

# The Contemporary Portrait – Supply List

Brian Kelley

Washington Studio School, Winter 2020

## Course Description

Why paint a portrait in this age of selfies? Why is portraiture experiencing a resurgence now, a new sense of relevance and urgency? Artists like Kehinde Wiley, Amy Sherald, Aliza Nisenbaum, Kerry James Marshall, Jenny Saville, Henry Taylor, Njideka Akunyili Crosby and many more are unpacking the portrait in ways rarely seen before. Looking at what is both general and specific, as well as timeless and timely in portraiture, students will:

Study the structure, planes, color temperature and the organization of value shapes that make up the portrait in space.

They will also consider the stories that observable human reality can evoke.

Both portraits of models and self-portraits will be covered, leading to an understanding of the difference between painting the stranger vs. the introspective aspects of painting the self.

Understanding how light, props, overall environment, as well as photographic references contribute to the language of the portrait will also be discussed.

**Who is this class for:** This class is best for those with some previous drawing and painting experience, especially of the human figure. However, those new to the portrait are welcome.

## Drawing Material

Graphite Pencils

Vinyl Eraser

Can of Workable Fixative

Vine Charcoal (medium or soft recommend) \*[make sure to *not* get *compressed* when you mean to get *vine*]

Small set of colored pencils (recommended: Prismacolor Colored Pencils 12 Set) **or** pastel (recommended: Prismacolor NuPastel Hard Pastel 12 Set)

Small pad of drawing paper, minimum 9" x 12", 90 lb. weight or heavier

*Optional:* Earth Color Chalks (recommended: Cretacolor Drawing Set of 8 Brown Shades)

*Optional:* Assorted Colored Markers and Inks

**Stretched Canvases** or panels, in the following sizes (sizes can be approximate and canvases can be pre-stretched).

1 Canvas or panel 9" x 12"

3 Canvases or panels 12" x 15"

### Improving your gesso grounds

1 pint of acrylic primer (acrylic gesso) and a 2-3" flat housepainting brush (\*you will want to paint at least 1-2 additional coats of gesso over pre-stretched canvases as the grounds of most pre-stretched canvases are very poor – you will want to do these coats in advance so that they are dry and ready to use in class) – *this is optional but recommended if you are using pre-primed canvases*

### Paint

Paint colors (recommended brands [approx. from cheap to expensive]: Utrecht, Plaza, Gamblin, Winsor & Newton, M. Graham, Williamsburg)

**Opaque White:** Titanium White (150 ml)

**Earth Yellow:** Yellow Ochre (35 ml)

**Cool Yellow:** Lemon Yellow/Hansa Yellow Light/Cadmium Yellow Pale Hue\* (35 ml)

**Warm Yellow:** Indian Yellow/Cadmium Yellow Deep Hue\* (35 ml)

**Earth Red:** Burnt Sienna (35 ml)

**Cool Red:** Alizarin Crimson/Quinacridone Red (35 ml)

**Warm Red:** Naphthol Red/Cadmium Red Hue\* (35 ml)

**Cool Blue:** French Ultramarine Blue (35 ml)

**Warm Blue:** Cerulean Blue/Cobalt Blue Hue\* (35 ml)

**Dark Earth:** Burnt Umber/Raw Umber (35 ml)

**Additional Earth Colors (optional):** Much of painting the figure involves the rich neutrals found in the colors of flesh. For this reason, you may want to consider some additional earth colors. These are optional and only recommended if you feel that you already use earth colors frequently and are interested in trying additional variations. Also, this is a line of pigments composed almost entirely on variations of rust (iron oxide) – most are Series I, but a few are Series II and above – so they tend to be an affordable place to experiment with new colors.

**Raw Siena** – Lighter and more orange than Burnt Sienna

**Raw Umber** – Cooler and often greener than Burnt Umber. Depending on the source, Raw Umber will sometimes be darker than Burnt Umber. Other times, it will be significantly lighter. Make sure to open the tube in the store to see!

**Van Dyke Brown** - A dark, black-brown

**Venetian Red/Indian Red/Mars Red** – Alternatively a very red-orange or red-violet earth color (Venetian tends to be more orange and Indian tends to be more violet). Very opaque and strong tinting colors

**Terre Verte** – “Earth Green.” Genuine Terre Verte is actually quite expensive, but hue mixtures of green and yellow ochre at Series I or II prices do exist. A yellow-green earth color. Alternatively, you may find that some Yellow Ochres are already a bit green, while others are more a yellow-orange. Make sure to open the tube in the store to see!

**Mars Yellow** – Very opaque and strong tinting earth yellow

\*Hue colors are imitations of genuine pigments that closely match the original color. They are cheaper in price and usually have no heavy metals.

\*\***Mars/Synthetic Iron Oxides** are all man-made versions of the mineral earth colors. They tend to all be stronger in mixtures and opaque. Some of the subtle, rich neutrals from mineral earths are not really replicated in the Mars colors. They are bolder.

\*\*\***Transparent Iron Oxides/Transparent Earth Colors.** This is an alternative formulation of the Mars colors so that they are less opaque and slightly less strong in mixtures, and they have become more widely available in the last ten years or so

## Brushes

Hog bristle brushes (*recommended*) or synthetic bristles designed for use with oil and acrylic.

Flat size #8

Round size #8

Filbert size #8

Bright size #8

Round/Filbert size #6

Flat/Filbert size #10/12

\*Additional brushes or brushes in larger sizes can also be used. What is most important is that you have a variety of a half-dozen or more brushes of different sizes and shapes.

Metal palette knife (medium or large size)

## Artist Mediums

Cold-pressed or alkali refined linseed oil (small bottle)

Gamblin’s solvent-free gel medium (*optional*)

Dorland’s cold wax medium (*optional*)

## Palette

Wood, glass, butcher tray, or temporary palette pad, no smaller than 10" (the larger the better)  
(make sure to use cardboard/foamcore backing for glass palettes -make sure NOT to get a palette designed for watercolors [ie: lot's of tiny "wells" in the palette])

Utility razor for cleaning palette (*necessary for permanent palettes, not needed for temporary palettes*)

### **Staying Clean and Misc.**

A mirror tile (either 10" x 10" or 12" x 12") – look for new plexiglass variants in your local hardware store (glass also works fine) – (*recommended if you do not otherwise have a moveable mirror at home*)

A moveable/adjustable lamp that can be used for dramatic lighting at home (*this is a lamp to keep at home – you likely can use a lamp you already own for this purpose*)

Miscellaneous props and costumes (*do not buy – just scavenge what you already own*)

Paper towels or cotton rags

Apron (*optional*)

Gloves (*optional* - latex, vinyl, nitrile – *I recommend nitrile*)

Jars with lids to seal and store solvents or painting mediums

Soap for clean-up (ex: Ivory soap)

### **Where To Get Supplies**

#### **Plaza Art**

1120 19<sup>th</sup> St. NW  
Washington, DC 20036

#### **Artist & Craftsman Supply**

1201-1203 Brentwood Rd. NE  
Washington, DC 20018

#### **Sullivan Toys & Art Supplies**

4200 Wisconsin Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20016

#### **Blick Art Materials**

1250 I St. NW  
Washington, DC 20005

#### **Jerrysartarama** (online)

#### **Utrecht** (online)