

MATERIALS FOR CONCORD, MAY 2019

Paint Surfaces: what to paint on?

During these 3 days we'll paint on small ish to medium size surfaces, approximately 13x13, 13x14, 13x15 ish inches, in that range. Larger of course but only IF you feel confident with covering that much surface quickly, depending on your own experience.

And given that we are NOT trying to make finished products or 'trophies', let's use well gessoed paper or something like that, instead of prepared 'canvases'. Rather than making nice pretty paintings to take to galleries, I'd prefer that you *give up all expectations of 'finish'* and instead think in terms of trying to achieve *perceptual resolution* (RESOLUTION, as opposed to FINISH) in *painting*. I suggest that for the first morning, we stay within 12x13 ish, unless you know that in a short period of time you can cover a lot.

(One thing you should know is that I have NO interest in nice pretty pictures for galleries and that for me, the take away from this class, is not to mechanistic like this is 'how to' paint a picture but rather that you go away with a slightly recalibrated perceptual apparatus more tuned to the dynamics of what is happening on your painting or drawing. Sure I could show you how to do this or how to do that, but it would be disingenuous and false.)

COMMERCIALY PREPARED PAPER IS FINE ALSO, I KNOW THERE ARE A VARIETY OF BRANDS IN PADS ON WHICH YOU CAN PAINT WITH OIL PAINT. YOU CAN USE THOSE AS WELL. STRETCHED CANVASS SEEMS LIKE OVERKILL AND PRESEMPITIVE. KEEP IT SIMPLE.

We'll start a new painting each morning and each afternoon, pushing as far as possible for a "*premier coup*" as Edwin Dickinson called it (from the French), a "first strike" approach, or in Italian, *alla prima* (all at once). Maybe you will do more than one on some mornings/afternoons so please!, bring enough surfaces so as not to run out – *better to have too many than too few*.

Please bring enough surfaces for 3 days; assume you are going to begin a new one each morning and each afternoon, you can figure out the math. Better to bring along too many than too few. Some suggested sizes 11x13, 12x12, 12x14, 12x15, that range.

Also, for some fast color studies we are going to do, please bring a number of 10x12, 12X 12 iah piecea in addition.

TO CARRY SUPPLIES AROUND – I always have a **strong canvas LL BEAN type bag**, with handles (is perfect for hauling panels, paper and other material.

<https://www.llbean.com/llb/shop/33381?page=boat-and-tote-bag-open-top>

And, **PUSH PINS** or **TAPE** to attach your surfaces to a backing board (light weight ¼ inch plywood, homosote, etc) of some kind while working.

Don't forget a **BACKING BOARD**, something onto which you can tape or pin your working surface. I'd recommend not smaller than 18x8 inches. ¼ inch Plywood or homosote or drawing board or a piece of MDF or whatever you use

If you want to work on gessoed linen, it need NOT be formally stretched. Stapled or tacked to plywood or homosote is just fine. If it's plywood you're tacking to, a coat of shellac (that has had plenty of time to dry) keeps the wood well sealed.

You can also use this board as a drawing board when we are focusing on that.

Brushes:

Please **DO NOT** bring **TINY LITTLE** brushes, like for painting the whiskers of mice. In order to load paint generously you need good sized, strong tools, capable of moving the stuff around – *not* the kind of brush a Chinese drawing master in the 18th century would have used to paint a princess's eyelashes. ***Always think about your brush size in relation to the paint surface size*** - a small brush doesn't cover, imagine you are using a snow shovel that makes large broad marks. Consider the brush as making a foot print and you want the footprint to add up to something.

I strongly recommend the relatively cheap **white nylon (synthetic) rounds** with longish hairs, they load paint much differently than flats or filberts. Soft nylons ROUNDS are very good for working on smooth surface. Get to know what each brush will do. Flat brushes draw very differently than rounds. IF you have only been using flats, a round brush is a VERY different kind of experience and you can 'draw' with it in a way not possible with a flat or filbert.

