

Oil Painting

Materials Guide

This PDF is designed to get you started painting in oils 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.sarahburns.com/materials to get a link!

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

Happy Painting!

— Sarah

Paint

Paint. There are many great oil painting brands. I mix and match. My favorite brands are WILLIAMSBURG, GAMBLIN, or RUBLEV. The rule of thumb is to avoid student grade paint if you can. The pigments are not as pure.

Essential List.

Titanium White
Cadmium Yellow Light
Cadmium Red Light
Quinacridone Magenta
Cerulean Blue
Ultramarine Blue
Ivory 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 will need a wide variety of reds if you plan to mix very many rich pinks and purples.

Sarah f. burns

Supplies

Palette. A simple piece of smooth, thin plywood works great for an oil painting palette. About 11" x 15" or larger. New Wave Posh Tabletop Palettes are excellent for purchase. You can make one yourself if you have the means. Go to classroom.sarahfburns.com/blog for more information about making your own wooden palette.

Medium. You will need something to thin your paint when you're working. My favorite medium is Oleogel by Rublev. Purchase it at NaturalPigments.com. I love it because it's simply linseed oil with some silica to make it a gel instead of a liquid. It looks like a tube of oil paint and can be taken anywhere without the risk of leaking or spilling.

Another good option is Artist's Grade Linseed Oil, any brand. If you choose this, you will need a little palette cup to keep it in while you are painting.

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 don't work and break easily. I like RGM Idea Line Palette Knives. They are made from fully non welded stainless steel. They should last a lifetime.

Brush Washer. My favorite brush washers are the Anderson and Sons Steel Airtight Brushwasher. They have an 8 oz or 20 oz option. I use the 8 oz option for plein air painting. If you would like a less expensive choice, the Silicoil Brush Cleaner works well, but is not leak-proof.

Solvent for Brush Washer. You will need a solvent to put in your brush washer to clean your brushes. There are three choices; Artist's Grade Rectified Turpentine, Mineral Spirits or Turpenoid Natural. I use the Rectified Turpentine, but it has volatile oils which can harm you. Use it with an air purifier, open windows, outdoors or with an N95 mask. Mineral Spirits are a little better and Turpenoid Natural is better yet.

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 Arches Oil Paper. The down side is it can feel very dry to paint on. Not as archival as linen or panels. You can save money too by purchasing plain flat hardboard and covering it with PVA size or Gesso.

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.

Disposable Gloves. You may not always want to paint with them on, but there are some tasks you'll need them for. Keep them handy!

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

Sarah f. burns

Easels

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

Checklist

Easel.

See classroom.sarahfburns.com/blog

Palette.

11" x 15" piece of thin, smooth plywood, or
New Wave Posh Tabletop Palette

Medium.

Oleogel by Rublev, or
Artist's Grade Linseed Oil

Palette Knife.

RGM brand recommended Trowel or
Shovel Type with Metal Blade

Brush Washer.

Anderson and Sons Airtight Brushwasher, or
Silicoil Brush Washer

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
Arches Oil Paper

Rags or Paper Towels.

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

Tongue and Groove Pliers.

Crescent R27 7.5"

Disposable Gloves.

Essential Pigment List.

Titanium White
Cadmium Yellow Light
Cadmium Red Light
Quinacridone Magenta
Cerulean Blue
Ultramarine Blue
Ivory 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