**ACRYLIC PAINTING HOW TO’S AND TIPS**

**SUPPLIES YOU NEED:**

1. Acrylic paint (artist grade are the best but you can start with student grade)and a color wheel to help you mix colors

2. A Palette to mix colors on (acrylics dry fast so a covered type will keep you from wasting paint.

3. Water and a cup or preferably 2 (clean water/dirty water). Keep water in cups that won’t tip over easily (mason jars are great). Change water regularly.

4. Brushes (get familiar with which are best for what type of painting and what sizes are best-there is a ton of info in books and online-If you want to be an artist you should take the time to research). The bare basic rule though is this: Big brushes are best when painting big areas or using a loose painting style. Small brushes are best for small areas and details*.* Keep a variety of shapes and sizes…experiment with them in sketchbook.

5. Paper towels or rags

6. Canvas

7. An easel…optional…but these help a lot. When you draw and paint flat on a desk there is visual distorting. If you don’t have an easel prop your painting up regularly to see straight on so you can catch any distortions.

**IMPORTANT:**

WHEN CHOOSING YOUR SUBJECT:

* RESEARCH YOUR SUBJECT. Look at examples by experienced artists in different styles.
* PLAN YOUR COMPOSITON- Keep notes in your sketchbook. Experiment with compositions by sketching thumbprints of composition. A strong composition is crucial to a successful piece of art. It's what attracts a viewer's eye, and what holds their attention once they take a closer look. (see Edgar Payne’s Compositional sketches online for easy visual examples of the many types of compositions).



Examples by Edgar Payne

* USE A VISUAL REFERENCE (from life is best or use a photo). What you think you know about how something looks is usually off. Why waste time and supplies working on something that you can’t bother to research how it really looks- you’ll end up frustrated and with a so-so painting –if you even finish it.
* DON'T START WITH COMPLICATED SUBJECTS- start with simple, easy forms like fruits, vases, tree. One of the most difficult things to paint, for example, is a portrait of a person keep that for after you’ve developed your skills.
* GEL MEDIUMS- These are optional but they are fun to experiment with and can change the paint quality.

**GETTING STARTED- DRAW ON A TINTED CANVAS**

Tint the canvas with paint and then draw your layout- drawing first can make details hard to see and your drawing gets smudged. It’s much easier this way. You can pick any ground color that complements your composition. When in doubt, I usually paint a diluted base of yellow ochre on the whole canvas. It provides the painting a vibrant undertone. Some artists always begin with a black under painting, there is no one right way, with time you will develop your own techniques.

**MIXING PAINT**

* Use a Color Wheel as a guide
* Add darker pain to lighter paint NOT the other way around because you will waste a ton of paint. Example to make gray add a dab of black to a blob of white.

**STEPS TO PAINTING**

* SEE STEP BY STEP EXAMPLE ON NEXT PAGE.
* REMEMBER TINTS/SHADES/VALUES (WHITE TO BLACK)-Paint the Middle Values first. When you are happy with your composition, fill the rough shape of the focal point of your painting with the middle value for that object.
* Then move to another object or shape adjacent your focal point and paint its rough shape with the middle value.
* Keep working around the whole composition blocking in all the shapes and objects. Don’t bother about shadows and highlights at this stage.
* CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-Once you have blocked off all the shapes in your composition, step back and take a look. Does it make sense? Did you choose good colors for each object?
* MAKE CHANGES NOW- Go back and make any needed changes to the colors. When you are happy with the colors, it is time to start filling in more details: smaller shapes and different values. Start with the lighter values then move to the darker ones.
* THEN PAINT THE SHADOWS. Shadows should be of a cooler color than the rest of the object. Note: Shadows are never black.
* PAINT THE HIGHLIGHTS LAST- The last thing you need to do is to add the highlights. Highlights don’t have to be white; they can be a very light value of the main color of the object.
* REMEMBER-Step back often and look at your painting from a distance. This will help you see the direction your painting is going and evaluate the values and areas that need tweaking or improvement.

CLEAN UP & PROTECT YOUR SUPPLIES ESPECIALLY YOUR BRUSHES!!! USE SOAPY WARM WATER AND STORE PAINTS WITH CAPS ON IN A SAFE TEMPERATURE CONTROLED CLIMATE.

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