Intro to Oil Painting Class

with Natasha Gill



Supplies

To Paint On:

Canvas
Canvas Boards
Canvas Paper

Essentials

Easel
Palette
Palette Knife
Rag or Paper Towels
Odourless Mineral Spirits

Paint Brands I've Used

Student Grade:
Winsor & Newton Winton
Van Gogh
Daler Rowney Georgian Oils

Professional Grade:
Winsor & Newton Artist Grade
Utrecht
Richeson Shiva
Michael Harding
M. Graham
Holbein

Brushes

ARTIFY (used in class)
Hog Hair
Synthetic Hog Hair
Rosemary & Co.
Trekell



Limited Palette Paint Colours:

Titanium White
Cadmium Yellow Pale Hue or Lemon Yellow
Yellow Ochre
Cadmium Red Hue
Permanent Alizarin Crimson
French Ultramarine Blue
Phthalo Blue
Burnt Umber
Optional: Permanent Rose (for bright pinks)

Colour Mixing Cheat Sheet

Cadmium Yellow Pale Hue + Phthalo Blue 3:1 yellow to blue ratio: sharp vibrant green

Cadmium Yellow Pale Hue + French Ultramarine: warmer, earthy green

Cadmium Red Hue + Cadmium Yellow Pale Hue: rich bright orange

Alizarin Crimson + French Ultramarine 2:1 red to blue ratio: purple

Burnt Umber + French Ultramarine: rich dark neutral, a good substitute for black

Anything + Titanium White: lighter tint, but add white a little at a time so colours do not turn chalky

Experiment with your ratios. Some colours like Phthalo Blue and Permanent Alizarin Crimson have a high tinting strength so use sparingly.

© Natasha Gill 2026

Intro to Oil Painting Class

with Natasha Gill



Going Further: The Fat over Lean Rule

DON'T FORGET

The **FAT** over LEAN Rule

What do fat and lean mean?

Fat means more oil in the paint. Lean means less oil. It has nothing to do with how thick or runny the paint looks.

The rule

Each layer of paint should be fatter than the layer underneath it. Lean layers dry faster, and fat layers stay flexible longer. If a lean layer sits on top of a fat one, the paint underneath is still moving as it dries and the surface can crack.

How to use it

Start with thin, lean layers using a little odourless mineral spirits. As you build up the painting, use paint straight from the tube, and save your fattest paint for the final layers.

The common mix up

A medium that makes paint flow more easily is not necessarily making it leaner. Mineral spirits make paint lean. Most other mediums add oil or resin, so they make it fatter, even though the paint feels looser on the brush.

Mediums

Mineral Spirits

Paint on its own

Alkyds

Linseed Oil

Odourless Mineral Spirits: the leanest option. Thins paint for early layers and cleans brushes.

Paint on its own: straight from the tube, in the middle

Alkyd Mediums: resin based mediums such as Liquin, Galkyd and Gamblin Solvent Free Gel. They speed up drying and add gloss. They count as fat because alkyd resin is a type of oil. Start with about 1 part medium to 4 or 5 parts paint, mixing in a little at a time. Best used in early and middle layers. Clean brushes well, as alkyds dry very hard.

Linseed Oil: the fattest option. Makes paint glossier and more fluid. Use it sparingly and in later layers.



Beginners do not need any mediums. Paint straight from the tube with a little mineral spirits is enough. Try mediums once you feel comfortable, and always check the label on any medium you buy, since formulas vary between brands.

© Natasha Gill 2026

Intro to Oil Painting Class

with Natasha Gill



Brush Care

Wipe clean and rinse in odourless mineral spirits. Wash using warm water and soap (there are special brush soaps but I use a coconut-based soap that keeps the bristles nice and moist). Make sure your bristles are straight and lay the brushes flat on a paper towel to dry. Store with bristles upright.

Caring for Your Painting

Keep it flat and out of dust while it dries. It should be touch-dry in roughly two days to a week depending on thickness, and fully cured in six months. Wait until it is fully cured before varnishing.

Keep Practising

- Paint small and often
- Canvas paper and small canvases are inexpensive and forgiving.
- Limit your time to 30 to 60 minutes.
- Stick to the limited palette.
- Start with simple subjects.
- Try the same subject twice to see your progress.
- Keep your paintings so you can see your growth.
- Be patient. Progress comes from mileage not talent.
- Remember to have fun!

Safe Disposal

Lay used rags flat to dry, or keep them in a sealed metal container, because oily rags can heat up and ignite.

Recycle your mineral spirits! Allow the sediment to settle and pour out the clean solvent into a new container.

Common Beginner Mistakes

Too much solvent weakens the paint film, so use it sparingly.

Painting lean over fat, the reverse of the rule on page 2.

Mixing too little paint, then struggling to match the colour.

Overworking one area, which muddies the layers underneath.

Not loading up your brush with enough paint.

Stay Connected!

@natashagillart

Post your finished painting and tag me so I can see your progress.



© Natasha Gill 2026