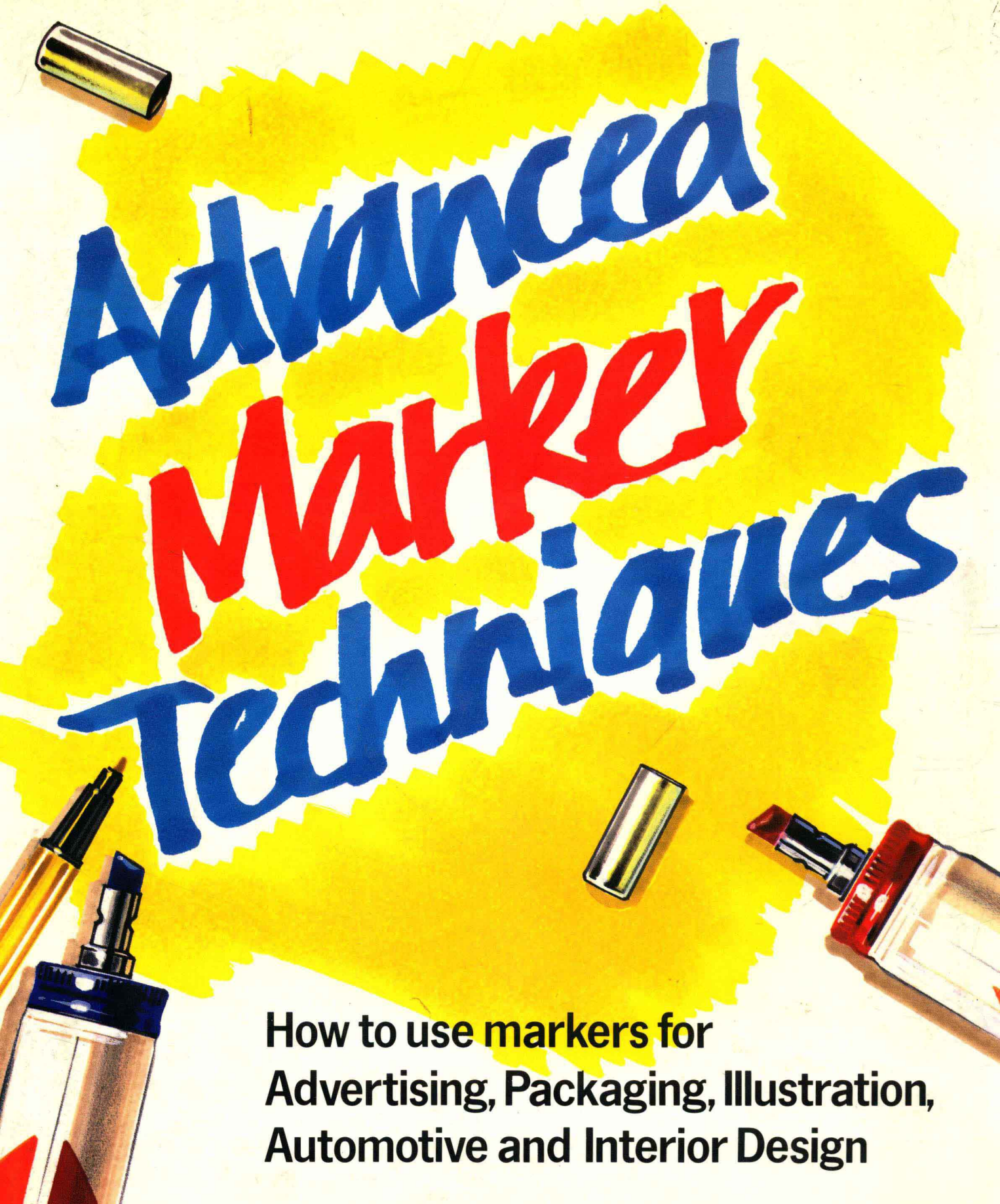
Dick Powell and Patricia Monahan

# Advanced Marker Techniques



How to use markers for Advertising, Packaging, Illustration, Automotive and Interior Design

