

Bendykowski
TECHNICAL GUIDE for oil painting

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Introduction

This document will give you the technical information you need to paint in oil without overburdening you with details. Where appropriate I have included links which in most cases will take you to Dick Blick's Art Supplies online store where you can get more information and even order the product. I don't make any money on your purchases, I just do this for convenience sake. Feel free to copy and distribute this document. If you have any questions or comments e-mail me at steve.bendy@icloud.com.

Steve

I What to Paint On

The most popular surfaces to paint on are canvas & linen which are stretched on wood frames or attached to a flat cardboard panel. Commercial products are primed with acrylic gesso suitable for acrylic and oil painting. If you want to paint very fine lines and extreme detail you will want a smooth surface found in "portrait" canvas, linen and wood panels.

Primed Canvas & Panels

Inexpensive packs of canvas are available at hobby stores. Many are **not listed** as "archival" so I don't know if they will last hundreds of years. However you will be toning your canvas with acrylic which should give an extra margin of safety. The more expensive cotton and linen products are thicker and are listed as being archival.

- ▷ [Cotton & Linen Panels](#)
- ▷ [Cotton & Linen Stretched Canvas](#)

Primed Wood Panels

Primed wood panels are usually smoother than traditional canvas which allows for very fine lines and details. They can be purchased as flat panels or cradled.

- ▷ [Ampersand Gessobord](#)



II Toning or Coloring a Painting Surface

I recommend that you give your new canvas a coat of brown, gray or black acrylic paint before painting in oil. If you are painting on inexpensive canvas this gives you an additional coat of protection. [Fluid acrylic paint](#) works best, which is the consistency of house paint. Apply it with an inexpensive mini-roller. Acrylic **house** paint has not been tested for longevity, but if you are not worried about the permanence of your painting there is no reason not to use it.

III Using Acrylic Under Oil

To speed the painting process, some artists block in basic shapes and colors with acrylic paint. When the acrylic is dry the painting is then finished in oil. The rule to remember is that once you begin painting in oil you can no longer use acrylic.

▷ [Watch Michael James Smith demonstrate this technique.](#)

IV Thinning Oil Paints

Oil Painting Mediums

Paint squeezed from the tube is usually too stiff and needs to be thinned before being used. Mediums are used to thin paints, increase or decrease gloss, and speed-up or slow-down the drying time of paint.

Winsor & Newton NOT recommended. Although popular Liquin medium contains strong solvents - don't use it.

Turpentine NOT recommended. Turpentine is used for cleaning brushes, don't use it for thinning your paints.

Recommended. I recommend using a [modern medium from Gamblin](#). If you are concerned about ventilation or have health issues you can also paint [totally solvent free](#).

- ▷ [Galkyd Slow Dry](#), dries in 3-4 days
- ▷ [Galkyd Lite](#), dries in 1-2 days
- ▷ [Gamsol Odorless Mineral Spirits](#), used to clean brushes & thin Galkyd.



Tips for Using Mediums

- a) Wipe the bottle threads clean after every pour. Make sure that the bottle cap liner insert remains in the cap to ensure an airtight fit.
- b) At the completion of a painting session, add several drops of Gamsol to thinly cover the surface of the medium. Do not mix or shake. Gamsol on the top of the medium acts as a barrier to help slow solvent-evaporation and thickening of the medium.
- c) If the medium appears to have thickened even slightly, add a small amount of Gamsol and shake thoroughly. Continue adding Gamsol and shaking until the medium is close to its original consistency. Once a medium has thickened to a gel it must be discarded.

Painting "Fat over Lean"

Disregard this section if painting in acrylic or you complete an oil painting or an area of an oil painting in one session. The "fat over lean" rule builds a painting that is flexible so over time there will be less cracking to your painting. Fat = more oil. Lean = less oil.

Approach #1: Use more Galkyd or Glakyd Lite on the top layers than you used on the bottom.

