

Creating Fur effect SBS

I have often been asked, 'How do you create realistic fur effect in your paintings?' , so here is a description of the technique I use.

Please don't assume this is the 'correct' way , this is just the method I have developed without any formal training so I am sure there are things the 'professionals' would frown upon in this SBS.

Medium : 7" x 5" Claybord

Paint: ETAC EFX (transparent colours only)

AirBrush: Micron CM-SB V2

Pencil eraser

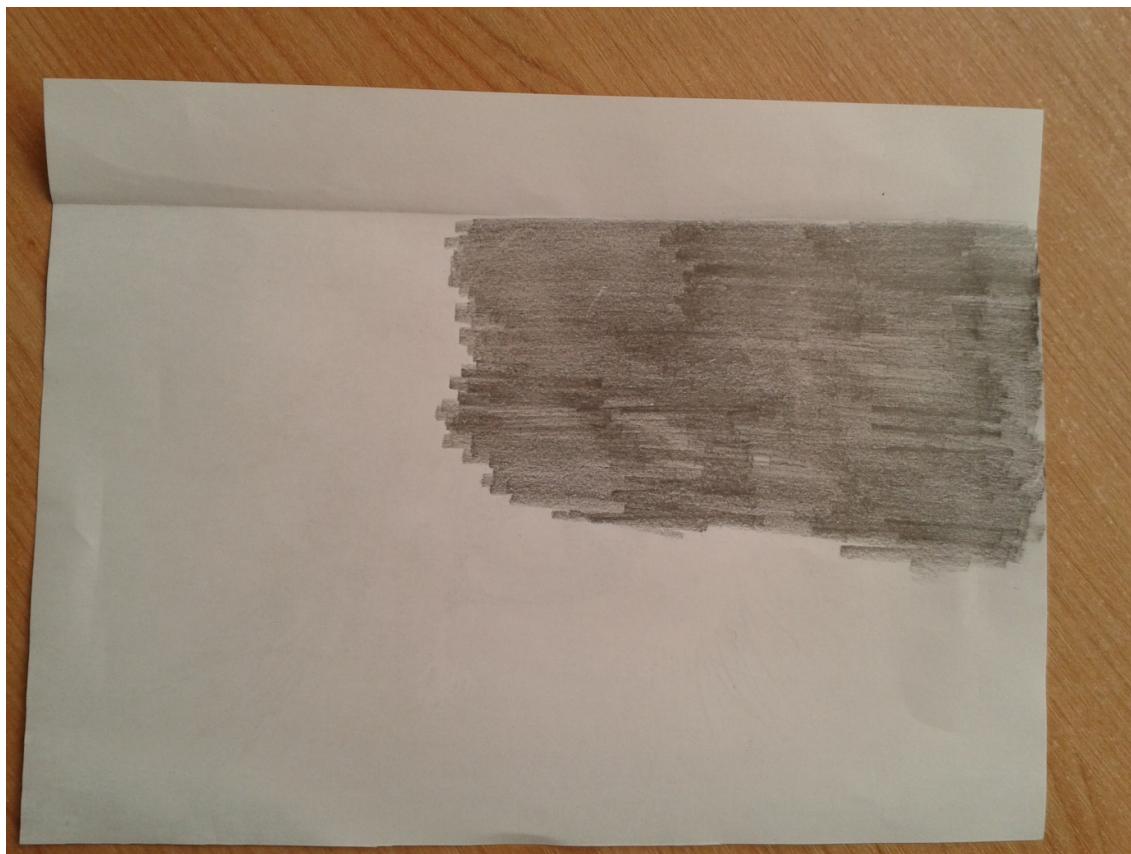
2mm Fibre Scratch Pen

Image transfer:

For this example I will use everyone's favourite , a Tiger face.

