

SHILS MATERIALS FOR CULLOWHEE, SUMMER 2017

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 IF you feel confident with covering the 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.

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 – 12x12.

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 which offers it's own quality of gorgeous resistance to paint.) Bring a variety of sizes and shapes (both square and rectangular. *Not* just rectangular!

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

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.

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 footprint 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, long 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 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.

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. (In watercolor however, Raw Umber is a beautiful color.) 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 palette possible 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. 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 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.

This is just a suggestion, not a requirement. But PLEASE, NO OLD MASTER GREY PALETTES and NO NATURAL WOOD wooden palettes, it's 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.

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:

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.

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>

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 be smaller than a piece of copy paper** – like 8x11, 12x12, but **NOT** great big ones like newsprint pads.

Please bring a **SMALL SCISSORS** and a very small container of **ELMERS GLUE**

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 - 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. Keep in mind that these now popular 'plein air' easels that everyone is paying a lot of \$ for, do not allow you to have the sort of palette needed to really paint anything other than a tiny little painting but, you can lay a large piece of plexiglass across the whole thing.

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 totally irrelevant for our purposes, 'mediums' really have nothing to do with 'seeing' or learning how to see with clarity. And, they have nothing to do with the design of a page. Much of it is hocus pocus and one way that many people get you to focus on anything but what really requires attention. If you are traveling and need the paintings to dry fast, something like Gamblin's GALKYD might be useful.