# Advanced Marker Techniques

Dick Powell and Patricia Monahan

Macdonald Orbis

A Macdonald Orbis book

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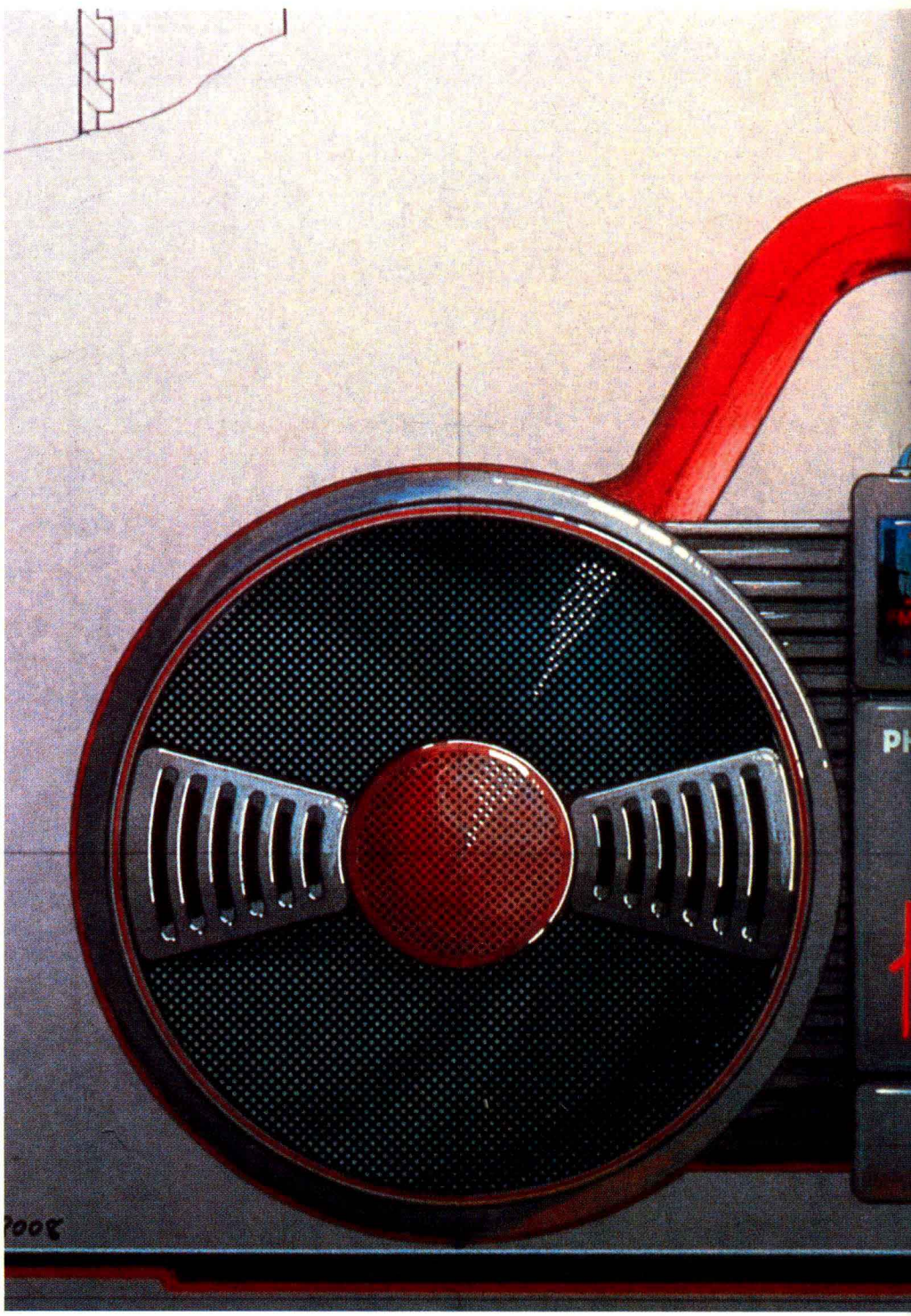
# Introduction

