

CHRISTINE LASHLEY

Art Supply List

STUDIO & PLEIN AIR • WATERCOLOR & OIL

Introduction To Art Supplies

Your supplies will depend on your level of experience, what you want, and what you can spend. Basically better quality materials mean better and faster results. Buy the best you can afford. Supplies are labeled as ‘student’ or ‘artist’ grade. (If it’s very cheap and not labeled it’s student-grade). **I recommend Artist-Grade Materials.**

Student-Grade Materials are rarely useful. For those who ‘just want to try out’ media to see if it’s fun, or for a child exploring, the student-grade materials will be more economical. But don’t think: ‘I’ll get the good stuff when I’m better,’ I hear that excuse too often! Good supplies will help you get better faster and you will not have to unlearn bad habits from inferior materials. Student paints have filler in them and you do not get as much pigment. They also handle differently due to inferior ingredients. Some are made so cheaply that they degrade or discolor in a short time. Student papers and panels do not take pigment properly and it’s an uphill struggle to paint on a bad surface.

If you have a limited budget, choose to buy a small quantity of artist-grade supplies versus lots of student-grade materials. See examples below on the order in which to spend your money if you have limited funds.

Understanding Your Materials Better

You may already have materials. Use this list to augment what you have, or try out a few new items. This list is based on my personal preferences. As you progress in your art journey you will find favorite supplies that are tailored to how you work. Educate yourself about your art materials. Over time you may have a lot of accumulated items from varied workshop lists. You may have duplicates and not even know this. Learn how to read the pigment information on the label of your paint to understand what is inside your paint tube. For example the chemical compound that makes Ultramarine Blue paint is PB29 (find this on the back of the tube), so any manufacturer can make a fancy name such as “Deep Ocean Blue” but this might actually be Ultramarine Blue. If you know how to read the label you can save money.



Santorini, Christine Lashley, 9x12 watercolor

Where To Purchase Supplies

Local brick-and-mortar stores often have inflated prices, but it is nice to see and touch the supplies. Often stores such as Plaza will match existing web prices. I do online shopping. I order through Dick Blick or Jerry’s Artorama. These companies have some good sales, sign up to be notified and/or get a catalog. Delivery is usually to my door in 3-4 days. I have set up sample ‘shopping baskets’ at Blick U for oil or watercolor, link... <https://www.dickblick.com/lists/blicku> and type in my name.

Watercolor Supplies: Plein Air or Studio

If you have limited funds here is the order in which to spend your money: 1) paper (see below), 2) brushes, 3) paint. Advanced students can bring favorite supplies. For example, if you prefer painting with flat brushes versus rounds that is fine. For beginners: think quality over quantity. Watercolor paints and brushes will last a long time and it's better to get a small amount of quality items (and add to your stash later when your budget allows) instead of a pile of student grade stuff that you will want to 'upgrade' later.

PALETTE - The Mijello Fusion is a plastic palette that can be folded up (shown on intro page). For beginners a larger palette with a lid can be good such as the John Pike palette, but this is very cumbersome to tote to class. If you travel or ever want to paint on location the Mijello is best. Palettes should be carried flat to and from class, so fresh paint does not ooze where it should not be. The Mijello states that it is air-tight, but experience has taught me to put it in a large ziploc anyway.

WATERCOLOR PAPER - 140 lb. sheets or blocks. Cold press is the most popular finish but you may use hot press or rough to experiment with or if you prefer. Look for the tag line: "100% cotton or rag content." Student-grade is OK for color swatch practice or those on a strict budget. However, your results will be so much better with good paper. With quality paper you can use the back of the sheet as well. Loose sheets are more economical than blocks, but need to be taped to a waterproof board with tape that will not ruin the paper when removed (white artist's tape is a good choice). Watercolor blocks are prestretched and ready to go as-is. A good size: 9 x 12" watercolor block, 140 # cold press. There are many good brands of paper. I like Arches and Fabriano. Note: paper manufacturers are now making 'traditional' or 'natural white' and 'bright white'. Either is fine. I prefer traditional.

