

EXPERIMENTAL MARK-MAKING

Being adventurous with different techniques and media will add interest and vitality to your work. Disposable pens can be slipped into your pocket for outdoor sketches, whereas sticks and quills dipped in ink are perhaps more suited for studio work where you can spread out your materials over

a table top. As biros and felt tip pens aren't traditional fine art materials, they have the advantage that they are easy to use in a casual way. Quills have an honourable history in art, and as they are capable of making thick and thin marks they are very expressive.

A biro is good for making quick sketches and spontaneous drawings. It skims across the paper, making fluid marks, and as it is such a familiar everyday tool there is no anxiety about using it.



I forgot to take any brushes to the shore with me so I picked up a quill on the beach, sharpened the end and drew with that. I used the feathery end to brush loose colour on. You can push and pull a quill in all directions, giving splattery marks that are full of character.



I drew this bridge with its backdrop of trees using sticks, twigs and cotton buds to exploit all the different marks they would make.



This swift sketch of a sunlit square in Barcelona was drawn with felt tip pens, which are ideal for describing extremes of tone. As it is not possible to vary the line of one pen by pressing harder or more softly I always carry three, with fine, medium and large tips. Remember though that they are not lightfast and so are only suitable for sketchbook work.