First I transfer the image using the old school method of rubbing the back of the image with a 3B pencil, I have tried carbon transfer paper, graphit transfer paper and saral paper in the past but still prefer this method, I just find it simple to do, not messy and the lines are nice and faint which helps a great deal if I am doing a monochrome portrait as I am always forgetting to erase the lines until it is too late ..

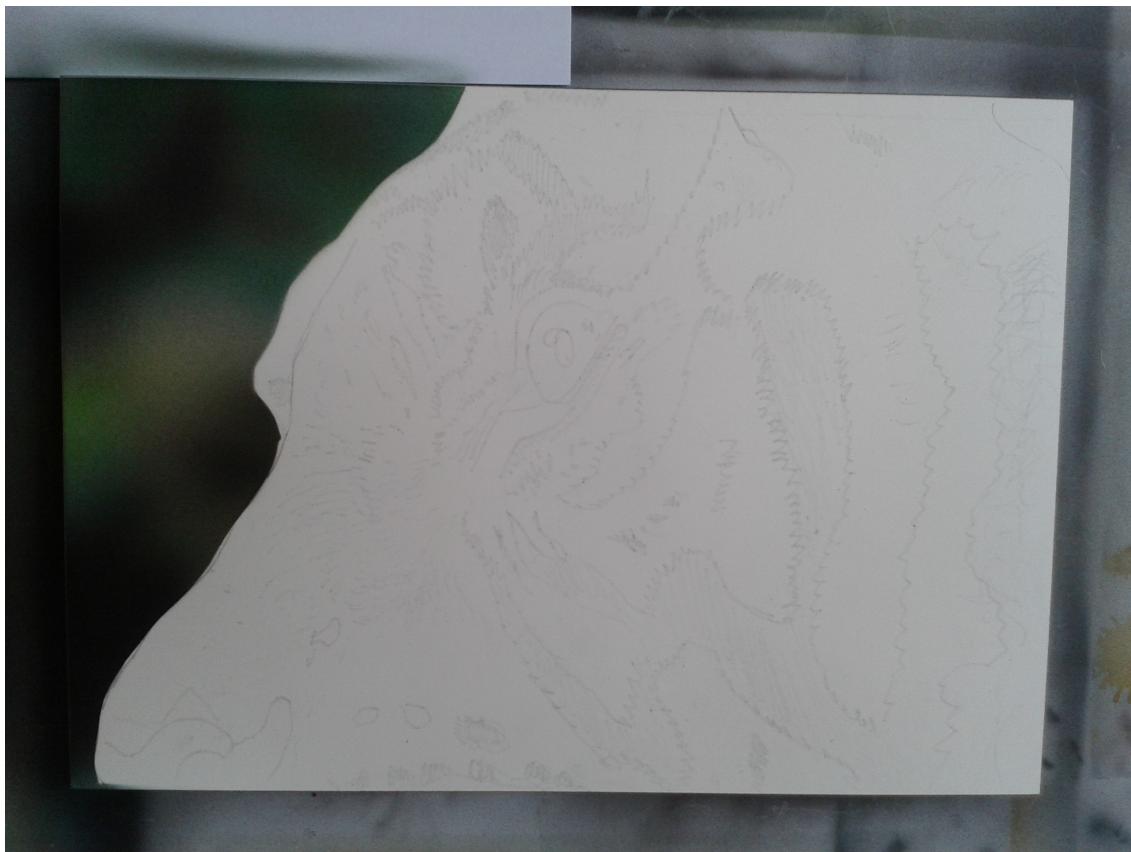
Picture 1



Background:

Having cut out around the outside edge of the tiger I held it in place with magnets, and filled in the very simple blurry background .

Picture 2



The background colours were built up using Paynes Grey, Forest Green, Golden Ochre and Burnt Umbra , layering the colours are required to get the right colour mix and tone's I was after, but at the end of the day this is just an approximation of the reference so I didn't spend too much time on this bit.