SKETCHBOOK - Any generic sketchbook is fine for quick studies/notes. 60# paper. Stillman & Birn make a great sketchbook for water-media. I get the Alpha series Red Label book in 5x7" hardback. The paper is great to sketch on, heavily sized so color flows well, and watercolor can lift out... very handy!

BRUSHES - Synthetic, sable (or a blend) watercolor brushes are good. Larger is better! Suggested assorted sizes: No. 12, a No. 8 or 10, round. Important!!! A dozen brushes are NOT needed. Don't get seduced by a big 'jumbo pack' of brushes for a cheap price, these are inferior quality. Instead, put your money into a few good brushes... or just one! If you can only afford one good brush, buy a #10 sable round watercolor brush. If that is too much (about \$40) my second choice for one brush would be a #12 synthetic brush (about \$10-15). Choose round brushes that form a good point and spring back to shape when wet.

The best brushes are pure kolinsky sable ('red sable' is good too, but lesser quality). Sable brushes can be VERY expensive. "Escoda" Tajmyr (red handle, series 1212) brushes are very good quality, pure Kolinsky sable, at an excellent price (see link for art sources). Budget synthetic choices are Sapphire Robert Simmons brushes. Don't fall for gimmick colored brushes (black), manufactures dye the bristle, these are usually synthetic or cheaper animal hair.



Students painting with Plein Air Pro watercolor easels

Other high-quality watercolor brushes: Rosemary, Davinci Maestro, Isabey, Escoda (Kolinsky). I do not like Winsor Newton brushes or most generic brands, the hairs are lower quality, shed, and belly is thin.

NEW BRUSH CARE: New brushes often have a hard glue-like protective coat on the hairs. This comes off with plain running water (gently squish the brush as the water runs, you can't get rid of it by just swishing in a bucket). Often there is also a plastic protective tube. Do NOT force your brush back into this tube after you take it out, it can ruin the hairs on your brush. Get a brush carrier to protect your brushes. Simple bamboo roll-up style, or other case. Don't get a floppy cloth case, you need a stiff case.

SHOPPING FOR BRUSHES: The USA had a shortage on sable brushes because of an import issue for a while. Kolinsky sable brushes can be purchased from Jackson's in the UK or Rosemary Brushes, often they have cheaper prices for brushes. Both companies have cheap, fast shipping to the USA.

OTHER - Small natural sponge. Paper towels (not tissue which can have additives). Pencil and soft white eraser. Sketch pad. Large container for water. Tape and board if using paper sheets. Tote for supplies.

PAINTS - I buy tubes of moist artist-grade watercolor paint. (Winsor Newton's Cottman line, and also Grumbacher make decent student-grade paint, avoid cheap paint such as Koi or Reeves). Suggested palette is in Winsor & Newton Arist's colors (except my preference of Holbein's Peacock Blue, and 2 Qor colors). Buy colors with a (*) if you can only afford a limited palette. Purchasing larger tubes (14, or 37 ml) is much more economical per use, however, it is better to buy small tubes of artist-grade paint than big tubes of student-grade paint. Your tubes will last indefinitely, so consider this an investment. Paint never goes 'bad,' even old vintage tubes are usable.

To note: not all colors are the same across brands. For example, a basic color such as Burnt Umber may look and paint differently depending on brand.



Yellow: *Winsor Yellow, *Indian Yellow (Qor)

Red: *Pyroll Red Light (Qor), (or WN Winsor Red); *Permanent Alizarin Crimson
Blue: *Cobalt Blue; *French Ultramarine Blue (not 'Deep' version); Cerulean Blue; Peacock Blue (Holbein) (or WN's Winsor Blue Green Shade... same as Phthalo Blue in other brands)

Orange: (mix)

Green: Hooker's Green

Brown: *Burnt Umber; Burnt Siena, (optional if you like neutrals: Sepia)

