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A FEW WORDS ABOUT MATERIALS

The world of art materials can be a confusing, daunting and expensive one. Because of this, I have tried to recommend commonly found media. Most of the materials needed for this book are basic ones that can be found in your local art supply store. Where more inexpensive solutions are available, I have tried to recommend them.

As with most things, art supplies come in many varieties and many price ranges. In some instances, the difference in quality is negligible; however, at times it can mean the difference between a vibrant colour and a pale, sickly one. I have found this to be most true with watercolour paints. The pan watercolour paints most often used in schools just do not seem to be as bright as watercolours out of a tube which are, unfortunately, more expensive. This can be somewhat allayed if students, before beginning to paint, put a few drops of clear water in each pan and allow the water to penetrate. Oils and acrylics, however, seem to be fine when purchased in inexpensive varieties. As for brushes, this is never the place to skimp. They need not be sable, but they must be clean and have a good point when dipped in water and given a good snap.

Here are a few of the art materials you may want for this book:

art masking fluid: This wonderful discovery can make a world of difference when painting with watercolours. It allows areas to be masked off, so that, when it is removed, clean whites remain. It is also used to create a batik-resist look in one of the exercises in this book.

brushes: These come in both round, flat and many other varieties. Use bristle, or coarser, brushes for thicker paints (oils or acrylics) and softer, finer brushes, such as sable for watercolours. The secret to watercolours is having a bigger brush than you might think necessary, but one with a good point.

canvas: This is used for oils and acrylics. First stretch over a wooden frame or cardboard and then cover with a 'ground', or primer, of gesso. Canvases are also available pre-prepared.

gouache: A high quality tempera paint, it comes in tubes and can be used to create bright, flat areas of colour.

mineral spirits: When painting with oils, use odourless mineral spirits or a synthetic to clean brushes and thin paints.

paints: This is pigment mixed with binder in a liquid or dried form (pan paints). Most paints come in tubes, jars or pans. The paints used in these exercises are watercolour, tempera, acrylic and oil. They are interchangeable – feel free to experiment with a medium other than the one specified. The price range will vary greatly, even in paints of the same brand. Look for a 'series' number to match with the price in many cases. Often a less expensive colour will be fine.

palette knife: This is used to mix colours when painting with oils.

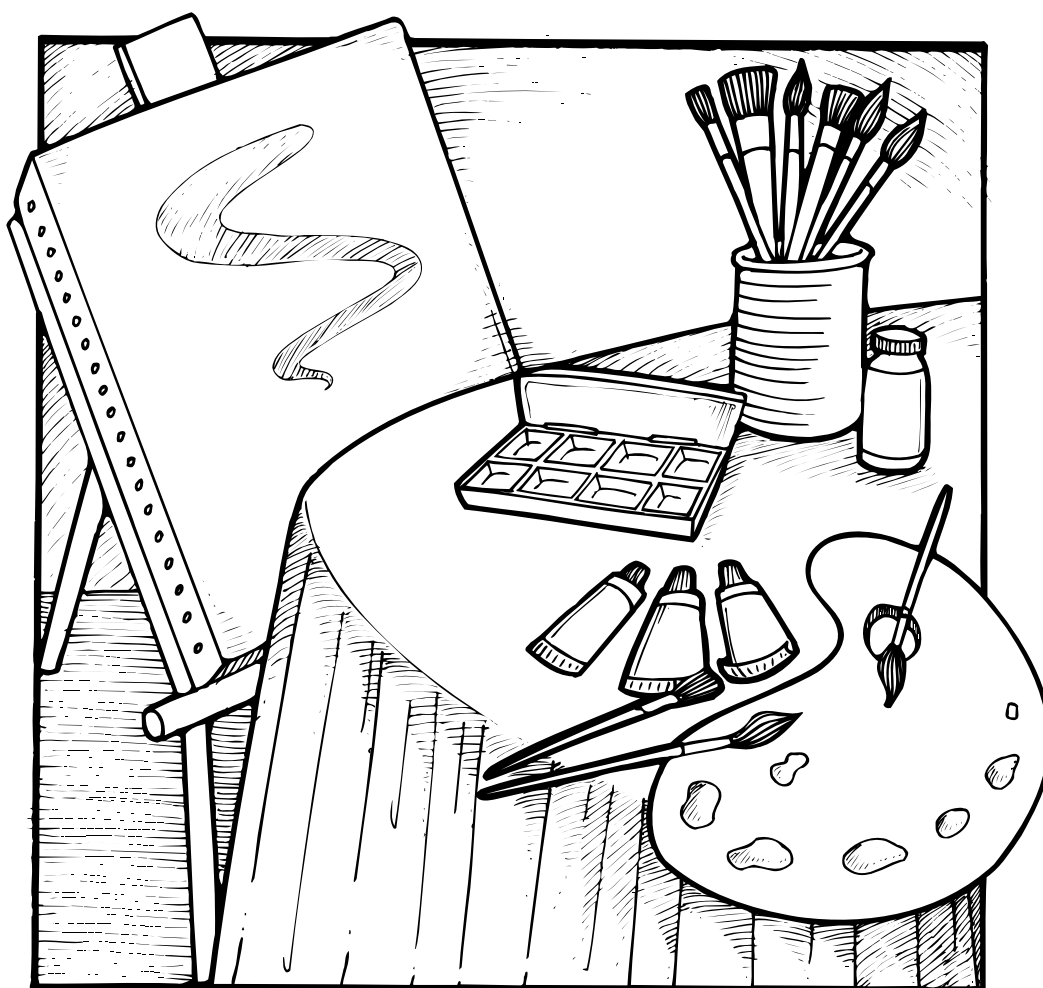
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palettes: These are needed to mix colours for all paints, except pan paints. They can be made of wood, glass or disposable sheets on a pad for oils and acrylics, or out of plastic or ceramic for watercolours. To save money when painting with oils or acrylics, use an old dinner plate or a scrap of cardboard covered with foil or waxed paper. To save money when painting with watercolours, use ice-cube trays.