Building Up the Image:

Building up the depth and texture for fur is achieved by slowly building up the layers of erasing/starching/colour, I always start off with 'sketching' out the first base layer rather than just a soft fogged area before starting the scratching, it's just the way I prefer and gives me an opportunity to establish the direction of the fur/hair.

Here I have used Burnt Umber, no reduction, and sketched out the first area I will work on.

Picture 3



You might think, 'Oh dear I think he has already gone too dark!', but I find with scratching you need to put enough on in the first place to have some to scratch off if you see what I mean.. Besides if this initial layer is not dark enough the little dark areas between the bottom layer of hairs will not be dark enough at the end. Note even at this stage I make sure the hairs are random but still give the impression of direction, as it is important not to give the overall look of perfectly manicured hair as if the tiger has just been to the barbers .

No I start the first layer of scratching, I am only using a 2mm fibre pen at this point, I file flat the end of the fibre insert on a piece of emery cloth , easiest way to do this is to just have about 2mm poking out of the end and file it flat right up to the end of the pen this gives you a square edge and the end of the pen stops the fibres spreading whilst you are sanding. Once flat I just push put at max 2mm of the fibre insert and only use the sharp edge of the flattened end rotating it around as the edge goes blunt. I like the fibre pen as it give a more organic look to the fur.