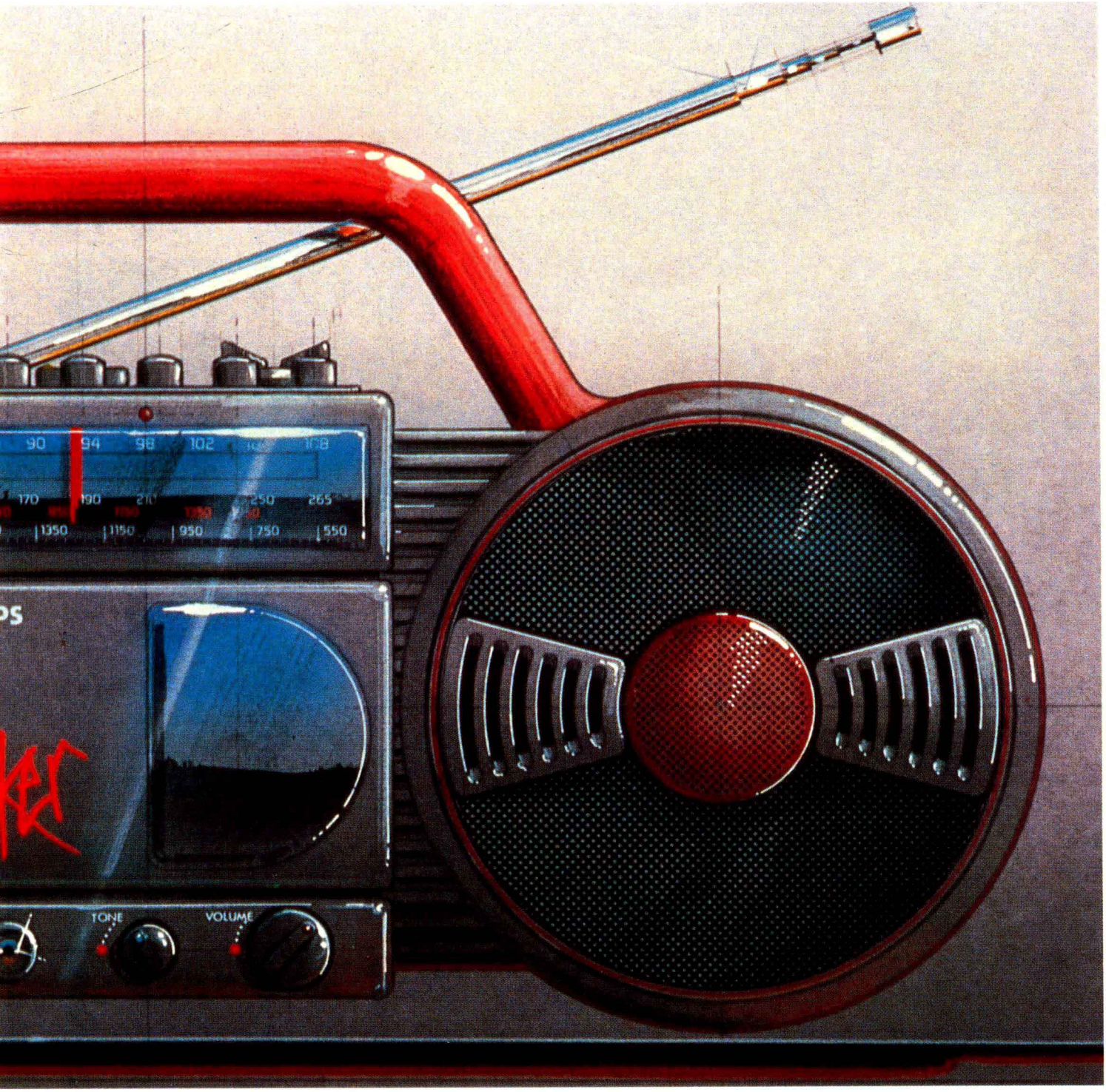
The origins of the humble marker go back a long way; indeed the first markers, made from bamboo and a felt nib, originated in Japan many years ago. The first commercial marker, however, was not launched until the mid sixties. It was blotchy and unpredictable, but offered two advantages that no other media of that era could match – a fast drying time, and convenience.

Design Studio: Philips C.I.D, Eindhoven

**This rendering of a radio design is typical of the output of industrial design studios. It is drawn in side elevation so that dimensional accuracy and scale can be maintained, and the detail on which such a drawing depends can be quickly put in using rulers, circle guides and so on. Many different media, such as pastels and crayons, have been used over the basic marker work to achieve more subtle modelling of the forms and details, and gouache has been used for the final highlights.**



