

Buying Supplies

Where to Buy Art Supplies:

The most reliable art retailers as of 2014 are “**Blick**”, “**Utrecht**” and “**Jerry’s Artorama**.” All of these companies have easy to use websites, good shipping rates and an excellent range of supplies at the cheapest prices available. You may have one near by but ordering online is preferable in most cases because physical stores do not usually carry all of the products available.

Using Coupons:

All of these stores have frequently released coupons that make a significant difference in how much you will spend. Often they will give you free shipping if you spend more than a certain amount, or a large percentage off a single item. As of 2014 “RetailMeNot.com” is a reliable source for finding online coupon codes that can be applied to the three art retailers mentioned above.

Buying Regularly:

It is easy to avoid buying art supplies, especially when you don’t have a lot of money to spend, however if you put it off your lack of adequate paints / brushes etc. can start negatively affecting your artwork. Because of this it is recommended that you plan buying art supplies at regular intervals, every 4 months, every 6 months or whatever you find works for you. Even if you don’t absolutely need more supplies, buy things that you can experiment with. Don’t feel bad about unused art supplies, 80% of art supplies produced are thrown away without being used for something substantial, as long as you waste less than this there is nothing to feel bad about.

Making a Budget:

When you buy art supplies (every 4-6 months) you need to give yourself a preset budget, \$50 or \$100 are good starting places. Regardless of the amount, make sure you spend all of it every time you resupply. Again this will encourage you to have an abundance of supplies which will encourage you to freely play and experiment in your studio.

Things to Buy (painters):

For painters make sure you resupply on the following items regularly.

- **Brushes** of many sizes, shapes and hair types (Synthetic, Hog, Sable etc.). It is preferable to buy brushes in person so you can feel them and make sure they are in good shape. It is ok to buy them online, but stick to the store’s brand for reliability (Blick brushes, Utrecht brushes etc.)

- **Canvas** can be bought in large rolls or smaller “blankets.” If you buy “unprimed” canvas buy a tub of acrylic gesso separately. “Pre-primed” canvas is easier and is also fine but is a little uglier.

- **Acrylic Gesso** is used to seal canvas or wood before you work on it, also giving you a strong white foundation that will maintain strong color. Any brand will do, buy large tubs of it.

- **Gamsol** is a safe odorless paint thinner for oils which you will need to clean your brushes. It is not necessary for acrylics which you can clean in water.

- **Paint** is probably the most expensive and important item to order regularly. In spite of the price, it is crucial that you regularly buy new paints that you haven’t used before so you can experiment. “Gamblin” is a reliable & affordable brand for oil paints. For acrylics “Golden” or “Liquitex” is reliable and affordable. Remember that cheap paint really does have noticeably worse color, often cheaper brands add white or grey as filler and use colors that will fade within months. Refer to the “Buying Paint” handout for color recommendations.

- **Medium** is transparent paint that affects the thickness, drying time or gloss of paint when mixed in in small amounts. It is crucial for creating transparent glazes and making saturated colors. Eventually you will want to use only one or two mediums, but you will have to experiment a lot with different types before you discover one that simply *feels right*.

- **Palette Paper** is cheap and disposable and can be used in place of a glass surface for mixing paints. You must make a habit of mixing colors before applying them to your surface or you will learn nothing new about color. In addition make sure you 2-3 different shapes of **Palette Knives**.

- **Rags** are used for wiping off brushes and sometimes smearing paint on your paintings. Buying cheap bags of artists rags will insure that your rags are lint free. Paper towels are also acceptable but are not as durable and cannot be used more than once, cloth rags can be used dozens of times.

- **Hand Cleaner / Brush Conditioner** is special soap that cleans off oil paints and helps maintain brushes. “Savvy Soap, Hand & Brush cleaner” (without ‘grit’) is a reliable and affordable option.

- **Wood** from Home Depot (or any hardware store) is necessary to stretch canvas over, refer to the separate handouts for instructions, but if you don’t have access to a woodshop or power tools, remember that most hardware stores will cut the wood for you if you ask.