
Acrylic Painting: How to Clean Paintbrushes with Lisa Solomon

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

(upbeat music) - I'm Lisa Solomon. I'm an artist, a professor, an illustrator, and one of the things that I've learned over the years is that you really need to take care of your tools. I'm gonna show you how to clean up your palette, scrapping off the acrylic paint, what to do with it, how to throw it away, how to store it, and we're also gonna go over cleaning your brushes, making sure that they're super clean, and getting them back to their really nice, pristine state so that you can use them again next time.

Chapter 2 - Acrylic Painting: How to Clean Paintbrushes

Clean paintbrushes

- It's time to clean up. If you were going to paint all day, I would recommend spraying your paints with some water. That'll keep them from drying out and becoming unusable. But we are done, so I'm going to show you what I would do to clean up. I don't have a sink here, so it's going to be a little bit different than maybe your setup at home, but hopefully this will give you an idea. The first thing that I would do is pick up any stuff that you didn't use. This is actually pretty expensive blending medium gel so if I was at home, I would put this into a container, a Tupperware plastic container, anything with a tight lid and then you can keep it and you can actually use it for a couple of days. I am one of those people who really thinks that you should put everything out on your palette even if you're not going to use it because you never know and the worst thing is when you're in the middle of painting and you're like Oh my God, I don't have any green and you really need green. So I put it all out there. I try and use it all. Sometimes I make really funny palette paintings after I'm done. So you want to take anything extra and goopy and put it in a paper towel, anything that you can literally pick up, you want to put it in a paper towel. And you actually, to be nice to the environment, you want to leave this and let it dry. Acrylic paints are mostly non-toxic. I don't think there's any crazy laws about not letting them go down the sink. I think you can actually let them go down the sink. But you don't want to put a lot of it down the sink, again, because there's formaldehyde and certain pigments are a little bit toxic. I would leave this out to dry overnight and then throw it into the garbage once it's all dry. Then you would take your palette and you would run it under the sink and you can use a palette knife to scrape the stuff off. If you let it soak a little bit, it will also just start to peel off. If you get a nice, big piece of polymer plastic acrylic, I would put it in a paper towel and throw it in the garbage can and not let it go down the sink. The last thing you want is your sink to get clogged with this kind of stuff. So we're going to clean up our brushes now. The first step in cleaning your brushes and it's really important that you clean them really well. If you want them to last, then you have to clean them properly. And when you get really good at painting and you start buying \$50 brushes, you're really going to want to take care of them because they're expensive. The first thing you're going to do is just rinse them out well in the water. I'm swirling them. I'm kind of pushing them against the bottom. I'm trying to get all the extra paint goop out of the brush. This is when you want to use a towel, a rag, instead of a paper towel. I find it much easier to use a real, live cloth. So you'll see I've already, just by that, got most of the paint out. Yay for me. I'm going to put them back in the water and I'm going to clean them one by one to make sure that I get them super clean. So this is the brush cleaner that I'm going to use. It's Masters Brush Cleaner and

Preserver. Oo, it's brand new, super nice. You're just going to rub the brush in the cleaner and you can see how there's more paint and color coming out. That's what we want. We want it to all come out. When I have a good amount on there, I'm going to use my hands and fingers which are still protected by the barrier cream to clean the rest of this brush out. And you really want to get down to the end. This is the part that's tricky and that's where you don't want the paint to live. So I've gotten in between all the bristles. I'm really moving it around. I'm going to dip it back in the water. Rinse, rinse, rinse, rinse, rinse, rinse, rinse. Here's the super important part. While you're pulling it on the rag, you want to try and reshape it. So remember how it was when you bought it? It was all perfect and nice. All the bristles were together. This is what you want. You want to leave your brush the way that you found it. The really important thing is when you've got your brush reshaped and nice and perfect, you want to store it right-side up like this. The last thing you want to do is leave brushes in water for any length of time. In this container or in some containers, they will sit upright like this and they'll be pushing in the bottom of the can. You'll take the brush out and it will be stuck like that pretty much forever. It's kind of hard to reverse that. And again, if you've spent \$50 on a brush, you do not want this to happen. Also, don't leave a brush lying flat on a table either. It's really important that you don't do this. The table could be pushing up against the bristles overnight and then you'll ruin that brush as well. So it's super important that you remember to put them back into some kind of jar, some kind of upright container so that they dry and they dry nice and neat, just like you bought them. Taking care of your brushes is not super hard, but you'll be really sorry if you don't take care of your brushes and then you'll end up spending so much money because you'll have to buy new brushes all the time. If you take care of them from the start, you won't have to do that and they'll last you for a really long time. I have brushes that are probably over 20 years old and they are still fine. (pulsing music)