



ArtTutor

ACRYLIC PAINTING

Cheat Sheets

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MAKING AN ACRYLIC PALETTE



MATERIALS



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



Acrylic paints dry quickly, which is a problem if you squeeze them out onto a conventional oils-type palette. Commercial acrylic palettes that keep the paints moist are expensive but you can quickly and at almost no cost make your own with a few household items.

- Materials you need are:
- Greaseproof or baking paper
 - Kitchen towel
 - White shallow tray or a plain white plate
 - Water

Step 1: Cut or tear the greaseproof paper so it fits the plate. Take two or three sheets of kitchen towel and place on the plate so it covers as much as possible of it.

Step 2: Add the water to the kitchen towel so it becomes wet, but not flooded.

Step 3: Place the greaseproof paper on top of this and smooth down.

Step 4: Add your paints to the palette in your preferred layout. White greaseproof paper allows you to judge your colours as they come out of the tube. Brown baking paper can be helpful if you pre-paint your painting surface with a pale tint to create a mid-tone base colour, as it replicates this quite well. Use whatever works best for you.

If you need to keep your paints moist to continue a painting session the following day, carefully lift the greaseproof paper and add a little more water to the kitchen towels. Then stretch cling film across the plate and store in a cool place.



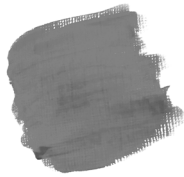


MIXING GREENS

		CERULEAN BLUE	PRIMARY BLUE	COBALT BLUE	ULTRAMARINE BLUE	PHHALO BLUE
LEMON YELLOW						
PRIMARY YELLOW						
CADMUM YELLOW MEDIUM						
YELLOW OCHRE						
RAW SIENNA						

Here are 5 common blues and 5 common yellows mixed, in most cases in roughly equal quantities to produce 25 greens. The left half of each green is a strong mix of the two colours.

The right half is a lighter mix with approximately 50% titanium white added to create a tint. Simply adjusting the ratios of blue, yellow and white will give you literally hundreds more greens.



MIXING GREYS

		CERULEAN BLUE	COBALT BLUE	PRIMARY BLUE	ULTRAMARINE BLUE	PTHALO BLUE
CADMIUM RED LIGHT						
BURNT SIENNA						
BURNT UMBER						
RAW UMBER						
RED OXIDE						

Here are 5 blues and 5 common reds/browns mixed in roughly equal quantities to produce 25 greys. The left half of each grey is a strong mix of the two colours. The right half is a lighter mix with approximately 50% titanium white added to create a tint. Adjusting the ratios of blue, reds/browns and white will give you literally hundreds more greys.



MIXING SKIN COLOURS

ALIZARIN CRIMSON
ULTRAMARINE BLUE
YELLOW OCHRE
TITANIUM WHITE



CADMIUM RED
CADMIUM YELLOW
PHTHALO BLUE
TITANIUM WHITE



Just by using three primary colours and white, many different shades and tints of skin colour can be created.

On this page, two sets of three primaries have been used to create eight different skin tones. With the addition of titanium white these can be lightened to create potentially an infinite number of variations.

The proportions of red, blue and yellow have been adjusted in each one to provide a bias towards red, blue or yellow. Each colour swatch shows roughly the proportions of each primary used for each tone before white is added.



MIXING SKIN COLOURS



RAW
SIENNA
+
BURNT
SIENNA



RAW
SIENNA
+
ULTRAMARINE
BLUE
+
BURNT
SIENNA



ALIZARIN
CRIMSON
+
ULTRAMARINE
BLUE
+
BURNT
SIENNA



ULTRAMARINE
BLUE
+
BURNT
UMBER



CADMIUM
RED
+
CERULEAN
BLUE



BURNT
SIENNA
+
YELLOW
OCHRE



Here are some further variations using common colours and are used by many top portrait painters. These 6 mixes, plus the ones on the previous page, can create the vast majority of skin tones you'll ever need.