BLICK calls one of their rounds, a scholastic wonder white, it has a long blue handle. Maybe try a #16, #14, #12. There are of course other brands, I'm just suggesting this as an example and, it's what I use and what is relatively inexpensive and a very good value:

<http://www.dickblick.com/items/05381-1016/>

PALETTE KNIFE: a nice long one for cleaning off the palette. WE ARE NOT going to use palette knives for putting on the paint, only for cleaning off the palette. Please don't bring the tiny little 'painting' knives. The only thing a palette knife is good for is cleaning up a mess, NOT MIXING COLOR.

Paint:

I'm NOT concerned with particular brands (you do *NOT* need Williamsburg or Old Holland to paint well. Winsor and Newton, Rembrandt or Gamblin are great paints), but you may want to have a useful selection/range of earth colors and prismatic. This gives you an idea:

A Quinacridone Red; and maybe a Permanent Red Medium and Cad Red Light; Cad Orange; Yellow Ochre; Indian Yellow; Permanent Yellow Medium; Hansa Yellow light; Cad Yellow Deep; Viridian; Cobalt Blue; Ultramarine; Cerulean Blue (*not* Cerulean Blue Hue which is a cheap version of real Cerulean); and Ivory Black. (yes, black is a color regardless of what some people say about not using black. That's ridiculous as silly as the people who don't use white.)

This is just an example, you can bring what you have or what you like, but it should be a range. I always prefer *not* too many greens already in the tube – better to follow Cezanne's example – several yellows and several blues and learn to mix them up on the battlefield of the palette. The above is a sample list of strong and useful colors. It's very useful to have many yellows, you can get to know what they each feel like and how they mix with other things like blues.

Please, as far as COLORS NOT TO BRING - absolutely, no Burnt Umber or Raw Umber – they are both mixed from processed dog turd. Also, NO Burnt Siena.

For **White**, I recommend **Permalba White** (made by Weber and Co., and available in a large tube or jar from every catalog nationally) – a superb white – flexible, non-yellowing, and non-toxic. And **Gamblin's FLAKE WHITE REPLACEMENT (FWR)**, in a large tube. Those two, MIXED on your palette make a terrific white.

The Palette:

I suggest the LARGEST POSSIBLE PALETTE, because you need room to make a mess and mix paint. The palette is the playing field, or battlefield, however you want to think about it. The tiny little palettes that come with these Russian and domestically made pochad boxes and other plein air movement gizmos are really quite ridiculous and I don't recommend any of that. One cannot possibly lay out extended paint thoughts on those 8 ½ x 11 inch palettes. If you have it bring a French easel and lay across that a large palette.

At any hardware store you can buy ¼ inch (NOT 1/8 inch) plexiglass, in opaque white or get it in clear and then, put two coats of gesso on the underside so that you can see your paint against white. Have it cut so that it fills the depth of the drawer on your French easel when the drawer is pulled out. The plexi usually come 23 or 24 inches wide, which is a good size. Bring a c clamp that will hold it to the drawer in case there is wind.

If you are using a pochad box or something like that, bring what we used to call la TV table, a light weight folding device and make a large palette, could be a disposable one no smaller than 11x14 but I'd say 16x20 or something like that, and use the table to hold your stuff.

I really recommend not holding the palette, it is such a waste of a hand. Keep your hands empty and put a brush in one. Regardless of your easel, I suggest one of these very light weight tables that folds up, to hold a palette and brush cup.

This is just a suggestion, not a requirement. But PLEASE, NO OLD MASTER GREY PALETTES and NO NATURAL WOOD wooden palettes. The dark surface is misunderstood old master schtick and will only undermine the presence of your color. We are painting on white surfaces so we use white palettes. True, that Poussin painted on a dark palette but he also used a dark canvas. And this is the 21st century not the 17th.

Disposable palettes are ok although to some people they are not environmentally PC, but bring the large size, 16x20 ish, if that's what you paint on.

Drawing:

How can the painter think if not graphically? Drawing before painting is a useful way to chart a course, establish a map/plan, plot out direction, intention and possibility. I will talk about drawing each day and show a variety of reproductions of other people's drawing. A sketchbook should be part of your luggage or supplies wherever/whenever you go – for making notes, observations and visual ruminations of all sorts. Learn to think, reflect, dream and travel with pencil in hand. And have a small sharpener.

