

Brushes 101



Head Filament: Natural

Squirrel Hair, Sabeline, Sable, Hog bristles, Camel Hair

Mediums: Acrylic, adhesives, alkyds, craft acrylics, gouache, glass paints, oils, tempera, watercolor, hobby paints

Surfaces: Canvas, canvas board, masonry, wood, glass, glazed ceramic, ceramic bisque, metal, plastic, plaster, silk, Masonite, rocks



Head Filament: Synthetic

Nylon, Sabletwin, Bristilina Konex

Mediums: Acrylic, adhesives, alkyds, craft acrylics, gouache, glass paints, oils, tempera, watercolor, hobby paints, fabric paints

Surfaces: Canvas, canvas board, masonry, wood, Masonite, glazed ceramic, ceramic bisque, metal, plastic, plaster, all fabric, concrete



Round

Under-painting, washes, rough lay-in; paint type relies on stiffness of bristle.

Pointed Round

Detail, spotting, varying line widths; thick-bellied for use with watercolor.

Flat

Loose style long flexible hairs carry large loads, light to medium-body paint.

Bright

Stiffer than flats, for medium to heavy-body paints, short strokes, chiseled edges

Filbert

Most versatile shape; soft edges, blending, double dipping for flowers

Brush Storage & Care Tips

- 1 Wood handle brushes should always be stored flat or hanging down to prevent water from soaking into the handle.
- 2 Acrylic brushes should be stored flat, but can be stored upright if most of the water has been dried from the hairs.
- 3 When storing natural hair brushes for the summer or long periods, dip the brushes in liquid hand or dish soap, wipe the excess, reshape the head, and allow the brush to dry. This will seal the hairs, eliminate mites from getting to the brush, and ensure the brush head keeps its shape.
- 4 Do not store brushes in cramped quarters where the hairs can get bent out of shape and break.
- 5 If acrylic paints dry in the hairs, the brush may be ruined, the hairs permanently damaged.
- 6 Try not to soak handles. Water levels should only be to the crimping on the ferrule. Wetting handles will cause cracking and loosening of the ferrules. Dry handles after every cleaning.
- 7 Clean immediately after painting. Do not let any paint sit or dry in the hairs.
- 8 Occasionally, you can clean the brushes with regular hand soap, reshape and let dry.
- 9 For natural hair brushes, occasionally use brush conditioner. This will keep the hairs from drying out and breaking.

Handle Length

Handle Length:

The type of medium used and the amount of small detail being painted determines the choice of handle length.

Standard Uses:

Also known as watercolor length. This brush length is ideal if you like to work close to your painting.

Long/Easel Uses:

Use for oil and acrylic painting at an easel. A long handle brush allows the artist to step back from the painting to get a better perspective of what is being painted.

Short Uses:

Usually used on craft brushes or brushes designed for children. Allows the artist to be closer to their work for more control.

Size Number

Ever wonder why some paint brushes are referred to as $\frac{1}{8}$ ", $\frac{1}{4}$ ", $\frac{1}{2}$ ", etc, while others are assigned a number? The first measurement refers to the width of the brush in standard measurement while the latter refers to the metric width in millimeters. So that means a $\frac{1}{2}$ " flat brush is roughly equivalent to a 12mm or a #12 flat.