COLOR BIAS OF PRIMARIES



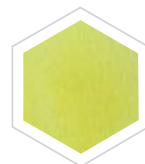
All primary colour paints (reds, blues and yellows) have a 'leaning' or 'bias' towards one of the other two primaries. For example, Alizarin Crimson is a red with a blue bias, whereas Cadmium Red is a red with a yellow bias.

Knowing the bias of the colours in your palette will help you mix the secondary and tertiary colours you want. It will also help you avoid mixing muddy and dull colours

If you want a vibrant purple for example, mix a red with a blue bias and blue with a red bias. That way you are only mixing two of the primaries (red and blue).

If you want a dull purple, then mix a red with a blue bias and a blue with a yellow bias. Now you are mixing all three primaries (red + blue + yellow). Mixing all three primaries results in a more neutral tone.

NB: The lists here though extensive, are not exhaustive, as manufacturers introduce or delete colours on a continuous basis.



YELLOWS WITH A BLUE BIAS

- Hansa Yellow Light
- Aureole
- Azo
- Lemon
- Cadmium Lemon
- Cadmium Yellow Pale
- Hansa Yellow Light
- Transparent
- Bismuth



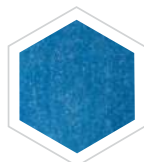
YELLOWS WITH A RED BIAS

- Cadmium Yellow Medium
- Cadmium Yellow Deep
- Chrome
- Indian
- Naples
- New Gamboge
- Raw Sienna
- Yellow Ochre
- Permanent Yellow Medium
- Mars
- Quinacridone Gold



BLUES WITH A RED BIAS

- Cobalt
- Cyanine
- French Ultramarine
- Ultramarine
- Payne's Grey
- Indanthrene, Indigo



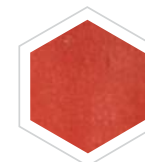
BLUES WITH A YELLOW BIAS

- Cerulean
- Pthalo
- Antwerp
- Intense, Monastial
- Manganese
- Turquoise
- Cyan
- Rembrandt
- Pthalo
- Prussian
- Paris
- Peacock



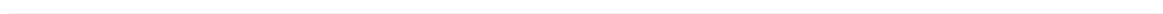
REDS WITH A BLUE BIAS

- Permanent Rose
- Alizarin Crimson
- Magenta
- Quinacridone Rose
- Rose Madder
- Crimson Lake
- Opera Rose
- Scarlet Lake
- Carmine



REDS WITH A YELLOW BIAS

- Cadmium
- Winsor
- Vermillion
- Perelyne
- Permanent
- Light
- Indian
- Venetian
- Pyrrrole
- English Red Oxide





TRANSPARENT & OPAQUE COLOURS

All paint colours, regardless of the medium used, have varying degrees of transparency. Knowing how transparent or opaque a colour is can help you when painting layers or glazes.

Bear in mind though that some colours may be classed as transparent by one manufacturer and semi-opaque by another and you can check this on the side of the paint tube.

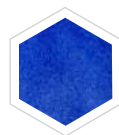
The lists here are colours that are generally considered transparent, semi transparent, opaque or semi opaque across the majority of brands.