Back in the sixties, the idea of manufacturing 150 different colours, each in its own small 6cc bottle which would stand only a few minutes of continuous use, seemed utterly ridiculous when compared to a palette of gouache. Now of course, there are hundreds of different brands, colours and types of marker for working on different surfaces and for producing different effects. The basic advantages remain: the main one is the fast drying time that allows the user to overlay colours immediately, without the intermixing common to other media (such as paint), so that full-colour visuals can be produced without the need for extensive preparation. Another benefit of markers is that they work best on lightweight semi-transparent papers which allow extensive use of underlays, so that paper stretching and tracing down are unnecessary. Markers have a third plus factor: familiarity with a particular brand gives the artist a colour memory that makes selection and use quick and easy. For these reasons the marker has come to dominate much of the graphics business, completely surplanting traditional media for many applications. When it first arrived, however, it

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demanded a new approach, and so artists and designers had to alter their styles and develop new techniques to take full advantage of it. These were hard-won skills, and for anyone, student or professional, who is inexperienced with markers, it is a daunting task to acquire them by trial and error and it can take a long time. This book will not help you to draw, and it will not turn you into an accomplished marker artist, but, by showing some of the basic techniques and tricks of the trade alongside fine examples of marker renderings, it can help you move up that learning curve a bit faster.

Drawing is absolutely fundamental to marker rendering (or any kind of visualizing for that matter), and without this skill the marker is as limited as any other colouring media. This book assumes that you can draw reasonably well and that you are used to drawing from life, from memory, or from reference material. From such a base it will help the beginner acquire marker rendering skills, and it should offer the more experienced a useful insight into how others achieve different finishes and effects. The book starts with a guide to the most common materials used by the marker artist. This is followed by two chapters that are devoted to practical stage-by-stage examples showing how drawings are created, and which include favoured techniques developed by individual artists and designers. The remaining eight chapters are devoted to specific applications. Each of these chapters gives numerous examples of drawings, from roughs and scamps through to finished artwork and illustrations, with a description of how they were done. These examples can be analysed for their technique and learned from, but more importantly, they are a source of inspiration, both for the beginner and for the experienced professional.

Artist: Paul Langford

**This punchy image (right), is deliberately simplified so that the idea can be put across to the client quickly and efficiently. The artist has used the marker with absolute confidence and it shows! This boldness of approach is vital for producing slick, but informative, loose visuals.**

Design Studio: The Design House
Artist: Nigel Langford

**A nice loose visual (below), with a fluid sketchy feel to it. The designer has obtained a good impression of the interior with the minimum of marks on the paper; note especially how the white of the paper is allowed to show through so that the drawing looks fresh rather than overworked.**

