

Texart Oil Painting Workshop with James Coe

Using Plein Air Landscapes to Improve Your Wildlife Paintings

MATERIALS LIST

1. OIL PAINTS — any brand, artist's grade preferred.

RECOMMENDED BASIC COLORS:

White (Titanium or Titanium-Zinc)

Ultramarine blue

Cadmium Yellow Pale, Light, or Lemon (shade varies with manufacturer: Gamblin or Williamsburg *Cad. Yellow light* are equivalent to Winsor Newton or Utrecht *Cad. Yellow lemon*)

Yellow Ochre (or Mars Yellow)

Burnt Sienna (or Transparent Red Oxide)

Cadmium Red Light or Medium (shade varies with manufacturer),

Permanent Crimson, Permanent Rose Deep, or Quinacridone Rose (all modern synthetic equivalents to Alizarin Crimson, which is no longer rated as light-fast)

- **ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL COLORS:** Cadmium Yellow Deep or Orange (a warm yellow) Viridian (cool green), and Cobalt or Cerulean Blue (both cool blues; I sometimes use one or the other)
- Other EARTH colors, such as Burnt Umber, Raw Sienna and Raw Umber can be convenient additions to the palette, individually. I prefer Burnt Sienna and Yellow Ochre as my only earths, and sometimes I omit the Ochre. Any of the earth hues can be mixed from the primary pigments on the palette listed above – but the genuine earths have other tactile qualities that make them useful, and are convenient.
- Naples Yellow - I recently added this color back to my palette and appreciate its usefulness in mixing soft grays and greens. Historically, Naples was ground from the toxic compound, Lead Antimony. That formulation is no longer available. Today most brands of Naples Yellow are mixes of yellow ochre, cadmium or hansa yellow and white. I recommend the finding a version with Chromium Titanate (PBr24) as the main ingredient. Winsor Newton *Naples Yellow* and Williamsburg's *Italian Naples Yellow* are two to try.
- Please avoid Pthalo (Winsor) Blue, Prussian Blue and Pthalo (Winsor) Green, which are very strong and staining pigments and can be difficult to control. Beware that some cheap brands of viridian or cobalt or cerulean are made from pthalo with added white.
- Flake White is made from lead and is poisonous. Cremnitz or Flemish whites are also lead.

- I do not use Black. Although many doctrinaire painting teachers tell students to avoid it, I recently tried adding it to my palette during a weeklong workshop and found that it was very useful in mixing certain dark values. Give it a try sometime. Ivory Black is the standard; although Gamblin's Chromatic Black (a transparent blend of quinacridone red and phthalo green) is worth a try.
2. **PORTABLE EASEL** – A folding “French” box easel is optimal. Other collapsible easels will work fine, as well, but I recommend that students paint standing up if they can. *Open Box M* in Wyoming makes a range of beautiful, but expensive pochade boxes for plain air painting, which mount on a photographer's tripod. The entire set-up is very portable and lightweight. Art Essentials has a similar set-up called the *Easy-L*, which is considerably less costly. And even more recently, *Strada* and *Edge Pro* have designed elegant clamshell - shaped boxes using friction laptop hinges that require no screws or tightening. They also mount on tripods and are the ultimate in portable pochade boxes. The legendary *Soltek* folding easel is made from high-tech materials, shaped somewhat like a French box easel, and very expensive. Many users swear by it. And others like the very basic *Guerrilla* line of pochade boxes. On the lowest end of the price scale, *Mabef* offers a “universal folding easel” that can be found for about \$30.
 3. **PALETTE** -- Wood (preferred) or paper pad palette – 12x16” is the recommended size—and if you do not have a French style field easel that provides a shelf for your palette, or a pochade box with an integral palette, then make sure your palette has a thumb hole so you can hold it while you work. IMPORTANT NOTE: brand new wood palettes are untreated and need to be rubbed with a coating of linseed oil the day before first using them. The newest pochade boxes often come with integral plexi or even glass palettes having neutral gray backing color.
 4. **RAGS OR PAPER TOWELS** -- I always have several rags available; the best are pieces of old cotton clothing or flannel sheets torn into square-foot pieces. Some artists prefer paper towels, or shop towels.
 5. **SOLVENT AND A WIDE MOUTH JAR OR CAN** –An “odorless” thinner, such as Weber Turpenoid or Gamblin Gamsol is best. IMPORTANT NOTE: The “natural” or citrus-based thinners are appropriate ONLY for cleaning brushes after you are finished painting. They should not be used to thin your paint. An increasing number of oil painters are opting to work ‘solvent-free’ and are using safflower oil to clean their brushes. This creates issues with working ‘lean’ – but is becoming an accepted mode.
 6. **PAINTING MEDIUM AND A SMALL JAR OR CLIP-ON PALETTE CUP** -- Gamblin “Galkyd” is my favorite. Also recommended: Winsor & Newton “Liquin”, Grumbacher “Copal” Painting Medium, Utrecht or a house brand “Alkyd” medium. Gamblin has recently introduced solvent-free gel and liquid mediums which are slower-drying than alkyds, but favored by artists opting to avoid petroleum-based solvents. For similar reasons, the classic mixture of turpentine and linseed or stand oil (traditionally with a bit of dammar varnish added, as well) is also out of favor. When working indoors, the pungent vapors of the turpentine are unhealthy and irritating; it's inappropriate for a workshop setting.
 7. **PAINTING OR PALETTE KNIFE** --I prefer a painting knife, with an offset handle and a narrow, diamond or tear-drop shaped blade about 2 ½ “ long.
 8. **BRUSHES: AN ASSORTMENT OF LONG-HANDLED, HOG BRISTLE BRUSHES.** I recommend Robert Simmons' *Signet* or the Winsor Newton *Artist* series as the best values, and my absolute favorites right now are the Winsor Newton Artist DOUBLE-THICK filberts, available only in odd-number sizes. Also fine are Isabey *Special*, or Grumbacher *Gainsborough*. I particularly like Silver Brush's *Grand Prix* series – especially for round brushes -- but they are expensive. I recently tried Utrecht's two premium series of bristle brushes, and I have found that the series 209 filberts (dark handles; made in Japan), seem to be equal in quality to Signet, and I recommend them, as well, as a good value.

