

Gouache Painting

Materials Guide

Gouache is an opaque water based paint that can be used interchangeably with watercolor. I recommend gouache instead of watercolor alone, because gouache acts a bit more like oil or acrylic paint.

This PDF is designed to get you started painting in gouache 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. If you would like, I have a handy shopping list for you at Blick Art Materials. Visit classroom.sarahfburns.com/materials to get a link!

There is an ever growing list of in-depth information about materials in my blog at classroom.sarahfburns.com/blog.

Happy Painting!

—Sarah

Paint

Paint. There are many great paint brands. I mix and match. My favorite gouache brands are Holbein or Graham.

Essential List.

Primary White
Cadmium Yellow
Cadmium Red
Primary Magenta
Cerulean Blue
Ultramarine Blue
Ivory Black
Raw Umber
Burnt Umber
Burnt Sienna
Yellow Ochre

Helpful Additions.

Cadmium Orange
Cobalt Blue
Violet
Moss Green
Cadmium Green
Prussian Blue

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Supplies

Palette. Jack Richeson makes a great palette for gouache painters called a Butcher Tray. They have a variety of sizes. Choose either the 8" x 12" or 11" x 15".

Small Spray Bottle. Something that sprays a fine mist. I got one in Health and Beauty at my grocery store. It's metal and only a couple of ounces.

Brushes. You really only need a few brushes. Choose very high quality watercolor brushes. I recommend a medium round, a small round and a smallish square tipped brush.

Brush Carrier. Get something designed to keep your brushes from getting mushed or munched. Some artist's tool boxes have a special place for them. I love the Bamboo Roll-up kind.

Jar to Clean Brushes. Anything will do. You just need something stable to rinse your brushes between colors.

Painting Surface. Choose Hot Press Watercolor Paper because it is smoother than Cold Press. Any brand is good. You can get it in sheets, pads, blocks or books. Choose the size and type that best fits how you want to use it. I like to have a variety of options. Personally, I only use books for special occasions, like travel.

Masonite Board to Tape Your Paper On. You can buy one from the art supply store, they often come with clips and a handle, which are useless. If possible, see if you can get a plain piece of masonite cut to size for you. The size should be a little bit larger than the paper you plan to use.

Pro Artist Tape. Acid Free and Repositionable without tearing the paper.

Rags or Paper Towels.

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Easels

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

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.

The most important cost 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?”. This post addresses these issues and has resources to help you make a practical choice for your first easel. The new easels I recommend range from around \$200 - \$500.

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Checklist

Easel.

See classroom.sarahfburns.com/blog

Palette.

Jack Richeson Butcher Tray, 11" x 15", or 12" x 8

Small Fine Mist Spray Bottle. Any fine mist atomizer spray bottle. Small, 2-4 oz.

Brushes.

1 Soft Round Brush - size 0, 1, or 2
1 Soft Round Brush, size 8

Bamboo Roll Up. For carrying your brushes safely.

Painting Surface.

Hot Press Watercolor Paper, choose pad, sheet, block or book.

Artists Masking Tape.

Drawing Board. Large enough to tape your paper onto.

Rags or Paper Towels.

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

Essential Pigment List.

Primary White
Cadmium Yellow
Cadmium Red
Primary Magenta
Cerulean Blue
Ultramarine Blue
Ivory Black
Raw Umber
Burnt Umber
Yellow Ochre

Helpful Additions.

Cadmium Yellow Light
Cadmium Orange
Cobalt Blue
Violet
Moss Green
Cadmium Green