



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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desertinstitute@joshuatree.org
55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,
Yucca Valley, 92284

PLEIN AIR: CAPTURING LIGHT & SHADOWS

FIELD CLASS / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: JESSICA SCHIFFMAN

APRIL 9TH, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Painting the landscape from life is thrilling and can be challenging as well. The world is filled with an infinite variety of color and value, and an overwhelming amount of detail. Patterns of shadow and light are changing constantly. This workshop will help you to simplify and organize what you see, and go on to create satisfying, dynamic paintings with strong, logical dark and light patterns. Topics will include composition, focal point, perspective, value (dark and light), underpainting, painting *ala prima* (layering wet paint without making mud), color theory, mixing paint, and more. This session will start with a demo painting as Jessica explains her step-by-step method. Students will be given individual feedback and guidance.

PROGRAM AGENDA

We'll start off with a brief introduction and safety talk. Jessica, the instructor, will do a demonstration painting, explaining each step. You will then set up your supplies at your desired location within the group site and you will paint with instructor feedback.

MEETING LOCATION

Indian Cove Group Site #6, 68917 Indian Cove Cir, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277.

Please arrive on time; we start classes promptly, and in the case of hikes or other classes on the go, we cannot wait for students who arrive late.

REQUIRED PREPARATION*

Waiver: All participants must complete the [participation waiver](#) at least 24 hours before a class begins. *Failure to do so may forfeit your right to participate.*

Park Pass (\$30 per vehicle): For classes inside Joshua Tree National Park, participants are now required to purchase a [park pass](#). You can purchase a park pass [online](#), or pay at a park entrance. If you have an existing pass you may use that at the entrance!

ACTIVITY LEVEL

CHALLENGING BUT REWARDING

Please contact us if you have questions about your ability to participate.
desertinstitute@joshuatree.org

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park
- Meals, Lodging, or Transportation
- Paints, brushes, canvas, palette

WHAT TO BRING

The essentials for all field courses:

- Water, between 3 and 4 liters per person for a full day outing
- Food and snacks, easily packed and eaten in the field (please leave no trace)
- Close-toed athletic shoes or hiking boots; no sandals, not even hiking sandals!
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen; light-colored long-sleeved shirts are recommended and very effective on hot days
- Warm layers for cooler mornings/evenings (it can be surprisingly cold!)
- Backpack to carry food, water, and any personal items you need for the day

Required for this course:

Easel

- A pochade box and a tripod, or a Julian or French easel. Or you can get by with a cheaper portable easel if you have some sort of table to put your paint on.

Paint, basic colors

Gamblin, Blick, Grumbacher, or Utrecht are decent brands. There are also higher quality, more expensive paints available. Buy artist's quality, not student paint, unless you need to save money. Student paint is so diluted, that you will be spending more in the end.

- Ultramarine blue
- Thalo blue
- Cadmium red light
- Alizeran crimson
- Cadmium yellow medium

- Burnt sienna
- Yellow ochre
- Titanium white

Other nice colors you don't really need

- Cadmium orange (I use lots of this but of course you can mix your own orange)
- Sap green (I love this transparent green but you can mix your own green)
- Dioxazine purple (you will use very little of this and you can easily mix ultramarine blue and alizeran crimson to get purple)
- Thalo green (you will use very little of this beautiful color. You can mix thalo blue with yellow to get a bright pure green similar to this)
- Carbon black. You won't be arrested if you use black, but I haven't used it for years. I mix ultramarine blue with burnt sienna, or other combinations, to make a more interesting black
- Zinc white is a warmer, more transparent white than titanium. It's useful as an extender for the thick final layer of paint.

Thinner

- Turpenoid or Gamsol, and a couple of small containers.

Medium

- Liquin or neo megilp or linseed oil. Linseed oil dries the slowest and is least toxic. Liquin dries fastest and is most toxic. I use linseed oil.

Brushes

- I prefer synthetic brushes over natural bristles. My favorites right now are Catalyst by Princeton #6 and 8 and 10 "bright", and Zen by Royal and Langnickel, #6, and Winsor Newton University Round, #2. They are all affordable synthetic brushes available from dickblick.com. There are lots of other choices, just make sure the bristles are stiff, not soft.

Canvas

- You will want to work small, 9X12 to 11X14 is a good size. Most plein air painters use canvas boards, which are cheap and light. If you use back-stapled stretched canvas, you can paint around the edges and won't have to bother with a frame.

Palette

- The French easel or pochade box usually comes with a wooden one (good for oils but maybe not good for acrylics). A disposable paper palette is fine. The Masterson palette had a tight-fitting lid so you can save your paint. 12X16 is a good size. Or you can save your paint in plastic pill boxes with separate compartments.

Canvas Carrier

- I use empty pizza boxes to get my wet canvases home safely.

Other important things

- Paper towels or rags
- Trash bag
- Sketchbook
- Palette knife
- Sunhat
- Insect Repellant
- Latex gloves or Vaseline to protect your hands
- Camera (or phone)
- Some kind of folding chair, if you paint sitting.

Recommended for this course (but not required):

- Notebook and pencil are always good to have

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR

JESSICA SCHIFFMAN has been a working artist for nearly thirty years. Her oil and acrylic paintings, including desert landscapes, forest scenes, figurative works and abstracts, are widely collected. In addition, she has illustrated numerous children's books and created murals. Jessica has taught art for over twenty years at venues including the Idyllwild Arts Academy and Summer Program, the Desert Art Center in Palm Springs and the Create Center in Palm Desert. Jessica studied painting at the San Francisco Art Institute.

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

There is no cell service in the park! Please allow ample time to arrive at the meeting location; park entrances may be very busy on weekends (see FAQs).

Please make sure you check weather conditions and dress accordingly.



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FAQ+ _

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Desert Institute Manager Benny Erdahl: **949-241-9693**
or Education Director Dr. Justin Lenzi: **760-819-4714**

For classes meeting inside the park, it can take up to 45 minutes to go through an entrance gate on weekends after 9am (though 15-20 minutes is typical). Please allot time to park, as parking lots tend to be congested between 10am and 4p in the busy season. ***There is no cell service in the park***, please plan accordingly.

WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified more than 14 days in advance. We are unable to process refunds for *any* cancellations less than 14 days in advance.

DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

If we do not meet our minimum of 6 registered participants for any given activity, we will likely cancel the activity with at least 48+ hours notice.

Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful.

We recommend that you purchase travel insurance, as we are unable to reimburse for expenses you incur due to a canceled class, such as airfare and hotel.

WHAT IF I FORGOT SOMETHING I NEED?

Our visitor centers and park stores are stocked with amazing essentials for your adventure. Preview or purchase items from our [online shop](#); we carry [hats](#), [shirts](#), bandanas, water bottles, notebooks, [maps](#), [books](#). And more!

CAN I BRING MY KIDS? MY SPOUSE? PETS?

Only registered participants may attend Desert Institute activities (unless noted in the activity description). If this is a kid-friendly activity, please make sure your child(ren) are registered and meet the age requirements.

As much as we love pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.

