

Session 3:

# Exploring Oil Painting

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Your Home Public Library, Johnson City NY

**MATERIALS:**

palette knife

brushes

wiper rag

blocked-in painting

basic paint colors\*

paper towels

painting medium

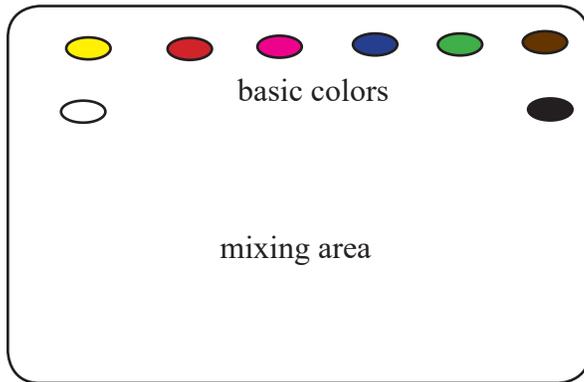
Murphy Oil Soap

soap cap

*\*Basic palette (paint colors)*

- Titanium white
- Cadmium yellow light or medium
- Cadmium red light or medium
- Alizarin crimson
- Ultramarine blue
- Veridian green
- Burnt umber

**Arranging the palette**



*Mediums (to help move your paints around)*

- Use either a purchased medium (I suggest M. Graham Walnut Alkyd Medium, which we'll use in class) OR my equivalent formula:  
2 parts walnut oil: 1 part Liquin
- TIP: DO NOT use any non-drying oil such as mineral/baby oil, OR citrus-based solvents, for mediums, underpainting, or even for cleaning your brushes. Not only are they more toxic than their "natural" labels would lead you to believe, they -- and your painting -- will take weeks, or even months, to dry.

*Preparation*

- Before handling paint, massage protective high-glycerin moisturizer into hands and wrists. If you wash your hands before stopping painting, apply moisturizer again.

*Mixing and applying intermediate colors*

- Your painting from last session should be blocked in with hues that follow the values of your underpainting. These painted areas need to be blended together.
- Begin by mixing paint colors to match your block-in colors. Add white to the darker colors, and mother grey\* to the lighter colors. Use these new values to bridge the gaps between darks and lights in your painted objects.
- If the demarcation between dark and light appears clear-cut in life, do not bridge them with intermediates. Some edges are sharp, some are soft.
- Glazes\*\* can also be used -- over dry paint only -- to change values and hues, and to soften edges.
- Stand back from your painting frequently, checking for hues and values. Feel free to modify hues -- making blues bluer, browns pinker or yellower, etc. -- but be careful to match values to your subject.
- Begin darkening darks and lightening lights, for drama and dimensions.

**Supply / Materials Ownership**

**YHPL's / MINE**

- easel
- #2 pencil
- viewfinder
- clipboard
- tubes of paints
- odorless mineral spirits
- disposable palette
- paper towels
- painting medium
- Murphy Oil Soap
- soap cap

**YOURS**

- canvas panel / painting
- set of brushes
- palette knife
- wiper rag
- small lidded plastic containers (mother grey, medium)
- color wheel\*
- other handouts\*
- paper supply bag

*\*also available for download at [glendablake.com](http://glendablake.com)*

- Begin adding highlights, but not with unmixed white. Highlights on blue objects will be bluish, on yellow objects will be yellowish, etc.
- Take into account the hue of one object next to another: some of that hue will be reflected into the neighboring object.

\* **Mother Grey** - a harmonious dark neutral color made with the unmixed colors at the end of a painting session. If you have no saved mother grey, mix it with a little of each paint color on the palette.

\*\***Glaze (transparent color)** - Mix your paint color as you have other colors. Then, using your brush, place a small puddle of medium next to your mixed color, drag some of the mixed color into the puddle, and mix. Use this to change hues or values without hiding what's underneath. Use only on dry paint.

### *Cleaning up*

- When finished with your painting session, scrape any leftover UNMIXED paints into a small air-tight container and mix them all together with your palette knife, for a “**mother grey**.” Use this on your palette next painting session, to mix harmonious greys, to tone down colors, or for shadows. (Do not get medium in your mother grey mix, as it will set up.)
- To clean brushes, first wipe thoroughly with paper towels or newsprint, then fill a bottle cap with Murphy Oil Soap, and take everything to the sink.
  - Saturate each brush with the liquid soap.
  - Swirl a brush in the palm of your hand, and swipe it back and forth in your hand, following the brush's shape.
  - Holding the ferrule (metal part) of the brush and squeezing the brush hairs between your thumb and the side of your forefinger, firmly squeeze as much soap as possible out of the brush while reshaping the brush.
  - Rinse under running water.
  - Re-soap, swirl again, and repeat until soap suds squeezed from the brush, and the brush itself, appear clean.
  - After rinsing, rap the brush on the edge of the sink to shake out excess water, and carefully reshape the brush. Let dry lying flat, or with brush hairs in the air, handle in a jar or other container.
  - TIP: You can also use the Murphy's for a hand soap, and as a pre-laundry treatment on any paint that you get on your clothing as well.

- Take the panel tray off your easel and fasten to an easel leg with the velcro strap. Fold the legs together, and place it in the easel cart. Put your painting and supplies in the small supply room.

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### **BOOKS I'VE FOUND HELPFUL**

*[\*available from or through Your Home Public Library]*

#### ***\*Problem Solving for Oil Painters***

Kreutz, Gregg

Shelf #: Q751.45 KREUTZ

*Tips, tricks, and down-to-earth practical advice.*

#### ***\*Fill your Oil Paintings with Light and Color***

Macpherson, Kevin D.

Shelf #: Q751.45 MACP

*Introduced me to the limited palette.*

#### ***\*Mastering color: the essentials of color illustrated with oils***

McMurry, Vicki

Shelf #: 751.45 MCMU

*Not crazy about the author's work, but some great advice on composition and color usage.*

#### ***Carlson's Guide to Landscape Painting***

John E. Carlson

*A classic, and not just for landscape painters.*

*Compositional and technical/technique advice from a master. All kinds of revelations.*

#### ***Paint: Illustrated Techniques for Every Medium***

Ed. Amy Jaynes

*Just what it says. Great stuff.*

#### ***The Complete Oil Painter***

Brian Gorst

*Somewhat intimidating, but very informative to dive into from time to time.*

#### ***\*The Artist's complete health and safety guide***

Rossol, Monona

Shelf #: 700.289 ROSSOL

*Not gripping reading, for sure, but valuable information for your health.*

#### ***\*Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain***

Betty Edwards

741.2 EDWA

*Learn about rendering what you see rather than what you think you know. I prefer the first edition.*