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Arizona Gourds

April updates from the desert southwest...



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Welcome to the April issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

Last month, I was really flattered to be included in an issue of the Costco magazine that was sent out to all of their executive members in the US. They did a nice article on people doing crafts as a business (although as many people have written to tell me, it's nicer to think of my gourds as "art"!)

If you are not a Costco member, you can still see the magazine online. I don't know how long the article will be available, but here is a link:
<http://www.costcoconnection.com/connection/201303#pg33>
 The article starts on page 33, and my section is on page 35.

FYI: The photo is from when I served as artist in residence at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon a few years ago - which explains the uniform shirt. The pictured gourd was made as a gift to the National Park Service, and is owned by them. It is currently on display in the Phoenix airport as part of a traveling art show.



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Update: Gourd Classes

New April Tucson offerings on the [Classes](#) page!

*Join the class updates list to receive advance notice of upcoming classes. Get the news first and have the best chance to sign up for popular classes!



[Join The Class updates List](#)

What's new on the [Arizona Gourds](#) website?

Update: Cholla Cactus Carving & Rotary Chisels

Many of you ordered a rotary chisel last month, and all of those orders have been shipped. Unfortunately, these burs are all handmade by one person, and he has been swamped by the volume of requests for this bur since the project was introduced. I hope to have more available very soon.

**For now, you can place an order, and I will ship your order complete as soon as the burs arrive.*

The Cholla cactus project is on the [Project Packets](#) page.



***ALL Amazon purchases made through site links and the search box help support Arizona Gourds and the Gourd Art Enthusiasts websites, and it costs you nothing extra!**



Gourd & Prehistoric Pottery Shard Necklaces.

These are made from gourd shards and real (legally obtained) prehistoric pottery shards from the Southwest. Each shard is wirewrapped securely onto the gourd shard, and many are embellished with copper. The



New ~ 8mm Large Hole metal beads in Silver and Gold color. The hole is large enough to accept leather cords! On the [Metals](#) page.



reverse side is attractively covered in Ultrasuede. I've signed each one along the edge. They are strung on cord for wearing. Limited to those on hand, I won't be making more of these. On the [For Sale](#) page.



New style Inlaid stone/shell earrings - These are great accents for gourd masks! Tip: Drill a small hole and fasten an "eye pin" on the gourd mask. Then you can either hang the earrings on the mask or remove them to wear yourself!

Feature - Using Colored Pencils on Gourds

I think one of the best things about working with gourds is that you can use so many different products, techniques and skills. It doesn't matter what hobbies you've tried in the past, you can use something you've learned and transfer that knowledge into gourd crafting. I bet a lot of you still have a box of colored pencils in your house - perhaps remnants from a previous project. Others have bought multiple sets of pencils from different manufacturers, looking for that perfect pencil that does just what you want on gourds. Thanks to those who shared their photos and knowledge below, hope it will encourage a few of you to dig out the pencils and give them a try.

The first pieces shown here are by Gerri Bishop of Arizona. Gerri does wonderful work, and you can see additional images on her website, [Wizard of Awes](#). Her basic directions are printed here, but there is also a PDF if you prefer to download the document and print from that.

COLORED PENCILS ON GOURD – TIPS

Cleaning: Gourd has to be clean – like wood – to take the pencils well. Scrub off mold, and sand to get all other gunk off. I use medium sandpaper (electric sander) to get the junk off, then finish with a light sanding of fine sandpaper. If you woodburn, sand again when finished to remove greasy substances and any detritus...then scrub well with alcohol.

Pencils: Lots of pencils will work, but they need to be water soluble and light fast. Beginner? Use Prismacolor. These are less expensive, and let you try the medium without spending a lot. If you decide you like this process and want to expand, the more expensive pencils (but wonderful) are made by Caran d'Ache, which has 180 colors. Derwent also makes some nice pencils, but stay away from the leads. Don't bother with Rembrandt brand. My personal favorites: Caran d'Ache watercolor pencils, Caran d' Ache Neo Color artist crayons, Derwent Inktense pencils. You can get sets of all of these, but the least expensive way is to buy the colors you really need.

