

The Colour Circle Inc Studio

CONTEMPORARY PAINTING IN OIL AND ACRYLIC

Wednesdays 9.30am to 12.30pm, 555 Nelson Road, Mount Nelson

These classes will focus on contemporary oil and acrylic painting techniques, encourage students to explore a variety of painting styles, considering ways that colour relationships, texture, form and perspective can make bold, playful and visually dynamic works.

Classes will cover basic tonal values, colour theory and mixing, and ways different types of paint brushes and painting methods can create different effects. This will involve class discussions, tutor demonstrations, individual production time, and one-to-one time between the tutor and students.

Contemporary Painting in Oil and Acrylic classes are suitable for students at all stages of learning, and new students will be assisted to progress at their own level and pace as they develop their own approaches to painting.

*** Please note** - No solvents (including odorless) are to be used in these classes. Please be aware that most oil painting mediums contain solvents. Specific solvent- free mediums or natural oils, such as linseed oil, are permitted.

No oil or oil paint is to make its way down the sink, please!

PAINTING IN OILS & ACRYLICS – General information.

When considering what paints to use, it is important to note that different brands and painting colours / pigment types have varying textures, tinting abilities and drying time. Preferences of painting materials and techniques are personal, and it is good to try out a variety of brands and methods that work with your individual approach.

Ask your local art supply staff if you have any question about what products to buy as they can assist you make informed decisions. There is also an abundance of online resources offering reviews and advice on all matters relating to techniques and preferred brands. If you have the means, consider buying products that are made in Australia. Langridge and Art Spectrum are two examples of 'local' brands.

PAINT SERIES & PIGMENTS

Most oil and acrylic brands have 'series', generally 1-6. This number reflects the rarity of the pigment or difficulty in processing it, rather than a rating of quality. Many paint pigments are toxic, and as such it's important maintain health and safety routines while painting. Avoid contact with skin, have a dedicated rag for wiping excess paint off onto, and be environmentally responsible while cleaning by avoiding paint from going down the sink.

Some brands have synthetic pigment often referred to as 'hues'. Synthetic colours are often cheaper to produce and are therefore more good alternatives for the budget conscious painter, as well as often being more environmentally friendly. While synthetic colours do not necessarily mean they are lower in quality, many budget brands use more 'filler' than pigments, making the paint less vibrant.

OIL PAINT

Oil paints are composed of finely ground pigments suspended in plant-based oil. When painting with oils it's important to remember the 'fat over lean' rule, whereby the paint should become 'fatter' as the paints are layered. This means adjusting the medium to paint ratio in order to maintain a stable paint surface. Some brands and mediums will specify this (i.e., 'underpainting medium' and 'painting medium', Mediums '1','2','3' etc.)

Oils are slow drying and have the benefit of extended time for blending. However, the drying time significantly increases the waiting time between applied layers, although paints can also be mixed mediums that will speed up this process including resins, cobalt driers, gel based and solvent based mediums.

Different brands have varying qualities. For example, Archival Oils or Williamsburg tend to be courser having a slightly 'grittier' texture which can be beneficial to create rougher earthy textures or for using a 'dry glazing' technique that creates a hazy or atmospheric effect. By contrast, brands including Langridge, Art Spectrum, Windsor & Newton, and Gamblin tend to be more 'buttery', making paint glide with more ease for 'wet on wet' techniques.

Decent quality cost effective oil painting brands include Daler-Rowney and Georgia. If possible, avoid brands from non-art shops including Derivan and Reeves as they are not particularly pigmented.

ACRYLIC PAINTS

Acrylics paints are synthetic water-based paints that were primarily designed for painting areas of flat colour. The primary benefit of acrylics is they are fast drying, creating less waiting time between layers. However, the drying time necessitates faster painting, sometimes making it more challenging to blend. Acrylic mediums are usually used to slow the drying process, allowing more time to blend.

Acrylic painting is relatively forgiving to work with, unlike oil paints that have specific rules for layering. As such, acrylic painting allows more flexibility when layering with different mediums without compromising the paintings stability.

Affordable entry level acrylics include A2 brand. Avoid budget brands such as Chromacryl and non-art shop paints as they are watery and low in pigments.

BASIC COLOUR THEORY

Having a colour wheel is particularly helpful when starting out with painting to better understand complimentary colours to help mix primary and secondary colours. Mixing the right colours to get the colour you want is not always so straight forward. The primary colours (red, blue, yellow) you mix will determine the kind of secondary colours (orange, green, purple) you get.

When mixing tones or shades of a colour, the opposite ends of the colour wheel is used to create that tint. For example, if painting a red apple, the shading will be made with green from the opposite end of the colour wheel.

