

Michael Chesley Johnson AIS PSA MPAC

Plein Air Painting Workshops

Supply List for Plein Air Landscape Workshops // Version 4/2021

I work mainly in two mediums, oil and pastel. What follows is a list of what I recommend for these. Please bring these items. If you'd like to bring something different, please let me know, and we can discuss it.

If you are painting in some other medium, please bring what you normally bring, but also the items marked "Miscellaneous" below. **Special Note for Acrylic Painters:** Acrylics dry fast outdoors. Make sure you are prepared to deal with fast-drying conditions. Consider using a Sta-Wet Palette, retarder and mister. Or, try the new, slower-drying acrylics such as Golden Open or Atelier Interactive.

For Oil Painters

- **Paints:** *Split-Primary Palette:* Hansa Yellow Light, Hansa Yellow Deep, Naphthol Scarlet, Permanent Alizarin Crimson, Ultramarine Blue, Cerulean Blue Hue, Sap Green, Titanium-Zinc White. (If you prefer, you may bring any warm and cool version of the primaries.) *Earth Colors:* Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Raw Umber. (I use Gamblin for all my oil painting materials. The Gamblin 1980 Oils are "student grade" but work well, and I recommend them if you don't want to pay for "artist grade.")
- **Thinner:** Gamblin's Gamsol. Please, no turpentine
- **Medium:** Gamblin's Solvent-Free Gel - but I don't use it very often, so it is optional
- **Panels:** Hardboard panels to which two coats of acrylic gesso have been applied. (Bring 9x12s - plan on 2 panels a day for full-day workshops - and also a few 5x7s). Avoid the cheap cotton canvas-covered cardboard panels. If you prefer not to make your own panels, Ampersand Gessobord is fine, although it is more "slippery".
- **Brushes:** Hog Bristle Flats (#10, #8, #4) plus a couple of small hog bristle rounds (#4, #6).
- **Painting Knife:** I like a small, trowel-shaped one about an inch long. Mine is RGM Ideal Line 19R.
- **Also:** Wet panel carrier, container for thinner. Handy Porters or PanelPak for carriers; I use the smallest Holbein brush washer (#1052-15S) for my thinner container. If you are traveling, you will need these carriers to get your paintings home!

For Pastel Painters

- **Pastels:** You should have a set of at least 36-48 pastels to start with. The more you have, the better. Both Polychromos (36-pc set), NuPastel (48-pc set) and Cretacolor (72-pc set) make good sets. You may also want to consider the "Michael Chesley Johnson Plein Air Set" of 50 pastels from Pastels Girault, which have properties of both hard and soft pastels. This may be ordered from the US distributor, Pastel Etc.: Michele Aplin, michele@giraultpastels.com or 310-640-8388 (\$245). Plus a selection of softer pastels such as Blue Earth or Mount Vision.
- **Paper:** UArt Sanded Pastel Paper (plan on 2 9x12 sheets per day for full-day workshops, and also a few 5x7 pieces.) I like the 400-grit. ArtSpectrum Colourfix will also work for liquid washes, but it is much coarser. Do not bring Sennelier LaCarte, as it can't stand moisture.
- **Backboard** to tape paper to
- **Solvent:** either rubbing alcohol or Gamsol. If you use the rubbing alcohol, try getting it in spray bottle, as I have taken to spraying on the alcohol rather than using a brush
- **Gloves:** a few pairs of disposable nitrile gloves
- **Also:** Container for solvent, masking tape

Miscellaneous

- **Outdoor easel:** So many different options! For oil, I like the Prolific Painter Daytripper, the 9x12 Guerrilla Painter Box or the 10x12 Open Box M, each of which requires a tripod. For pastel, the Heilman Designs "Backpacker" box plus tripod. If you use a tripod, make sure it has a metal head, not plastic. I use the ProMaster XC525. Whatever easel you use, it should be portable and lightweight and above all stable. Another good option is the En Plein Air Pro setups. An old standby is the trusty French Easel. If you bought a new easel for the workshop, make sure you know how to set it up.
- **Small Sketchbook** and **6B drawing pencil** for making quick thumbnail sketches.
- **ViewCatcher** or similar viewfinder

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- **Paper towels** and **small garbage bags**
- **Photos to work from** in the event of bad weather
- **Hat, sunblock** and **water bottle**
- **Appropriate clothing** and **footwear**

Optional

- **Umbrella.** Not necessary, but helpful in intense sunlight. I like the Best Brella.
- **Stool.** Not necessary, but if you must sit to paint, I strongly suggest a camp stool or collapsible chair, since not all locations have picnic tables.
- **Lunch** for all-day workshops or snacks.
- **Wheeled cart** to lug everything in. Make sure the wheels are big enough to go over rocks and roots!

Keep in mind that this is a plein air workshop! What this means is:

- **Everything should be portable.** You should be able to carry everything in ONE trip.
- **You should be comfortable with your gear.** Don't bring an untested field easel!
- **Think ahead to what you might need in the field,** such as drinking water, snacks, baby wipes for your hands, sun hat, sunblock, etc. But remember -- you still have to carry whatever you bring in ONE trip. (Most likely, we'll be walking very little distance from the car, but you never know!)
- **Restrooms may not be immediately available.** The nature of plein air requires a certain amount of flexibility on the part of both instructor and student, and although we will try to find locations that have restrooms, you may have to use the facilities the Great Outdoors provides. I will at least make sure we have bushes.

NOTE about Carpooling. Carpooling is okay, but I have two rules:

- Driver sets the schedule
- Make sure you have everything you need before getting into your friend's car

Suggested Reading

My books, **Backpacker Painting: Outdoors with Oil & Pastel** and **Outdoor Study to Studio: Take Your Plein Air Paintings to the Next Level**, have lots of information plus demonstrations. (Order from www.Amazon.com/author/johnson)

Also, take my Plein Air Essentials courses if you are new to plein air painting:
www.PleinAirEssentials.com

The "Bibles" of Outdoor Painting:

Guide to Landscape Painting by John F. Carlson.

Composition of Outdoor Painting by Edgar Payne.

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