

Tip: Silicone Shapers— A Useful Tool to Aid in the Treatment of Works of Art on Paper

Silicone shapers are silicone tipped tools designed for artists to manipulate clay, pastels, and other heavy media like acrylics and oil paints. They have been advertised as clay shaper tools, colour shapers, and silicone shapers/brushes. These tools allow artists to move and shape media to achieve precise marks, and clean linear strokes. The silicone tip is easy to clean, has a non-stick surface, and comes in a variety of shapes and firmness, providing a range of use (fig. 1).

Silicone shaper tools can be helpful when performing tear repair, working with adhesives, and removing poultices. The advantage over using a brush is the non-stick surface, which allows the silicone tip to be wiped clean immediately. The fine tipped points and angles are also useful for precise placement and a range of motions. For example, the tapered point shapers allow for a flexible but firm rolling motion.

The slight static charge that can be produced using the silicone tip is of additional interest. This feature was particularly useful when performing treatment on a pastel portrait. Particulates and dust were present on the pastel surface after it had been unframed. Since the dust was not embedded in the pastel, I was able to pass the silicone tip close to, but not touching, the pastel surface, attracting the dust away from the friable media and latching onto the silicone tip without risking mechanical damage. No friable media was displaced using this tool and method.

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

COLOUR SHAPER®, Royal Sovereign Ltd UK

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Fig. 1. Silicone tools with varying tips.