

Converting a Paint Box for Oil Pastel

by Ann Tucker

Now that warm weather is here, are you interested in doing some oil pastel plein air?



Do you have a pochade box or French easel for your oil paints but don't know how to convert it?

With a little balsa wood, glue and time, you can have that box converted and ready to go. I have a small pochade box, Guerrilla Painter's 6x8" ThumBox. I found that it was deep enough to hold 2 layers of oil pastels.





When closed, the top slide-tray can hold my color-pushers, palette knife and such. While under that are 2 pastel trays I made out of Balsa wood (no power tools required).



There is a half piece of foam at the bottom of the box to even out the floor. (The flap covering the thumb hole is great to push the pastel trays out when I'm setting up.) Each pastel tray is covered by a piece of foam. And it all fits just snug enough to hold all the oil pastels in place.

I measured the inside of the box and subtracted $\frac{1}{4}$ " to ensure the tray would fit. I cut a rectangle out of $\frac{3}{16}$ " balsa wood to these measurements. I then glued strips of balsa wood on top of this around the edge. (Foam-core and duct-tape would probably work just as nicely.) I cut out covers for each tray from sheets of thin foam. And my conversion was complete.



This set up can hold a full set of well-used Sennelier oil pastels.
I can only imagine how many oil pastels you could get to fit into the
drawer of a French Easel!