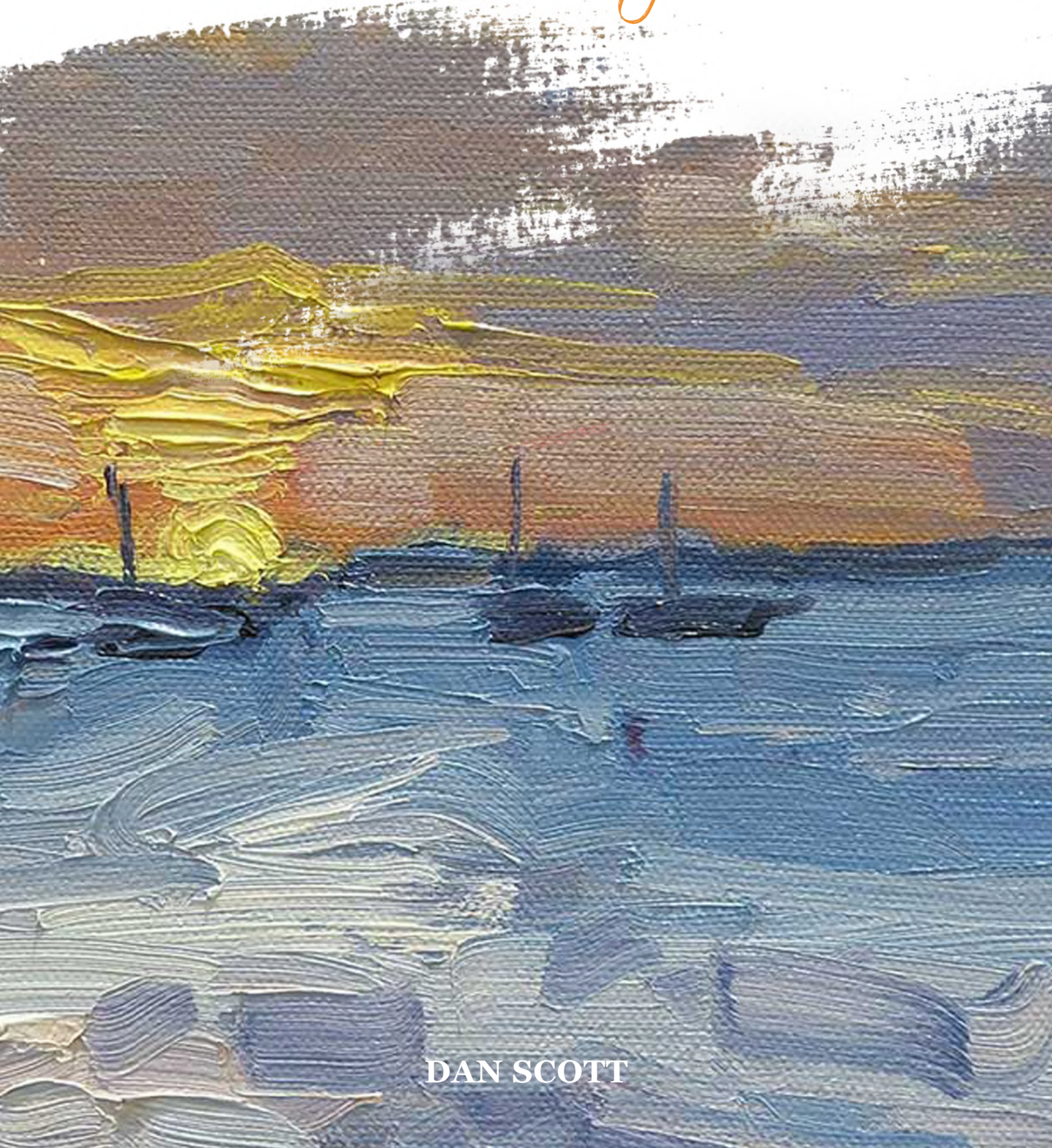




DRAW PAINT ACADEMY

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE *to Painting*



DAN SCOTT

Introduction

I remember that lost and confused feeling I had when I was learning how to paint many years ago. I felt bombarded by information yet completely lost for direction. If you are just starting out in painting, then chances are you feel this way too.

What I needed was not a big ask or anything overly complex. I just needed a bit of direction and answers to some of the really basic questions which you are confronted by when you start painting.

I wrote this guide to give help beginners avoid this confusion and get a sense of direction with where they want to go in art and how they are going to get there. If you have any questions or just want to chat, feel free to email me at dan@drawpaintacademy.com.



Why Do You Want To Take Up Painting

Before we get into the technical side of painting, I want you to consider the reasons why you want to take up painting in the first place and the reality of being an artist. This is important as many people get frustrated when they take up painting and sadly quit way too early.

