

SUPPLY LIST

Plein Air Painting Adventure in Umbria, Italy

with Winslow Art Center and Mitchell Albala

Preparati! Get ready!

This list is lengthy only because there is a lot of explanation with tips and suggestions for traveling light and compact. You probably have most of these supplies. Remember, any supply that is not absolutely necessary adds to your burden.

Please take time to review this list now and then test your setup. Don't wait till the last minute.

Questions? Email me: mitch@mitchalbala.com

This list is geared toward oil painters. Working in **pastel**? Please see notes on the last page of this list.

Supplies in Rome? If you are going to be in Rome before the workshop, you can buy some of your supplies there, rather than carrying them on the flight. They will be more expensive than purchasing them in the States. In terms of oil paint, Martha says that the brands of oil she has seen in the art stores in Italy are: Old Holland, Maimeri, Willimasburg, as well as others. Italy does not carry Gamblin.

Supplies provided by Winslow Art Center

- Paper towels
- Solvent
- Garbage bags
- Stools

DAILY EXCURSIONS - WHAT TO CARRY

You shouldn't have to carry more than your plein air easel or pochade box **and** 2) a shoulder bag or backpack for your supplies. *No more than that!* If you have to wheel your supplies around on a luggage carrier, you are taking too much! Everything listed in this supply list should fit comfortably into these two items. **Note:** All our painting locations are at Castello di Petroia, so you will never have to walk very far with your painting kit.

OUTDOOR EASELS

I *strongly* recommend *pochade* boxes, as they are much lighter and smaller than French easels. If you were thinking of bringing a French easel, **don't**.

The most important things for a pochade box (and its tripod) is for it to be **stable and **lightweight**.**

POCHADE BOX OPTIONS

U.GO Plein Air kits from NuWave - These boxes are particularly slim and lightweight. They have an 8.5" x 11" box at 2.1 lbs.

ARTWORK ESSENTIALS www.artworkessentials.com brand.

They have two options:

- The 10" x 12" x EASyL, which allows you to store two wet panels in the lid. At 3 lb. 8 oz., it's relatively heavy.
- Their Slimline 10" x 12" is 2 lb. 7 oz., but does not have room to store panels.

OPEN BOX M - also makes good boxes. Check availability and weights online.

SIENNA PALETTE BOX by Richeson

Advice on purchasing a pochade box

There are many brands of pochade boxes, and I am not familiar with them all. If you want my opinion on a particular kit, please email a link to the manufacturer's website. **If you have some other type of easel, or are unsure about it, please email me with a photo or link to the manufacturer's website.**

! Brand NOT to get: Guerrilla Painter

! No wiggle - With a pochade box, the most important thing is that it is stable and does not wiggle on the tripod. If buying a new box, be sure that it is returnable. Test it within the return period, and make sure it is stable. If you cannot get it to be stable, it may be that **1)** you are not setting it up properly; **2)** it is not a very good box; or **3)** it is not mating well with its tripod. Check with the manufacturer, and if necessary, return it before you get paint all over it; and get a box that **is** stable.

Tripods - Most pochade boxes have tripods the manufacturer recommends to go with their box. As with the boxes themselves, these can be heavy, and rather long when folded up, which can make fitting it into your suitcase difficult. However, there are also lightweight tripods that fold down to just 20" or so in length. Again ... test, test and test ... and return it if necessary.

! Be sure to test your painting outfit. Set it up at home and make sure you have everything.

"Backboard" - With pochade boxes, the area you attach your painting to is rather small. This means there can be quite a lot of backlighting around the painting, which can make evaluating color difficult. I like to use a slightly larger piece of cardboard (approx. 11" x 14") as a backboard, to block the backlight. I attach the backboard to the easel as though it were a canvas, and then attach my canvas panel to the backboard.

