

Landscape Painting En Plein Air
First Light Studio

Class materials list

The following is a list of the bare necessities for painting *en plein air*. En plein air is simply French for “in the open air.” It is not a style.

Primarily, you want your paints: a full complement of the primaries (blue, yellow, red, a warm & a cool of each) plus white and a few earth colors (yellow ochre, burnt sienna, raw or burnt umber). Oils are recommended as the most versatile, but you can work in acrylic, gouache, or water color.

Other things you’ll want are:

- An easel that works in the out of doors. My favorite is a “French” easel, a paint box with legs, a drawer for your paints and palette, and the part that holds your painting. Julien is the old maker and perhaps the best quality. (I can bring an extra one or two if need be)
- A light-weight wood or aluminum easel can work as well.
- A steel Stanrite #300 easel is even better for a lightweight outdoor easel.
- Minimum 6 canvasses or panels of similar size and format. Feel free to bring whatever size and format you feel good with. *See note below. Prime with pale grey, sienna, or brownish GESSO** (see 2nd note below)
- Small container of solvent. (For acrylic: 2 cans for water: 1 for the paints, the other for brushes (gets dirty))
- A couple of palette knives, for mixing and for painting. Metal with wood handles. Not plastic.
- Rags, jar with lid for solvent (odorless mineral spirits) and medium. More rags.
- Bag or backpack for carrying stuff. Or a folding canvas cart.

Optional and helpful items:

- Canvas carriers with which you carry the two canvasses together.
- Medium. Oil: Galkyd or Liquin work fine. You don’t need any medium for most paintings, but they can be handy. For plein air, I like gel mediums as they’ll sit there on your palette like a blob of paint. Acrylic: There are several mediums available the slow the drying process.
- Sun hat, water bottle, non-toxic bug repellent (summer). Rain hat, or wool hat, and jacket, just in case.
- Barrier crème for hands. (I’ll have some on hand)
- Waterless hand cleaner.
- Folding chair.
- More rags.

* You can paint in a variety of formats. Landscape is generally horizontal. You’ll want to at least suggest a foreground, a middle-ground and a background. Long narrow horizontals accentuate breadth of spreading land/water. Narrow tall formats accentuate receding space. Square is neutral. I like to work on a 1:2, 1:3, or 4:5 format (eg. 10 x 20 is common for me, 10 x 30, or 24 x 30). Store bought canvasses or panels will be more like 16 x 20, a good size and shape.

** The colored ground will help to pull your colors together in the final painting. Just put some burnt umber acrylic into the gesso. Or you can put a thin ground of any neutral color over the gesso layer, before you go out, or on site. Sienna or a buttery ochre work, too. You’ll see why this is a good idea. For very hot, bright weather, I’ve even tried a blue ground.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact Jef Gunn at zopa@hevanet.com