Some of the common reasons people get frustrated in painting are:

- They do not realize just how hard painting is (the professionals certainly make it look easy);
- They are not able to handle making mistakes (you will make mistakes when you are starting out and even once you are a master);
- They do not understand the processes and techniques;
- They are overwhelmed by a mass of information with no real direction;
- They do not sell any paintings;

... and you get the point.

The truth is, painting is an extremely challenging, but equally rewarding craft. There is a reason why our society holds the great artists in such high regard.

Our society is willing to pay substantially for great paintings, which when you think about it are nothing more than colored pigments arranged on a flat surface. These paintings do not produce any direct wealth or fix any world problems. Despite this, they are held in our most prestigious buildings and gifted to our leaders.

This is because painting is hard! But don't let that discourage you. You should be proud that you are taking on such a highly revered craft.

Once you understand why you are painting and the reality of being an artist, you will be much more resilient to any challenges you face (and less likely to quit).

With that being said, you may not be suited to painting. Not because you are unable to learn. You may just realize it is not for you.

But that is fine. There are many other artistic avenues you could pursue. For example,

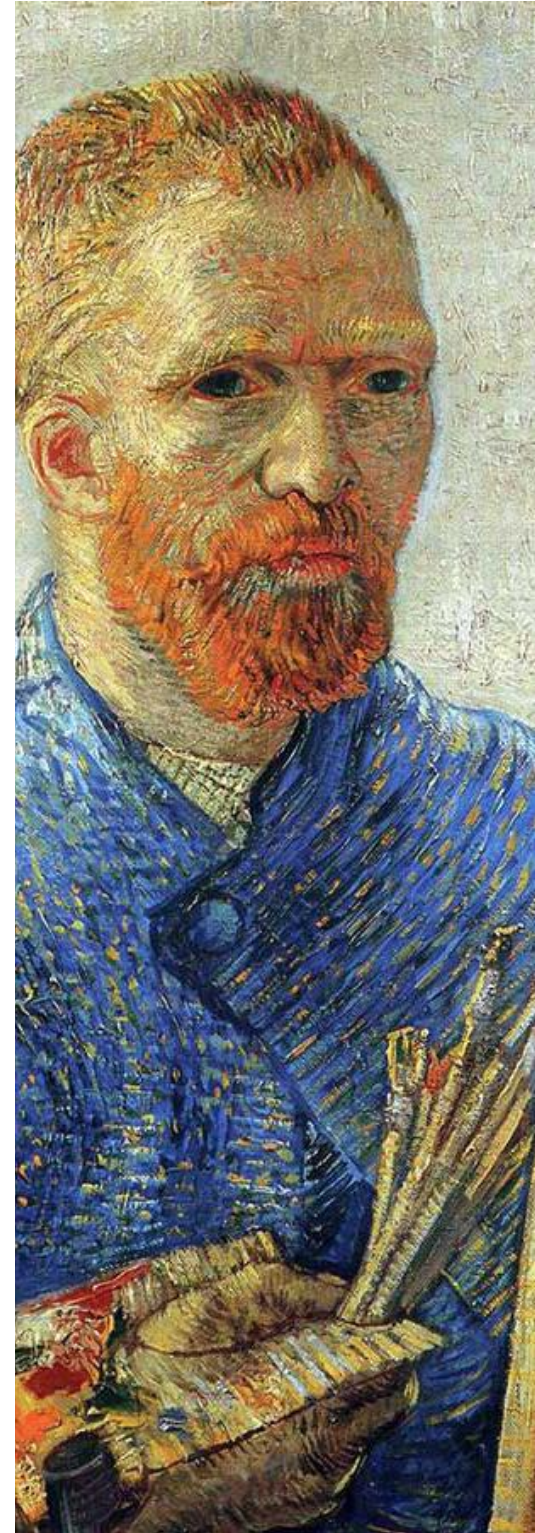


perhaps you do not like the hands-on approach of painting but enjoy composing landscape scenes. You may be better suited to photography in this case.

The *Wrong* Reasons To Take Up Painting

Here are some of the wrong reasons to take up painting:

- **You want to get rich.** Money is important, but if your only goal is to make money from your art, then you should go into another avenue which has more secure profits. That is not to say you are unable to make money from your art. It is just very unpredictable. My thoughts on money and art are this - do whatever you can to make enough money to live comfortably and practice your art. If you are able to live comfortably as an artist, then great. If you work full-time and use that money to finance your art, then that is great also. If you like painting landscapes but the market is only demanding portraits, then maybe paint portraits to make ends meet whilst practicing landscape painting on the side.
- **You want fame.** This is much the same as the point above. Fame in art usually comes to those least expecting it. It is unpredictable by nature. Just look at Vincent van Gogh, one of the most famous artists in history. He had no idea of his own fame as it all happened after his death. He was relatively unknown during his lifetime. I wonder if he would be happy or sad about his postmortem fame?
- **You want to become a master in a short period of time.** It is great to have high expectations of yourself, but painting is one of the most difficult crafts to master. Many of the all-time masters of painting have said how little they knew even in their later years. Painting is easy to pick up, but extremely difficult to master.