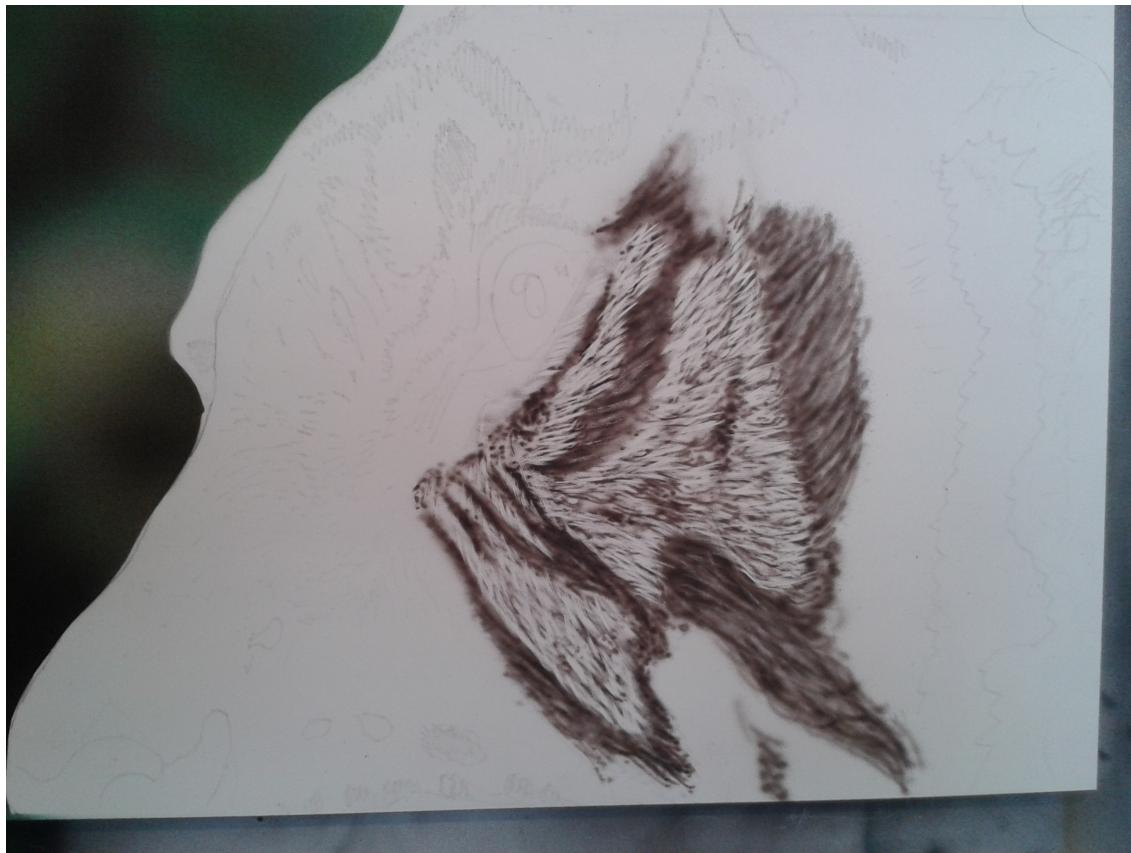
Picture 4a



Picture 4b



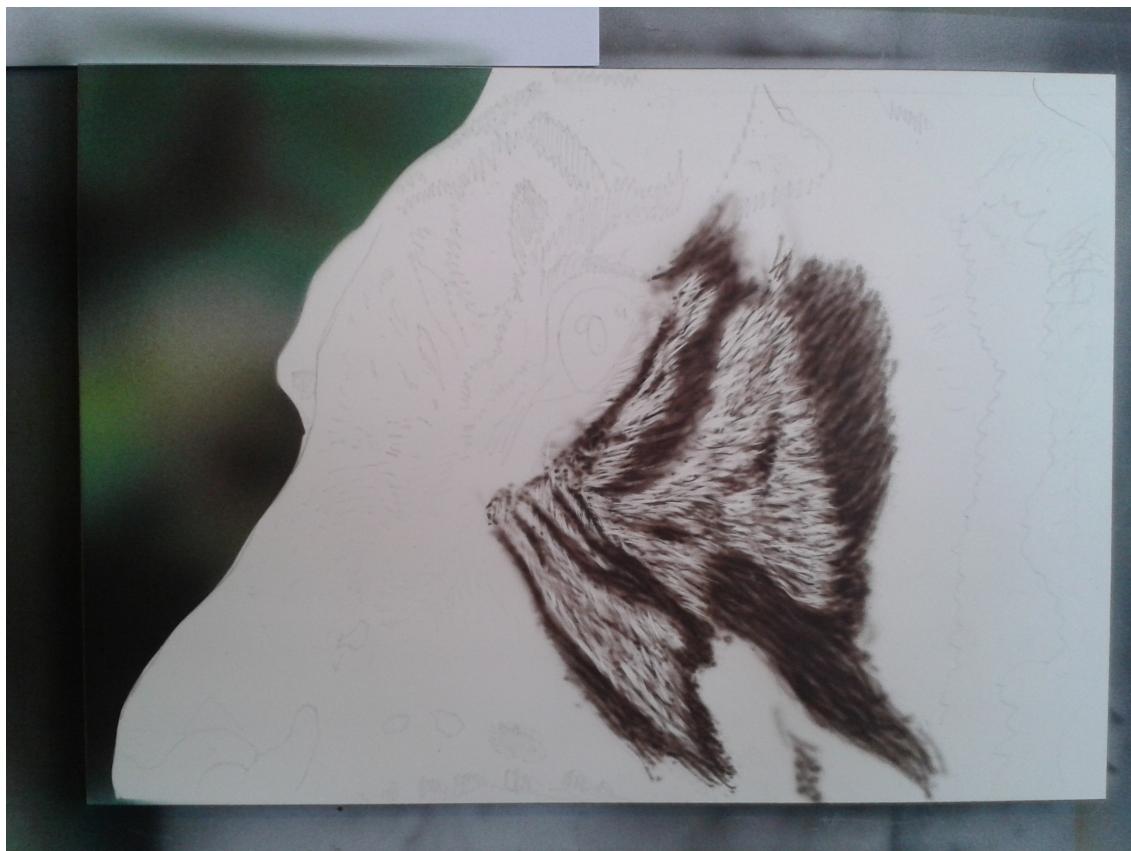
Picture 5



All I have done here really with the fibre pen is enhance the sketch I did with just the AB

Next I go back in with the burnt umbra and just touch up a few darker areas's and start to establish small shadow area's to build up a little form to the fur.

