

Suggested materials for watercolour painting

The materials that you use can have a profound effect on your painting. Cheap papers can tear easily and absorb too much water soaking it up like a sponge and it can be the same with brushes. Buying good quality materials, especially designed for watercolour painting, does not necessarily need to be expensive. Below are a few suggestions.

Paints – Artist's quality watercolour is more expensive than Student's quality, but provides a stronger depth of colour, so quite often less paint is required. Cotman and Georgian watercolours are Student's quality. The SAA supply their own Artist's quality paints and are reasonably priced.

A good selection of colours would be:

Cadmium Red, Alizarin Crimson, Ultramarine Blue, Cerulean, Cadmium Yellow, Lemon Yellow, Raw Sienna or Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, Viridian Green or Winsor or Pthalo Green, Pthalo Blue or Winsor Blue, Naples Yellow plus any other colours that you may have or prefer.

Brushes – For watercolour painting, brushes need to be especially designed for watercolour – acrylic and oil painting brushes are stiff, scratchy and don't hold much water. A useful range would be – ProArte size 14 which comes to a good point, a small rigger for tree branches and fine work and a large wash brush for skies and large areas of colour. Plus any other brushes that you prefer.

Watercolour Paper – Bockingford sheets or Langton Pads are reasonably priced and most forgiving. Extra rough surface and 140lb in weight works well. Loose sheets of Bockingford can be bought online from the SAA (Society for all Artists) and are reasonably priced.

Other materials you might need are a lightweight board to work on, a palette, water pot, old piece of towelling, putty rubber, a sharp 2B pencil or fine retractable pencil available from most stationers, kitchen paper for mopping and blotting, masking tape, masking fluid, white gouache, cling film.