

Favorite Art Supplies List from Andie Thrams

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Thank you for being here! To help you make informed choices, here are two art supply lists: the **Basic Art Kit** will get you going, and the more comprehensive **Favorite Art Supplies** is for those ready to expand beyond the basics. I recommend these materials based on years of research and on my own happy experiences.

If you're just starting to build your own art kit, the choices are deliciously overwhelming. Happily, you don't need to spend lots of money to get started. It's good to begin simply, with the basics, and upgrade as awareness evolves. While higher quality materials may be pricer, they often last longer, can be easier to work with, and usually pay off over time. If you find yourself frustrated with things, you might try upgrading and see if that helps. As soon as you can tell the difference between the better quality materials, it is time to up your game.

NOTE: If you are attending one of my in-person workshops, I often create kits for you to order ahead. If you can't get everything now, many materials will be available to try out and for purchase during our time together.



BASIC ART KIT

Paper

Watercolor field journal/sketchbooks are a nice way to get started. Choose a size you like (journals at least 8 inches on one side are easier to handle), and find a journal that will lay flat when open. There are many wonderful options. Here are some good choices:

- [Strathmore Softcover 400 Series Watercolor Art Journal](#)
- [Strathmore Hardcover 400 Series Watercolor Art Journal](#)
- [Fabriano Hardcover Watercolor Journal](#)
- [Hand Book Paper Co. Travelogue Watercolor Journals](#)
- [Moleskine Watercolor Notebooks](#)
- [Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolor Journal](#)
- [Arches Watercolor Pads](#)

Paint Sets

Watercolor travel kits are user friendly for getting started. Here are a few of my favorites, in order of increasing quality (and cost):

- [Winsor & Newton Cotman Watercolor Pan Sets](#)
- [Pelikan Watercolor Pan Sets](#)
- [Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolor Half Pans and Sets](#)
- [Daniel Smith Watercolor Half Pans and Sets](#)

Brushes

- [Pentel Aquash Large Water Brush](#)
- [Princeton Velvetouch Series 3950 Synthetic Brushes and Set: No. 8 and No. 12 long rounds](#) are excellent choices to start with.

Also Helpful

- No. 2 or [HB drawing pencil](#)
- 3 or 4 [Prismacolor](#) pencils in these colors: cream, chartreuse, goldenrod, and lemon yellow
- [Pencil sharpener](#) with attachment to catch shavings
- [Kneaded eraser](#) (less messy)
- [Pigma Micron](#) fine black felt tip writing/drawing pen, size .01, or bigger
- 2 [clips](#) to hold your journal open
- Small ruler
- Paper towels (Viva are great)

More Useful Items for Working Outdoors

- Case(s) to organize your supplies
- Water bottle for drinking and painting (at least one quart)
- Sit-upon, fold-up stool, Crazy Creek chair, or some setup that you can carry with ease and allows you to sit comfortably outdoors.

- A small tarp helps keep your materials from wandering off into the grass, and keeps bugs at bay.
- Warm hat, sun hat and/or visor
- Layered clothing, including rain gear
- Sunglasses
- Bug juice
- Sunscreen
- Headlamp or flashlight
- First aid items
- Binoculars
- Phone with camera
- Thermos
- Natural history field guides
- Daypack for everything! I prefer rectangular packs over teardrop shaped, to better accommodate larger sheets or tablets of paper.



FAVORITE ART SUPPLIES

In addition to the basics listed above, here are additional materials that I use all the time.

Paper

The watercolor papers I use most are 140 lb. 100% cotton hot press or cold press made by Fabriano or Arches. I buy full size (22 x 30 inches) sheets and tear them down into any size I wish using a big heavy tear bar. “Student grade” papers will not perform as nicely as better papers will. Buy the best you can afford. Here are my recommended watercolor papers in order of increasing price and quality:

- See **Basics** above for watercolor sketchbooks and journals
- Tablets of smaller sheets of good 25% cotton watercolor paper: [Blick Studio Watercolor Paper by Fabriano](#)
- [Fabriano](#) Artistico 100% cotton full sheets natural white watercolor paper
- [Arches](#) 100% cotton full watercolor sheets and blocks
- [Arches Text Wove](#) 100% cotton lightweight paper, excellent for book arts & lettering

