



Workshop: **Stuart Shils - *The Structure of the Visual Moment***

Student Supply List:

Paint Surfaces: what to paint on?

During these three days we'll paint on smallish to medium size panels, canvases, panels or gessoed paper is really fine with me, trying to achieve some sort of *perceptual resolution* (RESOLUTION, as opposed to FINISH) in each sitting.

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.

So, maybe in the range of 8.5 x 10 inches, 12 x 12, 11 x 13, etc. Bring enough for 3 days; assuming 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.

My own preference for working small and quickly is for a relatively smooth surface so that everything sits with distinct clarity on the surface and the brush can move with ease. On the other hand, some people work beautifully on rough canvas – so ultimately it's very personal, and rough may have its own opportunities. (I love rough linen but one has to be able to load a mass of paint quickly to overcome the texture.) Bring a variety of sizes and shapes (both square and rectangular. *Not* just rectangular!

A strong canvas bag with handles (like the sort available from LL Bean) is perfect for hauling panels, paper and other material.

Also bring PUSH PINS or tape to attach them to a backing board (light weight 1/4 inch plywood, homosote, etc) of some kind while working. Don't' forget a backing board.

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.

Brushes:

Please *DO NOT* bring *TINY LITTLE* brushes, like for painting the whiskers of mice, I will break them in half. 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.

Whatever kind of brush you are comfortable with (hog hair, nylon bristle, filbert, round, etc.), bring them, but please make sure they are not all #4's.

I like and strongly recommend the relatively cheap white nylon (synthetic) rounds with longish hairs, they load paint much differently than flats or filberts, but for large area flats and filberts work well. Utrecht calls it series #234, get a number 12, 10, 8 or a few of each. Dick Blick makes a similar brush, long blue handle with white hairs, I don't know what the series # is in their case. 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.

Paint:

I'm NOT concerned with particular brands (you do *NOT* need Williamsburg or Old Holland – Winsor and Newton, Rembrandt or Gamblin are great paints), but you may want to have a useful selection/range of earth colors and prismatics. An Earth Red (that could be either Venetian Red, Indian Red, Pozzuoli Earth); a Quinacridone Red; and maybe a Permanent Red Medium and Cad Red Light; Cad Orange; Yellow Ochre; Yellow Ochre Pale (by Rembrandt if you can get it), Indian Yellow; Permanent Yellow Medium; Hansa Yellow light; Cad Yellow Deep and Cad Yellow Light; Viridian; Cobalt Blue; Ultramarine; Cerulean Blue (*not* Cerulean Blue Hue which is a cheap version of real Cerulean); and Ivory Black. 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. Right now, I use Viridian only in the summer, and generally no other greens. 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, absolutely, *no Burnt Umber or Raw Umber* – they are both mixed from processed dog turd. (In watercolor however, Raw Umber is a beautiful color.)

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. THAT, MIXED on your palette WITH *Gamblin's Flake White Replacement White (FWR)*, those two together make a terrific white. FWR also available in a large tube or jar. Tubes may be easier to work with, but don't get the small tubes, only the large.

The Palette:

I suggest the largest palette possible because you need room to make a mess and mix paint. At any hardware store you can buy 1/4 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 drawer of 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.

Drawing:

Bring at least one 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. BUT NO CHARCOAL. Also, please get some litho crayons, called STONES, lithocrayons, available at Dick Blick in varying grades of darkness. Try a 1,2,3. These are wonderful things to draw with , very bold.

I also recommend prismacolor double tipped makers, a black one, please get one of these, you can order at blick: <http://www.dickblick.com/products/prismacolor-premier-double-ended-art-markers/>

the erasers: <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 get one of these, 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>

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.

We are going to focus often on drawing . Sketchbooks should not be too much smaller than a piece of copy paper – like 8x11, 12x12, but **NOT** great big ones like newsprint pads.

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*.

(For inside, ALWAYS use Gamsol, it kills your brain more gently than other stuff.)

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 - while a French landscape easel is convenient and practical, whatever you normally use outside will be fine. And remember a folding chair if you sit down to work, which I do.

A FOLDING CHAIR OR STRONG PAINTING STOOL, IF YOU LIKE 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:

I can talk about oil(s) when we meet. Please bring whatever kind you're most comfortable with – cold pressed linseed, stand oil, etc. There will not really be time for experimentation with mediums, but I can attempt to answer any questions you may have.

Basically though, the whole issue is irrelevant for our purposes. Much of it is hocus pocus. If you are traveling and need the paintings to dry, something like Gamblin's GALKYD might be useful.

Books: For inspiring reading one cannot go wrong with:

- 1) *The Art Spirit* by Robert Henri,
- 2) Van Gogh's Letters (to his bother)
- 3) *Hawthorne on Painting*
- 4) Jack Flam's, *Matisse on Art* is very good as well: a superb collection of Matisse's thoughts, lectures, letters, etc.

All are easily available in paperback and should be part of your essential art library at home and on the road – these are really fine books, like reading poetry.

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