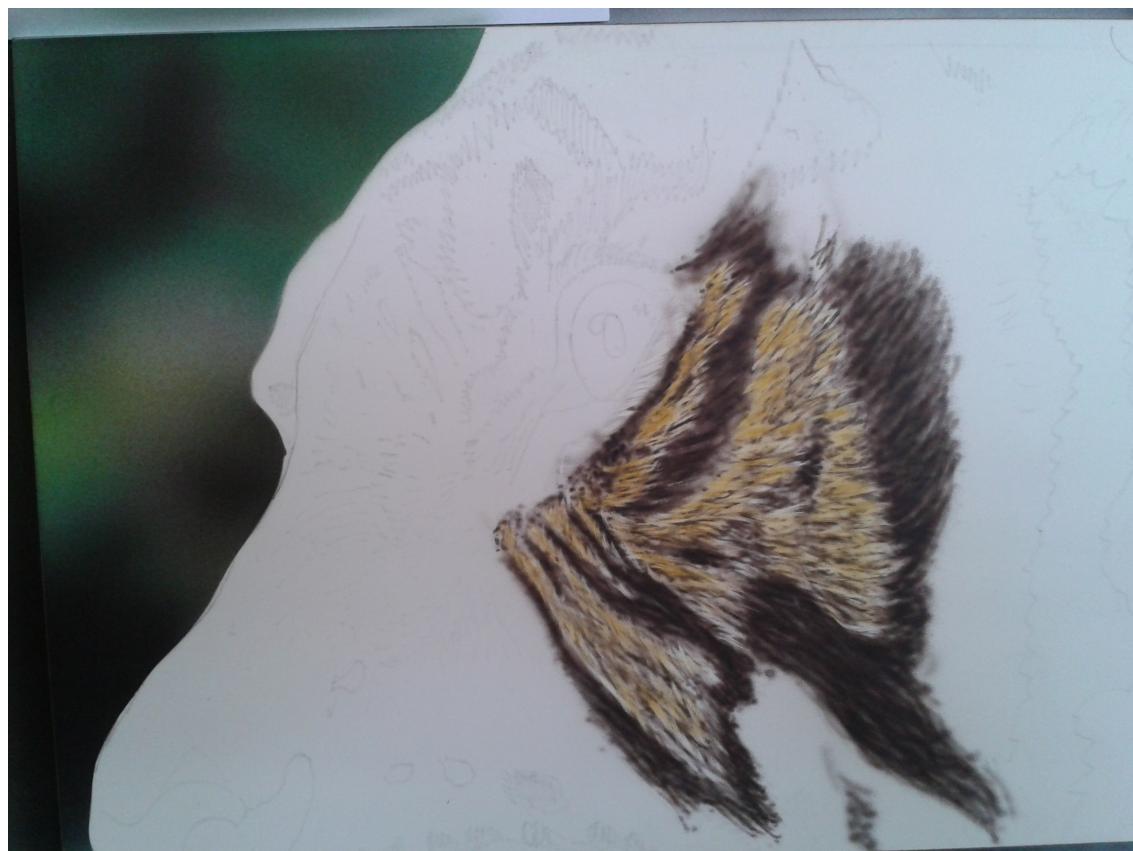
Picture 6



I know it doesn't look much at the moment, but it will get better ☺

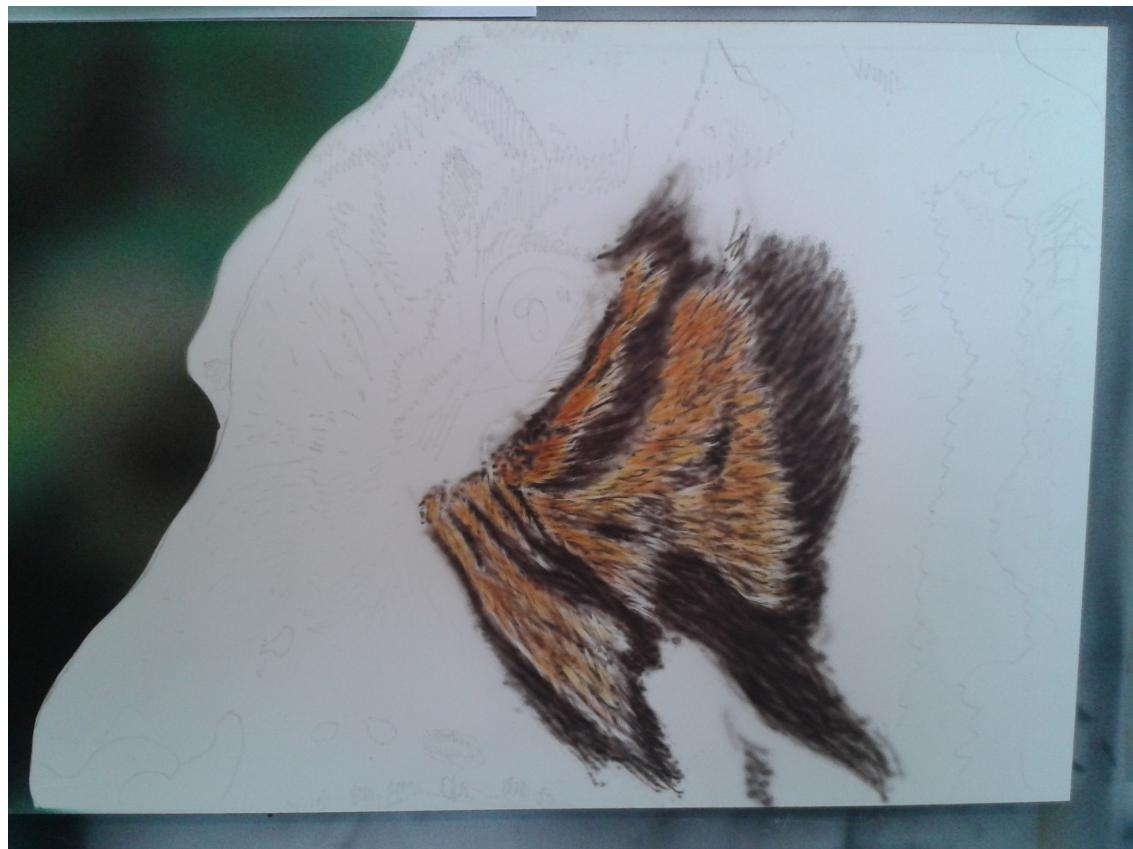
Now I start adding the first layer of colour, here I have gone in with Golden Ochre, I don't just 'glaze' the whole area, instead I like to lay down the colour with small dagger strokes basically colouring in the hairs / area with small strokes, this I find give me a little bit more variation in the colour rather than just dusting over the whole area.

Picture 7



Now I add the second colour , this time Brown Ochre, again I use small strokes rather than dusting the whole area required, I also stay away from the extreme edges of the Golden Ochre so I get a nice transition from the Brown Ochre, (which will now be an 'orange' due to the Golden Ochre underneath), to the Golden Ochre .