KEY

T = Transparent
 ST = Semi-Transparent
 S = Semi-Opaque
 O = Opaque



REDS



BLUES



YELLOWS

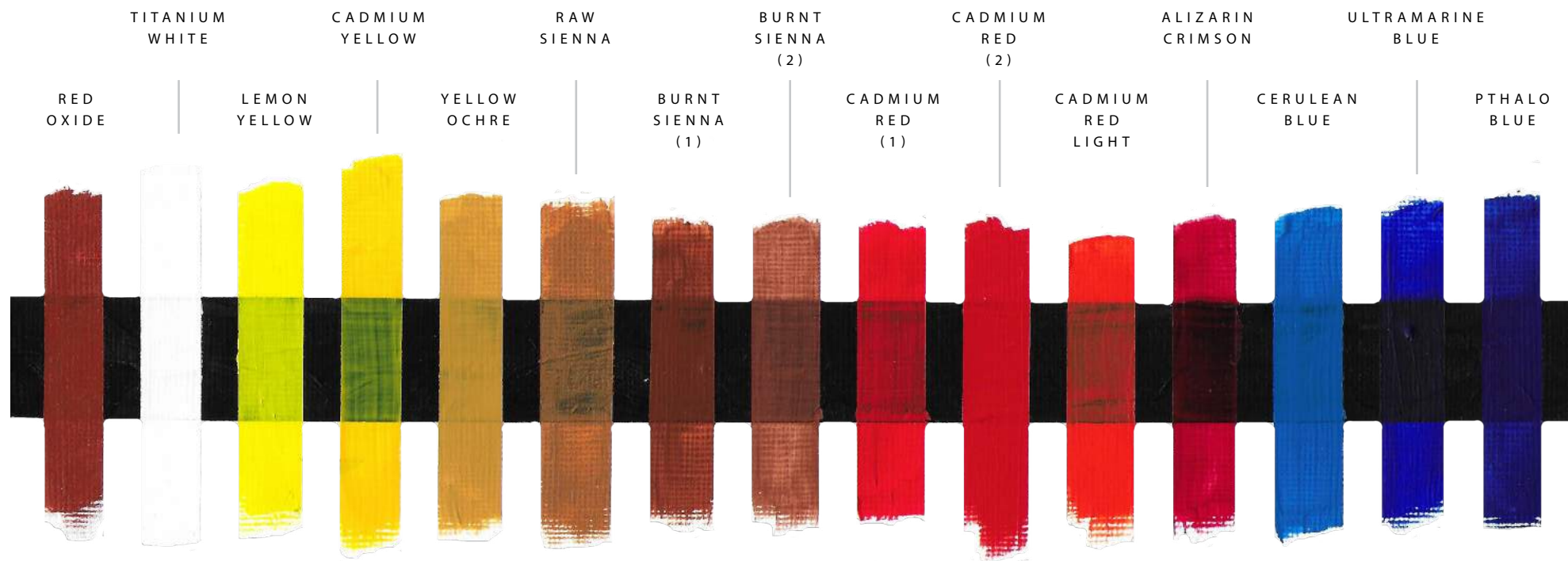
Alizarin Crimson	T
Light Red	O
Cadmium Red	O
Rose Madder	T
Bright Red	SO
Perylene Red	ST
Opera Rose	T
Venetian Red	O
Pyrrrol Red	ST
Permanent Rose	T
Quinacridone Red	T
Indian Red	O
Permanent Magenta	T
Permanent Rose	T
French Vermillion	O

Cobalt Blue	ST
Cerulean	O
French Ultramarine	T
Indigo	T
Prussian Blue	T
Indanthrone Blue	T
Pthalo Blue(Grn Shde)	T
Royal Blue	O
Antwerp Blue	T
Manganese Blue	T
Antraquinone Blue	SO

Yellow Ochre	SO
Raw Sienna	T
Gold Ochre	O
Quinacridone Gold	T
New Gamboge	T
Bismuth Yellow	O
Aureolin	T
Cadmium Yellow	O
Cadmium Yellow Pale	O
Lemon Yellow	T
Naples Yellow	O
Indian Yellow	T
Hansa Yellow Light	T



COLOUR TRANSPARENCY CHART



The transparency of a colour can easily be tested by creating a chart such as this.

On white paper, canvas or board, paint a black stripe down the centre, about 1/2" (1cm) wide. The precise width isn't critical. If you don't have black, you can create one with a strong mix of a blue and a brown. Let the stripe dry, then paint a streak of each of your colours across the stripe as shown. Use the paint straight out of the tube, undiluted.

Once the paint has dried, those that are transparent will be barely visible on the black stripe, such as here with ultramarine blue and alizarin crimson. Others like yellow ochre and cerulean blue will almost obliterate the black stripe, indicating they are much more opaque.



