

ESSENTIALS OF WATERCOLOR – FALL 2022
CUYAHOGA VALLEY ARTS CENTER
WEDNESDAYS – 3:30PM – 6:00PM
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First things first, get yourself a sketchbook or notebook to take notes in and/or create sketches. This can be any size and whatever you're comfortable with.

ALL MATERIALS WILL BE DISCUSSED ON THE FIRST CLASS DAY. If you wish to wait to purchase supplies, that is okay. Sometimes it's better to see first hand and then make a decision. *Do not buy new materials if you already have some of these things. We will always make-do with what you have on hand.*

PAPER: Paper is the primary surface that watercolor paint is applied to. It comes in many different sizes, weights, and textures. Cold press or hot press is up to you. Do not get anything below 140lb.

Watercolor paper pad (not to be confused with a block) – 12" x 18" – 140lb 15-sheets

Two (2) sheets of 22" x 30" 140lb watercolor paper (Brands include but not limited to Arches, Canson, Strathmore)

A backing board or something to tape paper to and work off of. I use a large clipboard made for drawing, but a small sheet of MDF or plywood might work as well.

BRUSHES:

A collection of synthetic blend or a variety of animal hair brushes (squirrel, sable, boar, hog, horse, goat, camel, lion, tiger, and bear, oh my!)

- One large (1" - 2", one medium, and one small flat brush (Watercolor or acrylic brushes will work).
- A couple of smaller round brushes. Medium and small.
- Liner and rigger brushes. Very thin, very sharp. Perfect for detailing.
- Large wash brush (hake, super soft, super wide)

PAINTS:

Tubes are preferred, but if you already have cakes, we can work with those.

- Blues (french ultramarine, cobalt blue, payne's grey)
- Yellows (van dyke brown, cadmium yellow, or raw sienna)
- Reds (cadmium red, alizarin crimson, rose madder)
- Darks & Browns (burnt umber, burnt sienna, raw umber, sepia, ivory black, lamp black)
- Small container of white gesso

ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES:

- A palette to mix paint on. Large flat trays work beautifully for mixing large pools of color.
- A water sprayer. Different sprayers have different mist patterns. Find something that can give you a variety of textures and mark-making.
- Paint rags/paper towels/grubby jeans
- LARGE water container. Cut a gallon of milk in half, old iced tea pitcher, etc.
- Saran/plastic wrap
- Salt
- Toothbrushes
- Liquid latex/masking fluid/frisket
- Stiff natural sponges
- Future reference material (photographs)

MATERIAL NOTES

SURFACES:

For a surface to paint on, watercolor paper is the primary support. Typically found in 140lb and 300lb varieties in varying textures, such as hot press and cold press, paper can be in a pad, block, or individual sheet. Depending on cost, you can spend anywhere from \$8.00 for a single sheet up to \$60.00 for a watercolor block that's a fraction of the size.

Hot press is smooth while cold press is a little rough and bumpy. 140Lb is thin and 300lb is thicker, so depending on how you work, this might come into play. Watercolor paper is created by grinding boiled linen rags and pressing it with rabbit skin glue, which is referred to as the sizing. Some sizing may affect pigment absorption, so some artists like to soak their paper in the tub to remove this.

BRUSHES:

For brushes, I'd get a few flat varieties. There are all sorts of different types or brushes and numbers, like flat, filbert, bright, round, angled, etc., but we can get away with just using flats and rounds along with a couple smaller, more detail oriented brushes. You can use whatever brushes you have laying around. Sometimes I keep old brushes because they make unique marks and textures because they've become so beat-up.

The hair is also important when it comes to absorbing watercolor and holding a full-load of paint in a brush. You'll get so good at feeling the weight of a brush loaded with wet paint vs. a brush that just has more dry paint in it. Sable, squirrel, and goat hair are great for watercolor because of their ability to hold a lot of water. Synthetic or "taklon" brushes are also good and cheap!

PAINTS:

There are all sorts of different brands of paints and it can be both overwhelming and confusing. Just look for the colors on the list and we will work with what you have. Student grade, professional grade, Liquitex, Academy, Windsor Newton, whatever will work. If there is a certain color that is out of stock, look for something that's closest to it. Remember to get tubes, rather than cakes.

Watercolor paint is incredibly finely ground pigment mixed with gum. It's an incredibly unique medium to use as watercolor is more of a stain than a continuous layer of color or paint. Generally, watercolors are more economical to use yet difficult to master because of our preconceived notion of what painting actually is; a covering onto the surface, especially through the use of creating lighter colors by using white, which we will not be using.

While there are so many different varieties of colors, you can think about them in color families or groups such as yellows, blues, greens, browns, and reds. Understanding this will allow you to create or capture different moods or lighting in your paintings. For example, burnt sienna is a brownish red that is great for bricks, however, it might not look good on a freshly painted red barn. You can liven it up with a little alizarin crimson to make it even more red. Using paint from the tube is great, but we will learn how to fine tune the colors to create your desired effect.

Permanence is important in understanding a painting's longevity and archival confidence, more commonly known as *lightfastness*, meaning how fast this color will fade over time when exposed to light. The series of a paint denotes how expensive the pigment is. The higher the series, the more expensive the paint.

All of these materials can be purchased at Hobby Lobby, Michael's, or even Dick Blick/Utrecht.