



WATERCOLOR PAINTING classes & workshops

Suggested Watercolor Materials

Most artists love browsing art supply stores and art catalogs for all the wonderful supplies & materials. However, **restraint** is the key, especially if you are diving into watercolor for the first time. A relative few colors, few brushes and a single brand of paper will serve even the most serious of watercolorists for a very long time. The first two pages include descriptions of recommended materials as well as explanations of the particular recommendations. The last page is an itemized list that can be used to assess your current stock of supplies and as a shopping list for your next trip to the art supply store.

Paint: Simplicity in the palette should be a guiding principle, especially for beginning watercolorists. Working with a limited number of colors from the start will help you develop a sensitive eye for color and exceptional color mixing skill. Basically your palette needs only one cool and one warm hue of the primaries, 3 secondary colors at most, and two versatile neutrals. This suggested list will help keep your palette simple but versatile. Student grade colors are much less expensive than professional colors and will do just fine for learning and experimenting with watercolor.

Color/ Temperature	Professional Grade Color Recommendation (see list of professional brands on the last page)	Student Grade Color Recommendation (I recommend the Grumbacher Academy line of paint for student grade watercolor)
Cool Yellow	<i>Any Professional Brand - Lemon Yellow</i>	<i>Grumbacher Academy Lemon Yellow</i>
Warm Yellow	<i>Any Professional Brand - Cadmium Yellow Medium</i>	<i>Grumbacher Academy Cadmium Yellow Medium</i>
Cool Red	<i>Any Professional Brand - Permanent Alizarin Crimson</i>	<i>Grumbacher Academy Alizarin Crimson</i>
Warm Red	<i>Any Professional Brand - Cadmium Red Light</i>	<i>Grumbacher Academy Cadmium Red Light Hue</i>
Cool Blue	<i>Any Professional Brand - Thalo Blue (or Pthalo)</i>	<i>Grumbacher Academy Pthalo Blue</i>
Warm Blue	<i>Any Professional Brand - Ultramarine Blue</i>	<i>Grumbacher Academy Ultramarine Blue</i>
Orange	<i>Any Professional Brand - Cadmium Orange</i>	<i>Grumbacher Academy Cadmium Orange</i>
Green	<i>Any Professional Brand - Viridian</i>	<i>Grumbacher Academy Emerald Green</i>
Violet	<i>Any Professional Brand - Thalo or Dioxazine Violet</i>	<i>Grumbacher Academy Violet</i>
Neutrals	<i>Any Professional Brand - Burnt Sienna and Raw Sienna</i>	<i>Grumbacher Academy Burnt Sienna and Raw Sienna</i>

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Palette : Any large – at least 10" x 12"- sturdy, deep welled, white plastic palette with a cover will do. There are many manufacturers that produce good, low-cost plastic palettes that will perform well for many years. Some excellent choices are: the Robert Wood, Tom Lynch, Frank Webb and the Cheap Joe's Original palettes. I am a fan of and use the John Pike palette. It is somewhat more expensive and is made of a sturdier plastic than the others and will last for a life time of watercolor painting.

Paper: This is an area where I recommend not trying to save money. Many beginning watercolor painters start out working on those rather popular watercolor paper pads found in most art supply shops. While relatively inexpensive, readily available and convenient, their surfaces have a heavy application of sizing that seriously affects the papers' working properties. On these papers, the sizing keeps most of the water and color on the surface. For someone new to watercolor, the results can be surprising, unpredictable and *frustrating*.

I recommend starting with either *D'Arches* or *Cheap Joe's Kilimanjaro 140lb Cold Press* paper. Both of these brands have excellent working characteristics and are not only great to start on, are great for those accomplished works you will create as you progress! They are both moderately absorbent – an important factor in wash and fluid control – and will stand up to a good bit of work and re-work. The best way to minimize the cost is to buy paper by the full sheet (22" x 30") and cut or tear them to a workable size – 11" x 15" (quarter sheet) or smaller.

D'Arches is the leading brand of watercolor paper, favored by many of the best watercolorists over the years. Generally speaking, it can be found in the same art supply stores that sell those same watercolor pads that so many choose to start with.

Kilimanjaro is the private brand for Cheap Joe's Art Stuff. Cheap Joe's is primarily a mail order supplier which stocks a wide variety of brands and materials, including *D'Arches* as well as their own. Find them on line at www.cheapjoes.com.

