

Painting Without Borders - In Oils

Very Important: This is a suggested materials list only, and nothing is a requirement. I am simply conveying the materials that I use. Every painter is different, and there is no wrong or right way. Use this only as a guide. Feel free to contact me with any questions.
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Painting Surfaces

I prefer to work on gessoed masonite or stretched canvas/linen - my current favorite is Centurion Deluxe Oil Primed Linen Panels. These are easy to transport, and the oil primer takes paint very well without the need for additional preparation. Sizes can vary widely, but for this class I recommend a size of at least 5"x7". You will need at least 3 surfaces for this class. I often stretch and prime my own surfaces, but you should feel free to start with a pre-stretched pre-primed canvas or board.

Surface preparation (optional if you have a preprimed surface)

Gesso

For unprimed surfaces, I use 2 coats of acrylic gesso. I apply both coats with a palette knife, because I prefer not to retain a uniform surface. Even if I purchase a pre-stretched canvas, I will often apply a small amount of acrylic gesso on it to hide the "machine manufactured" nature of it.

Oil Priming

When the gesso layers are dry, and time permits, I will also apply a thin layer of titanium white alkyd product such as Gamblin Fastmatte or Griffin Alkyd with a palette knife to give myself an oil based surface. I will let this dry for a minimum of 24 hours. This can also be used on a preprimed purchased surface.

Staining

Once the priming layers are dry, I stain the canvas with a thin wash of an oil color, such as Burnt Sienna or Burnt Umber. I dislike working on a stark white surface. Just put it on thinly and then wipe most away leaving a light stain. If I've skipped the alkyd layer, the stain will also provide a bit of chemical adhesion when I start painting.

Brushes

I don't use expensive brushes. The solvents associated with oil painting are extremely harsh, and so is my painting method. Synthetic or bristle brushes by Richeson or Winsor & Newton are extremely effective and inexpensive. Of the different styles available, I prefer flats.

Brights just don't hold a large enough charge of paint for my tastes, and I don't need filberts, because flats tend to become filberts after some use. I only use three sizes – a #12 (1" wide), a #5 or #6 (1/2" wide), and a #1 (1/4" wide). Keep in mind that the numbers vary between manufacturers and sizes are not consistent.

For cleaning my brushes, I use Turpenoid Natural (NOTE: Turpenoid Natural is not for use during the painting process. It is only to clean brushes after a session. If you use it on a painting, your painting will fall apart.). It removes even dried paint from brushes and is nontoxic.



Oil Paints

All brands are definitely not equal. For the student, everything is acceptable so that there are no worries about using too much expensive paint. As you progress, you will want to experiment with different brands.

Premium Brands

Excellent paints, but at a premium price. These have a high saturation of pigment and flow extremely well. Includes brands like M. Graham, Maimeri, Holbein, Old Holland



Midgrade Brands

The most versatile of brands. Without the premium price, you might be less stingy with paint, and that's always a good thing. Includes brands like Richeson Shiva, Rembrandt, Winsor & Newton, Grumbacher Pre-Tested, Gamblin



Student Grade

For beginners, student grade brands are perfectly acceptable. They tend to be a bit stiffer in the way they flow, and the pigment is less saturated. Includes brands like Winton, Grumbacher Academy



My Color Choices

My palette changes constantly as I try new colors, but I always keep a consistent set of warm and cool. Below is my current palette. Please do not feel obligated to purchase all of these colors.

Titanium White - the most opaque of whites, but without the dangers of Flake White

Cadmium Yellow Medium - I find I'm using less and less of this and may replace it with a cooler version (maybe lemon yellow or cad yellow light) in the near future).

Cadmium Orange - I was given a number of tubes of this and found that it greatly reduced my use of Cadmium Yellow, as I normally mixed it with Cad Red for orange anyway.

Cadmium Red Light or Cadmium Red Pale (Richeson) - my warm red choice

Alizarin Crimson - my cool red choice

Yellow Ochre - the lightest of the earthtones on my palette

Burnt Sienna - another color that I find myself using less of. I can get a similar color by mixing other colors

Burnt Umber - mixes with other colors to make rich darks (Burnt Umber, Alizarin and Prussian Blue make a rich black)

Prussian Blue - my warm dark blue

Cobalt Blue Hue or Ultramarine Blue - my cool blue

Cerulean Blue - my warm light blue

Additional colors I sometimes use:

Permanent Green Medium or Light or Cadmium Green (Richeson) - a warm green for landscapes

Viridian - a cool green for landscapes

Cadmium Yellow Light - cooler yellow

Rose Madder (Quinacridone) - a brighter, cooler version of Alizarin. Great for flowers.

Palette Knives

I tend to use palette knives only for surface prep or to remove paint from the surface.

Mediums

I use Odorless Mineral Spirits. If you prefer a cleaner version, I recommend Gamisol.

Palette

In the past, I used a Masterson Sta-Wet Palette. This is basically a tupperware container that you can seal your paints inside of so that they stay fresh longer. I've had a piece of glass cut to fit inside, which I can easily scrape clean with a razor as it becomes necessary. Another trick with a glass palette is that you can place a piece of colored paper behind it to match the color of your canvas. If you have a lot of paint left over, and know that you will not be able to paint for a number of days, the entire palette can be submerged in a tub of water where the paints will remain fresh until you return. Now that I paint almost everyday, my palette is built into my easel.

Rags

Make sure to bring paint rags. I prefer to use old cut up blue jeans, because they don't produce a lot of lint, which can get caught up on your canvas. You can use paper towels if you like.

Easels

I recommend a portable easel, not only for the class, but for home and on location work as well. There are numerous styles and prices to choose from. Many will also hold supplies for easy transport. My current choice is the Daytripper by Joshua Been.