

GET STARTED PAINTING! Introduction to painting mediums with Dani Henriksen

Introduction:

About me, my family, my art history degree and how I got started painting.

Why paint?

I believe we all have a desire to “create” inside us which manifests itself in so many ways: cooking, writing, sewing, creating atmospheres and memories in our homes and families. Creating is tapping into our curiosity and seeing where it takes us. I believe the things we learn into when we create tell us so much about ourselves. Creating speaks to the soul and it is a great “mood lifter.”

More reasons to paint:

Anyone can do it!

It is FUN! Art is all about having fun and expressing yourself.

It is rewarding.

The more you do it the better you get.

It can be very meditative and mindful.

It offers endless possibilities.

You can keep the artwork forever, give it as gifts...

It is a fun way to document memories such as places you have been.

It can offer endless challenge and growth.

Different Paint Mediums:

A lot of fun can be had exploring the different characteristics of each paint medium. There are three major painting mediums: watercolor, acrylic and oil.

Watercolor:

materials needed: watercolor paint, water, paint brush, watercolor paper

Pluses:

Affordable, nothing needed besides the paint, water, paper and a brush

Doesn't make a lot of mess

less-toxic

only need paper (preferably watercolor paper) as your painting surface

It has a unique look unlike acrylic and oil including added depth of layered colors

Dries quickly

Portable, easy to take with you for plein air or on trips

There are both transparent and opaque options. The opaque paint is called “gouache.” The beautiful transparency and layering of watercolors is unlike anything you can create with oil and acrylic. It is uniquely beautiful.

Unlike oil and acrylic you don't have to worry about wasted paint - unless you use watercolor out of a tube.

Minuses:

Easy to learn, difficult to master. Watercolor is known as the "medium of masters" because unlike with acrylic and oil, if you make a mistake it may be difficult or impossible to hide.

You often have to wait in between paint layers for drying so that your painting doesn't turn into a muddy mess.

Watercolor can be unpredictable at times because of the nature of the water. This can be a positive thing because it adds to the spontaneity and uniqueness of the piece but it may be frustrating at times and take flexibility.

Acrylics:

Items needed: gloves for safety, acrylic paints, brushes, water, a painting surface, gesso to prime the painting surface, and varnish for after the painting is finished.

Advantages: unlike oil paints they are water based and can be thinned with just water - no toxic solvents required.

Wet paint can easily be cleaned off brushes with soap and water.

It is fast drying. It is ready to over-paint in a short time and can be ready to hang or sell the day after it is painted.

They can be used to paint somewhat like watercolor since they can be thinned with water.

There are a variety of mediums that can be mixed into the paint to create different textures such as molding paste, crackle paste, drip paste. This is unique to acrylic paint.

More affordable than oil paints

Disadvantages:

The paint can contain toxins in the pigments so you should wear gloves.

The quick drying time can be considered a disadvantage to some who like to work with the paint. It is more difficult to blend colors and create subtle changes. This can create a look of sharp edges around forms and some artists prefer that. There is a certain crispness to the brush stroke.

Your brushes and tools need to be cleaned quickly or the paint will stick to them permanently and easily ruin them.

Tips:

Not all acrylic paints are equal in quality, in fact there is a huge difference. The biggest mistake you can make is to buy cheap acrylic paint - they are not worth your time and effort I promise!

I recommend Golden brand paints. Liquitex brand is also nice just use the highest quality and do NOT buy the Liquitex "basics" line. You can purchase Golden and Liquitex at Michaels, but I prefer the selection at Dick Blick art store in Sugarhouse.

Oils:

Items needed: gloves for safety, oil paints, solvent, additive, paint brushes, painting surface, gesso to prime the painting surface, and varnish for after you paint if you prefer.

Advantages:

One of the biggest advantages is that it is slow drying for artists who want more time to work with the painting, especially for more subtle blending variations of colors. Easier to use if trying to go for a more realistic looking painting because of the subtle blending.

Creates luminous colors (light filled).

Also, because of the slow drying time some artists like to paint “wet on wet” aka “alla prima” and having the colors somewhat blend together as they touch when wet. Impressionists for example.

You can adjust the viscosity (how thick or fluid it is) by adding an additive. I use terpenoid. Explain and demonstrate.

Solvents such as terpenoid are used to clean your brush and can be used to thin out or remove paint on the canvas.

It is hard-wearing: there is no change in color or texture as it dries.

Can be painted over once dried.

Smooth buttery texture!

It is very forgiving as you can keep manipulating it while it's wet.

