

Acrylic Painting

Materials Guide

This PDF is designed to get you started painting in acrylics with confidence! As you progress, you will naturally branch out and add new favorite supplies.

Use this checklist at your local art supply store or when shopping online. I also have a handy shopping list for you at Blick Art Materials. Visit www.sarahburns.com/materials to link to it!

Happy Painting!

— Sarah

Paint

Paint. Golden is the best brand of acrylic paint. The Heavy Body line is my favorite - it's the most like oil paint. You can get started with other brands of acrylic, but at some point you must try this lovely, high quality paint.

Essential List.

Titanium White
Cadmium Yellow Light
Cadmium Red Light
Quinacridone Magenta
Cerulean Blue
Ultramarine Blue
Bone Black
Raw Umber
Burnt Umber
Burnt Sienna
Yellow Ochre

Helpful Additions.

Indian Yellow
Cadmium Orange
Perylene Red or Naphthol Red
Cobalt Blue
Dioxazine Purple
Viridian
Sap Green
Phthalo Green
Prussian Blue

You may notice there are not a lot of greens on my list. Green is a very easy color to mix, so I buy very little green paint. You do, however, need a wide variety of reds if you plan to mix very many rich pinks and purples.

Sarah f. burns

Supplies

Palette. The biggest challenge with acrylic paint is it dries so quickly! Fortunately the Sta-Wet Premier Palette by Masterson solves that problem beautifully. The kit contains a tray with a sponge that you get damp and add a piece of palette paper to the top. Your paint will stay moist for hours, even days when you put the lid on.

Medium. There are many types of mediums for acrylic painters and the one I like best is the Open Acrylic Medium. This will help your paint stay moist, and allow you to thin it sometimes when desired.

Palette Knife. Medium sized, with a metal blade. Get the kind that looks like a small pie server or trowel. Don't buy anything plastic. They break easily and don't work as well. I like RGM Idea Line Palette Knives. They are made from fully non welded stainless steel. They should last a lifetime.

Brush Cleaner. You'll need a jar with water to rinse your brushes as you paint. Literally any jar will do! Pick one that is stable and about pint to quart sized.

Soap. Any mild soap is nice to use after a painting session to clean any paint residue from your brushes. Always wash them gently.

Tongue and Groove Pliers. A smaller, handsized wrench is invaluable for opening stubborn tubes of paint! CRESCENT R27 is what I use.

Sarah f. burns

Supplies...

Brushes. There's nothing like new brushes to make you feel like a great painter. Use your older brushes for scumbling or laying in early layers and save your nicest newest brushes for careful or specific work. Brushes are always wearing out, so plan to buy new ones frequently. Always get the Long Handled brushes.

Start out with at least 6-8 Hog Bristle Brushes (vegan versions available) in Flat or Filbert, sizes 4, 6. I don't recommend Bright brushes unless you want to create chunky strokes. Robert Simmons Signet is a good place to start.

You will also want 2-3 Soft Round Sable or Synthetic Brushes - size 0 or 2.

Brush Carrier. Bamboo rolls that keep your brushes safe and contained while traveling. Optional.

Painting Surface. Lots of choices here. My favorite starter option is Ampersand Gessobord. It comes in flat or cradled. Great surface in lots of sizes. Do NOT get the Ampersand Value Series. The surface is slick and horrible to paint on. Avoid cheap cotton duck canvas. It's frustrating to work on and is not archival. If you want to save money, try Hot Press Watercolor Paper. Hot Press Watercolor paper can be taped to a drawing board to paint on.

Rags or Paper Towels. The blue kind of paper towels you get at hardware stores are best for clean-up, although kitchen roll will do in a pinch. You can also use old t-shirts, socks etc for clean-up.

Sarah.f.burns

Easels

Your circumstances and needs are unique. There are a few considerations when it comes to choosing an easel.

Price. What is your budget? You never want a “cheap” easel. But you don’t have to spend lots of money! Great easels can be found second hand. If you’d like to save \$, start looking for second hand options.

An important quality consideration is quality hardware. Inferior hardware will strip and become useless and need repair or replacement.

Space. Do you have room to leave the easel set up? Or will you need to fold it away?

Portability. Do you plan to take your easel with you to do plein air painting, to workshops or for travel?

Size. Do you want to paint large or small?

I have a blog post at classroom.sarahfburns.com/blog titled “Which Easel Should You Get?” That post addresses all these issues and has resources and links to help you make a practical choice for your first easel. The new easels I recommend range from around \$200 - \$500.

Sarah f. burns

Checklist

Easel.

See classroom.sarahfburns.com/blog

Palette.

Sta-Wet Premier Palette by Masterson
Replacement Palette Paper

Medium.

Open Acrylic Medium

Small Fine Mist Spray Bottle.

Palette Knife.

RGM brand recommended
Trowel or Shovel Type with Metal Blade

Brush Cleaner.

Use soap and water.

Brushes.

2-3 Soft Round Brushes - size 0, 1, or 2
6-8 Bristle Brushes, Flat or Filbert, sizes 4, 6

Painting Surface.

Ampersand Gessobord or
Hot Press Watercolor Paper

Rags or Paper Towels.

“Shop” Paper Towels (the blue kind,
as opposed to kitchen rolls.)

Tongue and Groove Pliers.

Crescent R27 7.5”

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