

Watercolor 101 and 102

Class Supply List Updated 9/2023



This list is for watercolor students who have no painting supplies and want the information to inform their buying decisions and for those who already own some watercolor supplies, to use this list to review what you have and to fill in any gaps. I LOVE art materials, so I talk about them a lot. Unfortunately, price usually signals quality. I have nothing against saving money on artists' equipment – but the truth is, and I know from experience that certain kinds of brushes, paints, and paper are a compromise, and you won't get the same results and handling experience. I strongly encourage you to begin with quality student grade materials. I am providing this list of materials, which is a result of many long hours of painting and experimenting. I have plenty of materials for you to experiment with and an optional starter “kit” you can purchase (below).

There are two “class fee” options (above the class tuition) payable to me before or during the first session:

- \$5.00 handouts and limited experimentation of supplies but no “kit”, or
- \$30.00 Kit (handouts, a 10-well Palette with lid, a roll of washi tape, use of my paints, quality paper (Fabriano and Arches) for in-class assignments, and use of brushes and experimental materials).

You can pay

- by check – payable to Sasha Roberts-Levi
- [PayPal](#)
- or Venmo @sasha-roberts-levi-1
- Zelle - Sasha Levi or 313-701-9856
- [Credit Card](#)

Choosing art materials can be confusing and very much dictated by personal choice. I want this introductory class to be fun and stress-reducing – not stress-inducing. This is why I offer the starter “kit.” I will introduce the materials in the first session and throughout the term, so you can make informed choices about what you might like to add to your watercolor tool set.

Watercolors are also called “aquarelles” (aqua = Latin for water). They are composed of finely triturated pigments, a binder such as gum arabic, and a small proportion of wetting agents. They are soluble in water and remain so after drying. The 8 ml tubes are plenty for this class. If you have watercolors, please be sure you have the recommended basic spectrum colors. You will want a warm and a cool of each primary color (red, yellow, blue for mixing all other colors). You can view a PDF of all the Winsor Newton Cotman colors [here](#). Winsor Newton are a good quality student grade. The professional lines will sometimes be a little more saturated.

- Reds ([Alizarin Crimson Hue](#) AND [Cadmium Red Deep Hue](#))
- Orange ([Cadmium Orange Hue](#))
- Yellow ([Lemon Yellow Hue](#) AND [Cadmium Yellow Hue](#))
- Green ([Viridian Hue](#))
- Blue ([Ultramarine](#) AND [Cerulean Blue](#), [Prussian Blue](#) - optional)
- [Indigo](#) (optional)

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- Violet ([Dioxazine Purple](#) or [Purple Lake](#))

You can use the links above to purchase on Amazon individual small W&N Cotman tubes. If you are purchasing a [W&N Cotman set of 20 tubed colors](#) it will also include these colors: Permanent Rose, Turquoise, Emerald, Hooker's Green Light, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Burnt Umber, Lamp Black and Chinese White. I will recommend you not to use the Lamp Black or Chinese White in this class, so if you are purchasing individual tubes you can wait on these two.

Using Watercolors from the tube or from a “cake” or “pan” (think old Prang Oval Eight we used in school) is totally a personal choice. They are the same paint. At the factory, colors either are put into tubes or full or half pans. Tubes are the most economical way to purchase colors. You can fill empty pans and replace only the colors you use most (either with tube paint or another cake). There are many choices for purchasing empty pan pallets.

- This [Winsor & Newton Cotman Watercolor Paint Set, Studio Set, 24 Whole Pans](#) would be more than enough (basic and expansion colors and a nice plastic pallet for mixing).
- This [Winsor & Newton Cotman Watercolor Paint Set, Complete Pocket Set, 16 Half](#) has most of the colors you need (no orange) but it is small and portable.

Mixing brands across the hues is OK. I will have some paint for you to try. Different brands use different names (I'll show you how to read the label) and can behave slightly differently. If you own cake/pan watercolors, check them for a good selection of primary and secondary colors. For this class, I suggest Winsor Newton Cotman. But of course, if you have paint on hand, and it is good quality – use that. Other artist-grade brands I use are Winsor & Newton, Daniel Smith, and Schmincke Horadam. I haven't used Holbein. Stay away from Chinese watercolors and “inexpensive store-brands.” You won't get the saturation (brightness), and many are not light-fast. And you won't get the same results and handling experience.

