

MATERIALS, HANDLING & REFERENCE

Setting Up

Easel/Stance:

- Paper/canvas parallel to subject
- Center of paper/canvas at shoulder level
- Stand in a fixed position (mark if necessary)
- Body approximately 24 inches from paper/canvas (allows elbow to be slightly bent)
- Step back – OFTEN (the more you do this the quicker your drawing/painting will improve, however you MUST always return to your exact position)
- Neutral Clothing – Always wear something that does not reflect color onto your canvas.

Brush and Paint Handling

How to hold a brush:

- Your hand should have a pencil style, light grip placed halfway up the brush.
- DO NOT grip the ferule (as a reminder, mark hand position with tape - if necessary).
- You should be painting with your shoulder not your wrist.

Cleaning a brush:

- When Painting – Pour canola or walnut oil on a palette and rub the brush into it. Use a rag to wipe the paint off.
- When Finished – Use the same process as above. Then clean the brush in a sink with warm water and soap. Dry with a rag and reform the shape of the brush.
- Do not leave brushes in solvent, as it eats away at the fibers.
- Store brushes flat (as brush side down misshapes them and brush side up can allow paint/oil/solvent to flow into ferule).

How to handle the paint:

- Use mineral spirits/stand oil combination to thin (but never more than 10%).
- Paint thick over thin (a.k.a. fat over lean).
- Ensure you mix enough paint to cover large masses.

Cleaning a palette:

- Generally you don't need to clean your palette because:
 - If you are painting directly/impressionistically you are mixing your colors on the canvas and your palette simply holds your clean/unmixed paints.
 - If you are painting indirectly/tonally you are mixing on the palette, but you are not using a wide range of colors so your palette should not get excessively messy.
- Wet Palette – Wipe with a rag.
- Dry Palette – Scrape with a razor.

Materials/Supplies

NOTE: Read all labels regarding the health warnings of all art products. Just because they sell it does not make it safe. Ensure you research and use accordingly.

Palettes

Plexi-glass makes a great palette because it does not break and is easy to clean.

- **Studio Palette** – In studio work requires a large mixing surface; at least 12" x 12".
- **Plein-air Palette** – Outdoor work requires a smaller palette; one that will fit in your portable easel.

Paints

Artist quality paints contain the highest ratio of pigment for the best color results. They are worth the extra expense. Check the labels for additional information such as pigment classification (different companies use different names for the same pigments), light fastness, and transparency/opacity.

Purchase a **LARGE tube of titanium white**, regardless of which color palette you are choosing.

Color Palettes:

1. **Impressionist Palette (basic):** There is no such thing as a pure primary. Every color has a bias.

For example: Lemon Yellow - cool yellow (yellow with blue)

Cadmium Dark Yellow - warm yellow (yellow with red)

Therefore, you require at least two of every primary for mixing purposes... a warm and a cool of each color, and at least one of each secondary color. The choice is your preference or you can refer to the table below.

2. **Impressionist Palette (advanced):** When you have the basic palette assembled, you can begin to add more colors as budget permits. The choice is your preference or you can refer to the table below.

Colors	Impressionist Palette (basic)	Impressionist Palette (Advanced)
Yellows:	Cadmium Yellow Lemon Pale Cadmium Yellow	Cadmium Yellow Deep Hansa Yellow Deep Medium
Reds:	Cadmium Red Permanent Alizarin Crimson Permanent Rose Quinacridone	Cadmium Red Light Naphthol Red Cadmium Red Deep
Blues:	Ultramarine Blue Cobalt Blue Pthalo Blue	Cerulean Blue Hue Manganese Blue Hue
Oranges:	Cadmium Orange Cadmium Scarlet	Naphthol Scarlet
Purples:	Dioxazine Purple	Quinacridone Violet or Magenta
Greens:	Pthalo Green Viridian	Cadmium Green Pale Emerald Green
Earths:		Yellow Ochre Indian Yellow Terra Rosa Burnt Sienna

3. **Tonalist Palette (basic):** Primary colors (your preference or start with cadmium yellow, cadmium red, ultramarine blue), earth colors, black and white. Cadmium orange is a nice secondary to have.

Brushes

- **Length** – Ensure that your brushes are at least 8" in length so you can hold it correctly.
- **Filberts** – These are the most versatile. Choose any array of sizes (3, 5, 7, 9, and 12) (3 smallest).
- **Flats** – These are used for large fill areas. Choose large ones in a couple of sizes (12 and 14).
- **Cat's Tongue** – This is used for adding any necessary details (at the very end of your work).

