



Materials List for Watercolour with Maureen Lipa

The supplies in my list are good quality and may seem expensive but less expensive materials really do reflect (generally speaking) a poorer quality and that will affect your experience with creating leading to frustration. It actually makes more economic sense to spend a little more on better quality materials so that your investment in time and energy are worthwhile. Besides, you're worth it!

Supplies may be purchased at Oxlades (Unit 2/49 Guthrie Street, Osborne Park - just off Hutton Street, next to Abacus - 9446 3233) or at Jacksons (multiple locations). Ask lots of questions and try out the brushes before you purchase as there are no exchanges or returns on items! Also, if you are a member of an art group, they will give you a discount of generally 10-15%.

Online: artscene.com.au or adamstown.com.au - both out of Sydney. There are lots of other sites but be sure to price compare! I've done this for a few items and found that the prices at art stores in Perth are comparable.

Paper:

Watercolour paper comes in a variety of weights from 185-640 gsm. The heavier paper is thicker and is therefore less likely to buckle with all of the water that is added during the painting process. It is best for paintings with large washes and glazing. Thinner paper is better for light watercolour sketches or pen and ink with light washes. You will also see the labels Cold Press and Hot Press. This refers to the manufacturing process that gives the paper its texture which is called "tooth" or "grain". Cold Press has a rough texture while Hot Press is smooth and great for works with detail. Be sure to purchase 100% cotton paper as cellulose paper just isn't sturdy enough to hold up properly and won't let you lift off paint, scrape or gouge without tearing, streaking or blotting.

I recommend Arches 300gsm Cold Press (but this is now really expensive as the supplier randomly decided to increase his prices by 30%) so Saunders or Fabriano are great substitutes. A more economical paper is by Canson or Bockingford but the quality is not as good so it may not withstand the rigours of our projects. The paper is available in large sheets which are torn or cut down to size or in blocks - precut and bound together. The blocks are generally more expensive as there is more work involved in their manufacture. With the heavier papers, you are able to use both sides making it more economical.

Paint:

Watercolour paints can be purchased in two forms - tubes or cubes. I prefer the tubes and squirt out a good amount into my palette as needed then spritz with water to soften the pigment when I want to paint. The quality of paint is related to the price. Thus, if you buy the cheapest paint, most likely you will not be happy with results as the colours are muddy and chalky. Paint comes in student quality and artist quality and while the student one is less expensive they contain more fillers resulting in less vibrant colours and the tendency to create mud easily. So, if at all possible, purchase fewer colours of the artist quality. Companies include Winsor Newton, Daniel Smith and Art Spectrum. A new product line available at Oxlades is Maimeri Blue - an Italian company with fantastic quality and excellent value for money.

A starting point is purchasing:

- Winsor Lemon, Lemon Yellow (Daniel Smith) or Permanent Yellow Lemon (Maimeri Blue) - PY 175
- Permanent Rose (Winsor Newton), Quinacridone Rose (Daniel Smith) or Magenta (Maimeri Blue) - PV 19
- Cobalt Blue (Winsor Newton, Daniel Smith or Art Spectrum), Cobalt Blue Light (Maimeri Blue) - PB 28

Please read the tubes, looking for “pigment” (like the ingredient list in food products) to make sure you are getting the right ones. With these three pigments an endless array of colours can be mixed and as they are all transparent watercolours, mixing mud is limited - a good thing! Then down the track add:

- Ultramarine Blue - PB29
- Burnt Sienna - PBr7

These two when combined create ideal greys, blacks and chocolates as well as extending the colour range when added to other pigments. Even further down the track:

- Prussian Blue - PB27
- Raw Sienna - PBr7
- Indanthrone Blue
- Permanent Alizarin Crimson - PR206
- Cobalt Teal Blue (Daniel Smith)

And finally, a real treat, especially if you love trees and all things green!

- Cascade Green (Daniel Smith)

If you're like me, I feel like a kid in a lolly shop when looking at paint! The thing is, get familiar with what you do have, creating charts of colour combinations before expanding your repertoire

Brushes:

As a beginning artist you may try to get by with inexpensive brushes from sets or use the ones you already have on hand from experimenting with other mediums.....but, they can be too hard, too soft, too small and usually don't hold enough water. So, it is worthwhile to invest the money in one or two great quality brushes which can last you a lifetime. It is most important that you know about the hair or type of fibre used to make the brush - is it natural, synthetic or a blend of the two? as this affects performance and what tasks it is best suited for.

