

List of Resources • John MacDonald

Below is a complete list of the materials that I'm currently using in the studio and the vendors through which I purchase them. However, I'm always exploring different materials and will update this as necessary. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Palette:

I use a limited palette. It simplifies color mixing and ensures color harmony. The palette I'm currently using consists of:

White. (Gamblin: 50% Titanium/50% Zinc)

Cadmium Yellow Light, non-toxic substitute (see below)

Prussian Blue [PB 27] (Winsor & Newton brand)

Permanent Alizarin Crimson [PR 177] (Winsor & Newton brand)

Dioxazine Purple [PV 23] (Utrecht brand)

Raw Umber [PBr 7] (Vasari brand)

Payne's Grey, Old Holland [PB 29 + PBL 9]

More information on each pigment:

White: Winsor & Newton Winton "Soft Mixing White"

A 50/50 mix of titanium and zinc white. A soft, buttery white.

If I wish to speed the drying time of an underpainting, I will use Winsor & Newton's Griffin Alkyd, a titanium white.

Cadmium Yellow Light, Non-toxic Substitute

In the interest of creating a completely non-toxic studio I mix Winsor & Newton's "Winsor Yellow" [PY 74, also known as Hansa Yellow] and Winsor & Newton's "Indian Yellow" [PY 139 + PR 101]. Mixing approximately 40% Indian Yellow to 60% Winsor Yellow creates a very close match to Cadmium Yellow Light.

Prussian Blue. Any brand will do—they're all nearly identical.

Permanent Alizarin Crimson, from Winsor & Newton. Any brand of permanent Alizarin Crimson is fine but be certain that it's permanent! The pigment traditionally used in Alizarin Crimson is NOT lightfast—do not use any Alizarin Crimson that is not specifically labeled "permanent."

Lately, I've also been mixing approximately 30% of Rembrandt's Transparent Oxide Red [PR 101] into the Permanent Alizarin Crimson to create a slightly warmer Alizarin Crimson.

Dioxazine Purple, from Utrecht. Any brand will do. A rich, beautiful purple. It is nearly identical to the only slightly richer but vastly more expensive (and, in my mind, overrated) Cobalt Violet. This color can be mixed using Prussian and Alizarin but I use it so often that I've found it easier to purchase separately.

Raw Umber, from Vasari. I've tried other raw umbers from: Utrecht, Winsor & Newton, and Old Holland. All are too yellow. This brand, when mixed with white, creates a beautiful and versatile silver-toned neutral.

Payne's Grey, Old Holland. A beautiful cool black that mixes well.

Transparent Gold Ochre, from Utrecht. If I feel the painting—either the entire painting or a section—needs to be warmer (golden), I'll apply a small amount of this color and work it into the varnish/medium when I apply it to the painting. Essentially, it's used as a glaze. I will also use Prussian, Permanent Alizarin Crimson, or Dioxazine Purple if I wish to make the painting bluer, redder, or more purplish respectively. All three of these paints are transparent and so ideally suited for this technique.

Lastly, I'll use *any* color if the painting needs it and I'm unable to mix it with my limited palette.

Brushes:

My favorite brushes are no longer available: Utrecht F-series flats, a bristle-synthetic blend. Any moderately priced bristly-synthetic mixture will do.

I also use:

Royal Langnickel Aurèa series. These are flats, pure bristle and have become my favorite brush. They are softer and more pliable than the Utrecht bristle-synthetic blend, allowing more controlled drawing, but are and not adequate for scumbling.

Robert Simmons Titanium brushes, flats. These are soft, synthetic brushes that I use as a painting is nearing completion. They are good for blending and creating sharp brushstrokes and hard edges. They are not used for scumbling.

Recipe for (retouch) varnish:

1 part safflower oil (**artists** safflower oil. Do NOT use grocery store safflower oil.)

1 part linseed oil

1/2 part stand oil

1/2 part Dorland's Wax.

Cobalt Drier (10-12 drops for a 16 oz. jar,)

In an empty jar, I add all the ingredients **except the Cobalt drier**, cover it, and gently heat it on a Mr. Coffee coffee mug warmer. You can also submerge the jar in a pot of hot water. Anything capable of gently heating the jar will do. When warm, I shake the jar to thoroughly mix the ingredients, add the drier, cover, and shake again. At room temperature, the medium will gel with a consistency similar to slightly softened butter.