*Vincent van Gogh, Self Portrait
As An Artist, 1888*



So if you are still reading, then you may still be interested in painting, which is great!

I am not trying to be negative, just realistic. Painting can take up a significant amount of time and if you are not doing it for the right reasons, then you may as well save yourself the effort.

The *Right* Reasons To Take Up Painting

Now for some of the right reasons to take up painting:

- **You want to challenge yourself.** Painting is hard, but anyone can take it up. All you need are some basic materials and you are good to go.
- **You want a fulfilling hobby.** Not everyone has aspirations to become a professional artist. Many are just looking for a fulfilling hobby. Painting is fantastic for this. You can paint at pretty much any age, at any time of the day and at any skill level.
- **You seek an escape from your ever busy lifestyle.** During my time as an accountant, I was drawn in many different directions from conflicting interests. My days were fast-paced and often stressful. My decisions were influenced by money, politics and social standings. Painting is a great way to break away from this environment. There are no hidden biases with painting.
- **You like the idea of creating something.** Painting is one of the rare practices where the result is something truly unique and personal. Sure, there may be other paintings very similar to yours, but none will be exactly the same. Your strokes and color selections are unique to you.
- **You like to document your life.** Paintings can represent a visual diary of your life. You can paint different experiences, places you visit, people you meet and emotions you feel. Since I started painting many years ago, I have built up a sizable body of paintings. All of them tell a story about a particular point in my life.
- **You want to work for yourself.** If you want to become a professional artist, then you can treat your art career as if it were your own business. A major positive to this is you get to be your own boss.



- **You want to empower your mind.** The mind is powerful, much more powerful than the body. Painting is one of the best ways to challenge and empower your mind.

If you are not sure about if painting is for you, then hopefully these reasons give you an idea of what you can expect to get out of it.

Write **It Down!**

I suggest you take a moment to actually write down why exactly you want to take up painting. Keep this note safe, as you may find it to be an important reference later down the track.



The Myth You Need “Natural Talent” To Become *A Great Painter*

The term “natural talent” gets thrown around a lot in art. Generally, it seems to be used as an excuse not to take up painting.

Painting is no different to any other craft, sport or hobby. You learn, make mistakes, analyze where you went wrong and (hopefully) improve. People are not born with the natural gift of painting, though obviously some pick it up faster than others.

All the great masters of painting were amateurs at some stage. Here is the extremely secret step by step blueprint for becoming a great painter:

- Learn the basics (what we will be doing throughout this guide)
- Practice
- Make mistakes (yes mistakes are good, as you need them to learn and progress)
- Analyze your mistakes
- Make adjustments
- Practice
- Repeat steps 2-6 over and over
- Mastery

I consider painting to be technical craft which can be learned just like anything else. Sadly many painters hamper their progression by spending time trying to unlock some mysterious inner creative spirit rather than taking a structured and methodical learning approach. Sure, the structured learning approach may not sound as interesting, but it is a surefire way of becoming a great painter in time.

Of course, there are some artists who hit it big in the commercial world without any consideration to learning the fundamentals of art. But you should not be striving to mimic them.

My goal is to help you become a skilled artist, not a commercial success (though they can go hand-in-hand).

The way I learned painting is similar to how I learned many other things in life - accounting, volleyball, jujitsu, weightlifting, running and so on. I generally try and break the learning process into the following categories:



Theory & Research - Learning the fundamentals of art, researching art history and famous artists, watching other artists in practice and reading instructional books.

Practice - Putting what I have learned from above into practice. Each session should have some focus in mind (for example, I may want to learn more about color temperature, so I would paint a scene with contrasting warm and cool colors and observe the relationship).

Reflective - This is often overlooked but is just as important, if not more, than the other learning areas. This involves reflecting on the work you have done and determining how you will improve. This is more of a passive process and could be as simple as thinking about how you could improve your painting just before you go to sleep. Before I start a painting I always do a mental run-through of the painting process (the strokes I will make, the colors I will use, the challenges I may face, etc). This makes the actual painting process much smoother.

I try to apply this way of learning to everything I do in art. It helps me actually improve rather than just churning through paint to no aim.

So if your only reason for not painting is because you do not think you have the natural born talent to do so, then you best pick up your paint brush because that is not a reason. Painting is hard I assure you, but everyone is capable of learning it (with some guidance of course).



Acrylics, Oils Or Watercolors?

