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation's Wildlife Artist of the Year awards 2016; Bird Artist of the Year 2000, awarded by Birdwatch Magazine and had a piece selected for the prestigious Birds in Art exhibition in Wisconsin, USA, in 2011.

Great ideas for using pencils in bird art. I have put it to use already.

great drawing images showing a multitude of styles. well worth picking up if you like drawing birds.

My new "go-to" book for birds on colored pencil. Very detailed and easy to understand. I am so very glad to have ordered this book.

awesome book by the most equally awesome artist himself. must have!!

good

What a wonderful book. Great reference book and fantastic book for the price.

Wonderful artwork.

This is a nice book. It's just not what I expected.

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