

# Painting Without Paint

A photograph of an artist's workspace. In the foreground, a person's hand is using a silver stylus to paint a landscape on a tablet. The tablet screen shows a scene with a lighthouse and a boat. The artist is wearing a dark watch. In the background, there are various art supplies: a palette with watercolor paints, brushes, and tubes of paint on a wooden table. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a studio environment.

Landscapes with your tablet

Matthew Palmer

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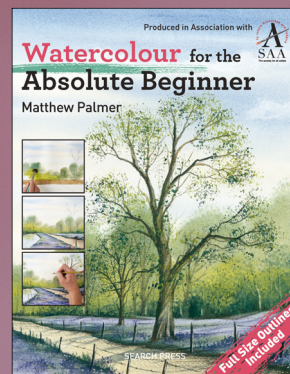
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Landscapes with your tablet



Matthew Palmer is one of the most renowned demonstrators for the Society for All Artists (SAA), and his classes are particularly popular with beginners. He has been painting seriously for thirty years and teaching for twenty, including demonstrating digital art for four. He has his own studio at his home in Derbyshire and teaches over two hundred people per week, as well as running watercolour workshops and holidays. He has many personal exhibitions, participates in several art shows and appears regularly on the Painting and Drawing Channel.

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Landscapes with your tablet

Matthew Palmer

## Dedication

To Sarah, for coming into my life and making me and everyone around her happy.

Also to my Mum, whose continued support and encouragement is essential.

Finally to my Dad, Ken Palmer (1938–2015), may he rest in peace and keep sailing on.

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Thank you to Katie and Edd and all at Search Press for all  
the help and support on this project.

Thanks to my parents for believing in me and the  
encouragement they gave; and finally to Sarah for being  
my world.

Page 1

### Atmospheric London Sunset

*The skyline across the River Thames in London is such an iconic silhouette,  
and one of my favourite views in the UK. This and the painting opposite  
were painted in the Procreate painting app.*

Opposite:

### Across the Valley

*A picturesque church pictured during a warm summer's evening as the  
night draws in.*



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# Introduction

As an established professional artist and tutor for twenty years, I enjoy using all forms of painting media. I also love sketching and painting when out and about. The digital medium makes this really easy and, since you need only your tablet and a finger, it is an 'always with me' art form.

The feel of painting on the tablet screen is surprising similar to traditional painting, and if you use a brush stylus, it is even closer. In fact, I apply the same approach to my digital painting as I do to my acrylic and watercolour painting.

Apart from the obvious advantages that no water or paints are needed, all the same principles apply to digital art as to traditional art. You can even work in layers as you do in watercolour; for example, the sky on the first layer, the distant background mountains overlaid on a second layer, and layer three is the foreground. The big advantage of digital art is that you can alter each layer at any point – even transform it entirely. If you start to feel a background mountain is too large, for example, you can change the colour, resize it, or remove it entirely. Perhaps you have just painted a seascape and a yacht but later decide you want another yacht – digital art allows you not only to duplicate the yacht but also to alter its size, position and colour.

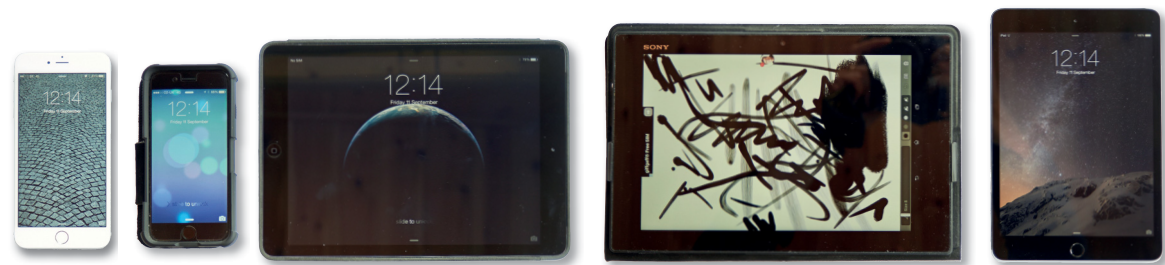
Just like different painting media, different painting applications or 'apps' work differently, and they all have their own pros and cons. In addition, new apps are developed and new features are added to existing ones. It is an exciting time to dip your toes into digital art!

I find tablet art addictive; you can be sitting on the train or in the pub and produce a painting using no water, no paint and creating no mess – it's great. I would encourage anyone to give it a go; once you start you will find you just can't stop. Painting without paint is its own art form.