One of the first questions you are faced with when you start painting is what medium you should focus on. The three main choices are acrylics, oils and watercolors.

There is no correct answer to this and all three mediums have different characteristics which may or may not suit you. I personally use oils and I strongly recommend all students use oils also for reasons I discuss later in this article. But if you want to use other mediums, that is fine also.

Acrylic Paint - **The Beginner's Choice**



Noosa - one of my acrylic paintings from when I was learning.

Acrylics are widely favored by those just starting out with painting as they are easy to use and often cheaper than oils and watercolors.



Acrylics may suit you if:

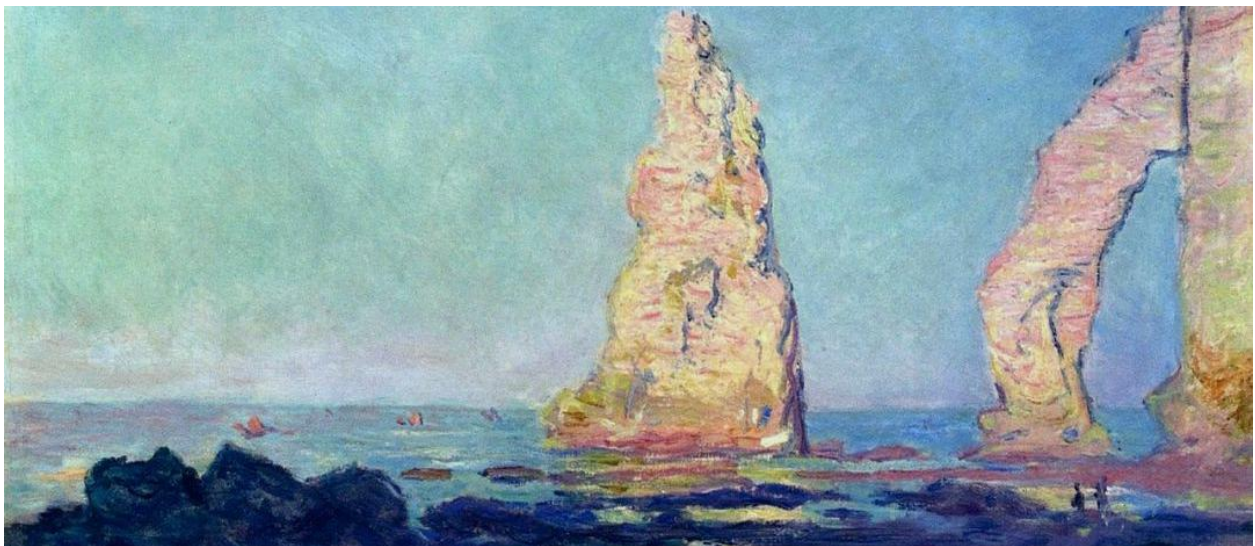
- You are a complete beginner and do not want to worry yourself with the complexities of oil and watercolor painting.
- You want an easy cleanup time.
- You are painting on a limited budget.
- You enjoy experimenting with mixed media.
- You are sensitive to the harsh chemicals involved with oil painting.

Personally, I started with acrylics many years ago. Acrylics were a great medium to use whilst I was learning the basics of painting and the general fundamentals.

However as I developed, I started to feel constrained by the limitations of acrylics, such as:

- The paint dries *very* fast. You can extend the drying time of your acrylic paints with certain additional mediums, however not by much. This can be difficult to deal with as you only have a limited amount of time when your paint will be responsive on the canvas. You are therefore limited to painting in a very direct style. Blending and glazing are not that effective for acrylic painting.
- Some colors darken as they dry (the colors which are lighter tend to have a greater change). This can be very frustrating, as you will think you have the painting spot on when it is wet but then the color harmony slightly adjusts once it has dried.

Oil Paints - The Master's Choice



Claude Monet, *The Needle Of Etretat, Low Tide*, 1883



Oil paints are the most widely used medium among professional artists for a number of reasons:

- They are versatile. You can vary the drying time and consistency of your paint dramatically using paint thinners and additional oil. This allows you to work with a wide range of painting techniques, including blending, glazing and scumbling.
- They were favored by the all-time greats of painting. It is hard to argue a downside of using oil paints when so many amazing artists used them to such success.
- Oil paintings seem to be held in higher regard by art collectors compared to acrylic paintings (there are some exceptions to this of course).

You really cannot go wrong with oil paints. If you are not sure where to start, I would suggest either jumping straight into oil painting or starting with acrylics with a view of jumping over to oils once you are more developed. There are some fantastic acrylic painters, but many of them paint in a very contemporary style. The traditional painting techniques which were used by the old masters are much better suited to oil painting.

If you think oil painting is too complex for you, then I urge you to reconsider. There are really only a few 'rules' which you need to understand in oil painting and the rest is very similar to acrylic painting.