# 1 Materials

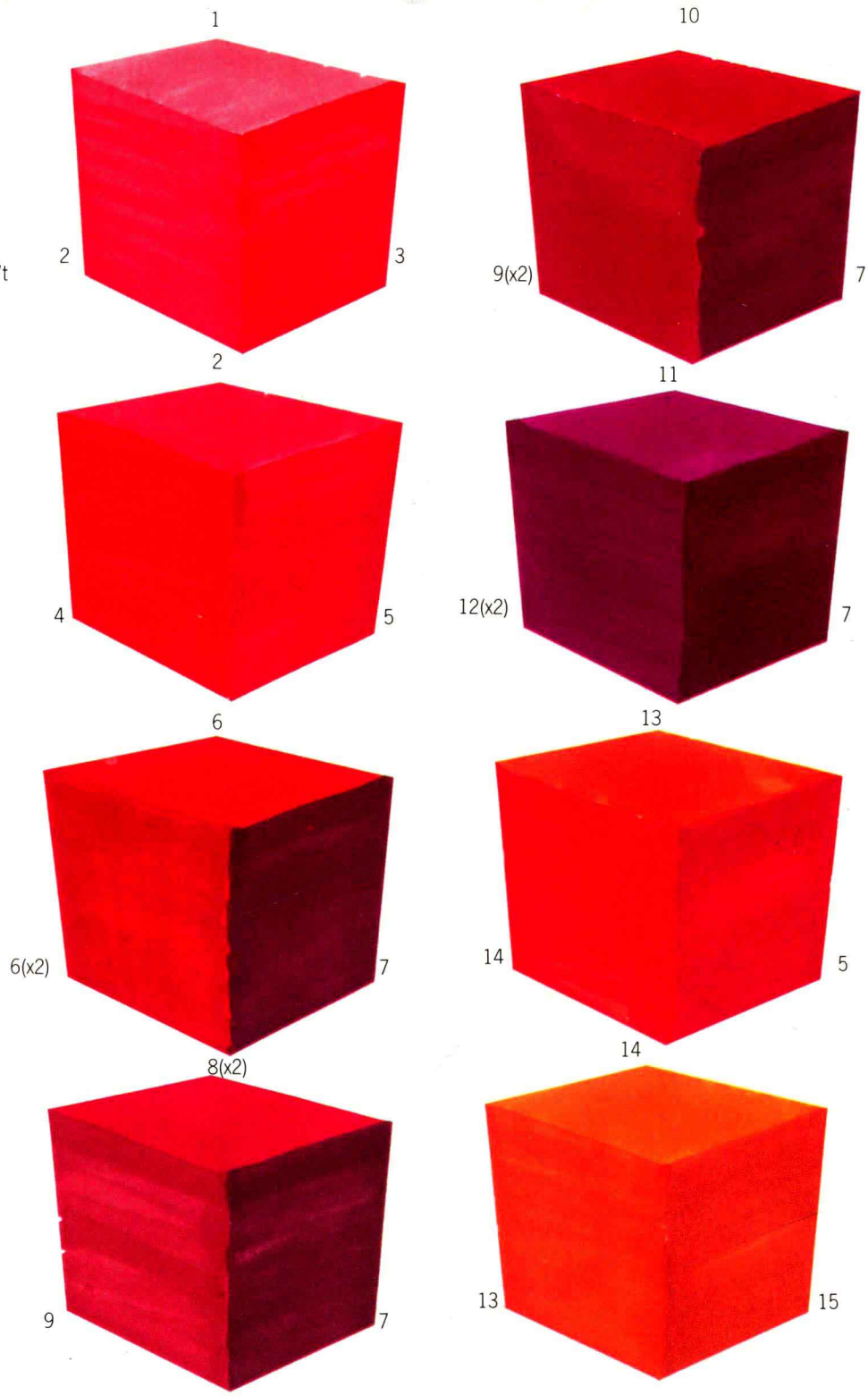
There is a bewildering choice of markers available and every artist has a preference for a particular product. Having established that one works well and suits his or her particular style, the artist will stay with it and avoid alternative brands which might introduce a new, unforeseen effect at the wrong moment. Seasoned artists need no advice on what to use, but for the newcomer it is often difficult to know what to buy. It may seem obvious to say so, but do buy the best available and learn how to look after your materials. What follows is a personal appraisal of currently available materials, how they work and what to look out for.

The ever-popular Magic Marker range gave its name to the technique and is now almost generic. Despite its stubby unergonomic shape it still has many advantages over long, thin rivals: each colour has an easy-to-remember name; they stand upright for fast, easy colour selection and do not roll off the drawing board; and the colours are totally consistent throughout the product life and from one marker to another. For those who can't get used to the shape, they are now available in long, thin barrels.

