

Six Approaches to Abstracting the Figure

By Melinda Cootsona

Materials List

PHOTOGRAPHS

Please bring several photos that inspire you of human figures. (Bring as many as you can!) These can come from magazines, mail order catalogues, the internet, and best of all your own personal photo stash. The key to good photos is a good sense of light. You want light and shadow on your figure. Flat overall lighting makes the image difficult to interpret. With more experience it gets easier, however when learning to paint the figure it is best to have good shadows (darks) and good lights (light) on the figure in your photograph. Black and white photos are actually preferable, as they open up your interpretation of color.

If you are printing photos be sure to use photo paper. Photos printed on regular computer paper tend to be washed out and lack the values that we want. Decent photo paper makes a huge difference.

Here is a good example of a photo with a strong light source. This is a particularly exaggerated light source, however that makes it easy to really see the shapes.



Here is also a link to my blog where I have posted an article specifically about working with photographs.

<https://www.melindacootsona.com/blog/2017/4/20/working-with-photographs>

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PAINT

I am not particular about colors. Bring as many as you feel comfortable with. What is important to me is that you have lots of paint to work with. We don't want to skimp on paint. At the very least you want a warm and cool of the colors you use. Below is a general guideline, but if you have similar colors there is no need to run out and buy new. Hansa yellow, for example is a perfectly good alternative to Cadmium. Most of you have been painting for a while, so bring the colors you are comfortable with!

Titanium White	bring LOTS
Cadmium Yellow Medium	Warm
Cadmium Yellow Light or Lemon	Cool
Cadmium Orange (There is no cool version of orange)	Warm
Cadmium Red Light	Warm
Alizarin Crimson or Quinacridone Red	Cool
Manganese Blue	Warm
Ultramarine Blue	Cool
Sap Green Or Green Gold	Warm
Viridian	Cool

A Black of some kind

ADDITIONAL COLORS THAT CAN MAKE LIFE EASIER

Gold Ochre	Warm
Transparent Earth Red (Red Oxide)	Warm

MEDIUM

Acrylic Painters

Whatever mediums you prefer. For those of you who are interested in collage, be sure to bring gel medium.

To keep working on Acrylics longer (more like oils) bring Golden's Acrylic Glazing Liquid, gloss or matte.

Oil Painters

Preferably Gamblin's Solvent Free Gel Medium or Fluid Medium

Odorless Mineral Spirits ONLY

Cold Wax if you are interested. Not required.

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OTHER DRAWING, MARK-MAKING AND PAINTING ITEMS, NOT REQUIRED, BUT YOU MAY WANT:

Graphite - I prefer 9B (soft)
Pastels
Stencils
Chopsticks (yes, chopsticks)
Inks (for Acrylic painters)
Oil Bars (for Oil painters)
Any other tools you like to use.

BRUSHES

Bring what you are used to using. Be sure to bring some larger ones. 1" to 2" size. These can be inexpensive "Chip" brushes from a house paint or hardware store. (about \$1.00 each) My favorite brushes are 1" chip brushes that I can throw away when they get worn out.

Just make sure to bring some larger sizes. This class is not about painting eyelashes! ;-)

Palette Knives

Spade shape is my favorite. Bring several sizes

Palette

Bring one! Wood, paper, glass, plexi, all are acceptable

SUBSTRATES

CANVAS

Always bring several different sizes to class to choose from.

3-4 Medium canvases about 24 x 24, 20 x 20, in that range.

3-4 16 x 16, 12 x 12, etc Nothing smaller than 12 x 12

Acrylic painters, you may also use **paper** as an option. I tend to work in multiple layers so sometimes canvas is a better choice as it holds up better. However, if you prefer paper, it is fine with me. We will be working on easels so you will need some kind of bracing.

**Alternatively and/or in addition, please feel free to bring old paintings that you are willing to paint over.

Canvas boards, Wood panels (gessoed) are all acceptable!

CANVAS PREPARATION

Please prepare canvases with color wash and/or mark making so that you are not starting from a blank white canvas. This is particularly important for oil painters that need the initial layer to be dry.

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COLLAGE MATERIAL

For those of you interested in working with collage, please bring your stash of papers.
And your gel medium.

OTHER

Notebook

One Full Roll paper towels (Viva brand are the best, mark my words, after you try them you'll never get anything else).

Gloves if you use them.

Oil Painters:

Clean jar with lid to pour out your used OMS.

Start saving **pizza boxes** to carry your wet paintings in. Saves your car! Or other protective material or **travel carriers**.

Acrylic Painters:

Container for your water.

Easels will be provided.

NICE TOOLS BUT NOT REQUIRED:

Colour Shaper

This is a unique tool that you will love. They are a bit hard to find. Here is a link to the Dick Blick Website that carries some of their products. Order the "Angle Chisel, Size 10 Firm."

<http://www.dickblick.com/products/colour-shapers-tools/>

Catalyst Blades are also great tools. You may want one or two of them:

<http://www.dickblick.com/products/princeton-catalyst-blades-and-mini-blades/>