

Plein Air Painting Without Borders (Acrylics)

Instructor: Patrick Saunders

Very Important: *This is a suggested materials list only, and nothing is a requirement. I am simply conveying the materials that I use. Every painter is different, and there is no wrong or right way. Use this only as a guide. Feel free to contact me with any questions. contact@patricksaunders.com*

Painting Surfaces

One of the easiest elements of acrylic painting is the fact that you can paint on almost any surface. Unlike traditional oil paints, acrylic is not destructive to the surface and does not require any type of primer, although you may still want to use one.

Some possible surfaces...

Canvas

You just can't beat that traditional canvas feel. You can buy prestretched, or stretch your own. It is important to prime the canvas with acrylic gesso to prevent cracking. If you choose to purchase a preprimed canvas, make sure that it is primed with acrylic gesso rather than a lead based gesso (very seldom will you come across a lead primed canvas). Acrylic paint will not adhere to a lead based gesso.

Illustration Board

You can also paint on illustration board - available at any art supply store - either primed or unprimed. I apply only one coat of acrylic gesso with a palette knife. Illustration board is absorbent enough that one coat easily covers.

Masonite (available at hardware stores and lumber yards)

I apply 2 coats of acrylic gesso in the same manner as I would for stretched canvas.

Strathmore Bristol paper

This is an extremely economical solution for the sake of this class. Bristol comes in pads with a variety of sizes and rough to smooth finishes. There is no need to prime the paper, although you will need something such as a drawing board to tape it to. It's a heavier weight paper, so it won't buckle much when wet.

Sometimes I will stain the surface with a thin wash of a neutral acrylic color, such as Burnt Sienna or Burnt Umber.

Brushes

I don't use expensive brushes. Standard white synthetic brushes by Utrecht, Winsor & Newton or Grumbacher are extremely effective. Of the different styles available, I prefer flats. Brights just don't hold a large enough charge of paint for my tastes, and I don't need filberts, because flats tend to become filberts after some use. I only use three sizes - a #12 for larger work, a #5 or #6 for medium work. For cleaning my brushes, I use ordinary soap and water. It is imperative that you clean your brushes after each use - dried acrylic paint is impossible to remove from the brush.



Acrylic Paints

There are many different brands of acrylic paints of varying prices. Premium paints have a higher viscosity, and the amount of pigment per tube is more saturated. Student grade paints are around half the price, and if you're new to acrylic painting you probably won't notice the difference. Stay away from fluid acrylics which are sold in small plastic bottles - these are intended for use with airbrushes which we won't be covering in this class.

Some premium brands include:

- Liquitex Acrylic Artist Color
- Golden Acrylics
- Winsor & Newton Finity Artists' Acrylic Colour



Some student grade brands include:

- Liquitex Basics Acrylic Color
- Utrecht Acrylics
- Grumbacher Academy Acrylic



Keep in mind that colors will vary between brands, so an Alizarin Crimson in Liquitex may not look exactly the same as Alizarin Crimson in Golden Acrylics.

My Color Choices

My palette changes constantly as I try new colors, but I always keep a consistent set of warm and cool. Below is my current palette. Please do not feel obligated to purchase all of these colors.

Titanium White - *If I need a stiffer white, I will sometime use acrylic gesso instead.*

Cadmium Yellow Deep Hue - *I find I'm using less and less of this and may replace it with a cooler version (maybe lemon yellow or cad yellow light) in the near future.*

Cadmium Orange - *I was given a number of tubes of this and found that it greatly reduced my use of Cadmium Yellow, as I normally mixed it with Cad Red for orange anyway.*

Cadmium Red Medium Hue - *my warm red choice*

Alizarin Crimson Hue - *my cool red choice*

Yellow Ochre - *the lightest of the earthtones on my palette*

Burnt Sienna - *another color that I find myself using less of.
I can get a similar color by mixing other colors*

Burnt Umber - *mixes with other colors to make rich darks (Burnt Umber, Alizarin and Prussian Blue make a rich black)*

Prussian Blue - *my warm dark blue*

Cobalt Blue - *my cool blue*

Cerulean Blue Hue - *my warm light blue*

Viridian Hue - *a cool green for landscapes*

Permanent Green Light - *a warm green for landscapes*

Additional colors I sometimes use...

Cadmium Yellow Light - *cooler yellow*

Quinacridone Magenta - *a brighter, cooler version of Alizarin. Great for flowers.*

Palette Knives

I tend to use 2 sizes of palette knives for a number of uses. The larger rounded corner trowel is for applying gesso, and scraping down large areas of painted canvas. I use the smaller sharp corner knife for detail work.

Water Container

Use anything you like, but I recommend something large so you won't have to frequently change the water.

Palette

At home, I use a large piece of glass, which I can easily scrape clean with a razor as it becomes necessary. Another trick with a glass palette is that you can place a piece of colored paper behind it to match the color of your canvas.

Rags

Make sure to bring paint rags. You can use paper towels if you like, or any absorbent fabric.

Easels

I recommend a portable easel, not only for the class, but for home and on location work as well. There are numerous styles and prices to choose from. Many will also hold supplies for easy transport. My current choice is the Daytripper by Joshua Been.