Also, some of you may be deterred by the harsh chemicals of oil painting. I almost had to go back to acrylic painting due to the extremely harsh smell of turpentine, but then I become aware of odorless solvent which, as the name suggests, is much less intrusive on the senses. Once the harsh turpentine is taken out of the mix, then oil painting becomes much more appealing.

Watercolors - The Untamed Beauty



Winslow Homer, *Sailing The Catboat*



Watercolors are often considered to be the most difficult to pick up due to the untamed nature of water and the fact you are not able to do much re-working of errors (as the paper can only absorb so much water and you are not able to thickly paint over areas). However, if mastered, watercolors can produce stunningly elegant paintings.

For this reason I would recommend you start out with either acrylics or oils before venturing into watercolors. With that being said, watercolors can act as a fantastic compliment to your acrylic and oil painting. Watercolors train a different skill set to the other mediums and help you paint delicately and accurately.

For example, John Singer Sargent was famous for his meticulous portraits using oil paints, but he used watercolors to paint impressionist and loose landscapes. These watercolor paintings probably felt very refreshing for Sargent who would have been accustomed to the lengthy and tedious portrait painting sessions.

What **Should You Go With?**

Usually I would say there is no right answer here and you should make your own decision, however as you are probably learning how to paint and looking for some direction, I will give you my personal opinion.

If you are a complete beginner to painting and have no experience with other creative mediums - start with acrylics or oils.

If you are familiar with art and painting but have very limited experience, go with oils unless for some reason you really want to use acrylics (say for example you want to paint in a very contemporary style).

Whilst you are learning acrylic or oil painting, you may want to dabble with watercolors. I would not start with watercolors unless you are extremely confident in your ability to learn.

Now this is not to say you must choose a medium and ignore the rest. I strongly encourage you to try them all at least to some extent. But you should have a preferred medium.

It is better to be a master of one than average at many.



Supplies & Equipment

In this article I will run through some of the painting supplies and equipment you will need. I will not go through everything, but rather just the essentials.

There are many speciality items which you will not need to worry about when you are starting, if ever. Remember, the old masters used supplies which were inferior to what we have available today. They did not have any secret supplies or techniques. So you do not need to go and purchase every new tool which becomes available. You just need to keep it simple and have the basics.

Also, as a general rule I will usually go for quality over quantity in terms of art supplies. For example, I would rather have a handful of great brushes than many poor quality brushes.

Paint

First up on the list is, you guessed it, paint! Obviously we would not get too far in this painting guide without it.

When you just start out in painting, most people seem to have a primal urge to buy as many colors as they can afford. Bright oranges, purples, greens, you name it. Those colors then proceed to sit in storage until well, forever.

You do not need many colors when you are starting. In fact, it is completely the opposite when you are a beginner as you need to learn how to mix your colors. Color mixing is an essential skill, not just so you can be efficient with your paint, but it helps you understand the relationships between colors.

As far as what brand of paint to buy, I have had good experiences with Winsor Newton, but it really comes down to personal preference. I do suggest you buy artist quality paints rather than student quality, as there is a noticeable difference.



Here is my current palette of colors which would be ideal for beginners:



These are not essential colors by any means, but they have worked well for me. You have a yellow, red and blue (being the primary colors), raw umber as an earth color and white for tints.

I actually do not have black on my palette, as I prefer to mix my own with ultramarine blue and raw umber. This gives a very natural black.



Paint Brushes

Your paint brush should feel like an extension of your arm. But all the different kinds of artist brushes which are available can sometimes only add confusion to the painting process, rather than make it easier.

Anatomy Of An Artist Paint Brush

Here is the anatomy of a paint brush for those of you who are not familiar with the terminology:



Paint Brush Bristles

Artist brushes come with many different types of bristles. The bristles will generally determine what medium a brush is suitable for. For example, oil painting requires bristles which are resilient and have a nice spring. Acrylic paint is not as harsh so you can use bristles which are a bit finer. Watercolor painting requires soft bristles which can hold lots of water.

Bristles for artist brushes come in two forms - synthetic and animal. Animal hair brushes tend to be more expensive but they can hold and apply paint in a way which is not possible with synthetic brushes. However, synthetic brushes have come a long way. I make use of both synthetic and animal hair brushes for my paintings.

Here is a summary of the different bristles:

SYNTHETIC: Economical and versatile options for all painting mediums. Most synthetic brush manufactures will combine synthetic bristles with animal bristles so you



get the best of both worlds. I would avoid cheap synthetic brushes as they are not durable and lose shape quickly.

HOG: Stiff, springy and economical. Hog hair brushes tend to do most of the heavy lifting in oil painting due to their durability and stiffness. I enjoy using hog hair brushes for general oil painting work, but not so much for the finer details.

