

## **Plein Air Painting Workshop Art Supply Packing Tips**

**By Joe Mac Kechnie**

### **1. Outdoor Equipment (develop your own separate lists for time of year, urban painting, day-hike painting or traveling abroad)**

- a. Plein Air Easels (small and sturdy but lightweight). Instead of an easel, use a piece of mat board (16x20), folded in half to fit in your luggage. Option: Tape your paper or canvas sheets to mat board and then use your knees or table to support the board.
- b. Small, portable painters stool (optional)
- c. Transport bag, backpack or suitcase
- d. Umbrella. Another option: a collapsing nylon auto windshield sunshade that can be clipped to your palette or easel. It can also be used in place of a tarp to sit on ground.
- e. Clothes and rain gear (winter, spring, summer). Remember, you will get paint on them.
- f. Hats
- g. Medical and psychological aids: sunscreen, bug repellants, first aid kit, pain killers, antidepressants for bad art, stuff like that. Most of this can be purchased at local stores in nearby cities.
- h. Food and drink (Most cities have plenty of great food and wine)
- i. Emergency (cell phone, flashlight or headlamp, maps)
- j. Digital camera, cellphone camera or video camera
- k. Team up with a fellow artist so you can watch out for each other
- l. Cleaning materials for getting paint off your hands and other places
- m. Bungee cords, big clips to hold things together
- n. Battery powered, clip-on book lamp to use to paint night scenes
- o. Business cards and bio to hand out to spectators
- p. Toilet paper, etc for when restroom facilities are scarce

### **2. Painting Supplies (develop your own separate list for watercolors, pastels, oils and acrylics)**

- a. Palettes (Watercolors are easy. For oils and acrylics, a small Masterson sealed Handy Palette is a good one for keeping paints fresh and sealed)
- b. Improvise; leave heavy, bulky easels at home. Find ways to prop your boards and canvases on things at the Plein Air site. Use your lap, picnic tables or backpack as an easel.
- c. Paints (you can mix every color using red, yellow, blue and white. What additional colors you want to bring along is up to you)
- d. Brushes and brush carrying device
- e. Mediums (thinners are not good for overseas travel. Instead use water-soluble oils or other water based paints)
- f. Palette knives
- g. Hand protection: creams or rubber gloves
- h. Pliers to open paint tubes

- i. Paper, canvas sheets or panels. Avoid stretched wood mounted canvases
- j. Scrapers and alcohol for cleaning palettes (you can purchase alcohol in most cities)
- k. Containers for clean water and waste water. No dumping on the ground permitted.
- l. Plastic bags for carrying disposable wastes
- m. Paper towels and rags
- n. Sketch books and drawing materials
- o. Pocket knife (don't try to carry it onto the plane; pack it in a checked in suitcase)
- p. Hooks or large clips to hang things on your easel
- q. Art tape and/or duct tape
- r. Hand held mirror (optional)
- s. View finders, color isolators, value chart, color wheels
- t. Small knapsack for carrying everything

### **3. Traveling Abroad**

- a. Primary goal: travel light and cut bulk.
- b. Light weight clothes and rain gear for traveling. Dress in layers.
- c. Backpacks and travel luggage: reduce to one or two
- d. Don't carry onto the plane palette knives or other perceived dangerous devices. Airport security will take them.
- e. Something you can put on the ground under your work area to capture drips and spills (plastic painters sheet)
- f. Leave at home heavy and bulky art stuff
- g. Use rolled up paper and canvases. Store in paper tubes
- h. Large garbage bags to place over backpacks to protect from rain. You can also wear them as temporary rain gear.
- i. Buy paints and other materials at your final destination rather than bringing them with you on the plane.
- j. Use acrylics rather than oils; safer and easier to handle. When you get back home you can add oil paints over the acrylics to finish off a painting.
- k. Extra pair of glasses. Also, bring sunglasses.
- l. Waterproof bag to protect camera gear.