

OIL PAINTING

Oil painting is one of the most forgiving mediums. One of the best benefits of oil painting is that it takes up to three weeks to dry completely. Until it dries, oil paints can be reworked, modified or even scraped off. In most cases, it can also be painted over without the previous color bleeding through.

METHODS

There are two different methods for creating an oil painting. Traditional (indirect painting), is a slow and controlled method. This is often more complex in application because transparent and opaque layers of paint are applied in succession over a period of time..

The second method is wet-on-wet (direct painting). With this method, the painting is usually completed in one sitting, often referred to as alla prima. With the wet-on-wet method, the painting is completed with, in effect, one layer of paint which is usually opaque or semi-opaque. The canvas is first covered with a painting medium, either clear or colored. The oil paint colors are then applied with a brush and/or a knife and a small amount of painting medium. Colors are applied and left 'as is' or blended using a brush or cloth to create the desired effect. This method is ideal, especially when working outside, when the whole of the painting is completed in situ.

WET-ON-WET

The wet-on-wet method is often referred to as the Bob Ross style of painting. However, he did not invent this style. It has been used by artists for centuries. Famous artists such as Vincent van Gogh, John Singer Sargent, Willem de Kooning, Oscar-Claude Monet and Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn all used this method in some of their works.

As mentioned, the wet-on-wet method centers around covering the canvas with a liquid before painting begins. Because the canvas is wet, we can make changes to our painting much easier. We can blend colors on the canvas instead of on the palette. We can also move the paint around on the canvas.

COATING THE CANVAS

One of the most common liquids used in the wet-on-wet method to coat the canvas is linseed oil. Linseed oil is transparent and colorless so it will not distort the colors applied to the canvas.

Another option is to apply a very thin coat of a specific color of oil paint that has been thinned with paint thinner. Colors applied over this will not remain true but this can actually be used to our advantage. For example, if we coat the canvas with a thinned white paint and then apply bright red over it we will get a beautiful pink. And alizarin crimson applied over a thin coat of cadmium yellow will produce a vivid orange.

What makes the wet-on-wet method so unique is that we can mix paints on the canvas to create some of the most vivid and stunning colors that could never be produced if we mixed the colors on the palette.

OIL PAINTS

You might think all oil paints are alike and in many ways they are. Oil painting is the process of painting with pigments with a medium of drying oil as the binder. Commonly used drying oils include linseed oil, poppy seed oil, walnut oil, and safflower oil. There are differences, however, in the various types of oil paint. One difference in various types of paint is its viscosity or thickness. Think of the difference between motor oil and vegetable oil. Motor oil has a much thicker viscosity than vegetable oil. This difference can occur in oil paints as well.

PAINTING BRUSHES

Natural brushes are preferred for oil painting. They allow for some texture in the brush strokes on the canvas, they work better for fine details and they hold oil paint well. For our wet-on-wet method, they also allow better blending of color on the canvas.

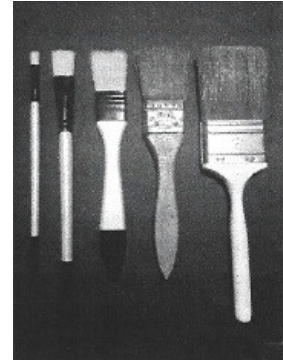
TYPES OF BRUSHES

While there are many styles of brushes, we will use five brushes that are common to landscape painting; flat brush, fan brush, filbert brush, round brush and liner brush.

FLAT BRUSH

Flat or rectangular brushes have square, flexible ends and can hold a lot of paint. When used flat, they can make long strokes and are well suited to blending and painting in large areas. The tip and sides can also be used for more delicate lines and small touches. Brush width is measured on the bristles, just above the ferrule. Flat brushes can come in many sizes from 1/4 " to 4" wide.

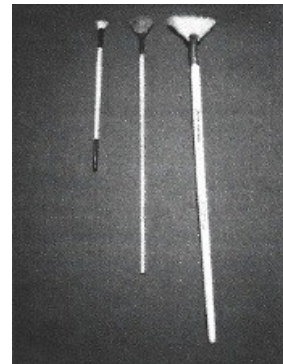
For wet-on-wet painting, we use flat brushes for broad areas of the surface, such as the sky or a large grass area. We also use the tips and sides of the brush for highlights and details on trees and vegetation. Lastly, we use it to blend colors or soften features on the painting.



FAN BRUSH

As its name indicates, the brush heads of these brushes are fanned shaped. Fan brushes are one of the most versatile brushes in our method of painting. They can be used for anything from clouds to trees to grass to flowing water. A person could literally create a painting using nothing but a fan brush. The edges are ideal for making delicate details and the broad, curved tip is great for making vegetation and tree leaves.

Fan brushes are listed by a number for their size. Different brands use different numbers for the size of brushes. Therefore, it is better to look at the brush size in centimeters or inches rather than the number written on the brush.



FILBERT BRUSH

The Filbert gets its name from its supposed resemblance to the nut of the filbert tree - a type of hazelnut. A Filbert is a flat brush with the hair rounded into an oval at the tip. Because it is rounded at the tip, it can be used to make curved features. It is good for forming the tops of deciduous trees and for bushes. It is also excellent for making rocks.

One unique feature of the Filbert brush is that it can be double-loaded.

Double-loading a brush is when you run the brush through one color on one side and another color on the other side. This is often done to create a highlight and a shadow in one stroke.