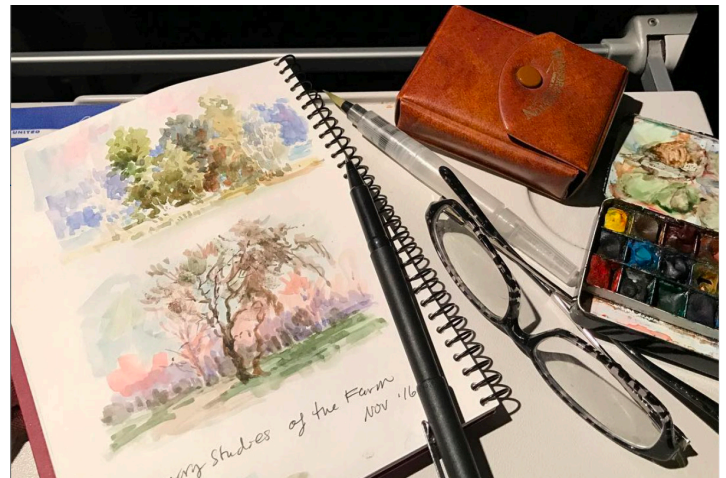
Other: *Permanent Rose; Cobalt Violet; Cobalt Turquoise Light; Winsor Violet; Quinacridone Magenta; Holbein Titanium White Gouache;

My lightest watercolor kit: Rosemary R3 pocket brush and Davinci Maestro 11 (both Kolinsky sable). Stillman & Birn Alpha series sketchbook. This is my lightest set-up and can fit in a tote and be carried all day.

Watercolor Supplies: Plein Air Notes

PLEIN-AIR SUPPLIES: These items are suggestions and in addition to my main list that discusses materials. You do not need the whole list for the plein-air class. The bare minimum would be a watercolor palette, water cup, brushes, paper, and perhaps a small blanket for sitting on the ground plus a bag for your supplies. You are encouraged to bring your favorite supplies.

TRAVEL PALETTES: You have choices based on how you like to paint. **Tiny:** For those who like tiny sketches in journals and small items that are not heavy to carry when traveling, the half-pan sets available are very handy. (See photo with vintage Bijoux Box, a modern Field Box Set is sold by Winsor & Newton and is about \$100). **Medium:** Mijello Fusion Watercolor Palette. Compact, yet versatile. Buy the 5.5x10.5" small size. Tube color. **Large:** some people like 2 palettes for more colors or the larger size.



Tiny kit with waterbrush - great for sketches on the plane

BRUSHES: Brushes should be protected in a case. Or, buy travel brushes that fold up into their own case. **Travel Brushes:** I recommend Escoda Kolinsky-Tajmyr Pocket Round Series 1214 (size 8, 10, or 12). Rosemary Brushes make excellent sable pocket travel brushes as well. (I have the R3, it is my favorite travel brush). A water brush (Koi or Pentel) is plastic and has a tiny reservoir available for water in the handle of the brush.

EASELS: An easel is optional equipment when painting outdoors, but can be very handy. My easel is the En Plein Air Pro, Traveler, for painting watercolor on location. I've used this for years, it comes with a backpack and a tray/tripod combo that is easy to set up. It is light to carry. Note the 'Advanced' easel is heavier, comes in a duffle bag, and includes a large palette in the tray, don't get this one... get the "Travel" version. Some people like a folding chair vs an easel. No easel is possible if painting city locations such as Paris.



Students painting in the Bahamas

OUTDOOR PAINTING TIPS:

A wide-brim hat cuts glare, provides shade, and let's you see colors better.

Avoid painting with sunglasses on if possible, or your colors and value will be off - usually too dark.

Wear neutral clothes. Bright colors (like red) can reflect onto the paper and create a weird glow.

White often attracts bugs.

Perfume/scented products attract bugs.

Wear sturdy shoes.

Oil Painting: Paint Choices, Outdoor vs. Studio Easels

I PAINT SOLVENT FREE

I can't use solvent, due to chemical sensitivity. An easy solution was to start a painting with water-mixable oil paint. Water-mixable oil paints are 'real' oils just like traditional ones, they just clean up or thin with water. They are handy for travel (solvent is prohibited on airplanes). Water-mixable dries a little bit faster so it works well for 'fat over lean' rules of oil painting layers. Overall I find that I enjoy the buttery quality and longer dry time of traditional oils, so now I use a combo of both types of oil paint (one or two colors of water-mixable to start toning/drawing, and then use traditional oils). You can see my all water-mixable list below or my combo list of paints.