HOW TO MAKE A PERSONALISED COLOUR CHART

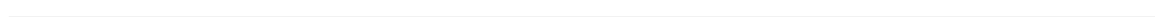


	CERULEAN BLUE	COBALT BLUE	PHHALO BLUE	PRIMARY BLUE	ULTRAMARINE BLUE	CADMIUM RED	ALIZARIN CRIMSON	RED OXIDE	BURNT SIENNA	PERMANENT MAGENTA
CADMIUM YELLOW										
YELLOW OCHRE										
RAW SIENNA										
LEMON YELLOW										
RAW UMBER										
BURNT UMBER										
DIOXAZINE PURPLE										
HOOKERS GREEN										
VIRIDIAN										
IVORY BLACK										

Too many leisure artists worry about having the 'right' colours, or the same ones they see being used by ArtTutor instructors.

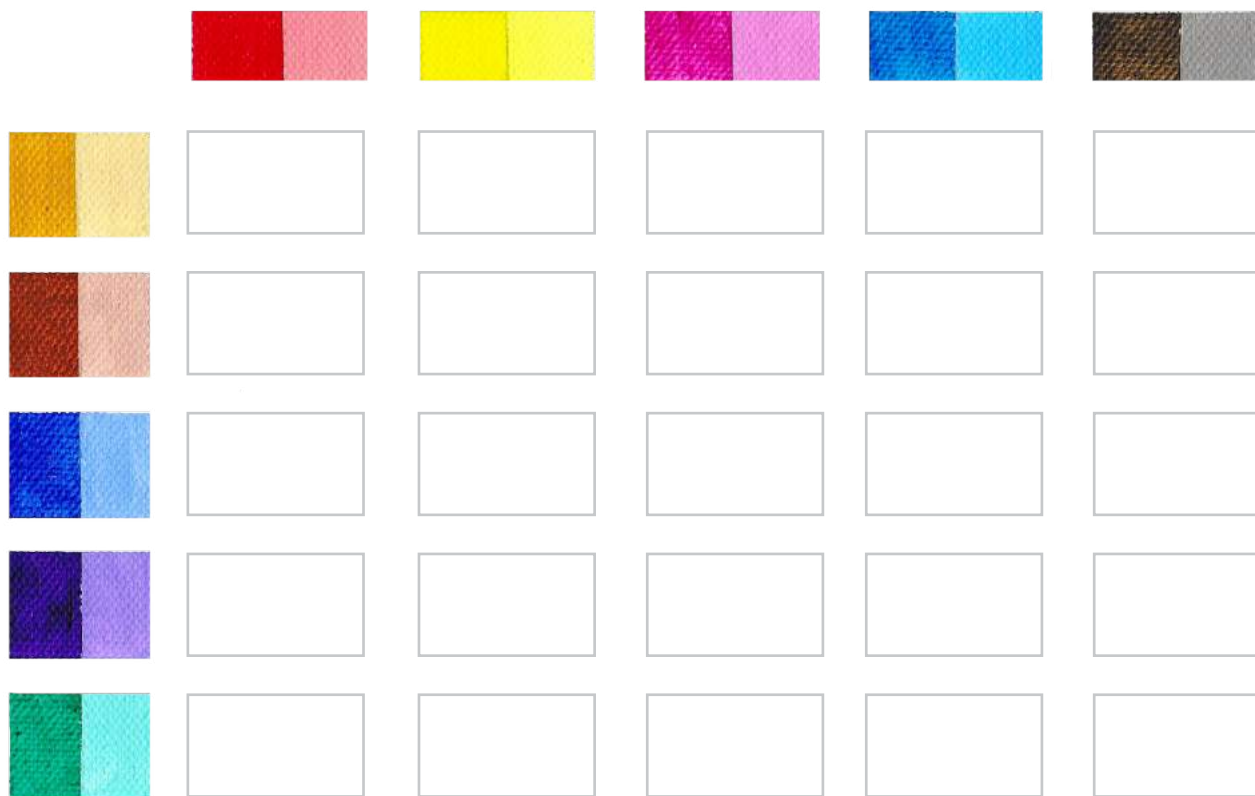
It's far better (and cheaper!) to use the one's you have already - at least for now. This way you will learn to exploit the colours at your disposal and it will allow you to go out and select new colours only if it becomes really obvious that you need them.

