

Landscape Painting Color Palette Suggestions for Plein Air Work

Introduction

Selecting the right color palette is essential for successful landscape painting, especially when working outdoors, or "en plein air." Many artists start with a standard set of colors that includes both warm and cool versions of each primary color, as well as white and burnt umber. Over time, each artist develops personal preferences and favorites, influenced by their approach to painting—whether they aim to capture the natural world as accurately as possible or interpret it with emotional expression. These individual preferences contribute to the variety and originality found in painting and keep it fun and full of possibility.

My Recommended Color Palette

The following colors are those I use consistently, whether painting in the studio or outdoors. This color palette is suitable for watercolor, oil, or acrylic paints.

- Lemon yellow
- Cadmium yellow light
- Cerulean blue
- Ultramarine blue
- Cadmium red light
- Alizarin crimson
- Titanium white
- Can of fixative
- Burnt umber
- Yellow ochre
- Raw sienna
- Burnt sienna
- Chrome green
- Galkyd Lite medium
- Gamsol solvent

Essential Tools and Materials

In addition to paint and a medium and a solvent you will need a palette and brushes suited to your chosen medium. It's helpful to have a selection of brushes in different sizes: large, medium, and small. Plus several canvases no smaller than 8x 10 inches.

For convenience, I use disposable paper palettes placed inside a plastic palette with a lid. A palette knife is also useful for mixing colors.

A portable easel is necessary for plein air work. I prefer using a French easel for its portability and stability.

Containers for your medium and solvent.

To manage sunlight and glare, I use a painter's umbrella that attaches to my easel.

Rags and an apron are also important for keeping tools and hands clean during the painting process.

Lastly, don't forget a sketchbook—an essential tool for planning compositions and capturing ideas and we will use it on the lesson day. Sketch with charcoal or water-soluble graphite sticks or dark pencil. An eraser might be needed.

I suggest that we get started together ahead of time by sketching from life anything of interest whether it's still life or out of your window or even sitting in your car.

Could we use a small private Facebook page of our own to post these drawings? It's not meant to be competitive but a record of your growth and commitment.

And these calls for supplies often use the caveat of just bring whatever you have on hand and just get started. Don't let anything hold you back. Paper and a pencil would get you started just fine.

Ellen's Creek Gallery & Framing on North River Road has lots of art supplies downstairs and helpful staff. Winton is a good starter brand for oil paint.

Please sign up for my newsletter by scrolling down to Stay in Touch at <https://www.juliapurcell.ca/contact/> and stay connected with any questions.

Regards Julia Purcell