

THE ART SHERPA™

PRESENTS

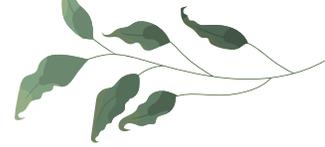
BEGINNERS  
ACRYLIC  
PAINTING  
COURSE

ACRYLIC

*Brushes*

ACRYLIC PAINT, THE BASICS - NOVEMBER 2021





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## VIDEO CHAPTER GUIDE:

Below are the timestamps we inserted in the tutorial video so that you can easily coordinate using the book and the tutorial video simultaneously.

STEPS:	TIME:	DESCRIPTION:
INTRO		
STEP 1	1:24	PARTS OF A BRUSH
STEP 2	4:32	BRUSHES FOR TYPES OF PAINT
STEP 3	14:39	SHORT OR LONG HANDLES
STEP 4	17:07	BRUSH SIZES
STEP 5	19:13	BRUSH SHAPES - WHAT THEY ARE FOR
STEP 6	43:49	BRUSH CLEANING





# STEP ONE - PARTS OF A BRUSH

## HANDLE

The back end or control bit of the brush. This is the part of the tool that translates all that creativity from your brain, down through your shoulder, into your hand, flowing to your fingers where you hold the brush. Can be long or short, can be wood or plastic, and may be finished or unfinished.

## FERRULE

This is the metal bridge between the handle and the head of the brush. It has a crimp where the metal meets the handle. This is to help the head stay attached even if the glue fails. (ps, the glue fails a lot) Metal ferrules may be of the following; aluminum, copper, nickel, or nickel-plated steel. Many people are allergic to nickel. Many good brush companies avoid the metal all together

## HEAD

The head is the business end of your brush. It's the part that does the painting. Your head can be made of natural hair bristles or synthetic elements. Its shape and make-up determines how much water it holds, loads paint, and how it releases that paint onto the canvas. Matching up the correct brush head to the type of paint you are using can do a lot to improve your experience.

## HEEL

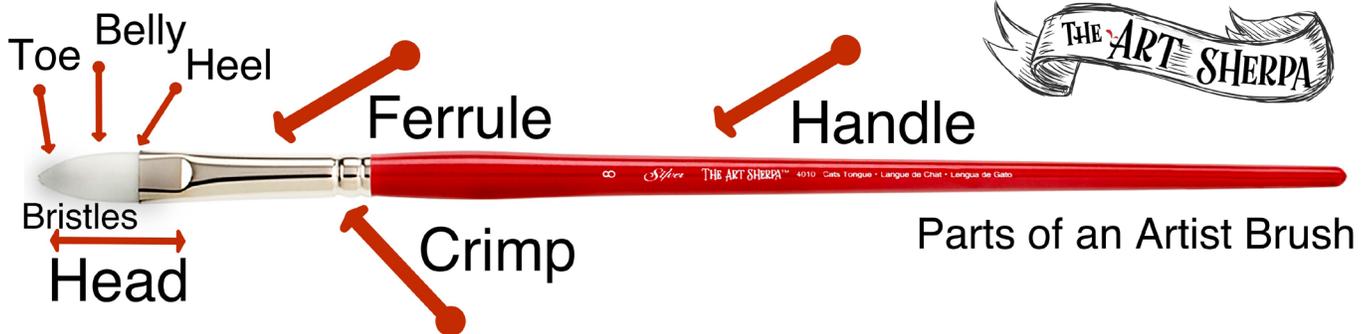
Where the filaments, hair or bristles meet the ferrule. Too much pressure on an artist's brush can break the heel. What that means is that the filament in your brush can bend or "crimp", because you pressed down too hard, disrupting the shape of your brush.

## BELLY

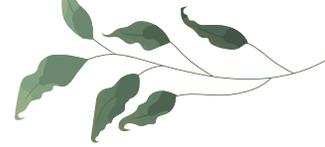
This is the area in which the bristles hold water and paint in your brush. Is generally in the middle between the heel and toe.