Variety of textural effects... you can do thin transparent layers or thick “impasto”

Disadvantages:

The slow drying makes it a slower process to move onto the next stage of painting. It requires time commitment.

The use of toxic solvent instead of water

Takes longer to build up layers if you are going for the look of transparent layers because of the drying time in-between.

Most expensive paint to purchase.

Painting surfaces:

paper
wood board - I have cut at Home Depot
canvas...

Where to get materials:

Watercolor:

I use a little Winsor Newton box set from Michaels

Watercolor paper: Arches brand is recommended by some artists. You can sometimes find it at Michaels, but always find it at Dick Blick. Canson is a good brand too.

Gouache: I bought the liquid gouache Winsor Newton tube set from Dick Blick.

Acrylic:

Golden and the Professional Liquitex “heavy body” brands can be found at Michaels and Dick Blick. Do NOT buy the Liquitex basics brand!!

Michaels carries a limited supply of the mediums that you can mix into the paint to create different textures such as molding paste, crackle paste, drippy paste. For the best selection go to Dick Blick.

Utrecht Acrylic Gesso

Oils:

I purchase the Utrecht Series 1 Artist Oil Colors (they are not only more affordable than other brands, but well loved by many professionals) My full set of paints include:

Titanium white, naples yellow light, cadmium yellow medium pure, yellow ochre, raw sienna, cadmium red medium pure, burnt sienna, alizarin crimson, burnt umber, sap green hue, viridian, phthalo green, cobalt blue pure, ultramarine blue, phthalo blue and paynes gray. My whole set cost me around \$300 but a year and a half later I have only gone through about 1/3 of the paint.

You should go to a professional paint store to buy oil paint supplies, last I checked my Michaels didn't carry any. I once again recommend Dick Blick in Sugarhouse; you can also purchase them on their website.

Solvent: Gamblin Gamsol - this is for thinning paint and cleaning your brush.

Additive: Liquin, this product smooths the paint, speeds drying and improves the gloss.

Gamvar Picture Varnish “gloss” finish (if you want the finish of your painting to be glossier, you can purchase a glossier varnish or just continue adding layers of varnish. You have to wait about 24 hours in-between layers for drying time.

Utrecht Acrylic Gesso - to prime the painting surface - necessary step!

Other recommended supplies:

Paint Palette

Easel

Cart for Supplies so they are easy to grab

tube pincher to get all the paint out

wrench for opening paint tubes

Good ventilation when oil painting

Brushes: If you are going for thick brush stroke and visible bristles in the finished product you can get cheap brushes - which a lot of amazing artists do! If you are going for a smoother finish I recommend a nice set of brushes from Dick Blick. I use the Utrecht brand “Tuscan Series.” There are many different shapes of brushes such as bright, fan, filbert, flat, round, angular. A good basic set is a good place to start and you will learn which brushes you tend to use the most. The numbers on the brush indicate the size starting with 1 for the smallest brushes.

Palette Knives: You will need some good palette knives for mixing paint or mixing liquin into paint. Many artists actually use their palette knives as their “brush.” I did one painting entirely with a palette knife. You can get these at Michaels or Dick Blick as well.

Where to learn more:

Books are a great resource!! Here are some I recommend:

For painting:

Carlson’s Guide to Landscape Painting by John F Carlson
Composition of Outdoor Painting by Edgar Payne - is a classic
Landscape Painting by Mitchell Albala - my personal favorite, he breaks it down and makes concepts so understandable.

For drawing:

Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain by Betty Edwards
Perspective Drawing by Kenneth W. Auvil
Drawing from Observation by Brian Curtis

For Inspiration:

The Artist’s Way, A spiritual path to higher creativity by Julia Cameron

Classes:

If you call around about art classes you will find them! Local art museums often offer a variety of classes throughout the year. The Petersen Art Center above Dick Blick is an excellent place to take classes! You can also register as a non-matriculated student at the U or BYU or other universities and take top notch classes - though you will be paying more of course. I am beginning an online class this Fall with J. Kirk Richards based out of Provo. Another great way to learn is to study art history books... you will not only learn about techniques and styles but you will fall more and more in love with art and that passion and direction in knowing what are you love the most is really helpful as you try to develop your own style. Lastly, I recommend following artists you like on social media. They often talk about their process and materials. Sometimes they show how-to videos or time lapses which are really informative!

I just recently began posting my art on Instagram @danihenriksenart. Follow me on there and see what I am up to! Thank you so much for being a part of this webinar today. It was really fun for me! I hope you were inspired to get started painting!! If you have any follow up questions feel free to message me on Instagram or email me at daniute@msn.com.