## Venice

*As shown in the work-in-progress pictures above, I paint with my tablet exactly as I do with paint on canvas or paper: starting with a sky, I add the midground before working forward towards the foreground. The finished painting opposite, created on Procreate, shows the results you can get with this wonderful digital medium.*



# Materials

You need very little to begin digital painting – just a tablet computer and your finger, and away you go. The following pages look in more detail at what is available to you.

## Tablet

One of the first questions my students ask me is 'Does it matter which tablet I use?' The short answer is no. There are lots of different tablet types, but most use either the iOS or Android operating systems. Whether you choose an Android or iOS-based tablet does not really matter. Although I focus on the iPad in this book, from time to time I use an Android tablet to paint with. New software and apps are being developed all the time for both of the popular tablets types. As long as your tablet has a touchscreen and the ability to download a painting app, you will be able to use it.

That said, the iPad has a much greater choice of apps or 'applications' for art. This is simply because iPads are much more popular than other tablets so developers create more content for this device. However, similar art apps are available for, and some are even unique to, the Android platform. The great thing is that once you have learned one application, they are all fairly similar.

*A selection of digital tablets and smartphones.*



### MATTHEW'S MATERIALS – MY PREFERRED TABLET

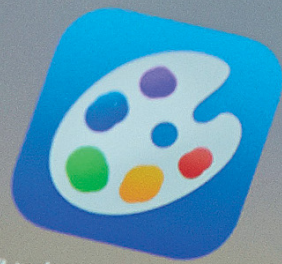
I use an iPad Pro, an iPad Air and an iPad Mini, which have 33cm (13in), 25.5cm (10in) and 20cm (8in) screen sizes respectively. All work well and the one I choose to use depends simply on which one I have with me at the time. I have even used my iPhone to produce a painting, as the same apps are available for smartphones as well.

New tablets and updated models of existing tablets come onto the market each year, with various sizes of screen. The great news is that all models are perfectly fine to paint with. Although you might think working on a smaller screen size is more difficult, I do not really feel there is much difference, as you soon get 'in the zone'.

Whatever you choose to use, it is important to note that brush sizes will vary depending on your tablet. A 100px brush on an iPad Air, for example, will be equivalent to a 150px brush on an iPad Mini, owing to the smaller screen size.



# Art Apps



Brushes Redux



Procreate



SketchBookX



ArtRage



Art Set

Just a few of the many art apps available today.

## Apps

'App', short for application, is another name for a computer program or software. When people talk about apps they are normally referring to programs that run on mobile devices like iPads and Android tablets. A tablet is nothing without the apps.

There are over 1.5 million apps for download on iOS and more than 750,000 for Android or other tablet devices. A huge proportion of these apps are games and utility programs but there is also a huge variety of creative apps, including art apps. These vary from photography to design, from sketchbook apps to the painting programs we look at here. New apps are introduced all the time. The great thing about art apps is that they tend to use similar sets of tools, colour palettes and brushes, so once you have learned how to use one, you will be able to find your way around them all.

## How do I download apps?

When you buy a tablet computer, it will have a built-in app store or play store. These are the areas you go to in order to buy and download apps. Some apps are free and others you pay for. Try looking up 'art apps' on your internet search engine to find out more on specific apps.

## Are all apps similar?

It is important to say that while each of the apps is unique, they all share similarities. For example, they all use varied styles of brushes, they all allow you to increase the brush size, choose various colours and work with layers. My recommendation is to stick with one app to begin with and learn to use that.

Once you feel confident, start playing around with other apps. A particular app might have a special feature that you love and only playing around or experimenting with the program will bring this out.

## Do art apps change over time?

A great thing about apps is that they get updated for free. In these updates, the programmers fix bugs and include new features, but the basic structure of the app will stay the same. Updates normally add minor improvements, so even in several years' time the app will probably be recognisable. As a result, the techniques in this book will always be relevant and work with all painting and art apps.

## Which painting app is best?

I have been painting with an iPad for several years and a few apps stand out to me as my favourites. These are *Brushes* (the current version is called *Brushes Redux*), *Procreate* and *ArtRage*. The instructions in this book are demonstrated on the *Brushes* app, because it is versatile and free, but the information can be applied more generally to other apps. There are notes throughout to give pointers on using other apps, particularly *Procreate*.

