

Brushes 101

An artist can find all shapes and sizes of brushes and it can be a tad confusing what will work best for you. Brushes come in nylon or traditional style like goat hair, bristle and sable etc, this is all preference to what you find works best with your style, there is no hard and fast rule with brushes.

I am not art snob, I do have some good brushes I keep aside for special pieces I do, but in general I do use Mont Marte brand a lot in classes and while working on pieces. The amount of money you personally are willing to spend is up to, the prices for brushes range from \$ to \$\$\$ and up. This is the same with paints, obviously with paint the more money you spend on higher quality paint the better the pigmentation and duration of lifespan. This goes with anything in life though when you think about, if you are just out to learn and have some fun then feel free to follow the info supplied.

Nylon is a good choice when learning to paint and the hobbyist painter, one they are cost efficient and two they clean very easily, while working and after use. Like with all brushes though they must be cleaned correctly after use and stored correctly otherwise they can become stiff, and shape can alter which will make the brushes unusable the next time you go to paint.

On a side note, I will give palate knives a quick mention, they are a great tool to have in your artist weaponry for both oils and acrylics. Cleaning palate knives is easy and storing; you can throw them in your tool kit and not think twice. You can get metal ones or plastic; I find plastic works well with acrylics but prefer metal for oils. Palate knife painting is a lot of fun to do and gives a lot of texture to your pieces you can really build up your medium which can make a painting really come to life. I strongly suggest everyone give palate knife a go at least a couple of times.

Acrylic Brushes

These are the best brushes I have found that are useful for the beginner or hobbyist. Mont Marte (not sponsored) I find are the best brushes to use for beginners and hobbyist, I use them at home I am far from an art snob sometimes the best of the best is not necessary. These brushes below will give you lots to work with and don't dismiss the old fan brush in this lot you will be surprised what tricks this brush can do, such a handy underrated brush.



Watercolour and Gouache Brushes

Again, I always suggest going with Mont Marte with all my students and again (not sponsored). I have found through experience that this brand really does stand the test of time if looked after correctly.



Fineline Brushes

This set is a complete gem to have in your weaponry I use this set for both acrylics as well as watercolours and gouache. Just make sure you thoroughly clean them between each use. This is a must have for fine line details and the pincher bit on the handle helps prevent shakes while painting fine lines.



Oil Brushes

Again Mont Marte (not sponsored) just my preference for cost and value of product. It is totally your call if you want to spread your wings and purchase a lovely set of Windsor and Newton etc but these sets really do cut the muster and are great value. Again, don't dismiss the fan brush it's a hidden gem in your tool kit.



Cleaning Brushes

Acrylics

Make sure you clean your brushes with each use by rinsing well under a tap until water runs clear, and then once a week soaking them in dish washing liquid for 10 mins then rinsing well. A good trick if you have accidentally left it too long before cleaning and the acrylic paint has dried on the brush and you cannot remove it is put hand sanitizer in the palm of your hand and rub the tip of the brush into your palm the paint should come off easier this way, just make sure you rinse the brush after thoroughly. Make sure you leave your brushes to dry with bristles upwards in a jar etc to avoid the bristles losing shape.

Watercolour and Gouache

I make sure I clean my watercolour and Gouache brushes thoroughly with each use, I do this with rinsing them under running water and squeezing out the water to see if it runs clean. Make sure you leave your brushes to dry with bristles upwards in a jar etc to avoid the bristles losing shape.

Oils

Firstly, remove as much excess paint from the brushes as possible to do this you pinch and drag your brush through a clean rag. You then move onto removing the remainder of the excess paint do not be fooled you have got it all in the first step.

Secondly, pour paint thinner or your cleaner fluid into a jar place the bristles into the liquid and swish make sure you have covered the entire bristle with the paint thinner then very carefully remove from jar and place on a new clean rag and repeat the pint and squeeze repeat this until the brushes are completely clean.

Thirdly place dish washing liquid in palm of hand and clean brush by making the liquid lathers up then rinse the brush and place your brush to dry with bristles upwards in a jar etc to avoid the bristles losing shape.

Note: Clean brushes in any medium are vital to your craft, if you have dirty brushes, you will find that you will have muddy colours in your painting, this is when old colour mixes with the new colour and dirties the pigments and ultimately can destroy the work you are doing. Also, if you have cloggy brushes you could end up with chunks of dried paint in your painting.

I hope you have found this helpful, I will be doing up other helpful hints over the coming months so stay tuned 😊