Burnisher: Also called a "stump" or "tortillon".

To start you'll need: Clean gourd, pencils, burnishers, X-Acto knife (removes excess pencil in lines), alcohol or baby wipes (removes wrong colors and pencil marks) and Fixative spray

Two secrets to success with pencils on gourds: 1. Patience. If something doesn't work, try something else. 2. Several different types of pencils... watercolor, oil, lead, Inktense, Neo Colors...some gourds work well with one kind but not another, and some areas of the same gourd will do better with different types of pencils. Experimentation is the key.

Shading: Same as acrylic painting – dark to light, burnishing well with each additional color to blend. If you don't like the results, use fixative and try again. If that doesn't work, you may want to lightly sand and start again.

If you don't like the colors, alcohol will take off a lot, but not all. Then go over with another color. You can also spray with a light coat of fixative before adding another color. NOTE: INTENSE DOES NOT COME OFF but you can spray with fixative and go over it.

Colors that don't work well are pale colors...yellows, light greens, pinks, light blues, very light lilacs and whites. If it's a pastel color, the brown gourd is going to give you some challenge. Try having pencils in "lead" of these shades. Put a layer of the lead color down first, then add another layer of the creamier pencils. If needed, spray with fixative and add a 3rd layer to get what you want. You can use the pastels...it's just more effort to get them to work. Can't get the burnisher to remove all the colored pencil lines? Add a little of the Neo Color crayon and



[BishopCOLORED PENCILS ON GOURD.doc](#)



rub it in.

Colors that can bleed...deep violets, intense blues. Use a light fixative spray to set them before you do a heavy spray of anything else. Found a spot of gunk you missed with the sander? X-Acto knife it off carefully. No problem.

Pencil lines from a pattern will show through light colors and through Ink-tense colors. Sand them off or use the alcohol or baby wipes. If you missed some and notice them coming through the pencil, use the fixative spray and go over the spot with color again.

Any rules about shading that apply to acrylics also apply to colored pencils on gourds. Most of the books I have learned from were books about painting and shading with acrylics.



The next pieces were done by Hellen Martin of Texas.

Colored Pencil Tips from Hellen Martin:

Prismacolor soft thick lead pencils are my personal choice. I will use their Verithin pencils to clean up my lines, and their watercolor pencils to fill in areas that the soft pencils didn't fill. Besides being excellent pencils, you can purchase pencils individually.

Using colored pencils on gourds is a challenge because of their color, grooves, dark spots, bumps and the list just goes on and on. Having the pencils adhere to a gourd is a challenge all its own. A product made by Golden Artist Colors, Inc, called Golden Gesso and Gourds - Acrylic Ground for Pastels is a gift from Heaven to solve that problem. Mix it according to jar instructions and lightly paint it onto the area where you will be applying the pencils. It will leave a sandy texture which helps the pencil adhere to the gourd. Never apply your colors with pressure! Lightly apply your color in a small circular motion and keep your pencils sharp. This will give you better coverage and fill the dents and grooves. Always lightly apply your shaded colors first. This is the opposite of acrylic/oil painters! You will apply your other colors over your shaded colors. Periodically, spray your piece with a workable fixative for colored pencils. This will keep your work from rubbing off.

Once you have your piece colored, use Prismacolor's colorless pencil to blend the colors. Check your piece to make sure the area colored is fully covered and add more color if needed. To give your piece a painted appearance, pat on Low Odor Mineral Spirits with a #2 or #4 filbert brush. You don't want your brush too wet because it could remove all your hard work. Remove most of the spirits from your brush by wiping it across a paper towel. Work slowly by lightly patting it on your work to blend the colors. Surprise! Now if you removed too much color, you have to start over by reapplying the gesso and colors.

When you are done, spray with a color pencil/pastel final fixative spray and enjoy you!





Sickles Colored Pencils.pdf



Phyllis Sickles of Arizona also uses colored pencils on many of her pieces. You can see more of her pieces on her [Visions on Gourds website](#).