If you are painting on gessoed paper or primed *un-stretched* pieces of canvas (see below), *you must have this backboard*, because the paper or canvas needs to be taped to something sturdy. The ideal backboard is a 1/8" or 3/16" thick piece of plasticized foam core (gatorboard), because this allows you to remove tape repeatedly without tearing the board. It's also very light.

TIP: 11 x 14" is rather large for packing, so I recommend **a)** score the 11" x 14" backboard in the middle (cut halfway through with a mat knife), fold in half, and reinforce with tape. This makes for an 11" x 7" folding panel, which will fit into your bag more easily. Be sure to score parallel with the 11" side. **b)** If that doesn't work, then simply cut the panel in half, and tape it together when you are in Italy.

BRUSHES

For oil painters, a range of hog bristle brushes are best.

Do not bring old, stiff, encrusted brushes as this will make paint handling very difficult.

Note: "Filbert," "flat," and "bright" refer to the shape of the brush.

Flat-shaped brushes are versatile. You can make broad chisel-like, squarish strokes, or use them along their side to get a rounder, thinner stroke.

Filbert-shaped brushes are also excellent. Even if you work primarily with filberts, it's helpful to have one or two flats, which are handy when rendering architecture.

#2 through #8 offer a good range of sizes for small plein air work. Since the sizing systems used by different brush manufacturers vary, I have indicated the brush size in inches (measured at the width at the ferrule, not the length of the brush).

In oil, this is a compact set of brushes that gives you maximum flexibility.

- 1 (one) large #10–#12 bright or short filbert (7/8" to 1") used for toning the surface and color blocking
- 2 (two) #2 filbert or flat (approx. 1/4" wide)
- 2 (two) #4 (approx. 7/16" wide)
- 2 (two) #6 filbert or flat (approx. 1/2" wide)
- 1 (one) #8 filbert or flat (approx. 5/8" wide)

Optional: One or two synthetic brushes, in #2 and #4 size can also be helpful

PAINT

! Do not bring more colors than necessary. It's better to stick with a limited palette. I use a *split-primary* palette, which includes both a cool and a warm variety of each of the primary colors. For a full explanation of this palette, see the article at my blog:

[The "Split Primaries" Landscape Painting Palette](#)

! Do not bring large 150 ml tubes of paint with you. Too heavy!

! Weight saver tip: For colors that are very strong, that you use sparingly — such as cadmium red or orange (or its equivalent "hue"); hansa or cadmium yellow medium; or dioxazine purple — consider bringing half used up tubes.

If there are any color(s) not listed here, that you *love* and must have, feel free to bring them — but I urge you to not bring any more than is absolutely necessary.

Colors with an **asterisk *** are essential.

[*] Titanium White only (not zinc or flake)

Better to bring two 37 ml tubes of white than a large, heavy 150 ml tube. A half used up large tube is OK, as well.

[*] Ultramarine Blue (cool blue)

[*] “Warm” Blue - There are several pigment colors that fall into this family. Phthalo Blue is the most common; however, I do not recommend it. It is so intense that it overpowers mixtures, and easily gets mixed up with ultramarine on your palette. Alternatively, any one of these ...

Sennelier’s **Blue Azure** (oil)

like Phthalo Blue with a little white added to it

Manganese Blue

like a “weaker” version of Phthalo, and therefore much easier to manage.

Cerulean Blue

For full details on working with and selecting “warm” blue pigments, please see this article at my blog: <https://mitchalbala.com/why-i-dumped-phthalo-blue-and-started-dating-her-less-intense-cousin/>

[*] Alizarin Crimson (cool red)

[*] Cadmium Orange or equivalent “hue” (warm red)

[*] Cadmium Yellow Medium or **Hansa Yellow Medium** (warm yellow)

[*] Nickel Titanate Yellow (cool yellow). If you are unfamiliar with this color see:

<https://mitchalbala.com/nickel-titanate-the-coolest-yellow/>

[*] Burnt Umber - for creating neutral mixes.

