

**EXPERIMENTAL WATERCOLOR**  
**Ox-Bow Summer 2019**  
**June 2-8**  
Hannah Barnes and Susan Klein

**Course Description**

This class approaches watercolor from an experimental angle, using chance strategies to create new works. Working from traditional sources such as landscape, students will harness the unpredictable qualities of watercolor to create improvisational, process-based images. Students will have the opportunity to work in a range of styles and motifs, including both representational and abstract images.

Located squarely between painting and drawing, watercolor possesses unique material characteristics that lend it to explorations of chance, accident, immediacy, and impermanence. As pigment suspended in a transparent, watery vehicle, watercolor engages the physical forces of gravity and fluidity like no other material. The class will create space for students to explore watercolor's unique capacities for improvisation. A source of study will be John Cage's chance based watercolors created at the Mountain Lake Workshop in Virginia between 1983 and 1990. We will also explore techniques developed by Dada, Surrealist, and Fluxus artists to generate unplanned imagery, music, and poetry, and consider how they can be applied to the painting process.

**Course Schedule**

**SUNDAY: COURSE INTRODUCTION**

1. Introduction and syllabus review; overview of supplies
2. Image presentation: Overview of Experimental Watercolor

**MONDAY: INTRODUCTION TO CHANCE**

We will explore material process through experimentation. Strategies include: wet-in-wet washes, pouring, layering, masking, subtraction; building toward recognizable imagery

Morning      Slides / Discussion: Approaches to Chance-based making  
Demo: Chance-based material strategies - working with pigment, water, gravity  
wet in wet washes, pouring, letting go  
Painting: introductory studies

Afternoon      Demo: Responses to chance - building and refining  
Layering, Masking, Subtraction; building toward recognizable images  
Painting: Introductory studies continued

Evening      Independent studies on material processes learned.  
Evening Goal: Five small chance-based studies

**TUESDAY: PAINTING GAMES**

Strategies include: play, rules, collaboration, improvisation, working with limitations

Morning      Slides / Discussion: Play Strategies

Demo: Surrealist + Fluxus games  
Painting: exquisite corpse, conversation paintings

Afternoon Slides / Discussion: Art and Games, John Cage; Found sound and found poetry  
Painting: Invent a painting game (collaborative exercise)  
Discus: Building on play-based processes

Evening Independent Game Studies  
Evening Goal: Five small game-based studies; one large study

### **WEDNESDAY: FOUND MATERIALS**

Strategies include: found materials; invented mark-making tools; object collecting/tracing; found color

Morning Exercise: Color walk  
Slides / Discussion: Found Materials and Tools - Cage, Goldsworthy, Albers  
Exercise: Object collecting

Afternoon Painting: Found object / found color studies  
Group Exercise: Invented mark-making tools

Evening Independent work with found components  
Evening goal: Five small studies exploring found components; one large study

### **THURSDAY: TRANSFORMATION**

Strategies include: collaborative work, unexpected change, destruction, recreation, alteration

Morning Slides / Discussion: collaboration and transformation  
Painting: collaborates

Afternoon Demo: strategies for collage and paper construction  
Painting: studies exploring destruction/recreation

Evening Independent work that utilizes ideas from the day  
Evening goal: Three studies exploring day's themes; develop work from the week

### **FRIDAY: CRITIQUE**

Morning Independent work and individual critique

Afternoon Finishing of individual work and group critique on final pieces  
Afternoon goal: 3-5 larger/focused pieces, selection of 5-10 small studies

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### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

## **PAPER**

Use only 100% acid-free cotton rag paper. Watercolor paper can be purchased as bound blocks, pads, 22" x 30" loose single sheets, or large rolls. We will be using primarily loose single sheets.

(5) loose sheets: 22" x 30" artist grade 90lb or 140lb cold-press watercolor paper  
Recommended brands: Arches (preferred), Fabriano, Saunders, Winsor Newton

(1) watercolor pad: 11" x 17" cold-press pad with 30+ sheets  
Recommended brands: Strathmore "Vision" (a good deal), Fabriano, Arches (more costly).  
If you can't find a pad with 30+ sheets, buy two smaller pads.

## **WATERCOLOR PIGMENTS**

Purchase only tube watercolors (not dry pan watercolors) 5ml size is fine for our workshop.

Recommended student/beginner brands: Cotman, Grumbacher, Blick, M. Graham, Holbein. For students wishing to invest in artist grade watercolors, suggested brands are Winsor Newton, Daniel Smith, or Senellier. Brands to avoid: Niji, Reeves, Van Gogh

### 11 Required Pigments:

Lemon Yellow (Windsor lemon or hansa yellow light are fine)

Cadmium Yellow Medium

Cadmium Red Light

Windsor Red or Pyrrol Red

Quinacridone Magenta

Ultramarine Blue

Prussian Blue

Cerulean Blue

Hooker's green

Yellow Ochre

Burnt Sienna

*Suggested additional pigments: Additional optional pigments are welcome; if you have watercolors already, feel free to bring them.*

Alizarin Crimson

Viridian

Cobalt Blue

Burnt Umber

Cadmium orange

Ultramarine violet

Quinacridone red

Opera rose

## **BRUSHES**

Purchase only watercolor or multimedia brushes with soft bristles (no stiff bristle or oil painting brushes). Common natural watercolor brush bristles include Ox Hair, Squirrel, and Sable.

Kolinsky sable is considered the highest quality brush and is also the most expensive. Many less expensive synthetics and blends exist and are recommended for use in this class.

Basic Brush Set (pre-packaged sets are a good affordable option)

(1) flat wash brush (1 1/2" – 2 1/2")

(1) Bright (1/2" – 1")

(3) additional flats or brights, three different sizes

(3) Round brushes, three different sizes

*Optional:* Large Hake wash brush, Sumi Brushes any size

## **STUDIO TOOLS**

Large plastic palette with lid and compartments (suggested brand: Robert E. Wood Palette by Speedball)

Masking tape (Blue low-tack painter's tape works well)

UHU stick, small container of PVA glue or matte medium

1 Box clear pushpins

1 plastic gallon bucket (for holding water, supplies)

Assortment of small cups

Cellulose sponge (regular kitchen sponge)

Cotton Rags (old t-shirts, etc.) / small towels

24"+ ruler

Utility Knife or x-acto knife

Assorted drawing supplies - pencils, charcoal, gum erasers, etc.

Sketchbook

Tackle box or equivalent for storing materials

## **ONLINE Supply Sources:**

Blick Art Materials [www.dickblick.com](http://www.dickblick.com)

Daniel Smith [www.danielsmith.com](http://www.danielsmith.com)