## TOE

The toe is where your brush ideally dances across the canvas. It's the end of the filaments, hairs or bristles. The shape of the brush toe greatly impacts your brush stroke.



Parts of an Artist Brush



# STEP TWO - TYPES OF ACRYLIC BRUSHES

## ACRYLIC BRUSHES

These are almost entirely of nylon or synthetic for the lion's share of the painting tasks. They can also be hog or hair, when you use techniques like scumbling or blending.

## HEAVY BODY

Heavy body paint works best when brushes have a firm synthetic filament with a good spring to it. These types of brushes are expressive and easily move and control the thickness of heavy body paint.

## FLUID OR SOFT BODY

Fluid acrylic paint works best when a brush has a softer, smoother filament. I prefer a synthetic for it's resilience and I do look for filaments that are self-sealing, or strokeless. These brushes are ideal for smooth finishes, techniques.

## HIGH FLOW OR INK

While preferring synthetics for acrylic brushes overall, these brushes have the most in common with watercolor brushes. They need to have sharp tips and edges with a thirsty belly. The filaments are soft so the brush head soaks up highflow paint easily, providing fine hair lines.

## SYNTHETIC VS. HOG & HAIR

The basis for my reasoning that synthetic brushes work better with acrylic is that acrylic paint has a naturally high pH, and that damages natural hair, causing them to break easier. Acrylic paint also contains ingredients that strip natural hair oils that increase that brittle nature. With the heavy body paints, natural hair does not easily manipulate the paint in the same way that a good stiff, synthetic filament can. This is a guide, not a rule. Nylon brushes can be made into both soft and stiff brushes giving them a lot of versatility. To make a brush by hand, there is only one vocational school in the world. There are family apprenticeships and it takes 3 years of training. Handmade brushes come from either long apprenticeship or long training. It may help you when you see the cost of a fine artist's brush to know the work and effort that goes into its making.

## SYNTHETIC FILAMENTS

Synthetic fibers are man-made-fibers via a chemical process, as opposed to natural fibers that are made from living things. Synthetic brushes are made of multi-diameter extruded nylon filament, Taklon or polyester. Synthetic filaments can be flagged, tapered, tipped, etched or abraded to increase paint carrying ability. Often, synthetic filaments are dyed and baked to make them softer and more absorbent. Synthetic is the most ideal for acrylic paint but acrylic paint, while fun and versatile, can be caustic and hard on





## STEP TWO: CONTINUED

the lifespan of your brushes. With good brush care, you can extend the life of your brushes. Another thing that I really enjoy about synthetic is that it holds a more optimal amount of water for the acrylic medium, and is more resilient in holding its shape for continued enjoyable use. Toray synthetic from Japan is a red wine color and is most ideal for acrylic brushes. Dupont created Acrylon, a synthetic bristle with one tip. Finally, Brislon was developed and flagged to imitate nature fibers better. Look for synthetics that are a blend of the diameter of fibers.

Pros are that synthetic is less prone to damage, insects, pets, wear and tear or paints and are easier to keep clean than animal hair brushes because the filaments don't have hair scale structures to trap paint. They are also better suited for painting with acrylics because a synthetic filament will withstand the high pH of acrylic paints.

### HOG BRISTLE

The best hog brush is made from the hairs on the back of a pig, which are strong and springy; specifically, you want to look for brushes that are made from Chungking Hog. This means the bristle is naturally curved. You also want to look for uncut flagged bristles.

**Flagged means the natural end of the bristle is intact and left naturally split. (Next time, instead of saying you have split ends, say you have flagged ends.) These split-ends are good because they improve the amount of paint a brush can hold .**

Finally you want brushes that are interlocked. This means the natural curves of the bristles are positioned inward toward the ferrule.

