

Desert Institute

at Joshua Tree National Park

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Fall Session

2020

Watercolor Painting: Exploring a Sense of Place

Information

Date/ Time: Saturday, November 21, 9:00 am - 5:00 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

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 informative natural-history hikes in a spectacular private locations. 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, naturalists, campers, hikers and backpackers 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 with new eyes. Some previous drawing experience will be helpful but not required. All students will be given individual attention as needed.

Note that this class will be conducted in and around the reserved Lost Horse Campground and will involve the ability to engage in moderate hiking up to three miles on uneven terrain.*

Itinerary

Saturday, November 21, 9:00 am - 5:00 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
- Discussion and sharing journals

What to Bring to the Course

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

- **Basic Watercolor field set (Preferred):** good choice is Winsor & Newton Cotman Watercolor Set - Pocket Plus Travel Set of 12 <https://www.dickblick.com/items/00337-2009/> **OR** Winsor & Newton Cotman Watercolors Compact Set - Assorted Colors, Set of 14, Half pans <https://www.dickblick.com/items/00325-1029/>
- **Your choice of brushes (Preferred):** the above field sets come with a small field brush which is adequate for the simple watercolor sketching on our hikes. For a greater variety during longer exercises and lessons please bring a selection of extra sabeline or nylon watercolor brushes to include three Rounds (sizes 1, 3, 5) and one Flat (1/2").
- **Optional: Watercolor tubes (1) each. Preferred list for a studio palette:** 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. **Optional Budget/beginner list or for a trail palette if you prefer tubes over the above field set:** 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, Winsor & Newton, and Daniel Smith are good quality brands. Avoid student grade paints. If you go with individual tubes make sure you have a palette as suggested below and be aware that you will be carrying your supplies in a day pack on our hikes. Opt for simplicity.

- **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.
- **Watercolor pencils (Preferred):** Derwent brand individual colors: Sap Green, Cedar Green, Burnt Sienna, Venetian Red, French Grey, Indigo. Optional full spectrum 12 pack: see Faber-Castell Goldfaber Aqua Watercolor Pencils set.
<https://www.dickblick.com/products/faber-castell-goldfaber-aqua-watercolor-pencils/>
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.
- **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 containers (2)** such as a 16 oz recycled plastic yogurt or salsa containers for brush work.
- **Watercolor Paper:**
 - Arches Watercolor Block (1).** Rough, 100% Cotton, 20 sheet block, 140 lb., 5.9" x 11.8."
 - And/OR a Watercolor field journal/sketchbook (1).** Choose 1 from the following options:
 - a) Strathmore watercolor pad 6" x 12" 400 series Cold press** (preferred for desert, mountain and textured landscapes/subjects) 140 lb. is best. Spiral bound is fine.(preferred brand)
 - b) Pentelic Aqua Journals or Hahnemühle Watercolor Books.** Choose a small landscape format—great to experiment with. Your choice of size but, keep it small. Larger pads require a greater amount of time and commitment and can be cumbersome in the field. The smaller sizes (under 8" x 10") are preferred, best for beginners, field sketching, and pack easily. Please note that while Moleskine Notebooks are popular and have great flat-fold bindings, the paper is light weight/tends to curl.
- **Daypack** to hold painting gear.
- **Seating: A trail chair, camp chair or yoga mat** for comfort to sit on while drawing in the field. Should be easy to pack into/onto your day pack. A yoga mat or saddle blanket is flexible and light and can fold to fit into funky seating areas or on boulders out in the field. Choose your comfort first, especially for the longer exercises. Yucca Valley Marshall's has a variety of affordable yoga mats.

- **Camera:** optional for capturing your progress and the view for working from the images later if desired.

Where to purchase art supplies:

Highly recommended to order from Blick Art Materials: <https://www.dickblick.com/> for better selection, prices, sales and free shipping deals. Or shop your favorite locally owned art supply store.

Fitness Requirements

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

Moderate

Guidelines

- 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

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, landscape design, ecological restoration, writing, 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 is a portal into the natural world, which helps us to profoundly connect with the environment—and ourselves—in new and meaningful ways.

* 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.