Brushes: Most watercolor brushes that are offered in the art supply sections of most stores are usually too small for good watercolor work. Five quality synthetic or synthetic/natural blend brushes are really all that are needed to do the trick. There are many quality brushes made by many different manufacturers. The most important characteristics in watercolor brushes are water absorption, springiness and, for rounds, coming to a fine point at the tip. Brushes called "white sable" (which is really synthetic nylon) or "golden nylon" are good choices as they generally combine the best characteristics of natural hair brushes at moderate cost. On the last page, I have listed a number of brush brands that I have found excellent for the cost. What ever brand you chose these are the types and sizes that are needed to start.

Rounds : # 8, 14 and 20

Flats : 1" and 2"

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Other Related Materials:

- a couple 2B drawing pencils
- a pencil sketch book – 11 x 14 or smaller, for sketching and value studies
- a small watercolor sketchbook, 9 x 12 or smaller, for quick color sketches and color studies.
- one natural sponge
- “studio rags” – old T-shirts or other absorbent material, cut into rectangles for clean-up, blotting, etc.
- two water containers – one for clean water and one for dirty rinse water
- board to support your paper, a product known as “Gatorboard” is popular as is tempered masonite, plywood or luan sealed with varnish
- tape or bulldog clips for mounting or holding paper to the board

Professional Grade Paint: all of the following brands are professional grade paint and will provide excellent results. Costs from brand to brand will vary. In general, buying in larger tubes will provide the best value/lower cost per ml of paint.

- Winsor & Newton – perhaps the oldest continuing manufacturer of watercolor paint, W&N is high quality paint with, generally speaking, the highest price.
- Holbein Artist's Watercolors – manufactured in Japan, these paints are creamy and manufactured to promote easy flowing washes.
- Grumbacher Finest Artists' Watercolor – another old brand, these paints are manufactured to produce maximum color intensity.
- DaVinci Professional Quality Watercolor– generally speaking, the best value of the professional grade paint manufacturers
- American Journey Watercolors – private brand name for Cheap Joes Art Stuff, an excellent paint at very good prices, available only through Cheap Joe's – online at www.cheapjoes.com
- Daniel Smith Extra Fine Watercolor – another private brand available only through the Daniel Smith website or catalog. An excellent line of paint with some unique color offerings. Ounce for ounce, some of the most expensive paint available.

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Watercolor Materials Inventory Check/Shopping List

Paint Color	Needed/Option	Less Expensive Option – Grumbacher Academy brand	More Expensive Option - Any of the professional grade brands listed above
Lemon Yellow	Needed		
Cadmium Yellow Medium	Needed		
Permanent Alizarin Crimson	Needed		
Cadmium Red Light	Needed		
Thalo Blue (or Pthalo)	Needed		
Ultramarine Blue	Needed		
Cadmium Orange	Option		
Viridian Green	Option		
Thalo or Dioxazine Violet	Option		
Burnt Sienna Neutrals	Needed		
Raw Sienna	Needed		

Palette	Needed/Option	Less Expensive Options	More Expensive Option
large plastic – at least 10” x 12”, deep paint wells, large mixing area	Needed	Frank Webb or Tom Lynch or Tom Jones or Cheap Joe’s Original Palette	John Pike Palette

Paper	Needed/Option	Less Expensive Option	More Expensive Option
140 lb weight, cold press surface	Needed	Cheap Joes Kilimanjaro	D’Arches

Brushes	Needed/Option	Options
Rounds : # 8, 14 and 20	Needed	Winsor Newton 965 Series; Robert Simmons White Sable line of brushes; Loew-Cornell Ultra Round, Wash Glaze & Sky Wash; Cheap Joe’s Dream Catcher Series – Rounds & Flats
Flats : 1” and 2”	Needed	Same as above

Other Related Materials	Needed/Option	Options
2B Drawing Pencils	Needed	Many similarly priced Options
pencil sketchbook	Needed	Same as above
watercolor sketchbook	Option	
natural sponge	Option	
“studio rags”	Needed	In an effort to go green, I have stopped using paper towels and now use old cut up t-shirts for clean up, blotting, etc. The alternative is to use paper towels
two water containers	Needed	any plastic container from home
Board to support paper	Needed	Gator board, varnished luan, plywood or masonite
tape	Option	drafting tape to hold dry paper
Bulldog Clips	Option	available at office supply stores
Stapler and staples		Used to stretch watercolor paper to its support