Tube Watercolors

The watercolor brands I use most:

- Daniel Smith
- Winsor & Newton
- Holbein
- Da Vinci

The colors I recommend for a basic palette are:

- Quinacridone rose, quinacridone pink, or permanent rose (purple-biased red)
- Cadmium red or pyrrol scarlet (orange-biased red)
- Ultramarine blue (purple-biased blue)
- Phthalo blue, or manganese blue, or cerulean blue (green-biased blue)
- Lemon yellow, or cadmium yellow pale, or hansa yellow light (green-biased yellow)
- Hansa yellow deep or cadmium yellow deep (orange-biased yellow)
- Sap green (useful green)
- Chromium oxide of (another helpful green)
- Ultramarine violet or other purple
- Permanent orange
- Burnt sienna
- Burnt Umber
- Quinacridone gold

Gouache

Gouache paints are watercolors with additives that make them opaque, matte, and apply smoothly. This allows painting light over dark, which can be quite useful. My favorite gouache brands are:

- Winsor & Newton
- M. Graham

You can find gouache paints in many colors. The ones I use most are:

- Permanent or titanium white
- Lemon yellow
- Cadmium yellow

Palettes

Many palettes are suitable for field work. Here are a few empty palettes you can purchase and customize by filling with your own artist-quality tube watercolors listed above:

- Schmincke (metal, use with empty or purchased 1/2 pans)
- Blick (sturdy plastic)
- Holbein (metal)

Brushes

A high quality round sable watercolor brush is the traditional brush of choice for watercolorists. And, for good reason! Nothing else holds as much paint, is as fun to manipulate, has such a nice “snap,” or will maintain as crisp a point as sable. Synthetic brushes are also very useful. I use both. It will pay off over time to buy the best brushes you can afford and take care of them. Winsor & Newton, Princeton, and Da Vinci all make fine brushes. Here is a list of brushes I recommend, starting with the least costly:

- 3 inch White bristle gesso brush
- Princeton round kids brush is cheap and useful
- Large Pentel Aquash water brush
- Princeton Velvetouch synthetic brushes: No. 2 round; No. 6 or 8 round; No. 12 round; 1/4 inch angular shader; script liner
- Da Vinci Cosmotop Spin synthetic brushes: No. 2, No. 6 or 8 round travel; No. 8 and No. 14 rounds; No. 12 flat
- Winsor & Newton Sceptre Gold II synthetic-sable blend brushes: No. 3, 8, and 14 pointed rounds; size 2 rigger; and 1/2 inch flat wash
- Winsor & Newton Artists' Kolinsky sable in these types: 1/2 inch one-stroke; size 3 rigger; No. 3, 8, and 12 rounds
- Da Vinci Cosmotop Sable Mix B brushes: the rounds are quite lovely
- A brush to dream of is the Winsor & Newton Series 7 Kolinsky sable brushes: any size, but especially a No. 10 round
- Brushes for sumi ink
- Brush pen
- Sable Travel Brushes

Inks

- Winsor Newton Calligraphy Inks
- Black Sumi Ink

More Useful Items

- Pipette or eye dropper
- Extra mixing palette
- Paint mixing cups
- Porcelain mixing cups

- Spray bottle
- Ox gall
- Gum Arabic
- Bone folder
- Pen holder
- Ink nibs for pen holder
- Favorite inks
- PVA glue for book art
- Matte gel medium for collage
- Glue brush
- Teeny bottles for mixed colors
- Long ruler/tear bar
- PearlEx sparkly powders to mix into paints
- Finetec/Coliro sparkly cake colors (I mostly use silvers and golds)
- Cutting mat
- X-acto knife with new blades (#11 are ideal)
- Tube-wringer
- Corrugated plastic panels (for making field portfolios or a board to clip paper or journals onto outdoors)
- Gaffer tape (for making field portfolios)

Additional Resources

- Blick Art Supplies
- Daniel Smith pigment info (always important to know exactly what is in your paint!)
- Hand Print color chart (I refer to this all the time)
- Talas (excellent source for book art supplies)
- John Neal Books (wonderful source for art supplies, especially for calligraphers)
- Osprey Fountain Pens