[*] Naples Yellow - Some brands of Naples Yellow are very drab, and lack the golden hinting that makes this color so luscious. Brands with good color: Daniel Smith (if you can still get it), Holbein, Gamblin, Van Gogh.

[*] Green - You don’t necessarily need a lot of greens on your palette; you can easily mix your own. However, it is handy to have one all-purpose green on your palette to save time. For this, I recommend **Chrome Oxide Green**. Unlike Viridian or Sap, it has strong covering power and can easily be manipulated in cool or warm directions. If there is another green that you love and have had success with, feel free to bring it.

Additional Optional Colors

Dioxazine Purple - This is a helpful color and can be a time-saver. You can mix violets with Ultramarine Blue and your reds, but they are not as rich and intense as Dioxazine.

Yellow Ochre

PAINTING SURFACES

Do not color or tone the surfaces beforehand.

If you're experienced with plein air painting and have a preference for a particular surface, please bring that.

Quantity: I can't predict exactly how many paintings and/or studies you will do. We paint on 5 days, and sometimes you will work on a painting for two sessions, and sometimes you'll do small studies. Guesstimate: about 10 – 12 surfaces. We probably won't do that many, but it's better to have extra on hand. Also consider having different sizes.

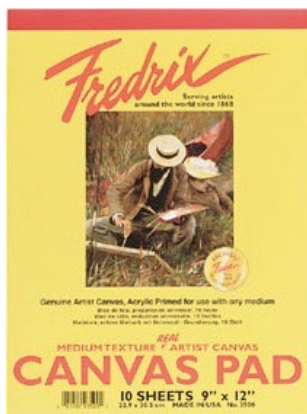
Size: I prefer to work small when painting outdoors, especially when traveling. A smaller surface is also more manageable for short painting periods. I typically work 6" x 9" to 8" x 10" maximum. The only exception to this would be if you are *really* used to working large and would be stifled by working on such a small scale. Larger panels, like 9" x 12" or larger, will be more difficult to finish in our short painting sessions, and to transport.

SURFACE TYPES:

Canvas panels: *Fredrix* and *Dick Blick* brands are good.

Pre-primed, *unstretched* canvas

Gessoed paper



Pre-primed, *unstretched* canvas

Fredrix brand: “Medium Texture Real Artist’s Canvas Canvas Pad” in 9" x 12" or Dick Blick’s Brand: “Canvas Pad, Real Canvas ...”

If using this approach, you will need a **lightweight “backboard”** – stiff cardboard or gator board, approx. 11" x 14", to which you tape the small canvas pieces to. The benefit of pre-primed unstretched

canvas this is that you can use whole sheets, or cut the sheets to a desired size. This is a very lightweight and portable approach.

Note! Many supposed “canvas” pads are not made from canvas, but texturized plastic or paper. **Do not get this type.** They are unusable.

Notes on gessoed paper: Gessoed paper is even lighter, thinner, and easier to transport than wet canvas panels. I like 140 lb Arches watercolor paper. It comes in “hot press” (smooth) or “cold press” (textured). You can also use any other brand of watercolor paper or drawing paper, as long as it has a sturdy weight, around 140 lb. Paper, of course, needs to be prepared: trimmed down to size and then gessoed. If you have never worked on gessoed paper before, and will be trying this for the first time, *I strongly suggest you prepare a few sheets beforehand, test it out, and make sure you like how the paint responds to it.* The texture of the paper matters because, like canvas, it reacts to your strokes, and you want to be sure you like that reaction.

How to gesso Paper? See this video demonstration:

<https://mitchalbala.com/how-to-gesso-paper/>

ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES

Palette for oil painters - The type of palette you use will depend on the type of pochade box you have. Pochade boxes have an area for the palette built into the box. In most boxes this is lined with the wood of the box. Some painters prefer to insert into the palette area a fitted piece of plexiglass or regular glass. Some boxes come with such a palette (such as New Wave’s u.go), or one can be purchased as an add-on.