Solvents

- Stay away from solvents or use only in ventilated studio.
- Mineral spirits mixed with stand oil, is a good choice for a medium to thin your paint (2 part mineral spirits to 1 part stand oil). Use as little as possible and always keep capped.

Supports

Like most art supplies, you will find your own personal preferences. Here are some recommendations to begin.

- Use quality acrylic primed canvas (make sure it is NOT TOO rough as it will wear out your brushes).
- Oil-primed canvas is a better surface than acrylic, however not necessary.
- Quality canvas sheets taped to a board should be used for studies, for economy purposes.
- Fredrix brand is readily available and is a good quality choice.

Life Reference Guide (also see Painter's Notes – Composition & Design)

Indoor Staging/Painting

Your subjects will generally be still life, interiors, and figurative.

Lighting:

- You can have complete control. Use it well.
- Don't use more than 2 light sources as you lose 3D form.
- Ensure temperature of light (warm or cool) compliments the subject.
- Set-up your subject so you have a full range of values in all subject matter.
- Tonal approach requires strong lighting (Rembrandt style – at a 45 degree angle to subject).

Still Life – Your painting time is unlimited, if you have ensured a consistent light source.

Interiors – Depending on where you are, your time may be limited or unlimited, and your light source consistent or changing. If you are on a time limit, makes color sketches if possible and use photo reference to complete (see Photo Reference Guide below).

Figurative – Your painting time is limited. You need to render the essence of the pose in the first 20 minutes (maximum). Work your centers of interest while you have the model. Take and use photo reference for less important areas (clothing, objects, and background). The reference can also be used to reposition the model.

Backgrounds – Use flat neutral backgrounds (beginner), or draped fabric (advanced). Ensure they don't detract from your center of interest.

Size – Work on small studies to begin with to increase your skills.

Outdoor Staging/Painting

Your subjects will generally be landscapes, city/streetscapes, and possibly figurative.

Lighting:

- You have limited control (mostly with placement of your subject).
- Light has the most color on sunny days in the early morning and late afternoon, but it changes quickly limiting your painting time.
- Light washes out color on sunny days at high noon, but it changes slower giving you more painting time.
- Light is most consistent on cloudy days and for longer periods of time.
- If light changes, move on to another sketch and come back the next day at the same time (and conditions) to complete the previous work. You may have to come back on multiple days. You can also continue with good photo reference (see Photo Reference Guide below).
- Tonalists require the high contrast light of sunny days to paint their subjects.
- Impressionists can paint in any outdoor light conditions.

Size – Work on small studies since time is limited.

Photo Reference Guide (also see Painter's Notes – Composition & Design)

Look For:

- Scenes with wide range of values
- Scenes with good detail
- Scenes with strong composition (see Painter's Notes – Composition & Design)

DSLR Cameras – Take as multiple photos and use as many of them as necessary to acquire all the information you need for a strong painting. The limitations of cameras will not allow you to do this well from just one photo.

- **Raw Format** – Shoot in raw if possible because it does not compress the digital information it records.
- **Bracket Exposure** – Shoot for light values, mid-values, and dark values (refer to your camera manual under bracketing). You want to capture as much visual information as possible to combine into your reference for painting.
- **Close-ups** – If your subject includes anything with detail such as a person or animal or other object or interest, try to take close-up shots if possible to gain as much information as possible. Bracket as well.
- **Foreshortening** – The camera already flattens objects, and distorts perspective. Ensure that foreshortened object make sense/do not look odd (mostly in figures).
- **Point of View** – While photography may look “cool” taken from a bird's/worm's eye view for drama, this does not translate well into painting.

Lighting:

- **Outdoors** – Color is most vivid in the morning just after sunrise and just before sunset for landscapes. Avoid shooting at high noon when the sun washes color out.
- **Indoors** – Often to varying degrees, you can control the light and arrangements of subject. Bring lighting in to get what you are looking for in terms of value and color ranges. Rearrange your subject for pleasing composition, as this is the best and easiest time to edit.

Other Reference – Do not rely solely on your camera. Observe to see true color that the camera will not capture, and/or take color sketches if possible. Take advantage of looking at other similar reference to fill in any gaps (like photos of details such as hands).

Editing Software – Some purists think you should not do this, however artists at every point in history have used the tools available to them. You make the choice.