SABLE: Not actually made from sable hair but rather from the tail of a species of mink (a member of the weasel family) found in North-Eastern China and Siberia. Sable brushes are extremely fine, springy and hold lots of water, making them perfect for watercolor painting and fine oil/acrylic painting.

SQUIRREL: Very soft hair with little snap due to a lack of resistance. Squirrel hair is suitable for watercolor painting, inking and any other low-resistance mediums.

BADGER: A popular hair for oil painting. Badger hair brushes tend to be the thickest at the tip of the brush and thinner around the belly, making them perfect for general and broad brushwork.

MONGOOSE: Sturdy and resilient hair which is used in oil and acrylic painting.

Paint Brush *Shapes*



Round brushes have a large belly and a long tapered end. They are extremely versatile and can be used for long, bold strokes and detail work.

A round brush made with sable hair comes to a very fine tip and can be used for delicate brushwork.



Filbert brushes are a personal favorite due to their versatility. They are somewhere between a round and flat brush. The curved tip allows for soft brushwork and blending. I use the filbert brush for any general brushwork.





Flat brushes have a flat tip and can be used to make thick, consistent strokes or thin lines. Flat brushes are great for blocking in solid shapes of color (i.e roads, fences, buildings, etc).



Fan brushes are more of a specialty brush. They have a range of special uses, such as painting the leaves on trees or adding texture to grass or rocks. But the fan brush is not limited to these special occasions. You can make use of the fan brush whenever you need scattered and broad brushwork.

Paint Brush *Sizes*

There is no industry standard for brush sizes, so it is best to get familiar with one brand.

It is important to have a range of small, medium and large brushes. In particular, you should make sure you have lots of medium to large brushes as these should be doing most of the heavy lifting in your paintings.

I generally recommended that you take the largest brush you feel comfortable with using, then use one size up from that. The benefits of using large brushes include:

- Large brushes will ensure you focus on making economical and meaningful strokes. Every stroke will have influence with a large brush.
- By using only small brushes, you tend to get caught up in needless details and miss the overall statement of your painting.
- Large brushes are a great time saver, as you can quickly cover the canvas.
- Even in the most intricate looking paintings, you will find that the brushes used were probably not these tiny round brushes. Take a look at the beautiful painting below by John Singer Sargent. Under that I provide a close-up which shows



his broad and surprisingly thick strokes of color made with what I assume to be medium sized brushes.

What you should learn from this is - instead of trying to make your painting seem realistic up close, aim to make it seem realistic from afar.



*John Singer Sargent,
An Artist In His Studio, 1904*



Which **Artist Paint Brush Should You Use?**

Personally, I use paint brushes as follows:

- For staining the canvas I use the largest flat or filbert brush I have.
- For sketching the composition I use a medium sized round brush, or sometimes even a fan brush if I want a very rough landscape sketch.
- For blocking in general colors and shapes I use a medium to large filbert. Sometimes I will use a flat brush if the shapes are very angular.
- For adding detail I use smaller filbert and round brushes. I also use the fan brush in certain situations, such as for painting leaves, grass or water.
- For signing the painting and adding very fine details I use a small round brush.

Which **Brand Of Artist Paint Brush Should You Use?**

I have had experience with brushes from most of the top brands such as Princeton, Winsor & Newton, Royal Langnickel and Old Holland. Most of these brands have a premium line of brushes which seem to be fairly consistent in quality.

It really comes down to personal preference. I have heard some great things about Rosemary & Co but I have yet to try those brushes out. I will place an order for some of those brushes soon and will let you know how I go.

Caring **For Your Paint Brushes**

Taking proper care of your brushes is essential if you want them to last for more than just a few painting sessions. Just remember that prevention of brush damage is much easier than the restoration of it.

I wrote more about cleaning your brushes [here](#).



Palette

The palette is what you use to hold and mix your paint. The palette comes in many different forms, including the traditional wooden palettes, disposable palettes and standing palettes.

If you are just starting out, I suggest you give the toned disposable palettes a try. They are economical and make cleaning up a breeze.



Canvas

Canvas is the most widely used material to paint on. When buying canvas you need to ensure the canvas has already been primed (unless you plan on priming it yourself). By primed, I mean ready to paint on.

You can prime a canvas using gesso, which is similar to a white acrylic paint, but it is generally thinner and dries harder. The purpose of gesso is to provide a responsive surface to paint on and stop paint from sinking into the canvas weave which would quickly deteriorate the canvas.

There are many different types of primed canvas so I will try and keep this simple. If your budget allows, you should invest in artist quality canvas, rather than student quality. The difference is noticeable.

You will have the choice of stretched canvas panels, which are generally ready to hang, and canvas boards, which are inexpensive but not recommended for exhibition works.