1. Synthetics - there are a wide variety of high quality synthetic fibres available that can be good alternatives to some of the more expensive natural brushes. Watch out for lower quality ones that can be too stiff and easily lift the previous layer of colour. Higher quality ones are softer, spring back to form quickly but they do hold much less water/paint than blended or natural brushes. So, task specific - they don't dissipate as much paint making it ideal for creating a fold in a petal.
2. Synthetic/Natural Blend - a very versatile brush that holds a nice amount of water/paint and is soft enough for layering without lifting off the previous colour. It has good spring and control. Has a smooth stroke and stays slightly bent when wet.
3. Natural Hair - this is the softest of brushes and holds the most water/paint while easily allowing for layering of colour without disturbing the pigment underneath. When wet, it can

easily be flicked back into shape without splaying or splitting. Also the most expensive! although pricing depends on the type of hair used (squirrel, camel, sable).

At the store, if possible, get the brush wet and test it on paper - look for spring, water release and the type of strokes that can be achieved - in other words, get a feel for it! Is it stiff or soft?; spring back to form or stay floppy?; hold a good amount of water or not much? If you are not allowed to get it wet then try pressing it onto a surface and look for the spring. How does it feel in your hand? Comfortable?

- Round Brush - they come in a variety of sizes - look on the handle for the number - the lower the number, the smaller the size. The smaller sizes (6,8,10) may be limiting as it takes many more strokes to cover an area than a larger brush and looser, more expressive strokes are difficult however, there is more control. Larger sizes (14,20,30) have fewer limitations, cover large area quickly and give sweeping strokes. The larger brushes can still be used for smaller painting though as they come to a point and with less pressure will release less paint into a small area. A great all rounder is a #10 or #12 with a good point.
- Flat Brushes - usually 2-3 inches in size (5-8cm), hold lots of water/paint and cover a large area quickly. Can be synthetic, natural or a blend. A hake brush is an inexpensive (about \$6.00) natural brush that holds lots of water however, it also sheds hair easily! It is useful for wetting the paper for our wet on wet technique. I would recommend picking up a hake brush and skipping everything else.
- When to replace a brush - this is entirely up to you and depends on the type of painting you do. Some artists replace a brush as soon as the tip has rounded off - I don't mind this though as it shows I love my brush! And I can always find other uses for it (scrubbing, creating texture or masking) so definitely don't throw them out.

Cleaning brushes - there is no real reason to clean a brush - simply rinse with clean water once you are finished and lay flat to dry (so water doesn't seep back to the ferrule and into the handle which causes the fibres to fall out and the paint peel off the handle) then store tip up in a container or in a fancy brush holder. Some colours may stain the fibres but this doesn't affect the brush or the performance. If you really feel the need to wash them, use a mild dish soap - place the soap and water in your hand, gently swirl and rinse with cold water until it runs clear.

Some other tips:

- Use the brushes for watercolours only
- Don't store in direct sunlight
- Dip brush in water to prepare the tip before painting
- Don't submerge the ferrule as this will weaken the glue and loosen the tip
- Never leave brushes tip down in water as this ruins the point
- Lay brushes flat to dry
- Inexpensive brushes need the same care as more expensive ones
- Use only old, inexpensive brushes to apply masking fluid

Palettes:

A word of advice! purchase the largest palette you can afford and preferably with a lid to keep dust out and paint in. Don't cheat yourself of space to mix colours and the opportunity to add paint! Choose one that has lots of divets for your pigments. Palettes last for years so it is worth the investment. You may also want to use a permanent marker to label the colours along the outside edge. Alternatively, plastic or ceramic plates or small ceramic bowls also work (bring gladwrap or foil to class to cover them with to avoid spills in the car on the way home).

Miscellaneous Materials:

- Pencil and eraser - any of the H pencils are fine as they produce lighter, finer lines that are less likely to smudge. A white eraser works well
- Palette knife - PK1008 - all kinds of fun uses!
- 2 containers for water - one to rinse off paint, the other to use for your washes
- Paper towels or toilet paper - for blotting excess paint off the brush, or to remove paint from the paper if it is still wet. I prefer paper towels as they are more durable when wet while others prefer toilet paper
- Masking tape (Bunnings is the least expensive)
- Spray bottle - to spritz your palette and soften the paint before you begin as well as a useful technique to create texture - an old eyeglass lens cleaner bottle is great!
- Painting board - to tape your paper onto - these can be mdf or corflute (corrugated plastic) both available at Bunnings. A good size is 40x60cm
- Old toothbrush - for spattering and scrubbing
- Wooden skewers - useful to drag paint and create branches or twigs or draw veins in leaves
- An old towel to cover your work area - this makes cleaning up easier!