

The Artist Sketchbook

MATERIALS LIST & NOTES



This list suggests a variety of supplies that work well for artist journals/sketchbook and for more “finished” painting. Don’t hesitate to bring your own favorite materials. I work frequently outdoors or on location, so my kit tends to be simple and portable. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about materials prior to the workshop: Jean Mackay, jeanmackayart@gmail.com.

THE BASICS

- Pencils- HB, B, or 2B are good all around drawing tools; 3B, 4B are softer and darker and nice for shading; pencils in the H range are harder and lighter
- Kneaded eraser or white vinyl eraser
- Sketchbook- there are many options for sizes and brands- **Strathmore, Canson, Stillman & Birn, Pentallie, Handbook, and Moleskin** are a few good choices. I highly recommend getting a sketchbook that 120-140lb (270-300gsm) watercolor paper. You will get more satisfying effects with 140lb paper made for watercolor sketching. **Don’t skimp on paper quality.** I recommend 5x7” or larger. The smaller sketchbook will not give you room to play and you’ll be tempted to make everything tiny.

PEN & INK

Any waterproof black pen is fine for getting started. Even a ballpoint pen will do. Pen and ink is great for field sketching-- very portable, and works well with colored pencils and watercolors.

- I especially like **Pigma Micron** pens. The ink is archival quality, waterproof, and the pens come in various sizes:
 - 01 or 02 make a nice fine line
 - 005 is especially good for very fine detailed work
 - Pigma Graphic 1 has a bold line that works well for working fast and without being fussy.
 - You can purchase a set and try different sizes to see what you like best.
- **Staedtler** pigment liners are very similar, with waterproof ink.
- Sharpie makes a pen that is fairly thin, but most Sharpie markers bleed if you are not careful.
- Fountain pens or traditional dip pens and bottles of ink are fun to try, but they require more finesse in the field and are less portable. If you want to combine ink with watercolor, make sure you get a waterproof ink.

WATERCOLORS

- Basic starters: If you just want to test the waters, you might try a box of **Prang** watercolors. These are very basic, but the colors are fairly vibrant and you can get the feel of watercolors without making an investment.
- "Student" watercolors: **Cotman** brand by **Windsor & Newton** makes great field box sets of "pan" watercolors (mini-set, compact set, field box set). These are lightweight and easy to travel with. Like kids' watercolor sets (like Prang or Crayola), these paints are remoistened before painting. **Student Watercolors** have working characteristics similar to professional watercolors, but with lower concentrations of pigment and less expensive formulas. These are a good, affordable choice for getting started and you can upgrade later if you want.
- Artist grade or professional quality watercolors- Popular brands include Windsor & Newton, Daniel Smith, QoR, M. Graham, and Holbein. Watercolor "pans" are preferred for portability and field work. When you are starting, keep it simple. It's better to get to know a few colors and work with them effectively, than have lots of colors and not know how they combine.

Good starter palette:

- Ultramarine Blue
- Cobalt Blue (or some people like Cerulean blue)
- Yellow Ochre
- Cadmium Yellow light or Hansa Yellow Light or Medium
- Permanent Alizarin crimson (or Quinacridone Pink or Quinacridone Magenta, which are also permanent colors)
- Cadmium Red or Transparent Pyrrol Orange
- Burnt Umber
- Burnt Sienna
- Quinacridone Gold is also a very useful; you may want to substitute it for yellow ochre. Daniel Smith brand recommended over Windsor and Newton.

Greens- Many people mix their own from combinations of blues and yellows or blues and browns. Others select a green that mixes well with blues for darker shades and yellows for lighter ones. Permanent sap green and Hookers Green are good choices.

COLORED PENCILS OR WATERCOLOR PENCILS

- If you prefer colored pencils to watercolor paints, by all means use them. **Faber Castell** watercolor pencils and colored pencils are especially good and the color remains true even when wet. **Derwent** and **Prismacolor** are popular brands.