For this exercise you are going to gather all of your existing colours and mix any two of them. The results of some mixes may surprise you and open up your eyes to possibilities you didn't realise were there. It's a very therapeutic exercise as well.





STEP 1



In the chart on the previous page I've used 20 colours I had at my disposal. You may have less and different ones and that's fine. Gather them together now.

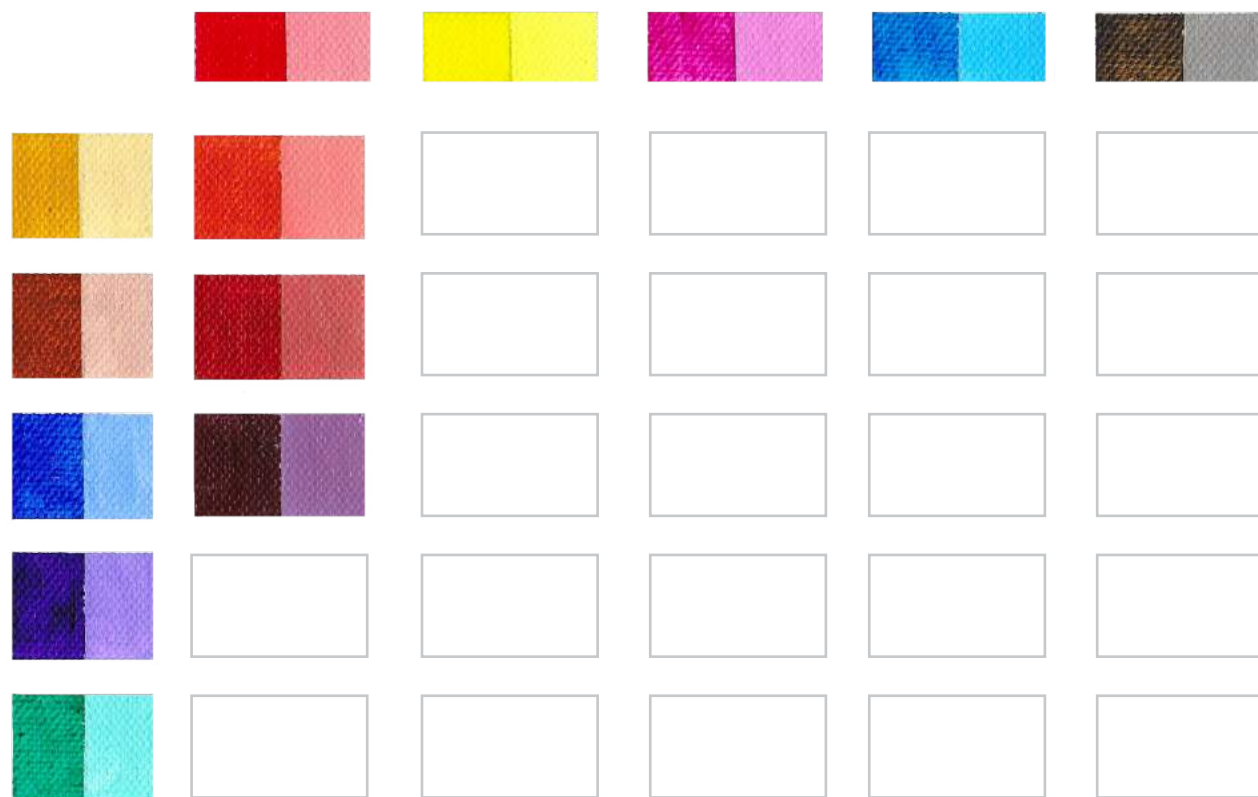
This chart was produced on a sheet of acrylic paper about 22" x 16" (40cm x 28cm or A2 size). The first thing to do is to draw a series of boxes in pencil about 2cm x 1cm. The actual size isn't critical as long as all the boxes fit on the sheet!

