

## WORKSHOP: “ACRYLIC PAINTING INTRODUCTION TO TOOLS”



**Summary:** Participants learned about acrylic painting brush types, uses and painting techniques. They worked on their own paintings choosing from photos and images provided as a starting point, or brought in their own images.

### Materials and Equipment:

gallery cradled board or stretched canvas  
semi/opaque acrylic paints in assorted colours  
assorted size paint brushes  
palette knife  
plastic lids or foil for palettes  
varnish  
table covers  
instructions/ideas sheet

pencil, eraser, sharpener  
washable markers  
sketch paper  
t-shirt scraps  
water container  
smock  
landscape or other image to work from

### Class Plan: Acrylic Painting Brushes

1. There are some basic types of brushes that are useful. From left to right they are: round, pointed round, flat, bright, mop, filbert, angled, fan, detail and liner brushes. Larger flat brushes are also called wash brushes.



2. Round brushes: have a wide thick base and taper to a point. They are used for creating wide lines, tapering lines to different thicknesses, creating fine lines and larger round brushes can fill in areas of the canvas quickly. They also work well for adding details and working on small spaces.



3. Flat brushes: are wide and have a square or rectangular top. They are used for filling in large spaces,

blending colours, creating long broad-brush strokes, defined/sharp edges and they can create fine lines when using just the edge of the brush. Larger flat brushes are also called wash brushes and can be several inches wide for filling large spaces evenly (right). They are a good all-purpose brush.



4. Bright brushes: are shorter bristled flat brushes and allow more control over the brush strokes but hold less point.



5. Mop brushes: are wide, thick and have tapered edges. They hold a lot of water and paint and are good for covering a lot of area. They can also create interesting stipple type marks like a sponge.



6. Filbert brushes: have a rounded top tapering on both sides and are otherwise similar to flat brushes. They create marks with softened smooth edges and can be rotate onto their edges to create fine lines.



7. Angled brushes: are like flat brushes but with bristles ending on an angle. They are good for cutting in shapes, outlining and filling in areas. They can be used on edge for fine lines.



8. Fan brushes: are flat brushes with the bristles spread out in a semi circle. They are excellent for painting trees, grasses and painting the appearance of texture.



9. Detail (top) and Liner brushes (bottom): are finer versions of round brushes. They are used to create fine lines, add details and the longer ones hold more paint for longer lines.



10. Brushes can be made of synthetic materials such as taklon, nylon, polyester and synthetic sable (below, the two brushes on the right), or natural materials such as sable, squirrel and hog hair (below, the four brushes on the left).



- a. In class we used synthetic brushes. They withstand acrylic paints and frequent washing and rinsing well. Taklon (the very white bristle brushes) is a polyester derivative and can be a vegan option.
- b. Brushes made from natural materials can also be used with acrylics and can achieve unique textures and effects. They have a natural ability to hold water/paint and allowing for detailed control.
11. Brushes can have long or short handles. The shorter ones are lighter and can feel like they give you more control. Longer handles allow you to paint further away from the canvas, like when standing at an easel.



12. For sizes, the larger the number the larger the brush. It refers to the thickness, length or width of the brush, and is rarely an actual measurement in inches or centimeters. The numbers also vary between brush manufacturers! It is a general idea of size relative to each other in a series of brush sizes.



13. Save your old brushes for use in stippling, dry brushing and creating texture. Here is one of my favourite brushes that has had a lot of use.



14. Palette knives are another useful tool for applying paint to canvas and they come in a wide array of sizes and shapes. Below are metal tipped ones on the left and plastic ones on the right. Some can be extraordinarily large at over a foot long.
  - a. We used the plastic ones in class for mixing paints.
  - b. The metal ones shown have thinner more flexible tips that the plastic ones and we used those in class for applying paint to the canvas.



15. There are other tools that can be used for painting and can be fun to try. We used Q-tips, sponges, toothbrushes and an icing bag with paint mixed with modelling paste in class.
16. Happy creating, and please share pictures of your creations if you feel comfortable.

**Useful Information/Adaptions/Variations:**

- To clean your brushes after acrylic painting, use cool running water and a small amount of dish soap. Gently massage the paint out of the brush under the water, until it runs clear.

**Trouble Shooting:**

- If you lose a bristle from your brush on your painting, try removing it with a fine pair of tweezers and blending the paint to hide any marks.
- Avoid leaving your brushes standing in their bristles in water for long periods of time. This can damage the bristles and make it harder to reshape your brush. Wash them when you are finished and either lie them flat or point side down in a brush holder.
- Avoid leaving your brushes with paint on them sitting not in use on your work surface for very long. Acrylic paint dries quickly and gets increasingly difficult to remove.