The brushes and paper used should be of the best quality - from the start. Although high-quality materials cannot guarantee any masterpieces, without them, it is almost impossible to achieve good results, brilliance, lightfastness, and durability. You can spend dollars or hundreds of dollars on a brush. Winsor Newton series 7 was Queen Victoria's favorite. These brushes are handmade using the tail hairs of the Kolinski Weasel! Again, quality is indicated by price. I'll share more about this in class but for now you'll need 3 round brushes (really small like a zero or 1), a medium (6 or 8) and larger one. You can buy synthetic watercolor brushes or natural hair. Don't use brushes that are meant for acrylic or oil. They should be soft, fat at the feral (to hold water and paint) shaped to a nice point, and spring back after you bend it. There are a few inexpensive but reliable brands I have used: (Please feel free to use mine, or bring what you have until after the first class).

- Winsor & Newton Cotman Water Colour [Series 111 Short Handle](#) Synthetic Brush
- Winsor & Newton University Brush, [Series 233](#) Synthetic Brush
- Winsor & Newton Cotman [Series 111, Set of 4](#), (Round 1, 4, & 6, One Stroke 3/8") This is a nice set to start with but you'll probably want a larger brush, too.

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Suggested Material List

1. **Watercolor Paint** – Bring your own or purchase a “kit” (see above)
2. **Watercolor Palette** - A palette with a mixing area. Both plastic and porcelain work, or small clear glass and white china dishes will work beautifully. You don't need a giant mixing pallet for this first class, but if that is what you have, that's fine too. Small round pallets will work to store paint but will not be big enough to provide a mixing area. If you are not sure what to purchase, wait until after the first class. The lid of pan plastic and metal pallets are meant to be used as a mixing space. You can purchase empty ones.
3. **Watercolor Paper** comes in a combination of three characteristics: weight, surface texture, and size. If you want to purchase paper, it should be medium weight watercolor paper (140 – 300 lb. cold press) with cotton content (100% is best, 25% is OK) and made for watercolor (it has a special sizing in it). Everyone will have their preference, which is fine. You can buy a pad or buy individual sheets as you go or use a “block”. Each artist will find a favorite paper, so I suggest experimenting. I'll talk more about this in class. Here are two of my favorites: There are other good quality cotton student brands.
 - [Arches Watercolor Pad 9x12](#)-inch Natural White 100% Cotton Paper - 12 Sheet Arches Watercolor Paper 140 lb Cold Press Pad – we will be using half sheets in this class.
 - [Fabriano Studio Cold Press](#) Watercolor Pad, 9 x 12
4. **Brushes** - You will need a variety of brushes in all sizes. Bring what you have, and I have plenty for you to borrow. We will begin using round brushes. You should have a small (#0 or 1, Med and large) Brushes are also a very personal choice
5. Two glass jars for water (I have Mason Jars for you to use)
6. A cloth (a dedicated washcloth works) or paper towel
7. A HB (#2 yellow pencil) OR HARDER like an H or 2H) and eraser
8. Metal ruler or small plastic T-square (we have some at the Art House to use in class)
9. Small bar of soap (like you get at a hotel) for cleaning your brush.
10. [Delicate surface masking tape](#) or washi tape
11. Other materials – don't purchase them now, but if you have them in the house, you can gather them:
 - A flat board
 - Gummed tape (for stretching your watercolor paper – we don't do this in 101 or 102)
 - Liquid masking fluid
 - A water spray bottle
 - A natural sponge
 - A kneaded eraser
 - Bag for carrying supplies to and from class and brush carrier (for protecting brush tips)

Here are some of the places I purchase art materials – I always shop and price compare, it's worth it!

- Dick Blick Art Supplies - online instore
- Michaels -online/instore
- Hobby Lobby - online/instore
- Amazon - online
- Jackson's Art Supplies - online
- Cheap Joe's - online