

# Soft Pastel: Bright Lions

by Kim Fjordbotten



## Materials

Soft (chalk) pastels 12/set, Mungyo Student Pastels or Holbein Artist Pastels (2 students can share)  
Dark blue Tiziano or Mi-Teintes pastel paper– cut into quarters (approx.11”x14” or 9”x12”)  
Vinyl eraser

## Goal

The purpose of this project is to encourage students to use bolder and brighter colours to create an image.

Rather than just drawing a brown lion, let's take advantage of the oranges and blues in our pastel box to express highlights and shadows. These are complimentary colours that look exciting beside each other.

## Procedure

Demonstrate the grid technique. Fold the reference image into eight or draw lines on it to divide the image.

Use a white chalk lightly to sketch the same eight divisions on the pastel paper. These reference quadrants will help drawings have the right proportions and composition.

The white lines and marks are easily smudged and will disappear during subsequent pastel workings.



Older students may choose a photo references for the lion, preferably in a 3/4 profile rather than directly front facing.



Younger students can draw half the face to match a photo. Use a front facing symmetrical image for this project. Our sample was done on orange construction paper.



**Beautiful art materials and advice to inspire creativity!**

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## Chalk Pastel Tips:

- Less is more. Let the dark paper show through the drawing marks wherever possible. Not only will the students use less pastel but they may avoid overworking their drawing.
- Try not to layer too much; dust does not stick to dust very well. Too much pastel on the paper is easily smudged.
- Let the marks of each pastel stroke represent both the colour and the texture of what you are drawing.
- Do not over-blend; let the bold colours glow.

## Procedure

1. First, use white chalk lightly to sketch the big shapes like the face area and the mane.
2. Is the lion looking slightly left or right? How can you draw this? Look at the nose. How much cheek can you see on the left side versus the right side of the nose? Look closely before you draw it.
3. Where are the ears? Are they symmetrical; is one turned or does it appear a little smaller? How does the hair grow around them? Sketch the ears and hair.
4. Where are the eyes relative to the ears and the nose? Does one look a little bigger or higher than the other? Sketch them.
5. Now add oranges and red in marks that convey the soft fur and other marks to represent the hairy mane.
6. Choose a dark blue or dark purple pastel to show the markings and shadows that define the features.
7. Add white to the chin, cheeks and eyes to define the markings there.
8. Step back from your drawing often. A pastel drawing may look finished sooner than you think when you see it from farther away. Try not to fill in the whole drawing. Keep it loose and interesting, then viewers can interpret it for themselves.



## More to See...

**Old Master Reference:** Google 'Degas' Ballerinas'. His simple, sketchy pastel marks describe texture, light, colour and motion all in simple open strokes. He also leaves a lot of the coloured paper showing through the finished work.

**Canadian Artist Reference:** David Shkolny (Edmonton AB) <http://davidshkolny.com>  
Bold colours and loose pastel marks create stunning landscapes. David teaches at The Paint Spot.