

The Wild Ink Sketchbook and Journalling Workshops FAQ's

So what's it all about?

The idea is that the projects are different every week but work towards building up a collection of useful art skills and knowledge. These skills compliment any creative pursuit from sketching and calligraphy to cake decoration and gardening. You are essentially feeding your creative soul!

'I'm a beginner...can I still join in?' OR 'I have more experience...can I still join in?'

Yes and yes! The sketchbook projects can be as easy or tricky as you like! There is a sliding scale of teaching so if you are a beginner you choose the more guided approach, if you have more experience you can use your existing skills and apply to the project.

These classes are similar to using a cookery book whereby I provide the project, the theme and techniques as well as visual references (method, recipe and ingredients) and you can use these limits to 'cook' your own art. As you become more confident you can obviously add and take away 'ingredients' and follow the method fully or deviate as you please or as your ability allows.

This means that the lessons really do appeal to a very broad range of abilities

'Help! I can't draw! I'm scared of the blank page! Will these workshops help?'

Abso-flippin-lutely! Many of the lessons are in illustrative techniques which I always think is like revealing a set of magic tricks. It also allows **a lot** of 'rule breaking' (there are, in fact, no rules...only in your head!), mixing of different types of media and finding easier ways to make and create. A sketchbook is a work book that reveals, teaches and collects your learning, thoughts, inspirations and experiments so it's a great place to make 'mistakes' (there are lots of ways to cover up the ones you can't bear to look at!). Through these workshops you will grow more confident using basic tools. If you like drawing you can free hand draw the elements, if you are new to drawing you can trace and transfer and limit your drawing to more simple shapes until you get more confident.

What are the benefits?

By removing the difficult creative decisions (what am I going to do? how am I going to do it?) and leaving the pleasing ones (colour, layout, pattern, decorative elements etc) you can more easily enjoy the experience and the enormously beneficial aspects of sketch booking and journalling.

It's a bit like advanced level colouring and highly addictive! All in all it's an excellent right sided brain activity leaving very little space in the head for everyday chores, list making, worry and anxiety.

Sketchbooks and journals are time machines...you can record small things you might forget: snippets of conversation, what you had for your tea, a memorable holiday, a book a friend recommends...when you look back through your journals you re-experience the feeling you had when you were making that art... it's a fully sensory! When I look back on my seaside sketchbook I can hear the seagulls, feel the salty air and smell the fish and chips caught on the wind!

You can pop in anytime, to any workshop as they are all geared towards any ability.

Each workshop is a stand alone art class but the 5/6 together build up a collection of useful skills and mini projects. I recommend starting at week 1 then, if you like it, join in each week.

Most people come weekly and some have been for many years! It's a highly addictive occupation so watch out!

What materials do I need?

You can journal and sketchbook with the very basics...it's a cheap hobby. My very favourite materials are a 2B pencil, eraser, sharpener and sketchbook. All the others bits below are good to have for these classes. Buy the best you can afford and they will last years!

Sketchbook:

You need a sketchbook which has smooth good quality paper. The paper weight is quite often stated on a good sketchbook...you need a thickish paper 140-150gsm or more. There are also sketchbooks that have watercolour paper in which are very good (make sure the paper is smooth).

Brand: I like sketchbooks made by 'Seawhites' and 'Pink Pig' which are very reasonably priced. I also like Moleskine and Stillman & Birn (Alpha Series) which are more expensive.

Size: About A5 or square version of similar proportions. Spiral bound books are good if you like sticking stuff in and ripping stuff out!

A pad of A4 cartridge paper is also useful to have

Tracing Paper:

Good to have a pad for many of the projects but you can also use white baking paper

Graphite Pencils:

HB and 2B

Eraser, sharpener, small ruler, scissors, glue stick, masking tape

Fine liner pens:

Black, waterproof.

Micron or Unipin are good brands.

The nibs come in a variety of sizes: 0.05 is tiny whilst 0.8 is the largest. You can buy a pack of 5 various sizes which is an economical way to purchase. You will use all of them but if you want to limit it buy a 0.1 and a 0.5

Posca Pens:

A white ULTRA fine Posca (0.7mm) is great for adding highlights and embellishments to your art

Watercolours:

Winsor & Newton (professional range) and Daniel Smith are my two favourite brands. The sets you can buy which already have pans of colour in them are all VERY good. You only need 3-6 colours really but most sets have 12-24 little pans of colour. Go with your budget and look out for offers as they can be excellent value.

Budget: The Winsor and Newton 'Cotman' are student grade watercolours and often much cheaper. I used a set for years and they do the job well but if you can afford the 'pro' grade ones, get them! The other big brands all have student grade watercolours so see what you can get for your money.

Brushes:

Round synthetic, mixed media brushes sizes: 2,4,6,8. It's good to have some bigger flat ones too but I just buy these from a cheap book shop/discount store or even kids paint brushes.

Gouache:

This is a water-based paint similar to watercolour but highly pigmented and with a chalky, opaque finish. I use professional Winsor and Newton and Schminke Gouache but in my classes we have used the Seawhites gouache which is very good as a budget alternative. The whole box is the price of one tube of W&N.

Palette

There are lovely mixing palettes available..buy one you like. I use cheap ones aimed at children which cost about £1, white china plates, enamel camping tins and plastic tupperware.

Water pot

I've got a posh pop up one from Winsor and Newton but old mugs, jam jars etc are just fine!

Coloured Pencils

Don't buy cheap... if you can afford it buy a smaller tin of more expensive pencils. Buy some good watercolour pencils which can be made water soluble or just used for colouring. Daler Rowney and Caran d'Ache are the ones I have and are really good. I've tried the pencils from all the big named brands and they are all excellent.

Acrylic

Acrylic is water-based paint that is completely waterproof when it dries. We don't use this too much but it's very useful for some projects. We use the acrylic paint set made by Seawhites which is very inexpensive. Discount shops also sell cheap sets which are perfectly adequate for what we are doing.

Other stuff...not essential but I like it...

Brown waterproof fine liner pens, black gesso, little emulsion tester pots, some old books you don't mind ripping up/cutting out, sellotape, drawing nib with holder, black ink, old luggage labels, post it notes, Washi tape, oil pastels.