Stretched canvas panels come as deep or thin edged. Deep edged gives a more modern appearance and is great if you do not intend on framing your painting. Thin edged is more suitable if you plan on framing your painting.

In relation to what size of canvas you should paint on, that is really up to personal preference and the purpose of painting. For exhibition pieces, you may want to paint on a larger canvas so it has more impact. If you are just practicing, then a smaller canvas may be more suitable.



Easel

When I started painting many years ago I did not even use an easel. I painted on a flat desk, much to the detriment of my neck.



Claude Monet,
In the Woods at Giverny: Blanche Hoschedé at Her Easel with Suzanne Hoschedé Reading, 1887

I was completely oblivious to the importance of an easel, not just for convenience but for the overall painting process. An easel is much more than a stand to position your artwork.

Most importantly, it allows you to paint upright. This is extremely important. Have you ever watched top artists paint and notice how they wander all around the painting and view it from many different angles? An easel makes this possible.

There are many different types of easels available, summarized below:



A-Frame - a three legged easel which is economical and portable, however it lacks in stability.

H-Frame Easel - your standard studio easel. The H-frame easel is sturdy but lacks portability.

Giant Easel - basically a larger version of the H-frame easel, used for large scale studio works.

Convertible Easel - a versatile easel which converts between a standard upright easel and a horizontal, tabletop easel.

Single Mast Easel - the most basic and affordable type of easel. However it is also the least stable.

Tabletop Easel - for those of you who prefer to work at a desk.

French Easel - the built-in storage makes the French easel a favorable choice for plein air painters.



I personally use a French easel and I also have a large H-frame easel for larger works.

Which should you get as a beginner painter? If you just plan on painting in a studio, then a H-frame easel would be optimal. If you move around a lot, then a French easel may suit you better. If you are low on funds, then an A-frame easel will do fine.

At the end of the day it does not really matter, but I certainly recommend you have an easel of some sort. It just allows you to paint with much better technique.

Palette Knife - Not Just A Tool To Mix Paint

Most beginner artists think palette knives are just there to mix your paints. But they can be a great tool in your arsenal if used correctly. Some artists solely use palette knives to create rigid, broken color paintings.

Palette knives are also much easier to clean and can really speed up painting times.



General Supplies

- **Large Cheap Paint Brushes** - great for quickly covering a canvas without having to worry about damaging your brushes.
- **Paper Towels / Rags** - essential for cleaning your brush between strokes.
- **Cups / Jars** - for holding your water / solvent / oil medium.
- **Tape** - useful for covering areas on your canvas which you do not want to be painted (i.e if you want the edges on your thick edged canvas to be crisp white, then you can place tape around the edges and remove it once the painting is finished).
- **Charcoal / Pencils**
- **Your Creative Spirit!** (Free)



The Beauty Of Simplification

There is beauty in simplification.

Simplification comes in many forms and should be thought of as a general mindset rather than a strict rule. With painting, every action you take should be performed as simply as possible, avoiding any unnecessary complexity.

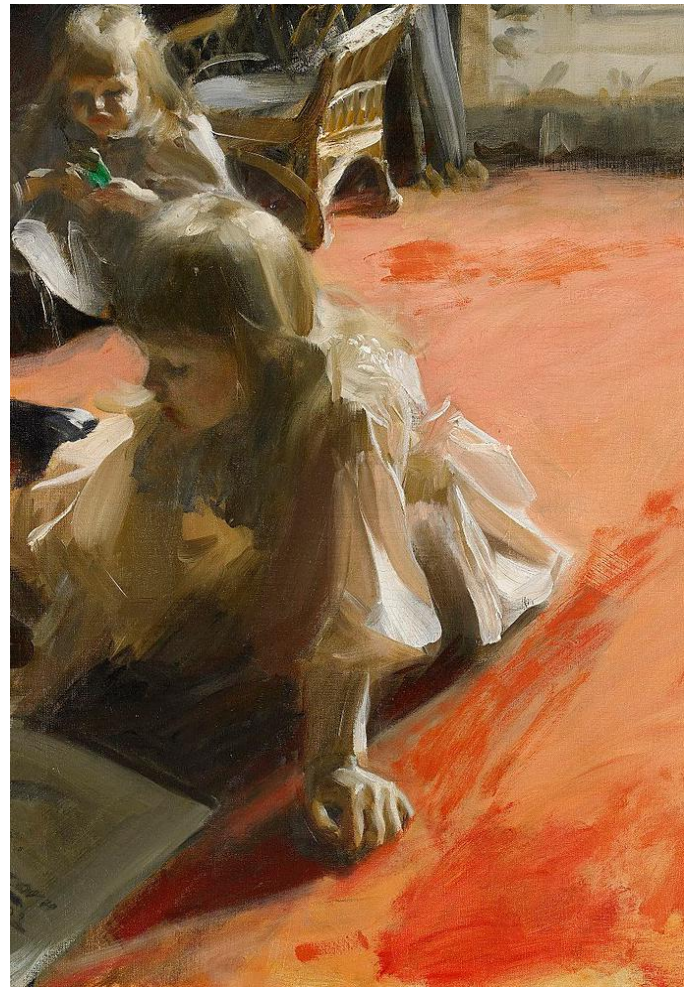
This is not to say you should avoid complexity - some tasks are just complex by nature. But you should not be aiming to make simple tasks complex just for the sake of it.