EASEL - For oil painting you will need an easel. There are numerous studio easels, look for one that does not wobble, holds your panel well, and is easily adjustable. Some artists like to have an easel that can be put away or folds. A pochade (French term for outdoor easel box) can be a great studio-to-outdoor investment and do double-duty as both plein air and studio easel.



8x10 RayMar panel with EasyL oil pochade box

Cheap Easels: Under \$100

Bristol Easel (you have to hold a palette in your hand and have a small table for supplies)

Thumb Box sold by Utrecht. Quite small, and for most people, will be too small for class. However, it is a great mini paint box, I love mine, and do use it frequently for travel as it's lightweight and compact. It will only hold 6x8 panels, or 8x10 vertical. Make sure you get the American one (not the Europe one) to fit US panels.

Mid Price Easels: About \$100-150

French (full or half) easel (it is heavy, but still a popular choice)

Sienna makes a pochade box sold online (Amazon), students have told me they are very happy with this easel. (Over time this will not stand up to heavy use like the more expensive ones listed below).

Full Price Easels: \$300+ (worth it when you are ready!) Use the tripod that comes with a pochade 'package' or your own tripod. Larger boxes need larger/heavier tripods. Tripods can be purchased on Amazon. Some pochade boxes come with a package deal of bag + tripod + box. Check if you need extras such as brush trays.

EasyL "Lite" pochade box (artworkessentials.com), (with the classic mini you will need a drybox such as Ray-Mar carriers). Becomes a table-top easel too. **This is my favorite easel.** Extras to get: tray and brush holder.

OpenM (very lightweight in the field, not good for a table-top) an old staple, possible to get a cheap used one.

Coulter Easel (fairly large mixing area, need a good tripod and large back-pack with this, good for those who need 'paint down at table level', this setup is not good for a table-top)

Strada Easel is metal, I have the Micro (can become a table-top, but is a bit tippy). Cute, but heavy for the size, needs trays to function or main mix area is too small).

Fly on the Wall and/or Daytripper, new to the market and very popular with the plein air professionals. Does not convert to a table top easel. I don't have this easel. It may be too flimsy for me.

EdgePro is wood or durable plastic and comes with a laptop style format. I have the small. It is very sleek and light. This is new for me and I love it! This will be my new favorite small easel for overseas/light travel.

Oil Supplies: Plein Air or Studio

If you are beginning in oils you will be wondering what is the best way to get started (and also the least-expensive). I suggest using water-mixable oils to start, in the Cobra (Royal Talens) or Duo (Holbein) brand. My list has **'must have' colors, *'nice to have' colors and 'good to have' colors. If you are really a beginner, more is not more. Too many choices will confuse you. Buy less colors so you get comfortable mixing and learn to understand your basic paint colors.

SUPPLIES FOR WATER-MIXABLE OR TRADITIONAL OIL PAINT

MEDIUM - Walnut oil and Gamblin Solvent-Free Gel. Use sparingly if at all.. 5-10% in mixes

PALETTE - The best is an acrylic or wood palette for class, or tempered glass for the studio. Paper disposable palettes can be flimsy and wick oil out of the paint, but they are handy for class. Pochade boxes have a built-in palette, you can cut plexi to fit in a wood pochade box and caulk the edges to seal (I have this).

WHAT TO PAINT ON - Many choices... You can paint on paper, panels, or canvas. Paper must be prepared with gesso first to prevent the oils from seeping into the paper and ruining it. Jerry's Artorama has 'Creative Mark' or 'Centurion' pre-stretched canvas and linen panels that are high-quality at a decent price. Any store or web site will sell 'student' grade panels, these are cheap cardboard, not well primed, are not archival, and warp and are not recommended. Fredrix panels are not recommended. RayMar is a favorite choice of professional artists, get the 'feather' weight cotton panels for travel. Wind River panels are a luxurious panel. I get AC14. Students often ask what is the cheapest (but best) option for studies... Centurion panels; or cut canvas (get pre-primed real canvas fabric pads a roll, not cheap paper board with canvas imprint), then tape to a board and mount later if you like the painting. You can repaint your panels (scrape excess paint first), thus saving money.