Approach #2: On the bottom layers, use Gamsol. In the top layers use Galkyd or Glakyd Lite.

V Palettes & Palette Knives

Palettes. Paint is mixed on a palette which can be any non-porous surface such as glass, wax paper or even waxy paper plates. Gray disposable palette's are nice as they allow you to see whites & light colors more accurately and clean-up is easy – just tear off the sheet and discard.

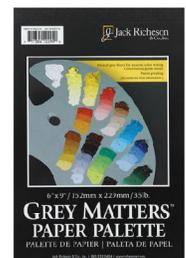
Palette Knives. Paint can be mixed with brushes or specialized palette knives, either metal or plastic.

[Palette Knife](#)

[Richeson Grey Matters Paper Palette](#)



Palette
Knife



Paper
Palette

VI Brushes

Although I own expensive brushes, I also use the inexpensive synthetic brushes found in packs at Hobby Lobby & Walmart. They don't last as long but perform just as well. Because they are so cheap I don't feel guilty when I "abuse" them to make interesting textures in the paint.

Sable, Synthetic, or Hog Hair?

Sable brushes are softer and the most expensive. They are great for blending, glazing, and making soft, less-defined marks. Hog hair is the traditional brush for oil and is stiffer than sable. Synthetic sable seeks to combine the best qualities of sable and hog hair. I usually use synthetic.



Inexpensive Synthetic Brush Set from Hobby Store

Brush Styles

Rounds. Rounds are good for making lines and fine details.

Flats or Brights. The ends of these brushes are straight which can be used to make sharp edges.

Filberts. The ends are curved which is useful for blending, softening edges and making tapered strokes.

Fan Blenders. Used for subtle blending of color and also creating texture such as foliage.

Selecting Brushes Links

- ▷ [Natural Oil Painting Brushes](#) (hog hair and sable)
- ▷ [Synthetic Oil Painting Brushes](#)
- ▷ Inexpensive [Gold Taklon Synthetic Sable brushes](#) from Hobby Lobby or Michaels

VII Cleaning Brushes

Cleaning Fluid & Containers

Oil brushes should be cleaned with mineral spirits followed by a conditioning soap. I recommend Gamblin's Gamsol for several reasons: 1) it is a mild solvent and odor free, 2) excess cleaner on the brush mixes well with all mediums, 3) Gamsol will be needed for oiling out.

- ▷ [Gamsol Odorless Mineral Spirits](#)
- ▷ [Brush Soap & Preserver](#)
- ▷ [Silicoil Brush Cleaning Tank](#)



Brush Cleaning Supplies

[Excellent article on brush care](#)

Note: Unlike other solvents, Gamsol is biodegradable and contains no hazardous air pollutants or compounds.

Cleaning With Safflower Oil

An alternative to cleaning brushes with toxic solvents like mineral spirits or Gamsol is to use [Safflower Oil](#). To use Safflower oil wipe the excess paint out with a rag or paper towel and then dip the bristles in the Oil. Safflower oil is a very slow drying oil and will keep your brushes from drying out for 7-10 days. If you leave your brushes out longer without working you should re-dip them or clean them in Gamsol.

- ▷ [Safflower Oil](#)



Safflower Oil for Solvent Free Cleaning

VIII Oiling Out & Varnishing

Oiling Out

Oiling out is the process of applying oil to a painting to unify the surface, restore matte or "sunken-in" colors and saturate colors. This can be done anytime during the painting process as soon as the surface is dry to the touch, and as many times as desired. [Here is a video of the process](#) using Gamblin products.

- ▷ A mixture of 50% [Gamsol](#) & 50% [Galkyd](#).

Varnishing

When your painting is finished, you can varnish it to protect the surface. The traditional product used is Damar varnish, but a newer product is my recommendation. Developed in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art, Gamblin Gamvar Gloss Varnish saturates and gives greater depth to the colors in your painting and gives your work a unified and protective semi-gloss surface. **Do not use varnish** to restore matte or “sunken-in” colors. Oil out instead.