Hog is good for painting impasto style, dry brushing and is also great for heavy body acrylic paint. Since the pH of acrylic is high, it can make the bristles brittle. As brushes are used, they will wear down and shape to the painter's style of brush stroke. They can shed when new, so it's always a good idea to rinse them out vigorously before the first use. When painting acrylic, artists need to know that the brush softens when in use with water. It can also hold a bit more water than you would want. It is essential that you use a towel in painting to take out the excess water.

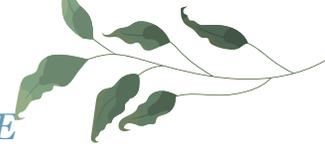
**Remember - All brushes look good on the shelf because they are sized with a starch solution. You want to buy brushes that say Chunking, Interlocked and flagged. That way when the sizing is washed out your brush's true shape remains ideal.**



### HAIR

Hair brushes are made from sable, squirrel, pony, mongoose, ox, goat, and camel (which is not camel, but in fact a blend of other hair) and are generally too soft and water heavy for acrylic. They do make a nice blender. Hair has a natural scaling, so cleaning is even more important. Like hogs, the high pH is hard on the hair. I have a dome blender I love in my brush bucket and use it as a blender often. Some hair is not ecologically responsible to use and many brush companies are developing synthetic alternatives.

**It may be important for you to note how brush companies source hair and hog bristles.**



## STEP THREE - LONG HANDLE VS. SHORT HANDLE

### LONG HANDLE

For painting standing at the easel, the long handle is best because it lets you back away from your artwork while you're creating it. Holding the brush handle far back, and then painting back from the artwork creates a loose expressive method of painting. Have you heard that old saying "They can't see the forest for the trees"? This means that you're too close to the subject to be

able to take it all in. Moving back from the easel changes that view. In fact, this is the view that lets you take in the whole forest and adjust where those trees need to go based on your artistic sensibility.

### SHORT HANDLE

For painting from the table while seated, most people paint with short handle brushes to prevent injury mostly from eye-poking. I'M KIDDING. But, the length of the handle can become problematic for the painter. It just isn't comfortable or practical for the short distances that sitting while painting creates because you're close in. So, if you're sitting at a table, you may prefer a short handle.

*Pro tip: Artists that sit at a table should regularly stand up and walk away from the work to view it. If you can't do that because of mobility issues, another trick is to take a picture with your phone. This is the other way that you can see the forest for the trees.*



## STEP FOUR - A WORD ABOUT HOW BRUSH SIZES WORK

They don't. There is no standard. It is very hard to shop online or in stores. Know the sizes you prefer, becoming familiar with a line and locating mm sizing when offered is your best bet.

### TYPES OF OTHER BRUSHES

#### WATERCOLOR BRUSHES

Watercolor brushes are soft, can pull in a large amount of water, and are usually made of sable or synthetic nylon. For the most part, watercolor brushes are short handled. You can invest as much as you want in a watercolor brush because with good care, they will last a very long time, through many uses. Natural hair, squirrel, badger or sable are all used by watercolorists. The most preferred brushes are made by hand.

#### OIL PAINTING BRUSHES

Oil brushes are usually made of natural hair, sable or hog bristle. They are firmer than watercolor and are made for the blended effects that oils excel in. The hog bristles will wear down over time, shaping to the artist's preferences, much like breaking in a good pair of shoes. In general, oil artists use long handle brushes since most of the work is done at an easel.

#### MULTIMEDIA AND DECOR PAINTING BRUSHES

These brushes are often short handled and can come in a variety of filaments or hair and usually have very specific jobs. They can have unique heads and shapes and are often shaped and developed for a single brush stroke. They work with any media. While we won't be using these brushes in this course, they can be a fun thing to do research on and add to your own art kit.





# STEP FIVE - BRUSH SHAPES AND WHAT THEY ARE FOR

There are a multitude of brush shapes. We're just going to discuss the basic ones that you'll be adding to your artist kit.