Here are some of the areas which you should try to simplify if possible:

- 1. Your color palette.** Painting with a limited palette (only a few colors) will force you to learn how to mix your colors and will also promote color harmony in your painting. The more colors you have on your palette, the more complex it is to manage.

Anders Zorn was known to paint with an extremely limited palette which is now commonly referred to as the Zorn palette. It included just yellow ochre, cadmium red, ivory black plus white. You can read more about the Zorn palette [here](#).

- 2. The number of strokes you make.** You should aim to paint with as few strokes as possible. Think of every stroke as an important step in your painting. If you try and limit the number of strokes you make, you will learn to think more strategically about your strokes and colors.



Anders Zorn, A Portrait Of The Daughters Of Ramon Subercaseaux, 1892



3. Unimportant details. By simplifying areas in your painting which you do not want to draw attention to, your focal point will be emphasized by comparison.

Check out the painting below by John Singer Sargent and notice the difference in the level of detail between the subject who is painting (who is actually Claude Monet) and rest of the painting. As a viewer your eye is pulled towards this focal point in the painting, as the rest of the scene recedes.



John Singer Sargent, Claude Monet Painting by the Edge of a Wood, 1885

These are just some of the methods of reducing clutter and simplifying your paintings down to the essentials.

Simplification is not a stand-alone technique or skill you can learn quickly. It will take time, as we seem to be programmed into thinking all great things must be remarkably complex. But remember you can also be remarkable by performing simple techniques with amazing accuracy and harmony.

As you become more experienced, you can start creating more complex compositions, but the individual techniques you use should still be simplified. If you look at some of the all-time great realist painters like John Singer Sargent, you will notice even his paintings are very simplified up close but as you stand back, it all just works together in beautiful harmony.



What Makes a Great Painting?

You need to determine what you actually believe to be a great painting. There is no correct answer to this but it is important to consider as it will help you determine what kind of artist you want to be and what your values are.

Personally, I believe a great painting has some level of accuracy, but not so much that nothing is left to the imagination. I believe a great painting has balance, where all the elements in the painting work in some kind of harmony. Finally, I believe a great painting has emphasis, being an area where you are drawn towards. As part of this, the painting should also have areas of relatively less importance.

Below is what I consider to be a great painting by Sir Arthur Streeton. It has a quality of accuracy, but not so much that it loses that beautiful painterly feel which Streeton was known for. It has a sense of balance and harmony with a tight color palette and fluent brushwork. It also has emphasis on the cart on the path which has relatively more detail and color compared to the rest of the painting.



Arthur Streeton, At Templestowe, 1889



Notice how my values are measurable in some way. You can look at a painting and determine with an amount of confidence if the painting has accuracy, balance and emphasis. I believe having values which are measurable is extremely important as otherwise you will be lost in the confusing world of art.

For example, say one of your values is, *it makes you feel good*. This is a difficult value to measure as it is so subjective.

My values change from time to time. When I started I certainly leaned more towards accuracy, as I loved that idea of being able to copy something with photographic accuracy. I wanted people to say ‘wow that looks just like a photo’.

But as I grew and became more experienced, my values changed. My dependence on accuracy relaxed and I started to favor more overall values like balance and emphasis. These values rely much less on how accurately I am able to copy a scene and much more on the overall composition of my painting.

Your answer to “what makes a great painting” will probably be different to mine. But there are no right or wrong answers. However, it is important that you have an answer as it will define who you are as an artist and what you want to become. It will also influence how you learn and progress.



What Now?

Thanks for taking the time to read this guide and I truly hope you learned something new! Please let me know your thoughts at dan@drawpaintacademy.com.

If you want to continue learning, I write regular tutorials on [Draw Paint Academy](#) and provide free tips to email subscribers.

I also create more in-depth video courses for those of you who are interested in going deeper into the world of painting. Painting is an incredibly challenging, but equally rewarding craft and I hope you continue with it. If you are interested in taking a course, feel free to email me and we can discuss what is available and what would suit you.

Kind regards,



Dan Scott

Drawpaintacademy.com





Ready to Keep Learning?

Come join me in the Painting Academy



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