Colored Pencils Tips by Phyllis Sickles

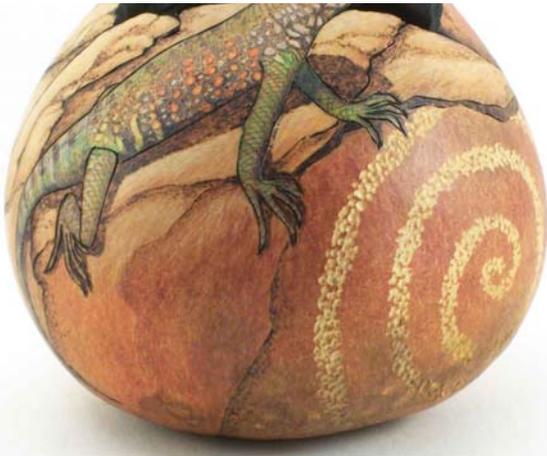
There are both wax and oil based pencils which are compatible with each other. Most of the pencils available at craft stores are wax based pencils. Those that I have used are Prismacolor, Derwent Studio, and Caran D'Ache Luminance. After doing a 3 month sunlight test, I found the less expensive Prismacolor to hold the color as well as the more expensive Caran D'Ache and have the same feel when using them. I would not recommend Derwent. The color faded quickly. The lead was also harder, was not as creamy and did not cover as well. I know there are Derwent pencils that are softer but I still suspect that the color would fade.

Some of the products that are used with pencils

1. Odorless mineral spirits – This is a solvent that speeds the colored pencil painting process and eliminates pencil strokes. It can be used with both wax and oil based pencils. It dries quickly and leaves no yellow residue.
2. Weber Turpenoid – A thin colorless refined turpentine substitute which evaporates quickly and leaves no residue.
3. X-Acto Knife – I used the knife to scrape away (erase) color along with sandpaper.
4. Pencil Extender – This is used when the pencil gets too short to hold or sharpen. It extends the life of the pencil.
5. Workable Fixative – When the surface is completely filled with the pencil medium, applying a spray coating of workable fixative will allow you to apply 2-3 additional layers of colored pencil. This will also allow you to lighten or darken an area that is just too saturated with color.
6. Colorless Blender – Prismacolor makes this product. It contains the same binding materials as the main pencil lines but has no pigment. It is used to blend colors.
7. Pencil Sharpener – Make sure to keep graphite pencils around because sharpening colored pencils can cause a wax buildup. Sharpening graphite pencils will clean and lubricate your sharpener.
8. A Soft Brush – Used to clean away colored pencil crumbs. If they are brushed away with your hand, marks can appear where they are not wanted.
9. Ground Gesso – It can be sprayed on the gourd to give it a white background and make the gourd surface work more like paper. The pencil coverage is quite different than coloring the raw gourd.

Working with colored pencils by using the layering method

Begin with light colors with light pressure. Use fine strokes that are close together for a smooth, even coverage. Continue layering colors going with stronger pressure in the medium and dark areas. Deepen the colors with darker hues. Try not to use black to darken an area because it has a tendency to deaden the color. Use a white pencil to blend the other layers. This will lighten your initial colors. At this time you could use the colorless blender to blend your colors instead of white. That would keep the color close to what you intended. After heavy working with wax-based colored pencils, the wax



has a tendency to build up creating a milk like film called a "wax bloom". This can be fixed by gently wiping the surface with a tissue and then spraying with a workable fixative.

Working with colored pencils by using the fusing color method

This is a technique in which you apply color in a smooth manner with stokes fairly close together. Add solvent with a cotton pad or QTip evenly by using a gentle tapping motion to dissolve the pencil strokes. When it is dry, another layer of color can be added if desired.

After trying this technique on my gourd piece, I found dipping the tip of the colored pencil in the solvent and then coloring the gourd to work better. The Q-Tip had a tendency to pull the color off of the gourd surface.

Creating Highlights

In order to obtain a bright highlight on an object, add white only to the area and then continue with coloring the rest of the object. Add white to the main color, blending it into the white highlight. White can have the tendency to dull the color and will not create a stark white when used on another color because it is also translucent.