## FLAT

A flat is also a square shaped brush but the filament is longer from the ferule to the toe.

### TECHNIQUES AND BRUSH STROKES:

Long smooth strokes for thinner paint or filling backgrounds. Washes and glazing.



FLAT

## BRIGHT

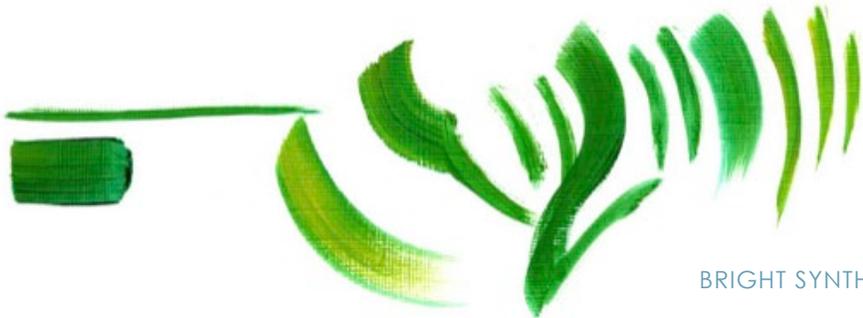
A bright is a square brush with a sharp edge. The filaments are shorter from the ferule to the toe allowing for more control and a firmer feel.

### SYNTHETIC

For the Acrylic Painting for Beginners Course - 1" or 10mm in width - synthetic

### TECHNIQUES AND BRUSH STROKES:

Short sharp controlled strokes. Ideal for controlling heavy body paint.

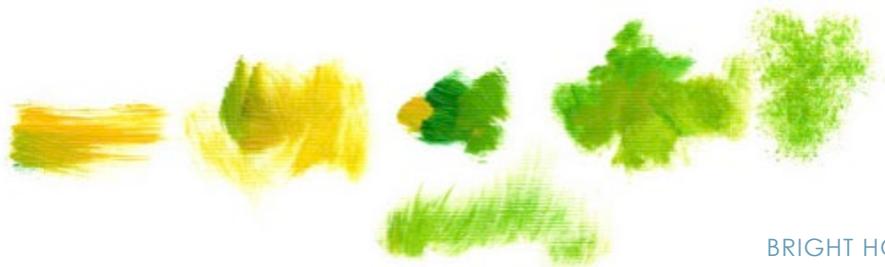


BRIGHT SYNTHETIC

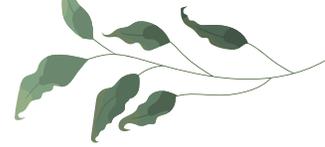
### HOG

### TECHNIQUES AND BRUSH STROKES:

This brush is good for all your dry brushing, impasto painting, stippling, scumbling and expressive strokes.



BRIGHT HOG



## STEP FIVE: CONTINUED

### ROUND

Round ferrule, full rounded belly, with pointed tip.

#### SYNTHETIC

#### TECHNIQUES AND BRUSH STROKES:

This brush is good for all your fine lines, and touch and pull strokes. You can do curves and straight lines, as well as blending. Good for details and places where control over your paint is needed.

#### CONS:

Not good at filling huge areas and can be pulled out of shape easily so constant brush care is needed.

#### HOG

Look for well crimped ferrules, Chungking hog bristles, Interlocking bristles and flagged bristle ends. I mostly use a #12 and a #6 round from different lines. The #20 is 12.5 mm across the ferrule diameter at the heel and 36.5 length out from the heel to toe. The #6 is 7.8mm in diameter and 26.5 length out from the heel to the toe.

#### TECHNIQUES AND BRUSH STROKES:

Good for grass, trees, bushes, dry brushing, clouds, blends and other rough but controlled needs.

#### CONS:

Can lose shape and need to be reshaped during the painting process. Loose hairs may pull away from the brush. If this is causing issues, rinse out, reshape and continue.