RECOMMENDED SIZES AND SHAPES OF BRISTLE BRUSHES:

#4, #2 round

#4, #6, and #8 filberts (or #3, #5, #7 double-thick filberts)

#8, #10 flat.

9. **PANELS OR STRETCHED CANVAS:** For a workshop, I request that students bring at least two surfaces to paint on for each day of the class – so plan on having at least 6 for this class, and a few extras in a variety of sizes would be prudent.

I recommend any of the following:

- Commercially prepared canvas panels (there are many brands available - from cheap cotton on cardboard to finest oil-primed linen on aluminum)
- Pre-primed linen or cotton canvas on stretcher bars
- Masonite panels primed with acrylic gesso

(Suggested sizes: 9 x 12 or 11 x 14, up to 12 x 16... but please, no larger than that).

10. OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT:

- **BACKPACK** or **SHOULDER-BAG** for carrying supplies, other than your easel. The trick is to condense your supplies into the fewest, easiest-to-carry packages. I have backpack straps on my French easel, which places my heaviest item on my back. For my most portable pochade box set-up, I am able to get everything into one huge backpack, including tripod, and wet-panel carrier.
- **SKETCHPAD** with pencils or charcoal for preliminary sketches.
- **UMBRELLA** - A clamp-on artist's umbrella to shade your work (clamps on to the easel). Some painters prefer a larger beach umbrella that stands up from the ground; the problem is that one often needs a hammer to pound the pole into hard ground. Obviously, avoid any brightly colored umbrellas that will affect the light on your painting.
- **VIEWFINDER** – a piece of board with a rectangular hole cut in it for viewing and framing the scene. An empty 35mm slide holder works. I use two corners of matboard from a discarded mat that was cut to fit a watercolor painting. The corners can be clipped together to make any rectangular shape.
- **WET-PANEL CARRIER** – a wooden or plastic box with slots to separate and hold panels or stretched canvasses with wet paint.
- **HAT** with a wide brim for shade
- **SUNBLOCK** and **INSECT REPELLENT**
- **DRINKING WATER**

ART SUPPLY SOURCES

These are some of my favorite sources for paints, brushes, linen and other supplies. A few have storefronts; all will sell materials by mail order, and all of them have websites.

Artwork Essentials *Easels, panels and plein air supplies – EASYL pochade box.*
5622 Highgate Terrace, Irvine, CA 92603 949-846-2196, <http://www.artworkessentials.com>

Art Supply Warehouse (ASW) *All art supplies; but not the best service – Annual membership subscription is now required to purchase from them.* 5325 Departure Dr., N. Raleigh, NC 27616, 1-800-995-6778, www.aswexpress.com

Dick Blick Art Materials *EVERYTHING for the artist; most complete catalog of all; good sale prices and good service.* P.O. Box 1267, Galesburg, IL 61402, 1-800-828-4548, www.dickblick.com

Edge Pro Gear *Makers of the newest, highest-tech Pochade boxes and other magnet-based plein air accessories. Highly recommended.* <http://www.edgeprogear.com/>

French Canvas *Good source for pre-stretched cotton and linen canvas and also stretcher bars canvas in rolls, panels, and other accessories. Offers discounts to SAA members of 5% to 10% - depending on the quantity of your order.* <http://www.frenchcanvas.com/>

Guerilla Painter *Many supplies for the plein air painter; high quality wet painting carriers.*
Phantom Canyon Ranch Co., Old Schoolhouse Road, 851 CR76h, Livermore, CO 80536, 1-866-762-4233, www.pochade.com

The Italian Art Store *Carries top quality imported and domestic paints and brushes. Good service.*
84 Maple Avenue, Morristown, NJ 07690, 1-800-643-6440, www.italianartstore.com

Jerry's Artarama *All art supplies; good prices when on sale, recently introduced much better shipping rates, too.* P.O. Box 58638, North Raleigh, NC 27658, 1-800-827-8478, www.JerrysArtarama.com

New York Central Art Supply *My personal favorite art supply store in NYC; well worth a visit.*
62 Third Avenue (@ 10th St.) NY, NY 10003, 800-950-6111, <http://www.nycentralart.com/>

RayMar Panels *Good source of plein air painting panels; also light-weight cheap drying boxes.*
1721 Rose Garden Lane, Suite 6, Phoenix, AZ, 05027, 1-888-809-3314, www.raymarart.com

Rochester Art Supply *One of the best ONLINE art stores; excellent service, great selection.*
150 W. Main Street, Rochester, NY 14614, 1-800-836-8940, www.FineArtStore.com

Upper Canada Stretchers *My favorite supplier of high quality stretcher bars; great personal service – but shipping from Canada is expensive to the US.* 1750 16th Ave., East, Owen Sound, ON, Canada N4K 5R4, 1-800-561-4944, www.uccsart.com

Utrecht Art Supplies *All art supplies; best source anywhere for high quality unprimed imported linens.* Now owned by Dick Blick see above; but maintains its own webstore: www.utrecht.com

Open Box M, LLC *Manufacturer of top-end pochade boxes and other plein air equipment.*
1392 Southfork Rd, Cody, WY 82414, 1-800-473-8098, www.openboxm.com