BRUSHES - Get synthetic brushes for water-mixable oils (natural hairs will get floppy). Silver Brush Bristlon or Rosemary Ivory are great. I use flats mostly, size: 2, 4, 6, 8 (it is nice to have 2 each). For traditional oils synthetic or natural hair (boar-bristle, badger, sable) brushes all work well. Brushes should be in good condition: no caked paint, and have an edge (not splayed or bent). Rosemary Ivory (softer) and Silver Bristlon (stiffer) brushes are excellent and what I mostly use. I also have assorted boar, badger and sable brushes.

OTHER - Paper towels, or rags. Baby wipes. Plastic bag for trash/used brushes/ rags. Smock or apron. Sketch pad for quick studies or notes. Palette knife. Small cup with lid for walnut oil. Small container for water. Dry-box or canvas carrier for wet panels. You will want some Kmar Varnish (semi-gloss) in a spray canister for when your painting fully dries (sometimes this can take a few months, or longer). Varnish protects art from dust and grime and will unify the texture of your paint surface (makes dark colors rich and glossy again).

TOTE - BACKPACK -

I use my pochade box with a Kelty Redwing backpack size 44 or 50, or a large canvas tote. Some students like a rolling cart for supplies. Get one with larger wheels to navigate tree roots and rocky bumps we may encounter.

CLEANING BRUSHES: To clean my brushes while painting I can use walnut oil, but I often just use a 'light, medium and dark' brush and switch freely between colors without cleaning. For a full cleaning after use, I use Turpenoid Natural and Master's Brush Soap. You can also put brushes in the freezer for the next paint session. Freezing slows the oxidation of the paint drying. Pinch off most excess paint with a rag (leave paint residue in the brush), wrap in a plastic bag and freeze. Brushes stay useable for about 2 weeks. Freezing does not harm the paint or your brushes.

WATER-MIXABLE PAINT LIST (Optional list for all water-mixable oil painting)

PAINTS - Colors are sold in medium (37ml), and also white in large (150ml). The ** colors are very important, and can be used as a limited palette, then the * colors are nice to have... then others can be purchased as desired. I recommend Duo (Holbein), Cobra (Royal Talens) or Max (Grumbacher) paints. List below is for Cobra colors with other brands noted. These paints will clean with soap and water or Masters Brush cleaner.

Yellow: **Cadmium Yellow Light (Duo) or Cad Yellow Lt. Hue; *Cadmium Yellow Medium (Duo) (note: in Duo get Cad Yellow - not hue, Cobra colors in Cad are too pale and watery)

Red: Cadmium Red Light (note: Duo get Cad. Red - not hue) **Pyrol Red Lt. (Cobra), *Cool Red such as: Madder Lake (Cobra only) or Rose Madder (Duo only)

Blue: **Ultramarine Blue (Max or Duo, do not get Cobra brand in this color); Cerulean Blue (Duo); Pthalo Blue;

Orange: -

Green: -

Brown: **Transparent Oxide Red (Cobra)... if you can't find this Burnt Sienna in other brands will work for this color, you don't need both

Violet: **Thio Violet (Max)

White: **Titanium White (large size, Duo)

TRADITIONAL OIL PAINT LIST (This is what I use)

PAINTS - Colors are sold in medium (37ml), and also white in large (150ml). The ** colors are very important, and can be used as a limited palette, then the * colors are nice to have... then others can be purchased as desired. I use M. Graham paints, except as noted.

Yellow: **Cadmium Yellow Light; *Cadmium Yellow Medium

Red: Quinacridone Red, *Madder Lake (Cobra only, or Permanent Alizarin in other brands), **Azo Coral (equals permanent red lt. in other brands)

Blue: **French Ultramarine Blue; Thalo Blue; **Cobalt Blue, Cobalt Teal (Michael Harding)