ROUND SYNTHETIC



ROUND HOG

## STEP FIVE: CONTINUED



### ANGLE

Look for a firm filament with a good spring and sharp edge. The brush head is shaped at an angle. These brushes are fantastic for doing a variety of jobs including hair fine lines and difficult compound curves.

#### TECHNIQUES AND BRUSH STROKES:

Great for controlled shading and curved strokes. This brush blends as well as being a go getter for fine lines, letter work and grass. It does not make a circle well. A favorite for double loading leaves and petals.



ANGLE

### DETAIL

Short fine round with a tip that lends itself to detailed lining. The belly holds a bit more paint than you might think and the fine point lends itself to control.



DETAIL

### MONOGRAM LINER

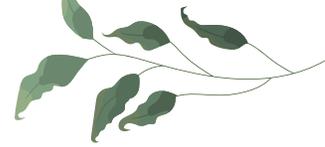
Sometimes called a long liner, this brush has more spring and can create very delicate, responsive lines. The fine tip is a longer length out than a detail round. I love how you can feel what is happening through the brush.

#### TECHNIQUES AND BRUSH STROKES:

The finest lines for hair, fur and blades of grass.



MONOGRAM LINER



## STEP FIVE: CONTINUED

### FAN

These brushes are shaped like a fan. Originally a decorative brush, this has become part of the fine art brush kit for its variety of textural brush strokes. It can be difficult to find one suitable for heavy body paint.

#### HOG

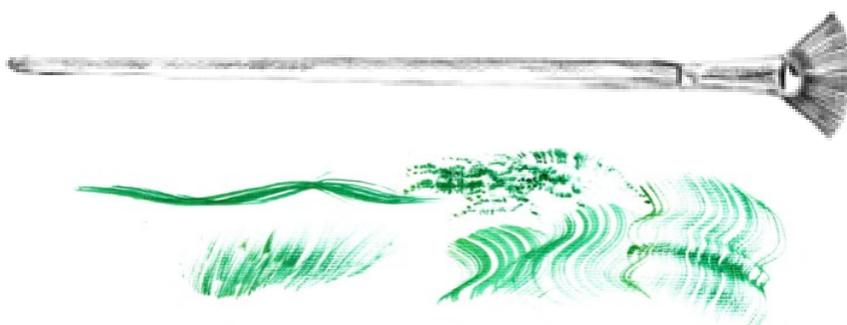
Full, even fan, with high quality white bristle interlocked construction.

#### SYNTHETIC

Even, sturdy, with a sharp edge and good spring.



FAN HOG



FAN SYNTHETIC

### 1" OVAL MOP SYNTHETIC

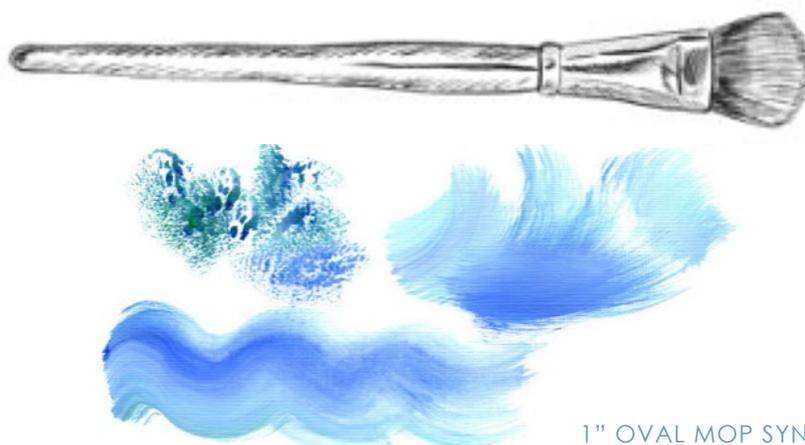
A favorite for soft diffused blending, clouds and bushes. These brushes tend to be fuller and softer with a rounded head. They are often used to apply varnish but can also be used to apply glazes.