▷ [Gamblin Gamvar Varnish](#)

IX Oil Paint Brands & Colors

What Brand Should I Buy?

In my 40+ years of teaching I can say that the brand of paint used has never made a difference in the final outcome or look of a painting. I have also seen little difference in the final outcome of a painting between student and professional grade paint. In the “Color Systems” on the following pages I have listed popular brands, but any brand will do and brands are interchangeable.

What Colors Should I Buy?

Believe it or not, less is more when mixing colors. See the material list on the next page.

X More Help & Resources

I offer many resources in the ‘How to Paint’ section of my website, all free. www.bendykowski.art.

XI Final Thoughts

Here is a quote from one of my favorite painters, Caspar David Friedrich: “A painting must not be invented, it must be found”. To me, that means that you may start out with an idea of what you want to do, but as you go along, you let the painting - the act of painting - suggest the way to proceed.

Good luck and have a blast being creative! If you have any questions, comments, or whatever, contact me!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve'.

Steve Bendykowski

www.bendykowski.art

Oil Painting Material List



If purchasing supplies for my workshop contact me at steve.bendy@icloud.com as some of the supplies below will be provided.

Supplies to Purchase

The brand or color ‘name’ does not matter as long as the color **has the proper Color Bias or Temperature**. Tube names of 3 popular brands are listed. You can mix and match brands. The five required colors are in **Bold**. The other colors are helpful, but optional.



Good

Better

Best

Color Bias & Temperature			‘Master’s Touch’ 50 ml (1.7 oz) Sold at Hobby Lobby	‘Blick Studio’ series 40 ml (1.35 oz) Sold online at dickblick.com	‘1980’ series by Gamblin 37 ml (1.25 oz) Sold online at dickblick.com
Yellow Green	Cool		Lemon Yellow	Cadmium Yellow Pale Hue	Hansa Yellow Light
Yellow Orange	Warm		Cadmium Yellow Medium	Cadmium Yellow Deep Hue	Hansa Yellow Medium
Blue Green	Cool		Cerulean Blue Hue	Cerulean Blue Hue	Cerulean Blue
Blue Purple	Warm		Ultra Blue	Ultramarine Blue	Ultramarine Blue
Red Purple	Cool		Alizarin Red	Crimson Alizarin	Alizarin Crimson
Red Orange	Warm		Vivid Red Orange	Cadmium Red Hue	Naphthol Red
Yellow Red	Warm		Burnt Umber	Burnt Umber	Burnt Umber
White	-		Titanium White	Titanium White	Titanium White
Neutral Gray	-		Neutral Gray	(Use Gamblin ‘1980’ brand)	Neutral Gray



Canvas

16" x 20" or 11" x 14" stretched canvas or canvas panel. Often on sale & also sold in packs.



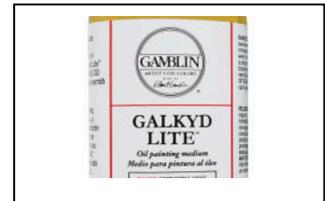
Brush Set

A packaged set of **soft**, “taklon” brushes that contain flat and pointed brushes.



Palette Pad

Each sheet is designed for oil or acrylic & they're disposable to offer a quick and easy cleanup.



Galkyd Medium

4.2 oz Galkyd or Galkyd Lite by Gamblin. Used to thin paint. Available at Hobby Lobby.

Other Supplies Needed

I also recommend the following items: 1) ‘Silicoil Brush Cleaning Tank’ filled with **odorless** turpentine, 2) Gamblin Gamsol. (Gamsol is needed to mix 50/50 with Galkyd or Galkyd Lite to oil out), 3) Paper towels for cleanup, 4) Palette knife to mix paint.

For ‘how to’ videos and other free resources go to www.bendykowski.art and click on ‘[How to Paint](#)’.

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