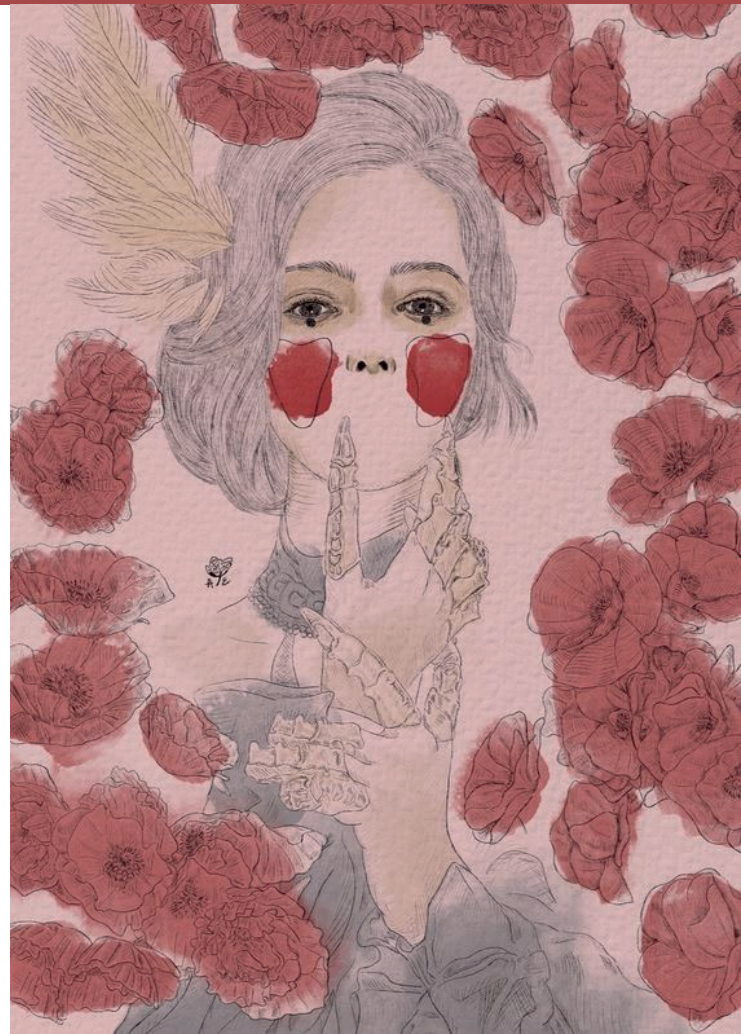




BEOPEN
art

Ana Espriella

"The material does not make the
artist... At the beginning"



All right, so you decided it's time to start your journey in the world of art and you got all your materials: A whole set of 24 graphite pencils, then another big set of color pencils, beautiful watercolor, oil paintings, a bunch of brushes... And it's a fantastic idea if it wasn't by the fact that you are probably going to waste all those pretty materials along with your money.

I know it sounds harsh but let me explain myself. When you begin as an artist, you will explore, destroy, and create new stuff. You are going to learn how to use paintings, how to prepare the canvas... God! Even how to properly sharpen your pencil! (spoiler alert, you are going to stop using pencil sharpeners). So, in the meantime, you are going to waste a lot of material (probably on purpose) in order to learn all of that.

With that in mind, instead of wasting USD 100 on an oil painting set that's not going to be used to create a masterpiece, you better buy a cheaper option to learn. Of course, when time passes by and you become a more advanced artist, you have to start investing in better materials. After all, the quality does change, and even how the artwork is preserved with the passing of time changes depending on what you use.

So, here are a few cheap materials you can use while you are either learning or practicing:

Ballpoint pens

Yup, those pens you use to do your homework or take note of your work are the perfect material to practice your drawing without worrying about carrying along a bunch of stuff. With a ballpoint pen, you can practice pressure on holding your pencil or brush, as well of how to shadow with hatched drawing.

Leftovers of your morning coffee

Did you accidentally make more coffee than you normally drink? Perfect! Painting with coffee is an old classic trick that at one point a lot of artists do. Coffee behaves in a similar way as watercolor, so it's a great material for practicing and to learn how the paper behaves depending on the weight of the paper and the amount of water you use. As an extra tip, wine also works but you have to keep in mind that wine oxidizes and, over time, your purple paint will turn brown.



Soy sauce

Soy sauce has a consistency and effect very similar to ink. It's dense enough to behave as a light liquid, but once it's dry it turns into a more dense/sticky material that even reflects a lot of light, just like some inks.

Cardboard as a canvas

Cardboard is both cheaper and easier to get than a canvas, with the advantage that you don't feel bad about "wasting" it if an art piece doesn't turn out the way you wanted. Of course, for future pieces use a corresponding canvas or paper depending on the material you are using, but for practice, nothing like a good piece of cardboard!



Free brand merch notebooks

Oh boy, now we are talking! Nothing better for an artist than free stuff. Have you seen how some brands try to promote a new product or do a recruitment marketing campaign to hire new people? Well, usually they give away free merchandise such as pens, stress balls, stickers and yes, small notebooks. Those notebooks are usually small so it's perfect to carry on whenever you go out and want to do a quick little practice or draw something you saw on the street. And if you don't like the brand logo on the cover then good news: You are an artist! You can put a sticker over it or draw/paint it so you can customize it with your style.

Again, after a while, I do recommend you to get better quality paintings, canvas, paper, etc. but at the beginning, well, just try and experiment so you can learn and practice. There's no need to use a Winsor & Newton 108 watercolor tube set or a Uni Posca set of 24 colors when you are literally just learning how light and shadows function or when you are practicing human anatomy. Just have fun and be a cheap mess!