#### HOG

Full, even fan, with high quality white bristle interlocked construction.

#### SYNTHETIC

Even, sturdy, with a sharp edge and good spring.



1" OVAL MOP SYNTHETIC

### ROUND BLENDER

A softer dome head, ideal for blending and softening edges. Synthetic or synthetic blends hold up best with acrylic paint.



ROUND BLENDER

## STEP FIVE: CONTINUED



### FILBERT

A filbert has a rounded head. The soft curve of the head allows for soft brush effects, some delicate blending and some nice curved edge strokes.



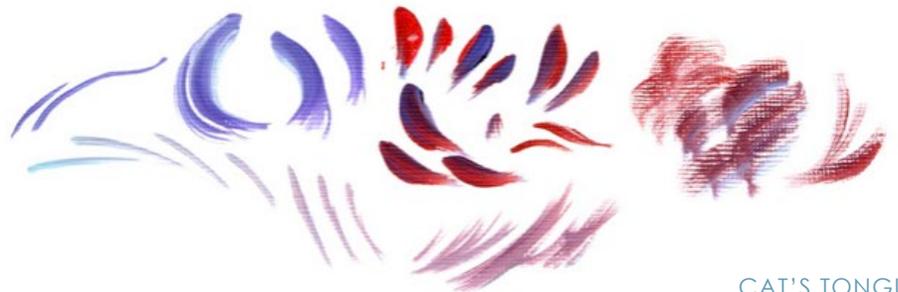
FILBERT

### CAT'S TONGUE (A POINTED FILBERT)

A filbert has a rounded head that comes to a point. The soft curve of the head allows for soft brush effects, some delicate blending and some nice curved edge strokes. The pointed toe and edge give lines and controlled details.

#### TECHNIQUES AND BRUSH STROKES

A brush that does many jobs in one, allowing the painter to work through large areas with no need to change tools. Blending, fine lines, curved strokes, touch pull and blending.



CAT'S TONGUE

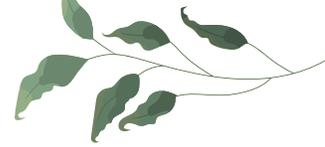
#### CONS

Hard to find a good one for heavy body paint. Care must be taken to keep the brush shape.

### A WARNING ABOUT ARTISTS' BRUSH HANDLES FOR THE ACRYLIC PAINTER

Artists' brush handles are most often made of wood, but can also be made of plastic and some cheap handles are made of unfinished wood. Higher quality handles are of seasoned hardwood that is sealed and lacquered to water resistance, intended to reduce swelling. This said, there's a lot happening to your brush when you use it. Depending on the water tightness of the seal, where the ferrule meets the handle, you may begin to see cracking and paint chipping along the handle. You may even see the brush head loosening from the handle. After decades of painting, I can honestly say brushes are not made for water. My advice to you here is be fastidious. Don't leave your brushes in standing water. Always rinse them out between uses, even during a painting session, and lay them flat. Always, always wash and dry after every painting session.





## BRUSH EMERGENCY CARE

### HOT WATER, SOAP, & RUBBING ALCOHOL

I'm sure you have the best intentions to be a good brush caretaker. You may have spent quite a lot of money on your brushes, so you feel motivated to take care of them. But life will happen. You will get distracted by something in your real life that will create the unthinkable situation, you leave your brush standing in water OR your brush is left to dry with acrylic paint on it transforming it into a stick... dare I say a very expensive stick?

The first tool to help you save your brushes is rubbing alcohol. Rubbing alcohol will break down acrylic paint allowing you to, with some effort, warm water and good soap, return your brush from stick to beloved partner and best friend. Rubbing Alcohol 91% is my preferred selection. You can use regular, like 70%, but it just may take a few more soaks and washes. When using this product to release dry paint, only the brush head to the ferrule should be in the solution. Soak the brush head for a few minutes, 1-5, then go through the washing process. Repeat if the brush is not restored to its former glory.

