

## ***Beginning Painting*** **Syllabus**

“In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities,  
but in the expert’s mind there are few.”

– Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*

This course is designed for beginners and those who have minimal painting experience. Students will learn the basics of handling acrylic paints and brushes and explore a variety of techniques (washes, layering, impasto, wet-on-wet, and others) and subject matter (such as landscape, self-portrait, and abstraction). We will cover the fundamentals of composition, gradation, and mixing colors. One-on-one and group discussions will also touch upon concepts crucial to the creative process, including critical thinking, discipline, spontaneity, and others. Technical demonstrations, a slide lecture, and short writing projects will complement our studio work. The goal of this course is to give students the basic tools and ideas necessary to begin their own personal painting practice.

### **Course Objectives**

- To become familiar with the basic methods, techniques & tools of acrylic painting
- To take part in a community of artists
- To *enjoy* the challenging and nuanced process of painting

### **Course Methods**

- Practice & repetition
- Experimentation & play
- Observation (inner & outer)
- Creative synthesis
- Mutual support & feedback

### **Course Guidelines**

- Do actively participate in discussions
- Do listen to the instructor and fellow students and follow directions
- Do complete all projects, including home assignments
- *Do not* talk while the instructor or a fellow student is speaking
- *Do not* use a digital device in class (make calls outside)
- *Do not* be mean, rude, or disrespectful to *anyone* in the class
- Students who cannot follow the rules or instructions of the teacher might be asked to leave

### **Course Structure**

We’ll be painting (and drawing) the majority of the time, but there will also be slide lectures, demos, class discussions, and short writing projects. At the start of every class we will have a warm-up before the main project. You’ll receive a handout via email before each class that explains the project we’ll be doing that week, which materials to bring, and what to work on at home. You can print the handout and bring it to class (or bring a digital copy on a device) if you would like to take notes during demos.

## Course Materials

### **For the first class you will need:**

- Work Clothing: Always wear old clothes, coveralls or an apron that can get dirty.
- Acrylic Paints & Brushes: An inexpensive student/beginner/basic set of acrylic paints and a small assortment of inexpensive short-handled brushes (e.g., #0 fine point, #3 fine point, #2 flat bristle, #6 flat bristle, 1.5 inch utility, etc.). Also, one small or medium-sized “Asian-style” calligraphy brush.
- Surfaces: Get at least three (to start) 11 x 14 in. or so pre-primed canvas boards.
- Painting-related Materials: Mixing cups (jars, yogurt containers, etc.), a mixing palette, rags, palette knife, small spray bottle (for water), a small color wheel.
- Painting Transport: You’ll need a way to safely transport wet paintings, as there is no storage at school. One option is to bring a cardboard box large enough to put a painting into without the wet surface touching anything.

### **Portable Art Kit (PAK):**

- A PAK is a small, portable container with supplies and a small sketchbook. The key aspect of the PAK is that it is **truly portable—it must fit in a backpack, pocket, or purse**. Use it to write down ideas, plan a piece, sketch on the fly, and brainstorm freely without judgment.
- For your PAK you need:
  - Sketchbook: **Must be 5” x 7” or smaller.**
  - Pencils and/or Pens: A small assortment of your choosing.
  - Container: A small and portable box/bag for supplies.
  - Mini Painting Set: Three examples: Pentel Aquash Mini Watercolor Set (Kinokuniya Stationery & Gift), Winsor & Newton Cotman Mini Watercolor Set (www.dickblick.com), Koi Pocket Watercolor Pan Set (www.utrechtart.com)

### **During the semester you will also need:**

- Pencils: A couple #2 pencils, eraser and small pencil sharpener.
- Additional Surfaces: Get as needed throughout semester. Some options: canvas board, wood panel, stretched/unstretched canvas, watercolor/printmaking paper, cardboard, etc.
- OPTIONAL: Gloves, masking tape, scissors/utility knife, sandpaper, acrylic mediums, etc.

### **Where to buy supplies:**

- Kinokuniya Stationery & Gift: 1581 Webster St. at Post St. in Japan Town mall in SF
- Accent Arts: 392 California Ave. @ Ash St.
- University Art: 267 Hamilton Ave. @ Ramona St.
- Michael’s (Sunnyvale): 818 W El Camino Real @ S. Pastoria Ave.
- Michael’s (Mountain View): 2415 Charleston Rd @ Independence Ave.
- Michael’s (Cupertino): 20640 Homestead Rd @ Forge Way
- Michael’s (San Mateo): 1750 S Delaware St. near Concar Dr.

## Course Outline

### **Day 1:**

- Introductions, syllabus & materials
- Class objectives & prior experience
- Demo: Location, body position, set-up & clean-up
- Project: Awful(ly) Mess(y)!
- Home Project: 1) Get PAK & other supplies. 2) Define “good” vs. “bad” painting.

### **Day 2:**

- Discuss: Good vs. bad painting
- Demo: Fast & furious layers/textures & mixing colors
- Project: Lay-TeX Chaos
- Home Project: Finish Lay-TeX painting.

### **Day 3:**

- Slide lecture (located in different room/building)
- Demo: Starting a painting & composition
- Project: Photo Landscape
- Home Project: 1) Finish Photo Landscape. 2) Make fast Plein-air Landscape painting(s).

### **Day 4:**

- Demo: Shading, blending, contrast
- Project: De-Stillied Life
- Home Project: 1) Finish De-Stillied Life. 2) Plan and prepare for TTT project.

### **Day 5:**

- Slide lecture (located in different room/building)
- Project: Transgressive Triptych Transformation (TTT)
- Home Project: 1) Finish TTT. 2) Make fast self-portrait painting(s).

### **Day 6:**

- Demo: Carving out heads (Impasto!)
- Project: Photo Self-Portrait
- Home Project: 1) Finish Photo Self-Portrait. 2) Bring portable mirror.

### **Day 7:**

- Demo: Ovoids & crosshairs
- Project: Mirror Self-Portrait
- Home Project: 1) Finish Mirror Self-Portrait. 2) Bring collage materials.

### **Day 8:**

- Demo: Mixing media
- Project: Abstract Mash-up
- Home Project: 1) Finish Abstract Mash-up. 2) Fast paintings of people walking.

### **Day 9:**

- Discuss: Volume, form & gestural marks
- Project: Figurative Gestures (we’ll have a model)
- Home Project: Plan and prepare for Pick ‘n Choose project

### **Day 10:**

- Demo: Getting “un-stuck”
- Project: Pick ‘n Choose
- Home Project: Carry your PAK off into the sunset...