Because I used 20 colours, I drew 10 boxes along the top and 10 boxes down the side. If you have 15 colours, you could do 8 along the top and 7 down the side, for example. Once you have your boxes drawn, paint a colour in the top row and in left hand column as I have done here. This chart is reproduced at a bigger size than the one previously, so only the first five boxes across the top and five from top to bottom are in view. It doesn't matter which colours go where, just place a unique colour in each box.

I filled in half of each box with pure colour and the other half mixed with roughly 50% titanium white, to create a tint.



STEP 2



In the top left hand empty box, mix the colour directly above it and to the left of it. Mix them in roughly equal quantities. You can see that I've already filled in several boxes with cadmium red mixed with yellow ochre, burnt sienna and ultramarine blue, in this case.

Paint the left hand side of the box a strong colour and add about 50% white to your mix to create a tint on the right hand side. This will show you how the colour changes across different strengths, which can change it quite a lot.

Repeat this for each of the boxes.



LIMITED PALETTE SUGGESTIONS



LIMITED PALETTE 1

Limiting your palette can really improve your acrylic painting. Not only does help to improve colour harmony it also makes the decision making process easier - and that helps you stay in the flow.

These two palettes are nicely balanced with a combination of cool and warm primaries. You can mix almost any colour you want from these limited selections and it will save you a lot of money on exotic paints that you rarely use after you've bought them.

Ultramarine Blue (warm)

Pthalo Blue (cool)

Cadmium Red (warm)

Alizarin Crimson (cool)

Yellow Ochre (warm)

Lemon Yellow (cool)

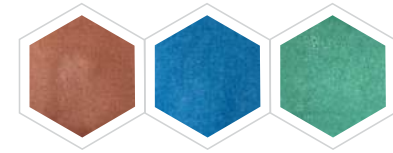
Plus (optional):

Burnt Sienna or
Light Red

Paynes Grey or
Indigo

Cerulean Blue

New Gamboge or
Cadmium Yellow



LIMITED PALETTE 2

Pthalo Blue

Cobalt Blue

Permanent Rose

Light Red

Hansa Yellow

Raw Sienna

Plus (optional):

Burnt Umber

Ultramarine Blue

Raw Umber

Viridian



BRUSH / KNIFE MARKS

ROUND BRUSH



FILBERT BRUSH



For many years acrylic artists have used bristle brushes similar to those used by oil painters. However, over the past few years a number of excellent synthetic alternatives have been developed - softer than hogshair but firmer than the natural hair and synthetic brushes used for watercolour. This allows the artist to move the paint around, but also paint with relatively smooth layers, or to use the coarser properties of hogshair to leave brush marks in the paint. Compare the brush marks of the two types of filbert brush here.

In addition, painting knives give the artist in both acrylics and oils the ability to spread paint thickly in an impasto style and many paintings have been created using only a series of knives. They can be obtained with metal or plastic blades and in a variety of shapes to allow many different strokes to be achieved.

The photos on this and the following page highlight just some of the brush/knife strokes that can be crafted by the artist. You can see from the doodles that some of the brushes (e.g. the round and the filbert) make quite similar marks. In some cases colours have been applied over a dried layer such as the snow-capped mountains using the knife, or one colour has been applied on one side of a filbert and a different colour on the other side. When the brush stroke is made, a satisfying natural blend of the two colours takes place.



LIMITED BRUSH & KNIFE SET



This is a very basic starter set, which can easily be adjusted, depending upon whether you prefer additional horsehair brushes or more of the synthetic variety.

NB: Don't rely exclusively on the numbering of brushes as an indication of size as each manufacturer will apply different standards. So a No. 8 Round in one range could be the same as a No.5 Round in another.

Wherever possible, check sizes yourself in an art store or, where this isn't possible, see if the website provides information as to the actual size of the brush head; e.g.. 1/2" across the metal ferrule or 3/4" from the end of the ferrule to the tip of the brush, etc. The above have all been given a general indication of size for this reason, rather than the number being quoted.



LIMITED BRUSH & KNIFE SET



In this group, I've eliminated the Hog brushes for an even more basic starter set. The Hog brushes could be added later or you may prefer to start with the Hog equivalents of the Synthetics I've listed.

