



Before you purchase a brush...

Please study the information on this page and the next two pages. We've attempted to answer the most commonly asked questions about brushes to help you select the brush that will produce the most satisfying results.

Brush Hair












The material used to form the tuft of a brush that picks up and spreads the paint is the most important part of the brush, and determines the performance and the price of the brush. There are distinct advantages of both natural and synthetic hairs.

NATURAL or animal hair is a by-product of the food and fur industries, no animals are destroyed for the purpose of brush making. It has superior paint-holding ability because of tiny, microscopic "scales" along the shaft of the hair. Price and performance of a natural hair brush is determined by the "grade" of animal it was taken from, and the availability of its hair. Shorter-length hair is more readily available, making the longer lengths more expensive. Natural hair may be used alone (pure) or blended with other hairs or synthetic filaments to achieve a combination of performance and price.

SYNTHETICS are man-made of either nylon or polyester filaments. They can be tapered, tipped, abraded or etched to increase color carrying ability. Often, synthetic filaments are dyed and baked to make them softer and more absorbent. The common name for this filament is "Taklon." The advantages to using synthetic brushes are:

- 1 They are less prone to damage from solvents, insects or paints.
- 2 They are easier to keep clean than animal hair brushes because the filaments don't have animal scale structures to trap paint.
- 3 They are less prone to breakage and are durable on many different surfaces.
- 4 They are better suited for painting with acrylics because a synthetic filament will withstand the caustic nature of acrylic paints with less damage.

F.Y.I. For the protection of the hairs, most brushes are treated with a water-soluble sizing. This should be removed by thoroughly washing with brush soap and water or special brush care products before use.

NAME/SHAPE	DESCRIPTION	USAGE	MEDIA	HAIR
 <p>Round</p>	Round ferrule, round or pointed tip. Available in a wide variety of sizes, lengths and price ranges.	Detail, wash, fills, thin to thick lines, scholastic artwork.	All media	All hair Synthetic
 <p>Pointed Round</p>	Narrower than a standard round. Round ferrule, sharply pointed tip. Natural hair holds a sharper point.	Fine detailing, fine lines, spotting and retouching.	All media	Sable Synthetics
 <p>Flat</p>	Flat ferrule, square-ended. Medium to long hairs. Lots of color capacity, easy maneuverability.	Bold, sweeping strokes, on edge for fine lines. Use heavier filling for heavier paint.	All media	Sable Mongoose Bristle Badger Synthetic
 <p>Bright</p>	Flat ferrule, inward curved edge at the tip, short-length hairs, usually set in a long handle. Width and length of brush head is about equal.	Short, controlled strokes. Useful with thick or heavy color.	Oil Acrylic Decorative	Sable Mongoose Bristle Badger Synthetic
 <p>Filbert</p>	Thick, flat ferrule and oval-shaped, medium to long hairs. Long handles. Natural hair is more suitable for blending because the hairs hold together when wet.	Soft, rounded edges, blending, figurative work.	Oil Acrylic Decorative	Sable Mongoose Bristle Badger Synthetic
 <p>Egbert</p>	Flat ferrule, oval shaped tip, longest springy hairs for more color carrying capacity than filbert. Long handles.	Soft, rounded edges, blending, figurative work.	Oil Acrylic Decorative	Bristle
 <p>Fan</p>	Flat ferrule, spread hairs. Natural hair is more suitable for soft blending, and Synthetic works well for textural effects.	Smoothing and blending, special effects and textures.	Oil, Wtrclr. Acrylic Decorative	Bristle Badger Synthetic
 <p>Script/Liner</p>	Round ferrule, pointed, narrow brush with very long hair. Liners are hair. Liners are shorter & narrower. Short handles, round ferrules. Large color carrying capacity.	Delicate lettering, highlighting, outlining, long continuous strokes.	Watercolor Decorative Ink Sign Paint	Sable Ox Synthetic
 <p>Full-bellied Round</p>	Round or triangular ferrule, extra fat for color carrying capacity. Extra long point. Short handle.	Lettering, outlining, long, continuous strokes.	Watercolor Decorative Ink	Sable Squirrel Synthetic
 <p>Detail Round</p>	Round ferrule Shorter in length than all other rounds but holds a lot of color. Short handle.	Detail painting, short strokes.	Watercolor, Oil, Acrylic	Sable
 <p>Wash/Mop</p>	Wash brushes come in varied shapes. The oval wash has rounded hairs, flat ferrules and produces a soft edge, with no point. The square wash can produce varying shapes and widths, and often has a short, "flat-footed" handle for scraping, burnishing and separating watercolor paper from blocks. The mop brush is a round, full version of the wash brush, made of soft, absorbent natural hair.	Laying in large areas of water or color, wetting, absorbing.	Watercolor	Squirrel Ox Bristle Synthetics