Erasing Colored Pencil

You might read that colored pencil can be removed by pressing tape on the surface and rubbing the back with a ball point pen. This did not work on my gourd piece. I can see where it would work on paper but not the hard surface of a gourd. I think the only way to remove color is by using the X-Acto knife. An X-Acto knife can be used to scrape off pigment in order to add highlights or remove a mistake. Various highlights can be rendered including lines against dark backgrounds, cracks, and highlights on hair and fur. Since the gourd surface would then show, a light color can be added to these scraped spots. I found that there was a coating of wax left on the gourd and didn't allow the highlight color to cover well. By gently sanding the area after scraping, I was then able to cover the highlight.

Combining Pencils with Other Products

Colored pencils are versatile and can be combined with wet mediums such as acrylic washes, water color, inks and dyes. They will go over most wet mediums once they are dry. The exception is acrylics when they are applied thickly. Colored pencils can also be used with metal leafing, Rub and Buff and other metallic finishes other than thickly painted metallic acrylics. Using the colored pencils first and then other products over them does not always work. The paint just bubbled up and I suspect inks and dyes might also.

Preserving Colored Pencils

Spray work with Krylon UV-Resistant clear acrylic coating to protect it from fading. Even though it is a matte finish, it has a satin appearance. This can be corrected by spraying it with Krylon Matte Finish once it is dry.



Mary Reed of California did this moth gourd using Prismacolor Sanford and Derwent studio color pencils.





Ellen Messina of North Carolina used prismacolor pencils and lots of burnishing on this gourd. The outline was wood



Marty McCarter of Illinois did these two gourds with Prismacolor (soft & hard) colored pencils. She used many layers of shades of colors, and used Fixatif to set the layers.

"Gourd song Blue" has names of songs with blue in the title and they are listed around the gourd face - Blue



Connie Worrell of Florida writes: Some people add color to their gourds with paint, I enjoy using colored pencils. The cannonball gourd rattle (below) was wood burned and then colored with Walnut Hollow oil pencils. This brand really absorbs into the gourd and covers very well, but unfortunately, they have been discontinued by the company. I recently purchased a 24 set of Lyra Rembrandt Polycolor pencils. They do not cover as well as the Walnut Hollow brand even after two coats. I usually color the first coat, rub it in with the tip of a toothpick or my finger, and then apply another coat or two. After all color has been added, I spray it lightly with several coats of workable fixative. When dry, I apply several coats of Minwax water based Polycrylic Protective coating either by brush or by dipping smaller gourds in a quart jar and then hanging them to dry. Drips are removed from the bottom with a cotton swab after about 30 minutes.

Julia Aubrey of California used Inktense Watercolor pencils on this piece.



Sioux Westberry-Kaufman of Arizona used Prismacolor pencils for this bowl.



<p>Prismacolor Pencils</p>				
	<p>Clear Gesso</p>	<p>Fixative</p>	<p>Blending Pencils</p>	
<p>Inktense Watercolor Pencils</p>				
	<p>Stumps and Tortillons</p>	<p>Colored Pencil Sharpener</p>		

Here are some of the products mentioned by the different artists. If you visit any one of these links, you will see other choices such as smaller or larger sizes, additional brands, etc.

You can also see more gourds done with colored pencils by visiting the Gourd Art Enthusiasts website. Simply search the photo section for "colored pencils" and you will find plenty of examples.

Reader's Mailbox
 I am always looking for ideas I can incorporate into my wood turning efforts. Thank you for allowing me to use some of your ideas. Here is a photo of a cherry vase that I turned. The top was cut at an angle and then I used the cholla cactus "bones" along the edge. This vase is about 4" tall and lots of lessons were learned with this experimental piece. I will definitely incorporate your Cholla Cactus technique into future wood turnings. Thanks again for sharing your expertise with those of us that need tons of inspiration and ideas.
Alan Hallum



Reader's Mailbox
 Two years after taking your classes in Idaho, I finally finished two gourds using the techniques you taught. I have been working on shards and practicing, but finally got up the nerve to finish up two of them! They each won first place in the novice division at the Idaho Artistry in Wood show and the butterfly gourd won Best of Division. Thank you for sharing your talents to help make me successful.
 Thanks so much for your classes, the Arizona Gourds website for supplies, and the Gourd Art Enthusiasts website!
Marlies Schmitt - Idaho





The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) continues to grow! We have **about 3175 members**, with gourd enthusiasts from all over the world! Membership is free and easy. The site also has state groups, event listings, a Q&A forum and a chat feature if you need an quick answer to a gourdng question!

