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Selecting paintbrushes for painting with acrylics



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Use the same ones you use for oil painting. It's best to put together a set of paintbrushes with various brush shapes: you can play around with strokes, material effects and lines!

Plan your paintbrush set on the basis of the use you will put it to.

1. What shape brushes?

The classics

- **The universal brush:** with its flat, 2.5 cm wide bristles, it can hold a capacious amount of diluted color. Your best tool for applying washes.
- **The flat brush:** it has stiff, short bristles and is practical for applying little dabs of thick paint.
- **The tapered round paintbrush:** load it with color to draw long, harmonious color lines without having to stop.

Originals

- **The fan-shaped, stiff-bristle brush:** for varying effects with a slightly diluted color. For excelling in creating delicate foliage.

- **The Kolinski fan-shaped brush:** it is thicker than the previous one and can hold a greater amount of color. Ideal for precision painting of details in a composition: hair, foliage, reflections on water?
- **The filbert brush:** for doing rounded contours, and applying color blocks and glazing..
- **The extra fine tip:** irreplaceable for doing details and finishing work.
- **The stencil brush:** for scumbling.

What you need to know: A matter of size

Paintbrush sizes can vary from one manufacturer to the next. With classifications ranging from thinnest to thickest and N°0 to N°24, brushes are classified differently by width. Every manufacturer has its own specifications, so thicknesses and lengths with the same number tend to vary.



2. Natural or synthetic bristles?

A suggestion: there's no reason to force yourself to choose? Combine them!

Natural bristles

- **Sable bristles** hold paint well for easy, flowing application. One drawback: their cost. You will need to give them loving care.
- **Boar bristles:** originally, these paintbrushes were meant for oil paints. You will enjoy their sturdiness when applying impastos, for instance.

Synthetic fibers

These paintbrushes hold their own against natural bristle ones.

- They come in various sizes and shapes.
- They are very easy to clean.
- They hold up well under heavy use (impastos, added fillers).
- Last but not least: they cost less!

Memo: Quick anatomy of the paintbrush



Paintbrushes come with the following features:

- A. Bristles: whether they have synthetic fibers or natural bristles, they need to hold their shape when wet.
- B. Bristles: they absorb the paint and release it gradually.
- C. Heel: this is the part where the fibers are inserted in the ferrule.
- D. Ferrule: a true metal collar that holds the handle and bristles together.
- E. Handle: protected by varnish, it generally carries the name of the manufacturer, the range, size and selected fiber.

3. And knives?

Acrylic paint allows you to paint with a knife. The painting knife, with its angular blade and pointed or rounded tip, is used dab paint onto the medium. The palette knife has a straight, rounded blade for mixing colors on the palette.

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Selecting accessories for painting with acrylics



A palette and easel, two essentials you need to remember!

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Cleaning and maintaining your acrylic materials



Acrylic paints are not messy and clean up easily with soap and water. But, like any other technique, you need to take good care of your materials so they last a long time!

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