

Title:

Oil Painting Lesson - Frequently Asked Questions About Oil Painting

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Summary:

Oil painting is probably one of the more challenging mediums to master. There are many aspects of oil painting that often confuse and intimidate beginners. Many questions arise and this article will cover some frequently asked questions that beginners have.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

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What is "Fat Over Lean?"

Fat over lean is one of the most fundamental approaches to oil painting and when followed will reduce the risk of your paint cracking as it dries. An oil paint is "Fat" when it comes right from the tube. If you wanted to make it fatter, you would add more oil. To make your paint "Lean" your mixture would contain more of a thinner like turpentine. Begin your painting with a "Lean" mixture. As you add more layers, you would make the mixture fatter. This will help reduce the risk of cracking.

Should I Varnish My Finished Painting?

If you want to protect your painting from dust, smoke, and other pollutants, you should varnish your painting. If not, these pollutants will accumulate on your painting and eventually darken or yellow the surface. When you apply a varnish, you are creating a layer that will protect your painting underneath. The layer of varnish can be cleaned periodically and eventually removed. A fresh layer of varnish can then be re-applied. You should wait 6 months to a year, depending on how thick your paint was applied, before varnishing. Varnishing a painting can be tricky especially if you have no experience. You should definitely do more research on varnishing before you attempt to do this yourself. You may even need to contact a professional.

Can I save the oil paint I do not use for a later time?

There are apparently ways to keep oil paint fresh until you are ready to use them again although I have never actually tried either of these techniques. Proceed with caution. Some artists actually put plastic wrap over the paint and freeze it. You can also try and put your unused paint onto a piece of glass and then keep it submerged in water.

What kind of support should I use with my oil paint?

There are a variety of different surfaces that oil paint can be applied to. Stretched cotton canvas is one of the most popular supports used by oil painters today. Linen canvas is also used but tends to be fairly expensive. Other supports that can be used with oil paints are masonite and even certain types of wood panel.

What kind of paint should a beginner purchase?

This is a tough question to answer, as every artist is different and will more than likely have a different recommendation. There are a few different grades of oil paint on the market today. You have "Artist Quality", "Student Quality", and "Economical" grades. Stay away from the economical paints as these have more fillers in them than actual pigment and do not cover very well. There are some very descent student quality paints on the market, which work well if you are just starting out and for experimentation. Once you get your hands on artist quality paint however, you may never buy anything else.

There are some very popular brands to consider as a starting point. Winsor & Newton, Grumbacher and Gamblin are popular choices amongst artists.

What kind of brushes should a beginner choose?

This is also a difficult question to answer exactly. Brushes come in a variety of different shapes, sizes and brands. Every artist is different and will have different preferences when it comes to brushes. Ideally, you should have a variety of different shapes and sizes on hand to start with. Over time, you will develop a preference for certain types of brushes. Never buy cheap brushes, as they will shed their hairs and fall apart a lot quicker than a good quality brush. There is a good introductory set of 11 oil brushes made by "Silver Brush" that you may be interested in checking out. Do a search online or visit your local art store for more information.

How do I come up with ideas for my paintings?

Don't throw your paintbrush down in a fit of rage if you aren't able to come up with an idea for your next painting. There are a number of ways you can find inspiration and ideas. Sometimes the mind just needs a break. Take a walk outside or a long drive and just observe nature. Take a ride to an art museum

with a friend and spend the day observing other artwork. Look around your home for everyday objects and setup a still life. Look to yourself for ideas. Do you have a passion for any particular subject? Do you love wildlife and nature? Perhaps you are a music lover? I absolutely love nature and wildlife. When I am searching for ideas for my next painting, I will usually take an outdoor trip with a friend. I will bring a camera of course and just take shots of whatever inspires me. Then when I get back to my studio I will take bits and pieces from each photograph and create my own composition.

I hope this article on oil painting has answered some or all of your questions. Best of luck and happy painting!