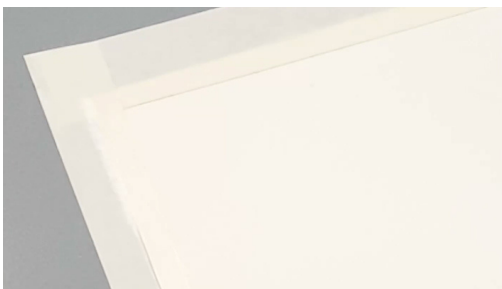




How to Create a Vibrant Koi Fish with Katy Lipscomb and Derwent

Follow along with artist Katy Lipscomb as she shares tips for drawing a butterfly koi fish with Derwent Inktense pencils, then deepening the colors with water.

HOW TO MAKE IT



Step 1

Use artist's tape to stretch your paper by taping all four edges to your work surface.



Step 2

Lightly sketch your subject using an Inktense pencil in a light color, such as Cyan or Yellow. As long as you sketch lightly, this color should be barely visible in your final drawing, so you'll want to choose something that will work well with your overall color scheme.



Step 3

When sketching, initially focus on the overall shapes instead of the small details. You'll notice that the head of the koi fish is usually the widest point and that the body tapers as you get closer to the tail, although this shift is very slight, so be careful not to exaggerate the scale too much. Use a reference photo to guide the proportions of your drawing.



Step 4

Most koi fish have two prominent fins in the front, two small fins near their tail, a dorsal fin on the back, and a tail fin. These can be added more carefully to look realistic or quickly for a more gestural look. For the tail, start by sketching the outside edges and adding gentle curving lines to emphasize their movement in the water.

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Step 4 Cont'd

The butterfly koi's tail fin is unique as it appears as thin and delicate as a piece of silk flowing in the water. You can emphasize this shape by adding graceful contour lines from the base of the body to the tips of the tail.



Step 5

Once your initial sketch is complete, incorporate additional colors as you refine your drawing. While the initial sketch is usually focused on the shape of your subject, the next stage is to develop the form by adding curving cross-contour lines. This helps to make the subject appear more three-dimensional and guides our placement of finer details like the scales, gills, eyes, and fins.



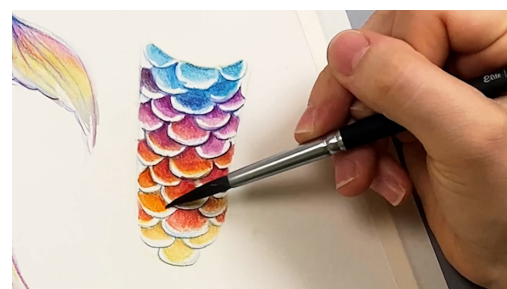
Step 6

Next, add color using the wide range of hues available with Inktense pencils. You can create a wide range of color value by using darker colors, like Purple or Navy, for the shadows and lighter colors, such as Yellow and Orange, for the highlights. In the brightest highlights, leave the white of the paper blank, such as for the tips of the scales.



Step 7

To create a rainbow effect, it's best to move along the rainbow to achieve smooth transitions. For instance, in the tail, I chose the following order: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, and Purple. This allows the tones to naturally shift from one to the next once water is added.



Step 8

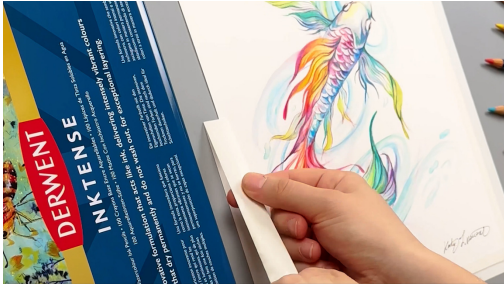
Once you have a base that establishes the koi fish's shape, form, value, and color, you can transform your drawing into a watercolor base. Simply take your brush, dip it into a cup of water, and paint over your surface. As you gently move your brush over the surface of your sketch, the water will activate the vibrant pigments of the Inktense pencils. It's best to start by working over each area only once with a minimal amount of water. This will help to prevent colors from bleeding into one another or from too much water accumulating on your surface.

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Step 9

Allow your piece to dry, and you'll be left with a stunning watercolor base which you can continue to develop with the Intense pencils. You can repeat these steps as many times as you like: Drawing, activating with water, allowing to dry, and drawing again.



Step 10

Once your piece has been developed to your liking, allow it to dry, sign with a fine-tipped pen, and then carefully remove the tape from the edges. Enjoy your new creation!

TIPS

- If you make any mistakes while the piece is dry, simply use an eraser to tidy up. If you make a mistake while your piece is wet or if you get any water drips, don't worry! You can use a dry paper towel to gently blot up the surface.
- Start by working lightly and gradually get darker and darker as you develop your piece. This allows you to better layer your colors and tones. Avoid using Black until the very end as it can muddy your hues.
- If a color seems too intense or if an area seems overly granular, burnish using the White Inktense pencil. This subdues the colors and adds a smooth finish.
- Layering multiple colors or using harder pressure adds pigment, resulting in a bold impact once water is added.