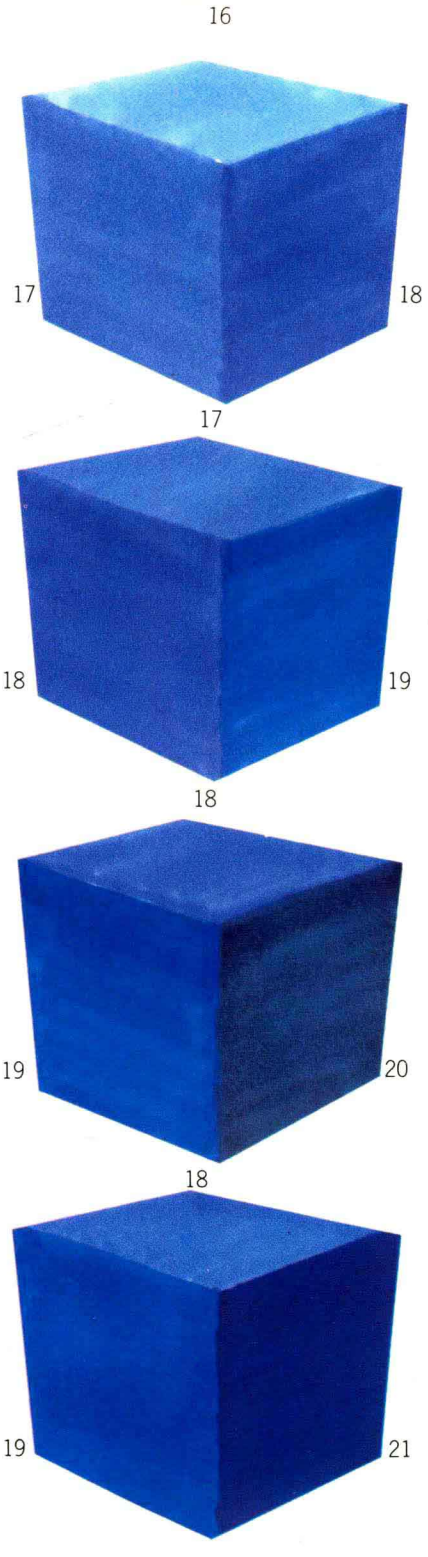
### Marker range and tonal rendering

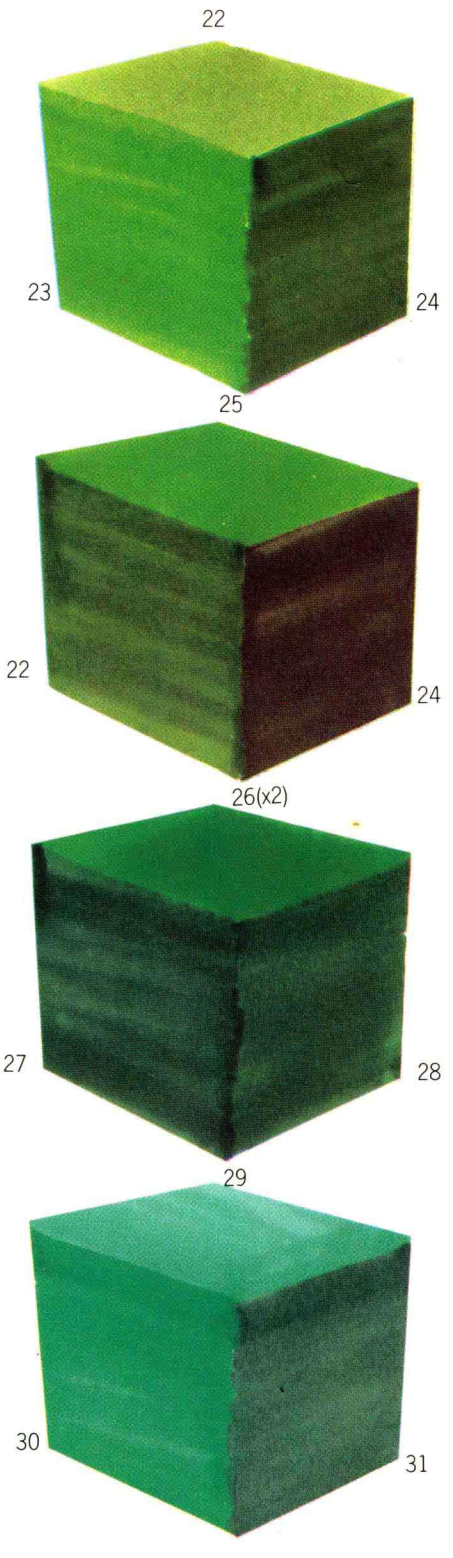
One important secret of good rendering is knowing how to use colour effectively to model three-dimensional objects. The world is a three-dimensional place, and virtually everything you want to depict has form which reflects light and throws shadows. Sometimes you may be working with hard objects with clearly defined breaks in the form; in such cases, sharp contrast between surfaces won't look odd and is often desirable. And at other times you will be dealing with soft organic surfaces which blend and flow together in smooth tonal transitions. In the former case it doesn't matter if the colour dries before you apply an adjacent shade, but in the latter you need to work fast to keep the colour wet so that newly laid colours can be subtly blended. In either case the real trick is recognizing which colours work well together to give sufficient tonal contrast, and yet can be successfully blended for tonal transitions. This usually comes with practice and experience, but for the beginner investing in markers for the first time a chart, such as the one shown right, can save a lot of time testing markers in the shop, and a lot of money buying unnecessary colours. If you are new to marker rendering it is always a good idea to keep a reference chart such as this so that you have a record of what works and what doesn't. If you do make a chart, be sure to use your regular marker paper and fix it to a board with a tape hinge down the centre; this will allow you to fold over the paper and thus protect the colours from direct light.