Disposable Vinyl or Latex Gloves. Can be found in most pharmacies or hardware stores. Test fit for size before you buy! Just bring enough to last you for the workshop.

Painting Medium for oil painters - smallest tube Gamblin’s *Solvent-Free Gel* or small tube of *Daniel Smith’s Painting Medium for Oil and Alkyds.*



Palette knife, metal, essential for mixing! Do not get the long flat-bladed type that’s like a regular knife, but a spade-head type, as shown here. About 2”.

Masking tape - half-used up roll (saves weight). Beige, white, or black (**blue** tape is distracting for color work)

Palette Cup (for oil painters) This can be any kind of small metal or plastic cup, no more than 2 oz., just enough to keep solvent on your palette without taking

up too much room. I do not recommend the larger stainless steel canisters with the clasp tops that hang from the side of the easel. Tool large! You will carry your supply of solvent around in a plastic bottle (see below).



Viewfinder - ViewCatcher (left) is a good plastic, adjustable cropping tool.

Optionally, your camera or phone can serve as a viewfinder.

Markers (optional) - 1 (one) black and 1 (one) 50% cool gray. We do lots of thumbnails. A soft pencil (above) is perfectly fine for this. You don’t *have* to try

the markers, but I like them and will be demonstrating with them. If you would like to try them, I recommend Prismacolor. They make a double-nib marker with a broad point on one end and a “fine” point on the other. (See below.) Or Dick Blick’s equivalent line.

For oil painters: small plastic bottle for solvent, 4-oz., with the flip down spout, like hand lotion bottles. Convenient and safe. Bring an empty bottle, and we will pour the solvent into these small-mouthed bottles with a plastic 2" or 3" funnel, which we will have on hand.

Sketch book, small/compact - approx 5" x 7"

Pencils - Essential! - Soft 2B, 6B, or Ebony. Drawing tools that make bold marks lend themselves more to shape-oriented thumbnails.

! Fine point markers, or very light pencils are **not** suitable for the type of thumbnails we will be doing.

Kneaded eraser

Rags (for oil painters, essential) - T-shirt type cotton cloth is best. Please, cut into small ~ 6" x 6" pieces. These are specifically for wiping out on oil paintings, which paper towels are not suitable for.

Pencil sharpener (small)

WET PAINT CARRIERS

For oil painters, carrying wet paintings is a challenge, especially when traveling. It’s possible that some of your oil paintings will be dry by the time you leave, so you may not need to worry about carrying too many wet paintings. **Note:** Some pochade boxes have space to hold one or two wet paintings.

Even the smallest wet canvas carriers will take up a lot of room in your luggage. Unfortunately, I don’t have any brilliant solutions for that. Two recommendations:

Raymar - They make high quality, very lightweight wet canvas carriers. The 13 x 10-³/₄" box has slots for three 9 x 12" panels. Keep in mind that this box doesn’t restrict you to only 9" x 12" panels. You can work smaller. If you work on panels, gessoed paper, or pre-primed *unstretched* canvas: instead of filling the slots with 9" x 12" panels, fill them with blank 9 x 12" gator-board foam panels (1/8" or 3/16"). You can attach/tape smaller paintings to the inserts.

Raymar Art website:

<https://www.raymarart.com/10x12-Wet-Painting-Carrier-p/wpc1012.htm>



They also make a wet canvas carrier that holds three 8 x 10" canvas panels.

Another inexpensive option - If you can find a slim box, approximately 9 x 12" or 10 x 13" and 1/2 to 3/4" inches deep. It can hold up to two paintings: one attached to the inside lid, and one attached to the bottom of the box, as shown.



APPS

Notanizer - A very handy app that I strongly recommend you get. I will show you how to use it in the workshop. Very helpful for composition! Find out all about it here:

<https://mitchalbala.com/compositional-studies-with-the-notanizer-app/>