

Plein Air Painting Workshop in Joshua Tree National Park

Information

Date/Time: Saturday, April 9, 9 am - 4 pm
Sunday, April 10, 9 am - 3 pm

Meet at: Joshua Tree Visitor Center

Instructor: Jessica Schiffman, Artist, Instructor

Overview

Painting the landscape from life is thrilling and can be challenging as well. The world is filled with an infinite variety of color and value, and an overwhelming amount of detail. Patterns of shadow and light are changing constantly. This workshop will help you to simplify and organize what you see, and go on to create satisfying, dynamic paintings with strong, logical dark and light patterns. Topics will include composition, focal point, perspective, value (dark and light), underpainting, painting *ala prima* (layering wet paint without making mud), color theory, mixing paint, and more. Each session will start with a demo painting as Jessica explains her step-by-step method. Students will be given individual feedback and guidance. Some previous drawing experience will be helpful but not required. This class will be conducted at the reserved Lost Horse Campground with the option to “car camp” with the instructor on Saturday night. Class registration includes camp site reservations (optional). For more information on camping with this class or a list of local accommodations, please contact us at 760-819-4714.

Itinerary

Saturday, April 9, 9 am – 4 pm

Joshua Tree Visitor Center

- Meet and caravan from the visitor center to Lost Horse Campground
- Introduction
- Teacher demo and discussion
- Pick a location and begin a morning painting (finish, if possible)
- Lunch/snack break, **bring your own food**
- Begin an afternoon painting (finish, if possible)
- Set up camp
- Evening free

Sunday, April 10, 8:00 am – 3:00 pm
Lost Horse Campground

- Complete morning painting or paint a new one
- Lunch/snack break, **bring your own food**
- Complete afternoon painting or paint a new one.
- Pack up, clean up camp
- Evening free/Departure

What to Bring to the Course

Easel

A Julian or French easel, or a pochade box and a tripod. Or you can get by with a cheaper portable easel if you have some sort of table to put your paint on.

Paint

I use Gamblin, Blick, Grumbacher, or Utrecht. There are also higher quality, more expensive paints available. Buy artist's quality, not student paint, unless you need to save money.

ultramarine

blue thalo

blue cadmium

red light alizeran crimson or quinacradone magenta

cadmium yellow medium burnt sienna

yellow ochre

titanium white

*cadmium orange (I use lots of this but of course you can mix your own orange)

*sap green (I love this transparent green but you can mix your own green)

*chrome oxide green or green earth or olive green or anything similar (or you can mix up your own)

*dioxazine purple (you will use very little of this and can easily mix ultramarine blue and alizeran

crimson to get purple)

*thalo green (you will use very little of this beautiful color. You can mix thalo blue with yellow to get a

bright pure green similar to this)

*carbon black. You won't be arrested if you use black, but I haven't used it for years. I mix ultramarine blue with burnt sienna, or other combinations, to make a more interesting black.

***You can get by without these items.**

Thinner

turpenoid or Gamsol, and a couple of small containers.

Oil Painting 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 linseed oil.

Brushes

I prefer synthetic brushes over natural bristle. My favorites right now are Catalyst by Princeton # 6 and 8, and Zen by Royal and Langnickel, #6, and Winsor Newton University Round, #2. They are all affordable synthetic brushes available from dickblick.com. There are lots of other choices, just make sure the bristles are stiff, not soft.

Canvas

You will want to work small, 9X12 to 11 X 14 is a good size. Most plein air painters use canvas board, which is cheap and light. If you use back-stapled stretched canvas, you can paint around the edges and won't have to bother with a frame.

Palette

the French easel or pochade box usually comes with a wooden one (good for oils but maybe not good for acrylics). A disposable paper palette is fine. The Masterson palette had a tight-fitting lid so you can save your paint. 12X16 is a good size.

Other Things

palette knife

paper towels or rags

trash bag

insect repellent

sun hat

latex gloves or Vaseline to protect your hands

camera (or phone)

sketchbook

*Field umbrella. Lots of painters use this expensive device that clamps onto your easel, and if you can keep it from flopping over or blowing away more power to you. Bring bungee cords. It will only shade your painting, but not you. I gave up on mine years ago. I paint in the shade. I frequently paint at the back of my car, under the hatch, with a piece of cloth velcroed onto the rear window for shade.

*canvas carriers. There are a variety of products for carrying wet canvases and wet canvas boards. I've never used any of them.

*wheeled cart: I love my old-lady shopping cart I got at a thrift store!

*some kind of folding chair, if you paint sitting.

***You can get by without these items.**

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

If you will be camping with the instructor, you will need these items:

- Tent
- Sleeping Bag and Pillow
- Food and water
- Ice Chest and Ice
- Firewood and hatchet (there is a fire ring)
- Camp Chair
- Layered Clothing
- Shade!

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.

Instructor Biography

JESSICA SCHIFFMAN has been a working artist for over twenty-five years. Her oil and acrylic paintings, including desert landscapes, forest scenes, figurative works and more, are widely collected. In addition, she has illustrated sixteen children's books and created several murals. Jessica has taught art for fifteen

years at venues including the Idyllwild Arts Academy and Summer Program, the Desert Art Center in Palm Springs, and the Create Center in Palm Desert. . Jessica has a BFA in painting from the San Francisco Art Institute.

* 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.