

Discovering Color in the Desert Landscape: Creating Vibrant Oil Paintings

Information

Date/Time: Saturday, April 16, 9 am - 4 pm

Sunday, April 17, 9 am - 3 pm

Meet at: Joshua Tree Visitor Center (Day 1)

Instructor: Elizabeth (Lizzie) Sampson, Artist, Instructor

Overview

Painting *en plein air* can be an exciting way to discover new colors in the desert landscape. Oil painting in particular offers a dynamic means of creating stunning color relationships through layering and mixing on canvas. In this workshop we will learn painting techniques that translate colors from the landscape into vibrant palette choices. We will discuss color harmony, cool/warm colors, dynamic grays, how to lay out your palette and mix complex colors, and how to paint directly using observed colors. Each session will begin with a demonstration by the instructor, followed by students putting this learning into practice through painting *en plein air*. Throughout the workshop, the instructor will offer opportunities for individual feedback and guidance.

Each class will end with a mini-critique and reflection on the day's learnings.

*Some previous oil painting experience would be helpful, but not required.

Itinerary

Saturday, April 16, 9 am – 4 pm

Joshua Tree Visitor Center

- Introductions
- Caravan to Live Oak Picnic Area
- Teacher demonstration and discussion
- Morning painting on site
- Lunch/snack break, bring your own food
- Short demonstration
- Afternoon painting on site
- Group critique and reflection

Sunday, April 17th, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Live Oak Picnic Area or other chosen spot

- Teacher demo + discussion
- Morning painting or continuation from first painting
- Lunch/snack break, bring your own food
- Demo + review
- Complete afternoon painting or paint a new one
- Group critique/ final reflection

What to Bring to the Course

A note about this list: Required materials are starred () but you know yourself best - feel free to bring what works for you as an artist! (If you have any questions, don't hesitate to email me).*

Oil Paint (50 mls)

- *Titanium White (at least 100 mls)
- *Cadmium Red
- *Alizarin Crimson or Permanent Rose (choose one)
- *Vermillion
- Cadmium Orange (or you can mix your own)
- *Cadmium Yellow Medium
- *Lemon Yellow
- *Viridian Green
- *Ultramarine Blue
- *Cobalt Blue
- *Cerulean Blue
- Vine charcoal stick for drawing composition, or you can just paint

Extra colors that are fun:

Phthalo Green

Burnt Sienna

Yellow ochre

Medium

- *Liquin or neo megilp or linseed oil. Linseed oil dries the slowest and is least toxic. Liquin dries fastest and is most toxic. I use Liquin because of the flow rate

Brushes

Synthetic brushes or natural bristle, up to you. There are many of choices of manufacturers, just make sure the bristles are stiff, not soft.

- *Filbert 4,6,8
- *Round 2
- *Bright 6
- *1 palette knife for mixing

Palette

*12X16, wood, plexiglass or disposable paper palette is fine.

Surfaces

- Sketchbook for notes (watercolor or sturdy paper to experiment with colors)
- *5-8 primed panels or canvases that fit your easel. (I mostly use 12x16 and wouldn't go bigger than 16x20)
- *Please pre-tone 1-2 canvases with burnt sienna or a warm red (cadmium is fine) before the workshop

*Easel

- French easel, or pochade box with tripod
- Portable umbrella for shading your painting area
- Backpack or bag to carry your materials

Cleaning

- *Odorless Turpentine for quick rinse of brushes while you paint. Bring a metal container or glass jar to keep it safe.
- *Eco-friendly brush soap
- *Paper towels or rags for wiping brushes while painting
- *Trashbag

Extras (you can get by without these)

- Gloves for protecting hands from paint
- Hat for shade
- Baby Wipes for easy clean up
- Canvas carriers. There are a variety of products for carrying wet canvases and wet canvas boards. I just carry them to my car and put them in a cardboard box to dry.
- Some kind of folding chair, if you paint sitting

The 10 Essentials: Every day in the Desert

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

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

Easy

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.
- Watch your step. Some of the class is at night, please bring a flash light and beware of uneven ground and equipment.
- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative.
- You are responsible for taking care to dispose of paint and solvents responsibly

Instructor Biography

Elizabeth (Lizzie) Sampson is a teaching artist with a plein air oil painting background that informs her extensive studio practice. She is inspired by the ever-changing landscape of our personal and shared

environments. She is particularly drawn to desert light and color, and has spent time painting Joshua Tree National Park's dynamic landscape. In her studio, she works to translate the colors found en plein air, while fabricating hypothetical narratives of unstable environments.

Elizabeth received her Master's in Art Education from Virginia Commonwealth University and received a BFA in Painting from George Mason University. She has experience teaching adult learners within museum settings, private painting lessons, and group workshops. Her joy for teaching comes from sparking creative exploration within lifelong learners.

To see more of her work, please visit www.elizabethsampson.gallery or follow her on Instagram @e.h.sampson <https://www.instagram.com/e.h.sampson/>

Instructor's notes

A note about the land:

As we paint in this inspiring landscape, it's important to acknowledge that we will be recreating on the ancestral and unceded territory of indigenous peoples, including the Serrano, Cahuilla, Chemehuevi people. May we honor their presence and recognize their contributions since time immemorial as the first stewards of this land.

A note about mobility:

We will be walking short distances on trails to find painting spots. Where you paint on your own is up to you, but I will be setting up demos within a 5-10 minute walk from our parking area. Please reach out to me ahead of time if I can accommodate you in any way or adjust my workshop to meet your needs.

* 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.