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CCWS Workshop

Suggested Materials

You can bring any materials that suit you, but here is a list of the materials I use that you might consider. I do have to emphasize the importance of good quality paints, brushes, and paper. Watercolor can be frustrating without them. I will discuss each with recommendations below.

Paints

Of course you can use any colors you have on hand, but I have some suggestions you may want to try. I am very partial to using single pigment paints. This means that all of my colors contain only one pigment, as opposed to some colors, such as Sap Green, that have as many as three pigments. There is a rule of thumb that says that if you mix more than three pigments you begin to get muddy colors. So if you start with a single pigment paint you have more flexibility in mixing as opposed to a pigment that already has three. Most tubes have the pigment(s) listed on the side. They all start with a P.

I use Daniel Smith watercolors almost exclusively. They are a bit more expensive but they contain more pigment and less filler compared to many brands, so a tube of their paint lasts much longer. Many of the colors below are available in other brands. However, for many of these colors, the names change among brands. I have included the pigment number for clarity.

You will also notice the “quinacridone” colors on my palette. I frequently use these in place of the traditional earth tones, such as Burnt Sienna, Raw Sienna, etc. They are much more transparent and are superior mixers with other pigments. But if you would prefer to use the typical earth tones, feel free. I continue to use Burnt Sienna, for example.

The pigments I consider the most important and that will be used in my demonstrations are in boldface.

Blues

Ultramarine Blue (I use Holbein instead) PB 29

Cobalt Blue PB 28 (not Cobalt Blue hue)

Cerulean Blue- (I prefer DS **Cerulean Chromium**) PB 36; avoid PB 35

Cobalt Turquoise PB 36

These blues exist in all brands of paint. However, the hue of Cerulean Blue and Cobalt Turquoise-both PB 36-vary greatly among brands.

Yellows

Quinacridone Gold formerly PO 49, now, sadly, a mix of PO 48 and PY150

Non-DS option: Raw Sienna

A good quality yellow (I don't use yellow very much, so bring one if you want to use it. Indian Yellow or New Gamboge are good choices.)

Oranges and Reds

Permanent Orange PO 62

Non-DS option: Cadmium Orange

Quinacridone Burnt Scarlet PR 206 and **Quinacridone Burnt Orange** PO 48

Non-DS option: Burnt Sienna

Quinacridone Rose PV 19 (Cool Red) Avoid Alizarin Crimson. AC is very fugitive and fades over time. Any cool red that isn't fugitive.

Quinacridone Coral PR 209 (Warm Red)

Non-DS option: Cadmium Red, or any paint that uses PR209 or is a warm red.

Brushes

Bring your favorite brushes. They needn't be sable, but should have an ample water reservoir and good points. I recommend rounds sizes 8-12 2-3 brushes within these ranges should be adequate. I use #12 and #16 Silver Black Velvet hybrid synthetic mops (they work much like an expensive sable at a fraction of the cost) and sometimes a #12 Escoda Perla round synthetic. These are only available online.

Paper

I can't emphasize enough the importance of good quality paper. I now use Baohong 140 lb. rough almost exclusively. It is the closest I've found to the old Arches. You do have to purchase it online, since most stores don't carry it. Other brands, such as Saunders Waterford, Fabriano and Lanaquerelle, are also fine options. Arches has improved in quality but can still be problematic. *Avoid Strathmore and Canson*, however. I also recommend that you avoid hot press. Cold press and rough are much easier to use.

It is most economical to cut up individual sheets and tape them to a board. You need to bring your own board (foamcore or heavy cardboard work) and masking tape. For *plein air* I prefer to use quarter sheets: divide a 22 x 30 sheet in 4 to make four 11 x 15 sheets. Watercolor blocks are also a good option. Again, Arches has improved in quality but can still be problematic.

Palette

An inexpensive plastic folding palette works well for *plein air*. If you are just starting and have a clean palette, organize your paints by color, putting all the reds together, the blues together, etc. Put the cool colors on one side and the warm colors on the other. Label them or make a diagram in your sketchbook. It's very easy to forget which is which otherwise.

Water

Bring water containers. I use an old mineral water bottle or canteen for clean water. I use two old yogurt containers to hold water for mixing.

Easel

If you're comfortable working at an easel, please bring it. Unlike in oil painting, easels aren't essential in watercolor. In fact I'm most comfortable holding my board in my hand.

Pencil and Sketchbook

For me a small sketchbook and pencil are essential and will be emphasized in the workshop for value studies. I prefer a 2B mechanical pencil, but the choice is yours. Soft pencils work best for thumbnail sketches and drawing on watercolor paper. I do pencil value study sketches prior to every painting. Aquabee and Stillman & Birn make good sketchbooks if you need to purchase one.

Other Suggestions

A good sense of humor.