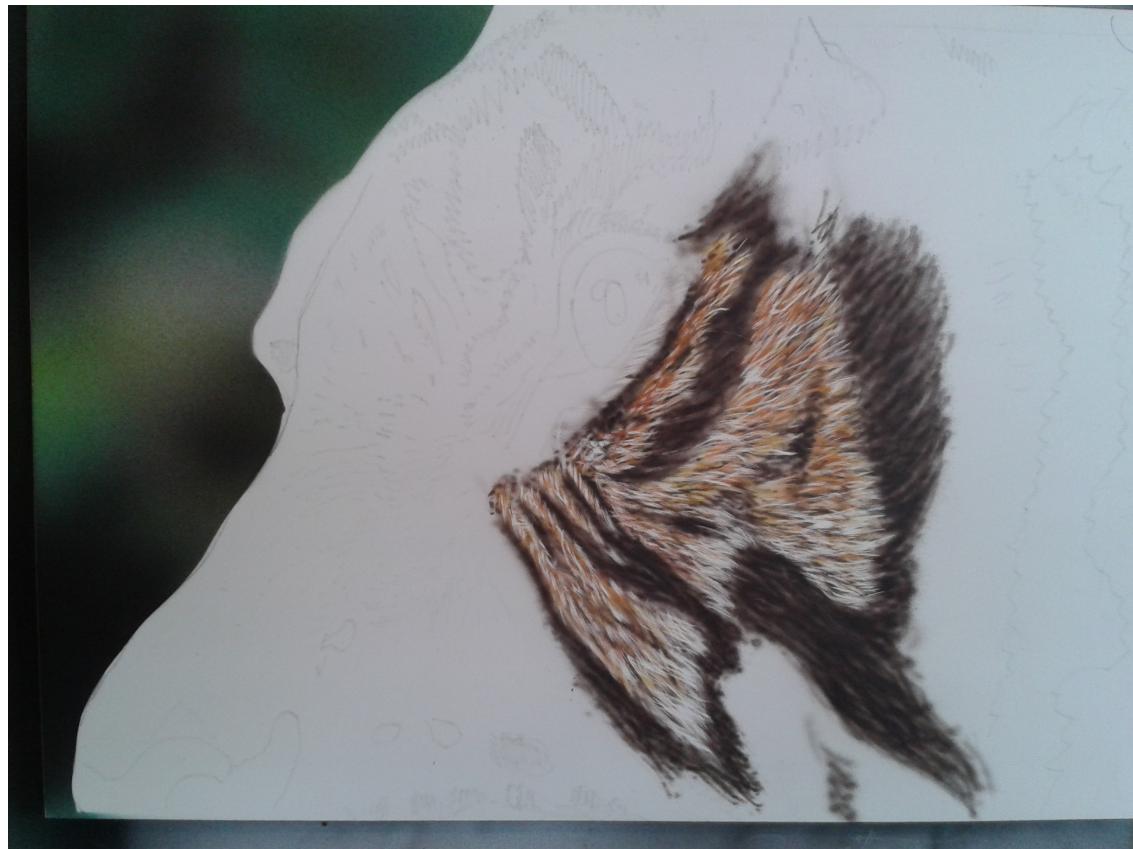
Picture 8



Slowly starting to look better ☺

Now I re-establish some of the highlights and introduce some new hairs, again just with the fibre pen. Once more making sure the hairs are 'random' and in addition to the existing hairs, i.e try not to just re-establish the original hairs.