Orange: -

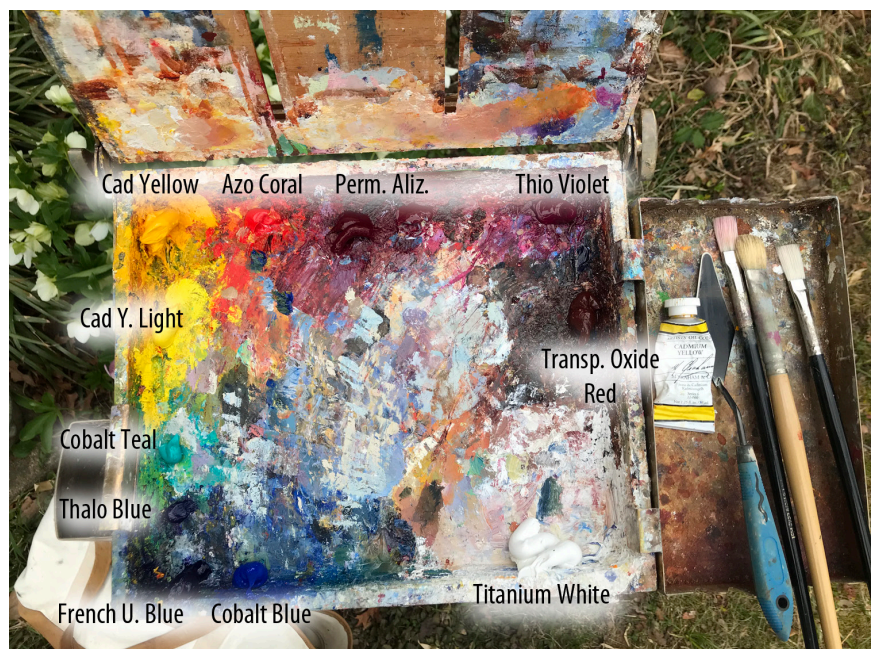
Green: Permanent Green Light (Rembrandt)

Brown: **Transparent Oxide Red (Cobra water-mixable), yes for traditional oil sets, you will need this or Burnt Sienna in water-mixable

Violet: *Quinacridone Violet (I use MAX water-mix Thio Violet)

White: **Titanium White (large size)

EasyL pochade box with tray shown here.

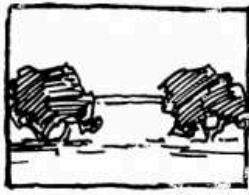


Bonus Material...

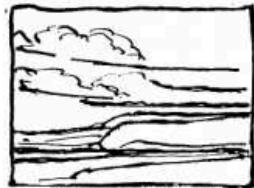
Things to be Avoided in Composing



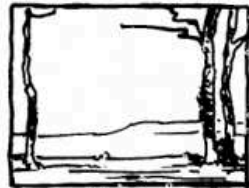
Canvas Halved



Equal Spacing of Masses



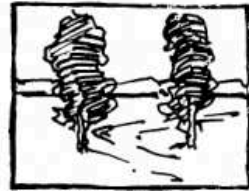
Too Many Parallel Lines



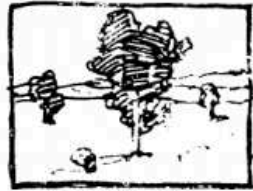
Lines too Near Edge of Picture



Trees on a Line



Equal Spacing



Centered Objects



Scattered Objects—
Centered Horizon



Three Equal Divisions



Equal Masses



Crowded design



Time-Honored Tips:

Here are some scans from Edgar Payne's 1941 book, *Composition of Outdoor Painting*. "Forms of Composition."

The more you concentrate on incorporating strong compositional ideas into your work, the more you will learn to look for and find the underlying layouts and structures of other people's images.

Looking at old master's and current working artist's paintings who you admire, with these structure ideas, can be really interesting and educational. It's a whole new way to look at art.

Strong composition is the factor that makes a great picture "work". When you ask yourself "What makes this a good picture?", good composition is at the heart of the answer.

Use Common Sense

With all of this good wisdom presented here, don't obsess over composition. You know more than you think! Much of composition is intuitive... like how you arrange furniture in a room... no sofa blocking the front door right? So why would you put a large fence blocking most of the viewer's path to your vista? Same idea.

Be intuitive... let the art 'feel right' and don't be a slave to the objects in front of you. Get messy and abstract in areas you want to have the viewer's eye read as secondary. Know what is your 'main idea'. Then, all else should only support that idea. Not compete.

Good Forms of Composition