Yes, your brush is your friend. You will get very attached to a good brush who stands by you through thick and thin, through clouds and water, through glazing, scumbling and sharp curved lines.

The second tool is hot water. Hot water helps in combo with your soap to remove the dried, crusty paint that the alcohol loosened. It can also help you tame your brushes bed head. Use hot water (not so hot you get burned). Dip and hold the brush in the water for 10-20 seconds. Remove and reshape it into its former glory. Lay flat and allow to dry. Ready to return to artful duty in your brush bucket.



### FINALLY, GLUE

If the head of your brush falls off, don't despair, it can be glued right back on. My favorite is CA glue, real name is Cyanoacrylate. You know its thin cousin as Super Glue. I find a thick viscosity CA does a great job to reseat ferrules to head. Thick CA glue dries much slower than the thin super glue you are used to but it really holds when done right. Starbond and Gorilla Glue are also great. Just make sure the handle and the head of the brush are dry. Apply a dab of glue to the handle and press the ferrule back into its seat. Allow to cure and get back to making art!





## STEP SIX - CLEANING YOUR BRUSH

Your paint brushes are an expensive investment that you will want to know how to protect and keep for years. It might surprise you to know that the future of each brush is sealed at the sink after each painting session. That leftover paint in the brush MUST ALL come out. The acrylic polymer emulsion and pigments get pushed into your bristles and the ferrules. When you get dried paint hiding in the ferrule, it can build up until it "blows out" the shape of your brush, causing splitting and stray hairs. This will give you a great cloud or scumble brush, but will ruin the shape and edge of your favorite brush.

Turpentine or thinners can destroy some types of synthetic brushes, and are not really necessary in acrylic painting. Warm water, soap, your fingers and a towel for drying are your best tools in caring for your acrylic brush.

### ART SHERPA SPA BRUSH CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS

#### MATERIALS:

- Art Sherpa Brush Spa Soap
- Paper Towels
- Container of Swishing Water
- Cup of Hot Water (not hot enough to burn your fingers)

1. Place cleaning supplies by the sink and lay your drying towels out next to the sink.
2. Remove excess thick paint that is on your brush (if you have any) on a disposable towel.
3. Vigorously swish the brush in a container of water.
4. Wet brush in warm running water and rub across the soap. Build up the suds as you use the directional stroke method. Do this firmly, but gently. Don't scrub or bend the filaments of the brush.
5. Take fingers and work the soap gently through the brush.
6. Rinse and Repeat step 4.
7. Now take your clean brush and stroke firmly but gently dragging across a dry white paper towel. If you see any color, go to step 8, if not go to step 9.
8. Run warmer water over the brush, rewetting it, and go over the surface of your soap using the soft circle method. If you are using the power scrub tub with loofah, be extra careful.
9. Take your cup very hot, but safe for fingers, water and dip brush in for 10-20 seconds. Finger shape your brush
10. Lay the brush flat on a paper towel. Come back in an hour to check the brush. (if you see any color repeat the cleaning steps)
11. Allow brushes to dry before placing them in your brush cup.

### THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BRUSH CARE

1. NEVER use solvents on synthetic filaments, it can melt the brush.
2. DON'T use Acetone on your brush even for dry paint.
3. DON'T leave a brush sitting in water.
4. DON'T dry a brush in any vertical position, always lay flat.
5. Rubbing alcohol removes dry paint and is brush safe.
6. Certain pigments stain, like Phthalo Blue and Dioxazine Purple. Staining is normal and does not hurt your brush. It is the dry acrylic polymer emulsion that damages the brush.
7. All hog bristle brushes must be washed before you paint with them to remove loose bristles. Small shedding of a couple bristles is normal; a full hair storm is not.
8. NEVER throw out ruined fluffy brushes. They make the best cloud, bush and special textures. They are a treasure. Keep lost brushes in their own jar. Give them fun new names like " Sir Cloudinator" or " Mr Magic Scumble"

***Dish soap works well too and you can do a lot to prolong the life of your brush just by keeping the paint out of it. You can follow these instructions with whatever you clean your brushes with. Just remember to clean them every time!***

## Q & A SESSION

### WHEN DO YOU THROW OUT A BRUSH?

I don't throw out brushes as much as keep them for bushes and clouds and textures.