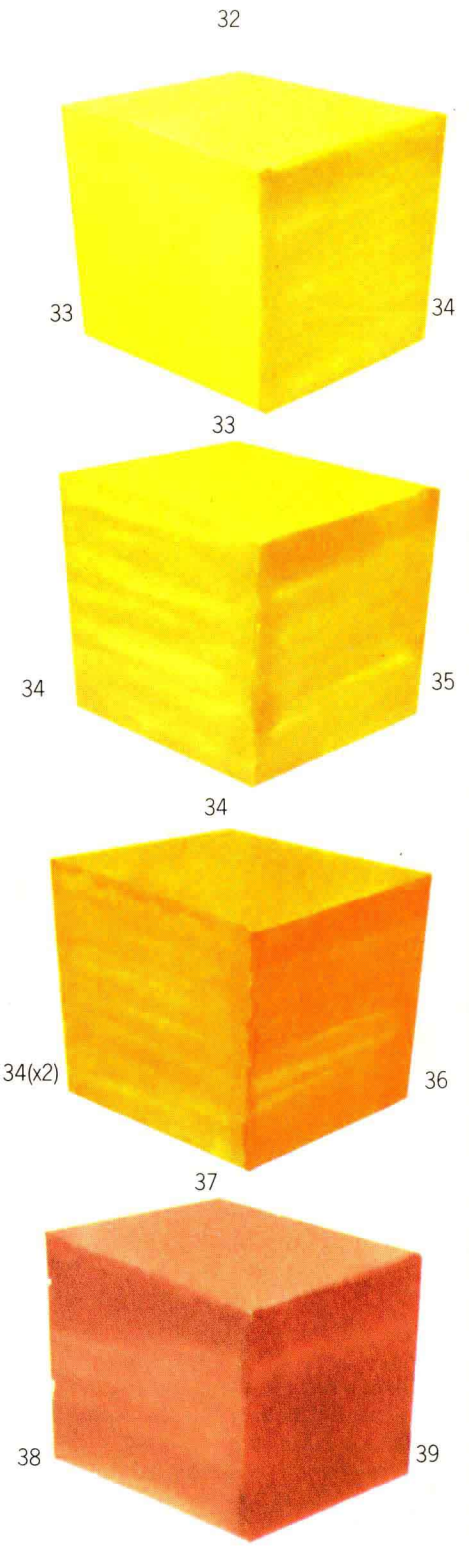
The standard method of creating two tones of the same colour is through overlaying: the colour is laid down once, allowed to dry, and then overlaid again. This gives quite a subtle tonal shift which is usually insufficient for sharp modelling so a second, darker colour is needed. The beginner is often tempted to use cool or warm greys for this shadow tone, but this invariably makes the colour 'muddy'. To keep the perception of the colour clear and bright it is essential to choose a new colour. This second colour can, in turn, be overlaid to produce a still darker tone. A third colour is usually necessary to produce the really dark tones, and this can also be overlaid yet again for the deep shadows. In this way, a subtle transition of six tones can be produced by careful selection and overlaying.




**The colour chart right was rendered with the Magic Marker range, but it could easily be carried out in any other brand, although some experimentation would be needed. The limitations of printing have made it very difficult to achieve accurate colour matchings, so you should only refer to the colour names when referring to this chart. Each colour has been used only once (unless stated as overlaid x2) to give a reasonable tonal balance, but more subtle effects can be obtained through overlaying.**




**Key**
**1** Pale Rose **2** Geranium **3** Lipstick Orange **4** Vermilion **5** Red **6** Cadmium Red **7** Venetian Red **8** Lipstick Red **9** Carmine **10** Crimson **11** Deep Magenta **12** Red Violet **13** Cadmium Orange **14** Chrome Orange **15** Sanguine **16** Pale Blue **17** Manganese Blue **18** Pthalo Blue **19** Mid Blue **20** Blue **21** Antwerp Blue **22** Pale Green **23** Marine Green **24** Grass Green **25** Light Green **26** Forest Green **27** Pinetree Green **28** Olean Green **29** Aqua Blue **30** Scarab Green **31** Teal Blue **32** Pale Yellow **33** Process Yellow **34** Cadmium Yellow **35** Yellow **36** Yellow Orange **37** Barely Beige **38** Light Suntan **39** Dark Suntan.

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