



Plein Air Painting

Family Friday Project

En plein air is a French phrase that translates to “in the open air.” Plein air artists work outdoors, capturing a particular place and time. Use the supplies in this kit to make your own plein air paintings.



Peninsula School of Art

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Let's get started!

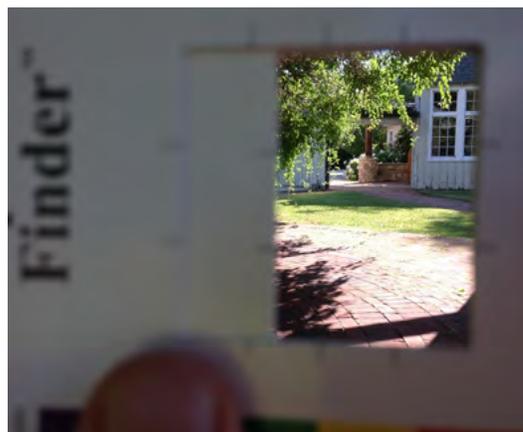
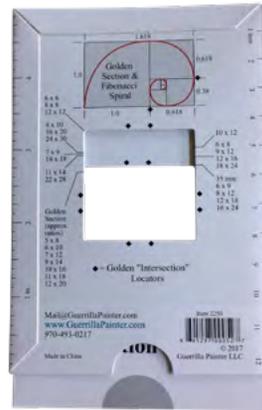


In this kit, you'll find a pencil, paintbrush, watercolor palette, paper, and composition finder. If you like to work with your paper on a slant, you can use the bag to make an easel. All you need is to get a cup of water and find a spot to paint.

Using the composition finder

Slide the inside of the composition finder down until the top of the window is just above the 35 mm line. This will be close to the proportions of your paper.

Use this window to frame your scene. You can use it horizontally (short and wide) or vertically (tall and narrow).



When planning your composition, pay attention to the lines created by shifts in color and by areas of light and dark. Try to find a scene with something that's close, in the foreground, things that are far, in the background, and something in between, in the middle ground.

Making an easel

Most watercolorists paint with their paper flat, but some like to tilt it up a bit. If you would like to try painting with your paper at an angle, follow the steps below to make an easel.

- 1** Flatten your bag.
- 2** Fold the left third in at an angle.
- 3** Fold in the right third.
- 4** Fold down the top.
- 5** Flip the bottom to this side.
- 6** Turn the bag over to the other side.
- 7** Fold the bottom edge up to the crease.
- 8** Pull out the back flap to adjust the angle.
- 9** It's ready to hold up your paper.

Watercolor tips and tricks



Before you start painting, put a few drops of water in each color to moisten the paint.

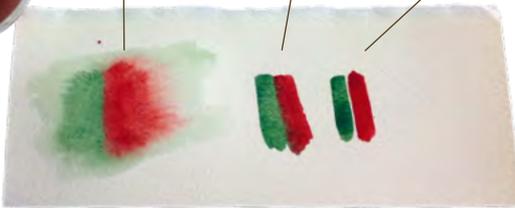
Use the wells in the lid to mix new colors or water them down.

Get different effects by varying how wet your brush and your paper are.

wet brush on wet paper wet brush on dry paper dry brush on dry paper



side by side on wet paper side by side on dry paper separated on dry paper



Let colors blend together by laying them side by side while wet or keep them distinct by separating them with a line of dry paper.

Take advantage of watercolor's transparency by layering thin washes of color. Wait until one layer is dry before adding another.

