

CHARCOAL/CARBON DUST TECHNIQUE AND TOOLS

By Christine Elder / www.ChristineElder.com

The carbon dust technique is one of my favorites for creating highly detailed and realistic drawings. It was popularized in the early 1900s by medical illustrator Max Brodel, the first director of the Department of Art as Applied to Medicine at Johns Hopkins University.

Suggested Materials for this technique

- Light sketching pencil (like a 2H).
- Fine-tipped permanent ink pen.
- Willow charcoal sticks or charcoal/graphite pencils (such as General's carbon sketch pencil or Wolff carbon pencil).
- Opaque white media such as pencils, pastels, pens.
- Emery board/nail file or preferably ultra fine-grained sandpaper sheet (like 600 grit).
- Erasers – preferably a fine-tipped eraser pencil in pencil form like the Tombow mono zero eraser and/or the Tombow mono sand eraser.
- Blending stomp – preferably in small and medium sizes.
- Soft watercolor brush or makeup brush for gently brushing away errant dust.
- Brushes in a variety of sizes and styles for applying and blending the carbon/charcoal dust.
- Scrap paper for protecting your drawing from the oily palm of your hand (wash your hands thoroughly before beginning your carbon dust drawing).
- Handout (value scale and viewfinder template) that you can download at bottom of the page.

