Figure Painting in Oil Materials List
Lacey Swift School of Realist Art

Oil Paints

Please buy professional quality, rather than student quality paints. Suggestions include but are not limited to Utrecht, Gamblin, Winsor & Newton, and Rembrandt.

Bare Minimum Set:

Titanium White
Ivory Black
Burnt Umber
Ultramarine Blue
Cadmium Yellow
Cadmium Red

Recommended Additions:

Cadmium Orange
Quinacridone Rose
King's Blue
Yellow Green
Permanent Green or Viridian

What's a "Hue" and is it acceptable?
When a tube uses the word "hue" (for example, Cadmium Red Hue) it means that it isn't using the pigment named in the color, but is using a less expensive and/or less toxic pigment with a similar color. So long as you're using professional quality paints, you should be ok if you chose the hue option.

Brushes

Get a few smooth and pert synthetic filbert brushes (pictured above) and these will get you through most aspects of painting. You may want to add a few small round synthetic brushes for details, and a couple cheap rough bristle brushes for scrubbing. Try to get brushes whose hairs don't easily fall out and that are not floppy.

I also recommend that you buy a couple brushes that are at least the width of a pinky finger and have long hairs, like the one shown at right. These put down paint a little differently. This one is a Sabletek by Royal Langnickel and is their version of a 'Flat'. Other brands may offer a "Long Flat" and that's what you're looking for.

   As you progress as a painter, you may want to explore different brush types for different effects. However, it is my opinion that the brushes don't make much difference until you learn how to use one or two brushes in many ways and get a feel for how they work. Aim for inexpensive brushes intended for fine art painting as opposed to craft brushes.

Palette

Flat palettes only. Disposable palettes are acceptable as are wood, plastic, or other flat palettes. I recommend either a wood palette that has been treated with linseed oil, a melamine or white coated hardboard palette, or disposable "Grey Matters" palette pads.

Medium

Linseed Oil or any other similar medium you prefer (FYI Winsor and Newton mediums are really hard to open) Odorless Mineral Spirits (Gamsol is an example)
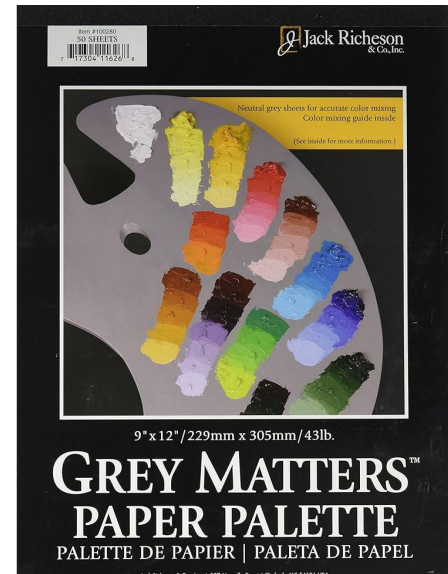
Painting Surface

*For Formal Paintings 11"x14" to 16" x 20"

Canvas Panels: Some canvas panels are well made, feature hardboard or gatorboard instead of cardboard, and can be considered for more finished work.

Primed Hardboard: Ampersand's Gessobord in addition to other brands offer convenient hardboard panels that have been primed for painting. These are great for people who enjoy smooth surfaces and don't like canvas texture. Just make sure that the primed surface is not shiny so there's some tooth for the paint to adhere to.
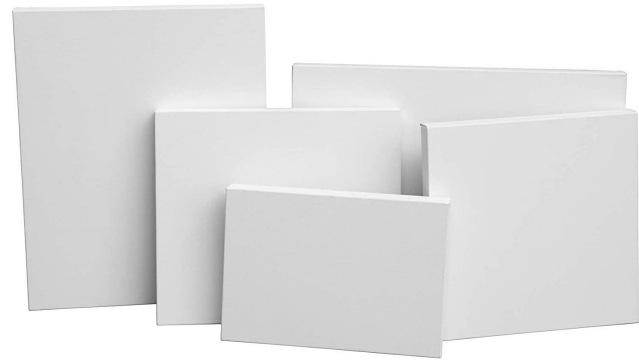
Stretched Canvas: This is a traditional choice for an oil painting support. There are many options including cotton, linen, polyester and various stretching and priming choices as well. While I won't get into all the differences here, suffice to say that a quality canvas that has no pin-holes when held up to the light, has no puckers in the corners, and appears square should serve as a good painting surface.

Other Useful Items

Clean Up:
Paper Towels or Rags
Bar of white soap, such as Ivory or Irish Spring

Drawing Board: I recommend getting an 18" x 24" smooth sheet of masonite/hardboard along with some masking tape. This will allow you to set your reference photo and painting side-by-side as you work, and you can even clamp your easel on it as well. This is what I do in my demos. I purchase mine from Blick Art Materials but hardboard is also available at hardware stores.

Easel: While it can be a little weird to get used to at first, it's incredibly helpful for many reasons to work at an easel. The one pictured at right is available across multiple brands and should cost around $40. It packs up small if you prefer to store it when not in use, is lightweight, and easily transported. I use these in my own studio as well.