

A Basic Introduction to Watercolour Paints

Say hello to your paintbox

Don't be overwhelmed by the range of makes of paints available, at the end of the day it will all depend on what you can afford, but get the best quality you can as they will last a long time.

There are many different makes, Daler-Rowney, Winsor & Newton, Cotman and my favourite Sennelier. Some artists have even brought out their own ranges, but do get a recognised name and professional quality, not student.

A standard paintbox which is already loaded with a dozen or so colours in pans is a good place for a beginner to start, and you can always buy more as you go along. The pigments have some fabulous names such as French Ultramarine and Naples Yellow, but don't worry if they aren't in your particular box or you don't have the exact colour that I mention in any of my lectures, get as near as you can at the beginning.

If you have just bought a new box of paints with pans in, I always recommend that before you rip off the wrappers with gay abandon, it's a good idea to make a colour chart. There are two reasons for this.

- 1) So that you can see what the colours look like on your paper and get to know them.
- 2) And if the colour name isn't printed on the paint container, once you've taken off the wrapper you might forget which is which.

So, cut a piece of paper that will fit in the lid of your box and work your way through each colour, painting little squares and writing the name beside it.

Most paint boxes have a fold out palette for working with your colours and of course you can use the lid. A little bit of pigment can go a long way and when you have finished, don't be tempted to wipe the surfaces clean. The colours will just dry out and can soon be reactivated with a little water next time.

Tubes or Pans

A question of choice really but if you are an absolute beginner I would suggest pans as you are less likely to waste paint at the start.

Extra Colours

If you feel like splashing out, if you'll pardon the pun, at this stage I would recommend you get, should you not have them, Raw Umber, Sap Green, Cerulean Blue and Paynes Grey (not as black as black). I find them very useful.