I'll leave you to choose your brushes and enjoy finding out what effects you can achieve. But do have a doodle! This is never time wasted. It allows you to understand how your brushes perform and what marks can be achieved, before you spend money on new ones and set to on your next minor masterpiece.



MEDIUMS

There are a large number of mediums available to make acrylic paint thicker, thinner, more translucent or for special effects such as crackle or pearlescent. We've concentrated on just three to help you get started.

GISSO

Acrylic paint is a versatile medium that will adhere to many surfaces, including paper, canvas, other cloth surfaces, various boards and most other porous and semi-porous surfaces. It's important that the surface is first primed with a covering of gesso, which is effectively a very pigment-rich thick, (usually) white acrylic paint.

RETARDER GEL

Acrylic paint dries fast so you can progress quickly through your painting without waiting for hours or even days, as with oils, for layers to dry. However, this makes it more difficult to blend smoothly on the paint surface. Various additives are available, such as Flow Improver or Retarder Gel, which keep the paint 'open' and workable for longer.

GLAZING MEDIUM

Glazing Medium is effectively colourless acrylic paint and allows translucent glazes to be created using with just a small amount of the desired colour added, to create mood and atmosphere, such as an evening glow. Avoid simply thinning the paint with water to create a glaze, as more than about 25%/30% added to the paint makes it lose its adhesive properties and it will dry almost instantly, making it difficult to avoid tide-marks.

These photos show the effect of applying, (A) a raw sienna glaze over an ultramarine blue background and (B) creating smoke, steam or clouds using increasing amounts of the glaze-to-paint ratio.



A .

B .





PAINT SURFACE GUIDE



Traditionally, acrylics is painted on pre-primed acrylic paper, canvas panels or stretched canvas, as mentioned on the previous page.

However most wooden boards such as hardboard (masonite), MDF, plywood and chipboard can be used, preferably primed with gesso as described on the previous page. Apart from canvas, other cloth too can be used and even wrapping paper or newspaper, if it's first primed.



COLOUR MIXING TERMS



PRIMARY COLOURS

There are three primary colours which cannot be created by mixing other colours. They are: red, blue and yellow

SECONDARY COLOURS

Secondary colours are mixed from two of the primaries. They are green (blue + yellow), orange (red + yellow), purple (red + blue)

TERTIARY COLOURS

The six colours created by mixing a primary with a secondary i.e. blue + green to create a blue-green or turquoise

COMPLEMENTARY COLOURS

Colours opposite each other on the colour wheel. For example, orange is opposite blue on the colour wheel and so become each others' complementary colour. Complementary colours are said to enhance each other when placed next to each other. When mixed with each other they have the opposite effect, creating a dull, neutral tone.

Complementary colours include: Orange and blue, Yellow and purple, Green and red

HUE

This is the brightest, most vivid version of a primary, secondary or tertiary colour. So red for example, with no other colour mix with it and undiluted is a hue. Painting only with hues would result in a very bright and garish painting.

TINT

Adding white to a colour to lighten it, creates a tint of that colour.

SHADE

Adding black to a colour to darken it, creates a shade of that colour. In acrylic painting, adding a colour's complementary to it has a similar effect (i.e. adding purple to yellow has a similar effect as adding black to the yellow). You could also mix a black colour by mixing the three primary colours together and then add that black mix to another colour (sparingly) to create a shade.

TO NE

Adding back and white to a colour, creates a tone of that colour. Obviously black and white make grey and so a tone is greyer version of a colour. These are also referred to as pastel colours, or neutral colours. You'll use tones a lot in your paintings because the bulk of any subject matter is made from them. You can then use shades for shadow areas, tints for highlight areas and a touch of bright hues where you really want the colour to zing.

VALUE

This is the lightness or darkness of a colour. While it might seem obvious that blue has a darker value than yellow, a very light blue might be lighter than a dark yellow. The best way to judge the values in a photograph or painting is to make it back and white. This will make it obvious which colours are darker and lighter than others.

