

## Watercolor Painting: Exploring a Sense of Place

### Information

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Date/ Time: Saturday, November 9, 9 am – 4 pm

Meet at: [Joshua Tree Visitor Center](#) (click on the link for a map to the meeting site)

6554 Park Blvd., Joshua Tree

Instructor: Monica Lynne Mahoney, Artist, Instructor

### Overview

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Join Joshua Tree based artist Monica L. Mahoney in a watercolor field painting immersion in the heart of Joshua Tree National Park. Known for her Plein air watercolors of sweeping desert vistas and knowledge of the native flora of the region, Monica will guide participants in capturing the “Genius loci” or spirit of this special place. Students will tap into their natural observation skills and paint the landscape in field journals using basic watercolor and water-based pencil techniques. To warm up, Monica will guide students in recording sensory observations during an easy and informative natural-history walk in a spectacular private location. Students will then practice gesture and thumbnail painting as well as basic color mixing techniques while using value, tone, line, shape, and depth to capture the essence of the landscape. This workshop is perfect for artists, novices, naturalists, campers, hikers and backpackers and all who are interested in developing their watercolor painting skills in the field. From beginner to intermediate and advanced, the class is designed to have fun and explore how painting, sketching and journaling in Nature helps us see the world—and ourselves—with new eyes. Some previous drawing experience will be helpful but not required. All students will be given individual attention as needed.

This class will be conducted at the exclusive Lost Horse Campground.

### Itinerary

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Saturday, November 9, 9 am – 4 pm

*Joshua Tree Visitor Center*

- Meet and caravan from the visitor center to Lost Horse Campground
- Introduction
- Field Class
- Lunch/snack break, **bring your own food**

- Field Class

## What to Bring to the Course

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### *The 10 Essentials: Every day in the Desert*

- Day pack
- 4 quarts of water
- Closed toe hiking shoes
- Lunch and snacks
- Clothing layers
- Hat
- Sun glasses
- Sunscreen
- Notebook and pencil/pen
- Whistle

## Necessary Art Supplies

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- **Brushes:** minimum selection: 4 sabeline or nylon watercolor brushes to include three Rounds (sizes 1, 3, 5) and one Flats (1/2"). Optional larger selection: five Rounds (sizes 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8) and three Flats (sizes 1/4", 1/2", and 3/4").
- **Brush holder/protector:** a sturdy zip bag, bamboo brush roll-up, or canvas pouch.
- **Watercolor tubes (1) each. Preferred list:** Alizarin Crimson permanent, Cadmium red deep, Cadmium orange, Aureolin, Lemon yellow, New Gamboge, Naples yellow, Viridian, Hookers green, Sap green, Ultramarine blue permanent, Cobalt, Cerulean blue, Prussian blue, Violet, Transparent red oxide, Yellow ochre, Raw sienna, Raw umber, Burnt sienna, Davy's grey, Paynes grey and/or Moonglow by Daniel Smith. We will experiment with all of these colors.  
**Budget list\*:** Alizarin Crimson permanent, Cadmium orange, Aureolin, Viridian, Hookers green, Ultramarine blue permanent, Cerulean blue, Violet, Burnt sienna, Yellow ochre, Paynes grey.  
\*Paints are the most important part of the supply list. Grumbacher and Daniel Smith are good quality brands. Avoid student grade paints.
- **Watercolor pencils:** Derwent Sap Green, Cedar Green, Burnt Sienna, Venetian Red, French Grey, Indigo. Optional full spectrum 12 pack: see Faber-Castell Goldfaber Aqua Watercolor Pencils set. Sharpen before hand if not pre-sharpened.
- **Exacto knife or metal hand-held pencil sharpener (1)** for sharpening watercolor pencils in the field (important). Alvin brass bullet is good quality.
- **Folding Palette with individual wells for tube color (1)** such as Blick large plastic folding 24 to 28 well palettes, the Masters International folding palette (20 color wells), Mijello Fusion 24 well, airtight or silver nano.
- **White Oil pastel (1 stick)** for resist.
- **White cotton rag squares/strips (4)** 5" x 5"-ish sections work well (cut up an old T-shirt with no oil spots) or paper towels for blotting.
- **Sponge (1):** an old, used but clean cut up dishwashing sponge. Scotch-bright type with green abrasive/scrubber side works well. 1" x 1" square or so.
- **16 fl. Oz. Plastic Water bottles (2 full)** such as Nalgene or any refillable water bottle.

- **Plastic water container (2)** such as a 16 oz recycled plastic yogurt or salsa container for brush work.
- **Watercolor Paper:**  
**Arches Watercolor Block (1).** Rough, 100% Cotton, 20 sheet block, 140 lb., 5.9" x 11.8."  
**Watercolor field journal/sketchbook (1).** Your choice Hot press (smooth, dries faster, great for washes, skyscapes) or Cold press (rough surface, preferred for desert, mountain and textured landscapes/subjects) minimum 96 lb. but 140 lb. is best. Hard cover, sewn bound for full-width panoramic painting. See: Pentelic Aqua Journals and Hahnemühle Watercolor Books. Moleskine Watercolor Notebooks have great flat-fold bindings but the paper is lighter weight and tends to curl. Your choice, all are great to experiment with. Your choice of size. Keep in mind larger books require a greater amount of time and commitment. The smaller sizes (under 8" x 10") are preferred, best for beginners, field sketching, and pack easily.
- **Daypack** to hold painting gear.
- **Seating:** Used Yoga mat and a small sheepskin rug (available at IKEA) provide comfort for longer painting sessions. They shake out and roll up nicely. Or a short/low profile portable folding chair that sits close to the ground. A small picnic blanket works too. Best if the seating is strapped to the outside of the daypack.
- **Camera:** optional for capturing your progress and the view for working from the images later if desired.

Where to purchase:

Michaels carries some of the painting supplies but ordering from Blick Art Materials at [dickblick.com](http://dickblick.com) is recommended for best selection, prices, and free shipping deals. Or stop at one of their stores in the Los Angeles area, or your favorite locally owned art supply store. Shop early to allow for adequate preparation and shipping time.

## **Fitness Requirements**

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Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold.

## **Hike Level**

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Moderate

## **Guidelines**

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- You are responsible for your safety.
- Park your car in designated areas only. Parking along the side of the road is dangerous to you and the environment.
- Rattlesnakes are present in the desert. Avoid contact with wildlife. Put your hands and feet only where you can see them.
- Stay with the group. If you get lost, stay put.
- Drink plenty of water. If you run out, notify the instructor or the Desert Institute Representative.

- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative.

### **Instructor Biography**

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MONICA LYNNE MAHONEY, BFA, studio art, MLA Landscape Architecture, is a multidisciplinary artist, educator and native plant naturalist living and working in Joshua Tree, CA. Mahoney's diverse artistic practice includes drawing, painting, sculpture & installation, landscape design, ecological restoration, and award-winning public engagement and civic art programs that integrate art and the environment. She believes that no matter the skill level, the practice of painting and drawing in nature provides a unique portal into the natural world, which helps us to see and connect with Nature—and ourselves—in new and profound ways.

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\* The Desert Institute staff/instructors will attempt to accommodate participant's needs; however we reserve the right to deny a student participation in the course due to concerns regarding health and safety issues.