Bring a sketchbook in the 8.5 x 10 inch range and some pencils, whatever you are comfortable with for thinking visually on paper – 5B, 6B, 7B, etc.

NO CHARCOAL.

An eraser:

<http://www.dickblick.com/products/pink-pearl-eraser/?clickTracking=true>

woodless pencils:

<http://www.dickblick.com/products/koh-i-noor-progresso-woodless-graphite-pencils/?clickTracking=true>

also have one of these if you can find them at various venues, this is just one shop. They are very inexpensive but terrific to have for drawing:

<http://www.texasart.com/g4628/X-acto-Precision-Edge-3-in-Triangle.htm>

Please bring a **SMALL SCISSORS**

And a small glue stick

<http://www.dickblick.com/items/23822-0030/>

OR A SMALL CONTAINER OF ELMERS GLUE or the white neutral ph glue if you already have it.

Solvent:

For working outside, standard 100% mineral spirits will be fine, odor will not be an issue if we are outside. You can bring a glass bottle (a wine bottle with cork) to pour it into at the end of each session - the sediment will settle and it can be poured off and used again in a few days. Don't forget a *funnel*.

Brush cup:

You need a decent sized brush cup for cleaning the brushes – NOT one of those tiny little palette clip on cups. Jerrys or any other distributor carries a silver colored brush cup with the insert that has holes in it so that the sediment goes down to the bottom. You don't need the giant size outside. But get a good one, usually about \$30.00 ish dollars, and they last for many years. Unbreakable.

Gloves:

I always carry a box of ***disposable surgical type gloves*** (also available at hardware stores) – ***vinyl NOT latex*** - latex is permeable when solvent is involved. Protection of the hands and skin (and I'm not thinking cosmetically) is a personal issue, but, I always recommend wearing thin vinyl gloves to paint, no one needs unnecessary exposure to solvents or to the toxicity of some pigments. An invisible glove cream like Winsor and Newton's "Artguard" is also a possibility.

I use a glove available from **Grainger** Hardware (they have a website with an 800 number and you can call them directly, they deliver promptly via UPS. They offer a very fine and tough green glove made of nitrile (will last MUCH longer than what you get in the paint dept of a hardware store). I use a size medium, without powder. If you have small hands get small. You want a tight fit. **Item number: 4GC49.** Touch N Tuff, Powder Free Nitrile Gloves. I think this is the link:

http://www.grainger.com/Grainger/ANSELL-Disposable-Gloves-4GC50?cm_sp=IO- -IDP- -PC_TS70300505&cm_vc=IDPPCTZ1

Easel: You will of course need some kind of easel to hold your work in place. I always prefer the French landscape easel which is convenient and practical. And remember a folding chair if you sit down to work, which I do.

Keep in mind that the 'plein air' easels, the pochade boxes, have tiny little palettes and they are really not so functional unless you are making paintings 2 x 2 inches. If you use those easels, I'd suggest a wide piece of ¼ inch plexi with white gesso underneath, and lay it across the entire surface and extending over the sides.

A FOLDING CHAIR OR STRONG PAINTING STOOL IF YOU LIKE TO SIT. Please bring a chair or arrange to borrow one if you are traveling by plane. There are times when I am going to want to talk with the group and I want everyone sitting. Also, for some of the drawing exercises I want you to sit.

Paper Towels: Essential to the painter - my long-standing favorite is *Bounty Microwave* – they're 100% cotton and each towel goes a long way. Almost everything else is junk next to Bounty – if you cannot find the Microwave, anything Bounty makes will be OK, and the price is worth it.

Misc: Don't forget to bring *plastic bags* to put used towels and trash in – I use the ones from the supermarket trips or the sort that the Sunday paper comes in.

A **broad brimmed hat** is desirable to keep the sun out of your eyes and minimize strain; sunscreen!!, and don't forget all the other accouterments of outdoor painting. A fingernail brush or **hand scrubber** is good for washing up.

Mediums: FORGET THEM, IT'S ALL A BUNCH OF NONSENSE.