Using black for shadowing should be avoided as it dulls the colours vibrancy, making the form appear flat. You can mix 'coloured blacks', 'chromatic black' or 'mock black' using opposite colours. Common mixed include ultramarine and burnt sienna, and viridian green and alizarin crimson. Gamblin oil paints have a 'chromatic black' what using the latter or like combination.

Warm and colours also create a visual 'push and pull' effect where warm colours tend to appear in the foreground while cool colours tend to recede. There is a vast variety of paint colours to choose from vibrant to subdued.

TINTING & GLAZING

Paints have a variety of tinting qualities including 'transparent', 'semi-transparent' and 'opaque'. These are often indicated on the tube with a square icon: the empty square indicates 'transparent'; the half square is 'semi-transparent' and the blocked-in square is 'opaque'.

Transparent colours enable translucency where you can see the painted form, or painting surface, underneath thinly applied layers of paint. Generally speaking, transparent colours are best to use for targeted glazing as they allow thinly applied paint to tint areas to subtly increase vibrancy or to subtly darken.

Opaque paints are suitable for forming the overall structure of a painting and tend to have more covering power. Opaque paint is also very suitable for scumbling and dry glazing techniques to create hazy, fluffy and floating areas in a painting.

PAINTING MEDIUMS

Oil and acrylic painting mediums are usually used for thinning, to aid with fluidity, to speed up or slow down the drying time, create specific textured effects, or for surface finishing / glazing. Glazing or varnishing are usually the final steps to finalising a painting and are often used to unify the surface in a chosen finish (matt, satin or gloss). Varnishing also adds a protective layer to the painting.

Oil painting mediums by contrast traditionally used solvents for thinning paints. However, there are many non-toxic and solvent free alternatives that are more sustainable for your health and wellbeing, and environmental reasons. A range of plant based drying oils used for oil painting include linseed, safflower and walnut; however, they are typically slow drying.

Faster drying non-solvent-based mediums include resin-based gels. Other non-solvent mediums include: Art Spectrum Wax Medium, Langridge Wax Paint Paste, Langridge Oleogel, Langridge Impasto Medium, Walnut and Alkyd Medium, Gamblin Solvent-Free Gel Medium.

CLEANING

When cleaning paint, it is important to protect yourself and the environment from harmful or toxic waste and chemicals. Wearing gloves while painting is good practice if you are a messy painter, and gloves should especially be worn while cleaning. To avoid paint contamination, it's important to get into a routine of placing brushes and painting instruments in a designated spot so that paint is limited to the painting surface.

Although acrylic paints are water soluble and easy to wash up in the sink, there are still harmful ingredients that should not find their way into the waterways. Likewise, all oil paints and any related products should be disposed of properly. Oil paints are traditionally cleaned with solvents; however, solvents (including odorless solvents) are hazardous for personal health and the environmental.

The first step to cleaning your palette and brushes (oil and acrylic) is to remove as much excess paint as possible and dispose of in a bin. You can use a palette knife to remove excess paint from your palette or use disposable palettes to save time cleaning. Small squares of old towels (roughly 10 x 10cm) make good painting rags as they are absorbent and textured, allowing excess paint to be wiped off or squeezed by firmly pinching and swivelling the brush in the rag.

Once excess paint is removed from the brush bristles with a rag, the remainder of paint can be removed by swishing the brush in jar to contain the paint sediment. The paint sediment should always be thrown in the bin. For acrylic paints water and soap is suitable methods for removing the remaining paint.

For oil paint, there are many non-solvent options for cleaners. Baby oil and soap are perhaps the most cost-effective method, however other products include General's Brush Cleaner, The Master's Brush Cleaner, Art Spectrum Brush and Hand Cleaner, Chelsea Classic Lavender Brush Cleaner, or Chroma Incredible brush cleaner (similar to a detergent that can be mixed with water). Once paint is removed, lathered soap between fingertips and bristles to remove any remnants.

WHAT TO BRING

For these classes a series of basic colours in oil or acrylic paint are recommended. Any personal favourites outside this are very welcome.

PAINT COLOURS

- Ultramarine Blue
- Burnt Sienna
- Raw Umber
- Yellow Ochre
- Lemon Yellow
- Rose Madder
- Viridian Green
- Sap Green
- Crimson Alizarin
- Titanium White

BRUSHES

- Stiff synthetic (flat or filbert 2, 4, 6)
- Hogs hair (flat or filbert 4, 6, 8 – or larger is painting big)
- Soft wide synthetic

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

- Palette – large tile or A3 disposable palette
- Palette knife with crooked handle (2-3)
- Oil sketch pad OR canvas stretched/board (or mix and match).
- Painting rags (10 x 10cm recycled towels or like alternative)
- Solvent free paint cleaner for oil paints