

AIMEE ERICKSON'S OIL PAINTING MATERIALS LIST

If you're using a different medium, please bring comparable supplies in your medium.

PAINTS

For workshops, I'm no longer publishing a list of paint colors; most students already have many tubes. Bring enough that you feel prepared, and not so many that it's overwhelming. If you're a beginner, buy a set of 6-12 tubes.

PALETTE

Something to mix your paints on. Please don't use a white palette; it makes judging values difficult. A wooden palette treated repeatedly with linseed oil makes an ideal smooth surface for mixing. Glass or plexiglass is also good; tape a neutral color paper to the back. If you prefer a disposable palette get the gray one from Richeson, and bring some binder clips to keep the paper from sliding around.

BRUSHES

Brushes make brushstrokes, which is what makes a painting. If you're in need of a good set of brushes, I suggest the David Boyd Jr Starter/Workshop set or the Suzie Baker set. If you want just two or three, get a couple of decent longish flats.

SOLVENT & MEDIUM

A **solvent** (turpentine, traditionally; water if you are using water-miscible oil paint) dissolves and thins wet paint; we use it to clean brushes and only in small quantities as a medium. With traditional oils, use odorless solvent (Gamsol or turpenoid). Use a stainless brush washer with a basket and a gasket lid that clamps on.

A **medium** is used to change the consistency of the paint. Gamblin's Solvent-Free Gel is recommended.

SUPPORTS

A **support** is a surface to paint on, and a **ground** is the primer, usually gesso, used to coat the support to prepare it for painting.

Acceptable supports include stretched canvas, canvas panels, birch panels, masonite panels, or an oil paper like Arches Oil Paper or Multimedia Artboard; these last two are absorbent unless you gesso them.

Paper is a good support if coated with shellac, and I frequently do small studies on treated paper. My favorite support is homemade muslin panels (see [video here](#)). I also paint in my sketchbook—a coat of shellac on each page makes it suitable for oil paint and good for studies, although you can paint right on heavily sized sketchbook paper with reasonable results.

Size and quantity of supports depends on the student—sometimes you'll want to do a sustained study and sometimes several starts. Better too many than not enough.

Tone: a very thin layer of paint, mostly wiped off, to give the canvas an overall 'tone' before you start. It can be done ahead of time and dry, or right before your paint. A light-to-middle-value neutral is a versatile choice. Use a little solvent and a neutral combination of paint to cover the board. Then use a paper towel to remove excess and create a very thin, even tone.

PALETTE KNIFE

A palette knife, or painting knife, can be used for mixing and for applying paint. A three-inch offset blade with a long, graceful shape is the most versatile. Keep it clean: scrape dried paint off with a razor blade.

PANEL CARRIER or some other way to transport wet paintings.

PAPER TOWELS & plastic trash bag

PORTABLE EASEL (unless the venue provides easels)

MISCELLANEOUS A baseball cap is sometimes useful, even in a studio setting, to shield your eyes from light.

BOOK Plein Air Techniques for Artists.