[Check out our two GAE T-Shirt designs !](#)

"Like" Arizona Gourds on Facebook to get special offers, up to the minute news about new products and classes, and other gourdng updates. (Just a note - I don't add gourd friends on my personal page, I save that for family and non-gourdng friends.)



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Tip of the Month - Sharing Photos

It's difficult for most people to send large photographs to friends or for publication in newsletters or magazines. Many email programs just don't handle large files well, and you internet provider may restrict the sizes of the files you may send or receive via email. Also, when photos are embedded in an email or a PDF, they are difficult to use. I get a lot of photos for the newsletter or for the AGS gourd crafting contest, and many of them are almost unusable because they are so small or in a strange format.

While submitting photos for a recent publication, I found out about a great free program that allows you to share photos easily. You simply load them on the site, and the person on the other end is able to view them and download them, no matter how large the file. The site is called "We Transfer" and the address is <https://www.wetransfer.com/>

When you use this website, you can send up to 2 gigabites of photos. You include the email address where you want them sent, and the recipient will get an email telling them where to download or see the photos. It's pretty easy to do both for the sender and the recipient, and the photos are much better quality when they are sent full size.

Featured Gourd of the Month:

"Colored Pencil Mini"

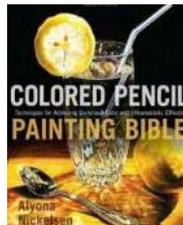
This is a very small gourd vase, made from the top part of a bottle gourd. This is my only colored pencil attempt on a gourd - but it was fun and I hope to do more!



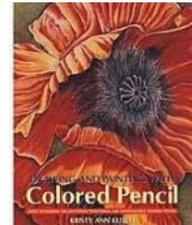
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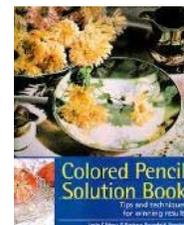
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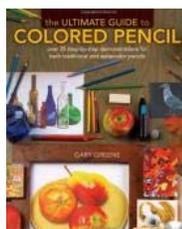
[Colored Pencil Painting Bible](#)



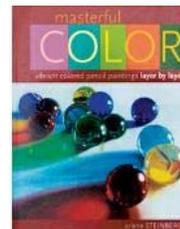
[Drawing and Painting with Colored Pencil](#)



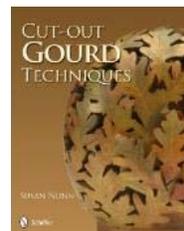
[Colored Pencil Solution Book](#)



[The Ultimate Guide to Colored Pencil](#)



[Masterful Color](#)



[Cut Out Gourd Techniques](#)

I personally own the Colored Pencil Painting Bible and think it's a really great addition to my bookshelf. The other colored pencil books all come very highly rated. You can click on each book to read additional reviews.

Cut Out Gourd Techniques is available in May. (Preorder from Amazon and it will be shipped as soon as it is available.)

pass the newsletter link along to your friends.

<http://www.arizonagourds.com/April2013.html>

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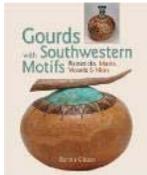
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If your email address changes, just sign up again with your new address - no need to email me the change, as I purge non-working addresses monthly.



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(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

Gourds with Southwestern Motifs by Bonnie Gibson

The hardcover edition is now out of print. This is the paperback version of my "Gourds" book.

All copies I sell are autographed.

*Want to see my listing of top gourd books? Here is my ["Listmania" listing on Amazon](#)



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