### HOW AM I SURE NOT TO PULL INDIVIDUAL STRANDS OUT OF A BRUSH? DO THE BRISTLES FALL OUT OF A HOG BRUSH?

Try to wash your brush vigorously before its first use and gently remove loose bristles. After that you should only lose a hair once in a while.

### WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN THE MASTERSON WET PALETTE STAYS MOIST ON BOTTOM YET THE TOP OF THE PAINT HAS DRIED?

Check the lid, use your mister, and/or get a small humidifier.

### BRIGHT IS NOT USED FOR WATERCOLOR CORRECT?

You can run into them in watercolor. I use one from aquasoft I adore.

### CAN YOU MIX HEAVY AND SOFT BODY PAINTS TOGETHER?

Yes, you can.

### IS THERE A DIFFERENCE ON HOW TO CLEAN THE HOG BRUSHES VERSUS SYNTHETIC?

I take extra time cleaning the natural brushes hair or bristles because they have scales and can hold/hide paint in them.

### HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU HAVE GOTTEN ALL THE PAINT OUT OF THE FERRULE?

I really look closely for it collection - it takes my glasses to do it and also I work my nail into the heal to ensure its cleaned out gentle.

### OK, WHAT IS VARNISH IN ACRYLICS? I THOUGHT THAT WAS AN OIL TERM?

Acrylics can be varnished as well for really many of the same reasons.

### I FOUND ISABEY CAT'S TONGUE, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT BRAND?

GREAT brush company.

### I DON'T HAVE VARNISH, I HAVE TWO GOLDEN MEDIUMS, A GLOSS, AND A RETARDANT. WOULD IT BE THE GLOSS? SAME TERM?

Varnish is its own thing for acrylic.

### FLAT DRYING? WHY?

Keep particles of acrylic out of the ferrule - protect the glue and brush shape.

### CAN YOU LEAVE BRUSHES IN WATER DURING SESSION?

I wipe and water cup clean as i go and then do a big wash after.

### WHICH ONE IS BEST CHOICE FOR GLUING BRISTLES BACK?

Cyanoacrylate glue; I use Gorilla Glue.

### WHAT ABOUT CLEANING DRIED GESSO IN A BRUSH?

Sherpa soap cleans out dried gesso in a brush - experience of a friend.

### IS HANGING BRUSHES FILAMENT DOWN OK?

You can but most beginners don't have specialty brush drying racks, down is fine.

### DO YOU HAVE AN AMAZON LINK TO YOUR FAVORITES?

Yes, [www.theartsherpa.com](http://www.theartsherpa.com)

### DOES IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT HANDED PEOPLE HOW TO HOLD THE BRUSH?

In the same way for pencil but nothing more than that" It's more about navigating the canvas than anything and learning where your particular strength stroke is; is it right to left, or left to right?

### WILL THIS BE AVAILABLE LATER?

Yes, both on Facebook and YouTube.

### THIS MIGHT BE ANSWERED LATER BUT CAN YOU USE THE SAME BRUSH FOR ACRYLICS & WATERCOLORS?

You could, but it is not recommended because watercolor brushes are designed specifically to hold water and acrylic destroys brushes and watercolor does not. A good watercolor brush will last a very long time.

### WHY DO YOU LIKE HEAVY BODY PAINT?

Because it takes less effort to cover the paint and I get a result that I am happier with at the end.

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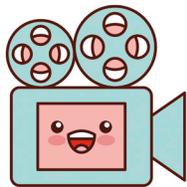
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