I often use the medium only when the painting is nearing completion, using no medium at all in the initial painting sessions. Nor do I mix the medium into the paint as I work. Instead, when the painting is DRY to the touch I apply the medium to the entire painting

with a cloth rag, distributing it evenly and removing any excess by gently wiping the canvas with the side of a roll of paper towels. The surface should be slightly damp, not dripping. I then paint directly into the varnish while it's wet. If I make a mistake and need to wipe off an area of oil paint, the varnish is also removed, but I'll simply wait until the next session and repeat the process.

I also apply the medium as a final varnish when the painting is finished and dry. This medium is not meant to be a final varnish—that is, it doesn't provide the impermeable and strong film of a Damar-based varnish—but it's better than no varnish at all. It also restores any matt areas of sunken color and creates a uniform, semi-glossy surface.

Why the Dorlands Wax? I find a medium consisting solely of oil or varnish to be too glossy for my taste. A glossy painting is particularly difficult to photograph or view under strong lights. The addition of Dorlands Wax gives the final surface a semi-gloss, or satin, appearance. Colors appear as rich as with an oil varnish finish but without the high gloss.

Painting panels:

I use several types:

Pintura (<http://www.jerrysartarama.com/discount-art-supplies/Canvas-and-Boards/Canvas-Panels-and-Boards/Pintura-Painting-Panels.htm>)

These are of cotton canvas and gesso primed, perfect for an acrylic underpainting and for plein air painting, not being as expensive as the linen panels. The weave is small and close, similar to linen. These may be used for acrylic underpaintings.

Raphael Oil primed panels (<http://www.jerrysartarama.com/discount-art-supplies/Canvas-and-Boards/Canvas-Panels-and-Boards/Raphael-Premium-Archival-Oil-Primed-Linen-Panels.htm>)

Being oil primed, any underpainting on these panels must be done in oils. I use these for both plein air and studio paintings and for most of the large paintings in the studio (24x30 and larger). The linen is similar to a portrait linen—a tight, small weave. It's a wonderful surface for painting.

New Traditions Art Panels

These are very nice painting panels offered on a variety of surfaces. They are not inexpensive but the quality is high. I use the L28—oil-primed linen—on gatorboard. I tend to purchase them only for the largest sizes, 30x40 and 36x48.
www.newtraditionsartpanels.com

Multimedia Artboard

These also come in a variety of surfaces and backings. I use the Claessens #15 Primed Linen. These boards are perfect for traveling and plein air painting but the board is thin and flexible. I prefer clipping them to a rigid piece of gatorboard when painting on them. The quality is very high. <http://multimediaartboard.com/>

Centurion OP DLX panels.

Oil primed linen on board. Inexpensive. A nice, small weave in the linen. The boards can warp but are easily straightened when framed. Available at Jerry's and other online suppliers. These are becoming very popular among plein air artists.

Wet-Painting Carriers.

PanelPak wet canvas carriers. www.panelpak.com
These are simple, inexpensive carriers that work very well.

Frames:

ArtFrames.com (<http://www.artframes.com/catalog1.html>)

I prefer the Laguna (both the Gold and Dark Espresso) Their customer service is very good.

Kingofframe.com (http://www.kingofframe.com/readymade-frames_c_7.html)

Of these, I like the Craftsman and Arroyo, but have used and liked the Laredo (black and gold) and the Saratoga (Black w/ Gold). These frames are slightly more expensive than ArtFrames but I feel the extra cost simply reflects a slightly better quality.

Picture Hanging Hardware:

American Frame Company: clips, screws, thin wire. www.americanframe.com

Picture Hang Solutions: heavy wire and hooks. www.govart.com (HWR-709C, HWR-707C, BOX-740-6, HWR-129-BC)

Hand Protection

Rubber Gloves: Mapa Trilites 994.

I purchase them from ULine, product #: S-1715M (medium size). 1-800-295-5510 or <https://www.uline.com/Product/ProductDetailRootItem?modelnumber=S-17150>

If you don't like using gloves, you may prefer a barrier cream. It's applied like skin cream and protects the skin from chemicals. It's easily washed off with soap and water.

Travabon barrier cream

I order it from JD Industrial Supply. 1-734-426-2475

Here's a direct link to the Travabon page on their website: <http://www.jdindustrialsupply.com/travabon-cream.html>

Suppliers

Jerry's Artarama

www.jerrysartarama.com

Utrecht (Now owned by Dick Blick but still maintains its own website.)

www.utrechtart.com

Cheap Joes

www.cheapjoes.com

Art Supply Warehouse

www.artsupplywarehouse.com

Dick Blick Art Materials

www.dickblick.com