

MISSA 2019

THE WAY OF THE BRUSH – Heather MacDonald



Student Supplies:

Japanese painting (sumi-e) and calligraphy require the 4 treasures*:

1. brush (fude) – the most important tool is the brush – for this course, I recommend 2 brushes (1 medium, 1 small)
2. ink stick (sumi)
3. ink stone (suzuri)
4. washi ('rice' papers)

In addition, students will need to bring:

approx. 1 metre of felt, white or light grey preferably. We work flat, so traditionally a wool felt pad is used for cushioning of the delicate paper as well as the important function of absorbency. Felt is available at fabric or craft stores – and sometimes also art stores or where Asian calligraphy supplies are sold. As an alternative, one could use newspaper (it works as an absorbent pad underneath but you'll need at least one or two newspapers) or a piece of smooth, thick absorbent cloth (shaggy or textured towels won't work).

2 containers for water (mayo jar, pickle jar, etc. plastic preferred over glass if possible)

a small set of watercolours such as Kuretake or Yasutomo (Japan), or Marie's Chinese watercolours. Colours can be in tubes or in pans. Only a small set is necessary as colours can be mixed. These brands are very reasonable in price.

a simple palette for paint or a plain white plate (small)

one 8x10 or 9x12 stretched canvas – regular or gallery depth

one 8x10 or 9x12 birch wood panel – regular or gallery depth. Gallery depth supports do not need framing.

A metal edged ruler at least 18 inches

A utility knife with snap-off blades

A small (about 6-8 oz) spray bottle (fine spray)

2 inexpensive bristle paint brushes – 1.5" to 2"

A cutting mat, at least 12"x18"

*The “Four Treasures” are required for a successful experience. **NOTE:** The little mini ‘sets’ for calligraphy that are sold in the fabric covered boxes are **not** suitable.

Brush (fude): the hair portion is approx. 2 ¼ inches long- light brown to dark brown blends – some white or light hair is usually mixed in. ***The most important purchase is your brush.*** Expect to pay at least \$18 – 20+ for a good quality brush.



Ink stone (suzuri): rectangular ones with a well at one end are best – an oval or round one is a good alternative. Size does matter here, so don’t buy a small, shallow stone.



Ink stick (sumi): black only. Just one will do. Please do not buy coloured sticks or liquid ink of any kind. Highly decorated ink sticks are not an indication of quality.



Paper (washi): a roll is the easiest to use and lasts a long time. Large packages of pre-cut sheets are also fine, but expect to use a lot of paper in a 5-day session. Names such as Wenzhou or mulberry paper, Xuan, Moon Palace, or Paragon. Paper can be thick, thin, bright white or cream coloured as long as it is paper that is sold specifically for Sumi-e/Asian calligraphy. Some Asian stores don’t have ‘brand’ names but sell their paper in large sheets that can be cut down to any size.



For the Way of the Brush at MISSA, I am suggesting a second, small brush for some detail work as well as for signatures. The one in the middle is called a menso brush. It is the most popular for detail work in sumi-e.



Finding supplies locally:

Victoria's Chinatown: there is a store called Dragon Village, where I found brushes, paints, and other calligraphy or sumi-e supplies. There could be others in the area.

Vancouver's Chinatown also has several stores that carry the same supplies, including paper. It's a bit of a hunt, as some stores have closed, sadly.

On-line:

If you are an Amazon.ca shopper, I can suggest the following:

Easyou Chinese Calligraphy Natural Stone (Luowen Stone) She Ink stone 5" - comes with an inexpensive ink stick \$20 plus shipping.

T Tocas 5" Ink Stone with Cover & 4" plus Oil Smoke Ink Block \$22 plus shipping
or, if you just type "Japanese ink stick" in the search box, you'll come up with a myriad of ink sticks, stones, and other items - not all necessarily Japanese. Although one can buy many items online, including the felt pads, Amazon isn't a reliable source for brushes, as many of the ones advertised are not good, while others are prohibitively expensive.

Please bring packing materials to safely transport your work home.

PLEASE LABEL YOUR SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT!

Many art supply stores will offer discounts to students. Just ask!

MISSA students receive 10% off supplies at Island Blue Print.

<http://www.islandblue.com/> (online orders: mention you are a MISSA student in the comments of your order)

Supply questions may be directed to the instructor: heather at thewayofthebrush.com
Replace "at" with the @ symbol. All other questions should be directed to
missa@missa.ca