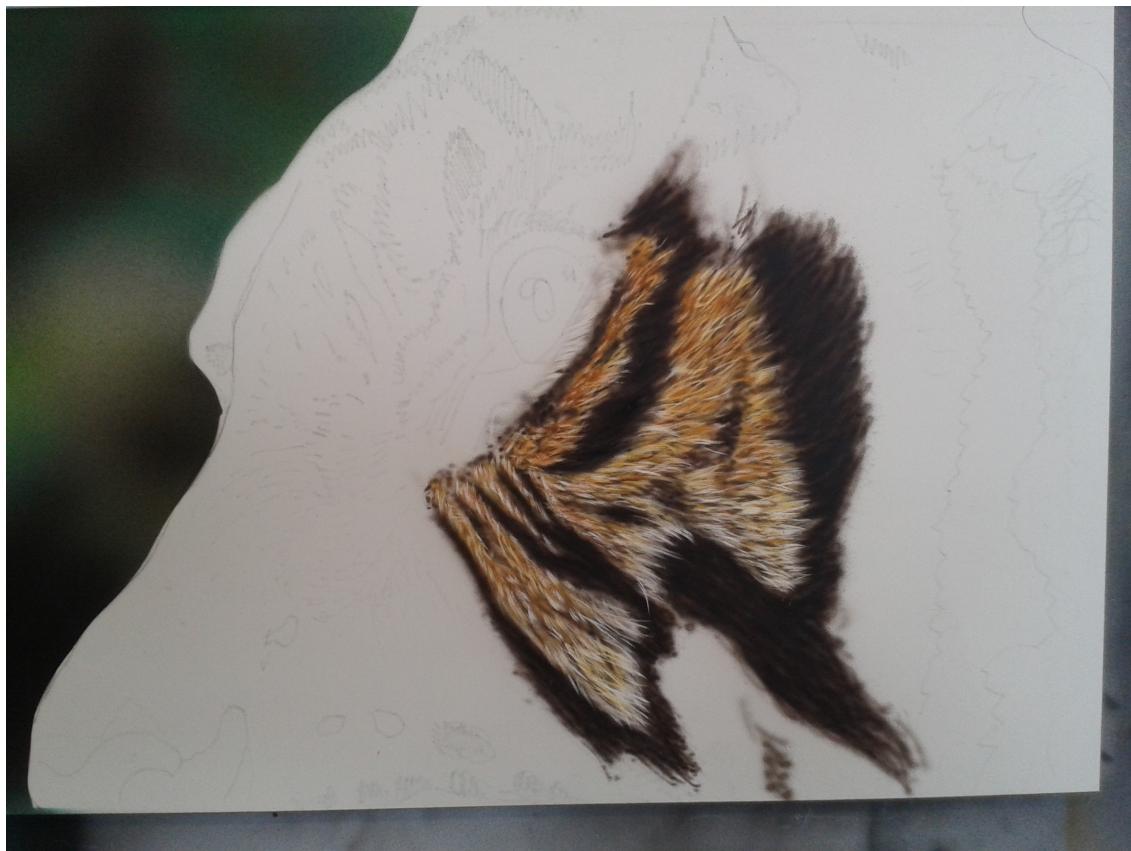
Picture 9



Looking much better now.

Here I have repeated the layers of colours , erasing and finally enhanced the darker areas with Paynes grey on top of the burnt umbra.

Picture 10



Definitely looking better now, this section is not completely finished yet, but good enough to carry on with the next area. As I like to build the painting up in sections, at the end I will need to go over the whole painting adding the finishing touches to each area and bring everything 'together'.

After a bit more fur, decided it was time to bring life into the painting and do the eye. Nothing special here, just started out mapping with paynes grey.

Picture 11



I used paynes gey as the area around the eye is a 'cooler' dark colour and needs to be different than the dark area's in the fur.

Here I have just about finished the eye, after the initial mapping with paynes grey I slowly built up the colours using, green, blue , brown ochre and a bit of golden ochre , Paynes grey used again for the shading. The white highlights were scratched out with the fibre pen again and slightly dusted with blue.

Picture 12



I notice in the reference there is a slight tinge of blue to the grey area near the tear duct and also in some of the white fur(doesn't show up well in this photo).

More fur erasing ...

Picture 13



As I move down the nose the fur is much shorter and finer so I have to be careful to only use very short strokes with the fibre pen , by the time I reach the end of the nose all I will be using a 'stabbing' motion with the pen.

Using the same process I carry on until the painting is just about complete.

Picture 14



For the nose I only needed Brown Ochre and a little Payne's grey for the shading, now I stand back and look at the whole painting working out where I need to touch up the colour and blend any area's together bearing in mind I have been painting is 'sections'.

Also add in any highlights and the whiskers.

Finished Painting:

Picture 15



The whiskers were also done with the fibre pen with a little shading added afterwards.