papers: There are many different kinds of paper that come in a variety of price ranges. For watercolour painting, watercolour blocks are handy, but if unavailable or too expensive, try watercolour paper taped down. Heavier paper with some kind of texture, or 'tooth', is good for all kinds of painting; although canvas, masonite or illustration board is sturdy and will not ripple or tear when painting in acrylic and oil.

pencils: There are many different kinds of pencils in different hardnesses. If a light, sketchy effect is desired (one that will not show once paint is added), use a harder pencil labelled with a number and an 'H'. If a darker, smudgier look is desired, use a softer 'B' pencil.

watercolour pencils or crayons: These can be used just like normal coloured pencils or crayons, but when a wet brush is added, they turn into paint. They can also be dipped in water and used for drawing and to create many beautiful effects. They produce a painterly look, but are more controllable.



BASED ON A VASE

In this exercise, students get to create their own Greek vase paintings. Through a tradition that is over 2500 years old, students depict events that happened to them or favourite activities in this dramatic and dynamic style of decorative art.

Show your young artists examples of Greek urn or vase painting – an ancient tradition used to record historical events, mythical stories and cultural themes in a beautiful and unusual way. Explain to students that they will create their very own vase paintings and ask them to think about what they would like to depict – whether it be an event in their lives, a story of their own invention or a favourite celebration or holiday. Ask them to style their painting after the Greek vases – with strong contrasts, earthy colours, simple, graceful shapes and decorative edgings.



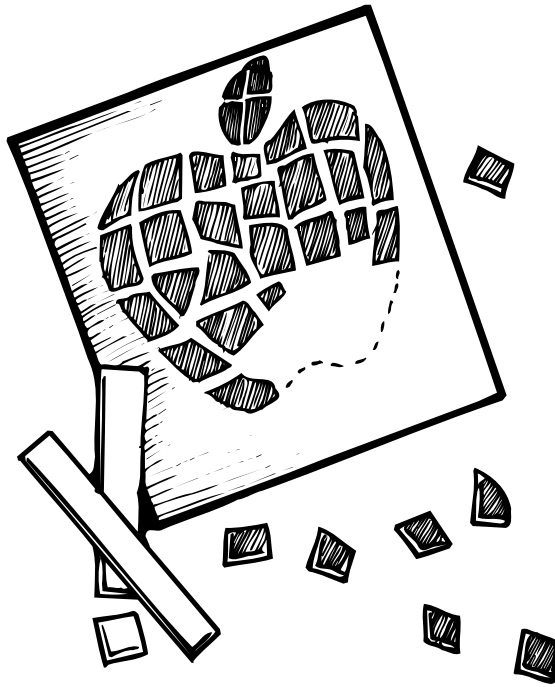
STUDIO

Pass out the plates or cups to the class, one for each student. (If the cups or plates are not plain white, you may need to first cover them with heavy white paper or spray paint them with flat white paint to get a good painting surface.) Let each student design and paint his or her 'vase', keeping in mind that the design should continue around the entire rim of the cup or plate. Paint the outlines in black, filling in the background with black and adding decorative edging for a dramatic and authentic effect.

Materials

- pencils
- acrylics in earthy tones such as red, brown, black and white
- brushes
- extra-large paper cups or heavyweight paper plates (plain matt white)

MAGNIFICENT MEDIEVAL MOSAICS



Mosaic is an ancient form of picture-making using bright bits of coloured tile, stone or glass. In this exercise students will create their own mosaics from hand-painted pasta shapes.

For inspiration, show your young artists examples of mosaics if possible. Many mosaics can be found in ancient Roman, Byzantine and Islamic art. Because of their amazing resistance to the wear and fading of time, mosaics from many hundreds of years ago still exist in excellent condition. The basilica Hagia Sophia in Istanbul boasts beautiful mosaics created for the Emperor Justinian more than 1400 years ago, and they still shine with luminous, glittering colour!

STUDIO

In this project, students will get to create their own mosaics. First, ask them to make a rough colour drawing of their design – something to act as a guide in creating their mosaic pieces. To simulate the ceramic tiles used traditionally in many mosaics, they will create their mosaic pieces from bits of the fettuccine and lasagna noodles. Give each student a small handful of the noodles to break up into pieces and then coat with paint (be sure to cover the sides as well as the top) on the newspaper. Remind them to think about the design that they wish to create so that they make pieces of the approximate colour and size they will need.

Students may wish to paint their background cardboard or card stock a colour, such as black or gold. This adds contrast to their overall design. Then, when all the pieces are dry, glue them in place. Your young artists may need to go back to the process of creating tiles in order to get just the right pieces they need. When the mosaics are finished and are completely dry, you may wish to coat them with clear acrylic gel medium for gloss and durability.

Materials

- pencils
- acrylics
- brushes
- heavy card stock or cardboard
- dried fettuccine and lasagna noodles
- glue
- newspaper

Optional

- metallic gold paint
- acrylic gel medium