

WC Foundations
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Brushes

Brushes come in various sizes and shapes. Brush fibers range from Kolinsky Sable, Squirrel, goat, badger, Ox and mongoose to nylon and acrylic. Some new lines of synthetic brushes use fibers of varying thickness and lengths to simulate naturals. Rounds and flats are most functional for watercolors. Over time you'll develop your own preferences for brush shapes and styles.

I **HIGHLY** recommend a brush that's either completely natural hair (Sable, Squirrel) or a combination of natural and synthetic hair. Don't waste your money on so-called watercolor brushes made of synthetic hair at your local art store. Trust me! You do not want to be fighting your tools, paper or paints.

The brushes I recommend are:

Silver Black Velvet Rounds and Flats: 1 Round in size 12, 14 **or** 16. Flat ¾”.

Or, if you're going with a fully synthetic:

Princeton Neptune Round in size 12, 14 or 16. Flat ¾”.

Natural hair brushes hold a lot of water and pigment. Water and pigment flow from them in an even manor.

Mixed synthetics don't hold as much but are pretty good. Sable/synthetic and Squirrel/synthetic are a good mix to look for.

Synthetics work okay. Synthetics tend to drop pigment and water immediate as you apply a brush stroke. Whereas brushes made of natural hair lay pigment and water more evenly throughout a brush stroke. Many watercolorists get by with synthetics entirely. I recommend experiencing a variety to get a feel for what you like.

Loading brushes

Water and pigment control is a challenge. It's our intense focus for 4 weeks. Through various exercises you'll get to know each pigment on your palette very well, how it behaves on various paper water saturations and dryness'.

Papers

Arches, Fabriano, Lanaquarelle, Winsor & Newton, Saunders, Kilimanjaro (Cheap Joe's brand) are all known high quality WC paper makers. There are others. You can explore papers at any art supply website.

Each brand's papers has a different feel. Fabriano is soft and velvety, Arches has a crisp, hard surface that resists water at first.

Many, such as Strathmore and Pentac, sell student grade papers that are fine for testing colors, sketching and experimentation. There's a color/value shift as watercolors dry and I've noticed that shift is much greater with cheap papers.

Good papers are internally and externally sized, whereas cheaper papers are only surface sized. Sizing is a starchy substance that helps paper to resist water.

Many watercolorist stretch their paper. First paper is soaked in room temperature water in a tub. Sizing is lost during this process so it's wise not to soak paper for more than 20 minutes. 10 minutes is optimal. Then place paper on a surface such as gator board or mdf and taped down with paper tape. Some use staples. or both.

Surfaces

HP (hot press) paper has a smooth surface. You'll probably experience more blossoming/back runs with it. Marks a more pronounced. WC is harder to control on HP. Lends itself to painterly effects.

CP (cold press) A lightly pebbled surface.

Each brand of paper has their own unique textures. Easier to work than HP. Pigment particles fall into the texture and even out. It's really a delight to work on.

Rough- A highly textured surface.

Again, each maker has their own textures. Pigment falls into the "wells," of the paper creating textured washes. Great for rough dry brush effects