

# Painting

*by Sophia*



## WHAT'S COVERED

There are several kinds of paint available for art, and an artist may choose a type of paint for very specific reasons. In this lesson, you will learn the characteristics, including the advantages and disadvantages, of the following types of paint:

## 1. Oil Paint

Paint is a combination of a **pigment** (color) with a **binder** (liquid that keeps it together). When the paint is applied to a surface, the binder helps the particles to adhere, or stick to, that surface. Eventually the binder evaporates to leave only the pigment behind.

**Oil paint** is a pigment suspended in an oil-based binder, usually linseed oil. Linseed oil comes from flax seeds. Oil painting emerged as the preferred paint of choice in Europe during the 15th century. It is relatively easy to work with, holds color well, and is easy to combine with other colors. The artwork produced with oil paint will often last a long time if proper precautions are taken while working with it.

➞ **EXAMPLE** This is an example of an oil painting.



Woman with a Hat by Henri Matisse



#### TERMS TO KNOW

##### **Pigment**

Fragments of color, usually ground minerals, sometimes also plant dyes or synthetic colors

**Binder**

Liquid substance that holds pigments together and helps them adhere to the surface of the painting

**Oil Paint**

Type of paint that uses linseed oil (usually) as a binder

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## 2. Acrylic Paint

**Acrylic paint** is a relative newcomer, emerging during the 1950s. It is a pigment suspended in a synthetic, or artificially made, binder. The emergence of acrylic paints allowed for experimental types of artwork to be produced that were not possible with oil paints because of their much slower drying times. Acrylic paint dries quickly and was the paint of choice for artists such as Jackson Pollock, who relied on it to create his splatter, or drip, style paintings.

**TERM TO KNOW****Acrylic Paint**

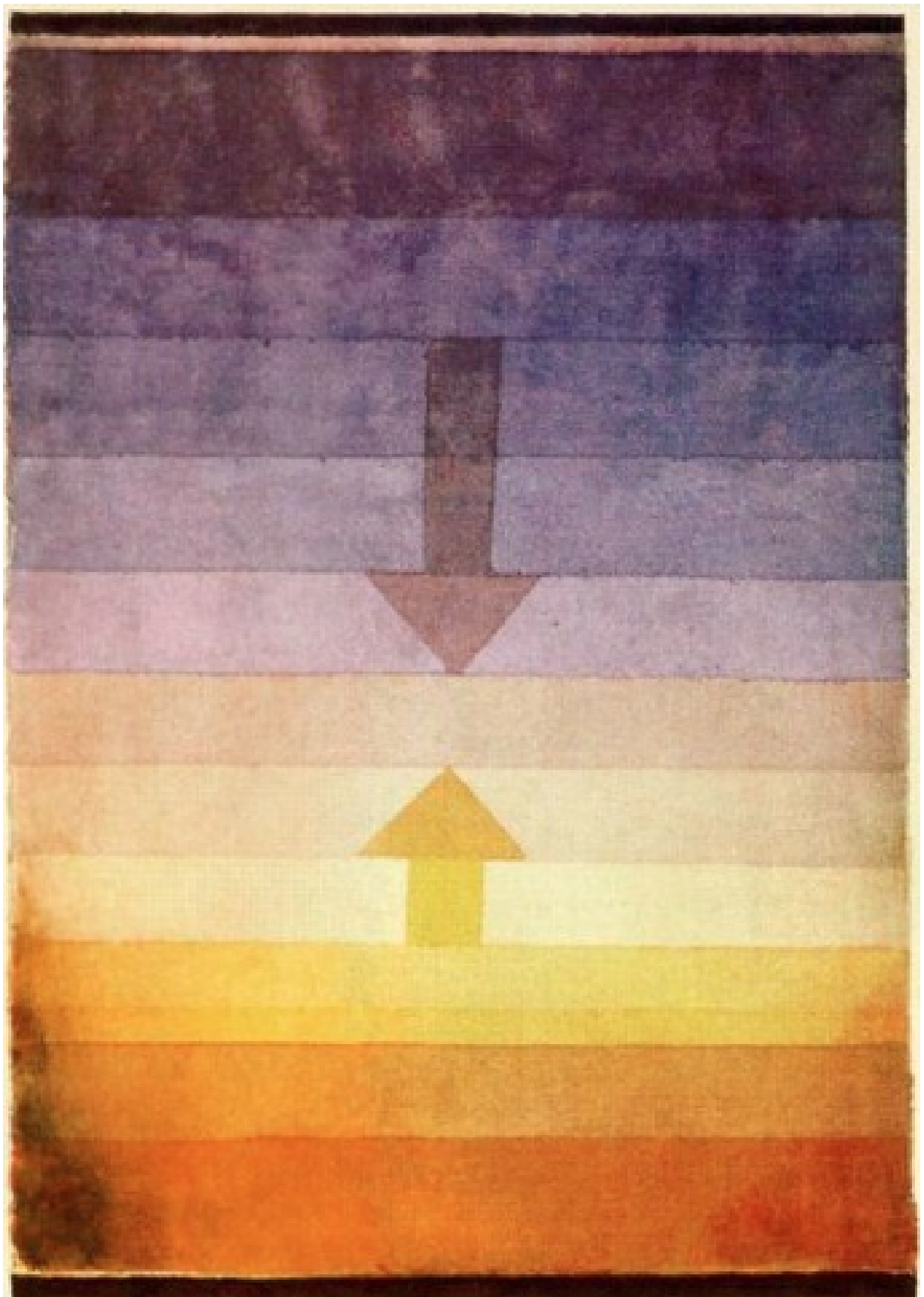
Type of paint developed in the mid-20th century that use synthetic polymers as binders; very fast-drying compared to oil

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## 3. Watercolor Paint

**Watercolor paint** is pigment suspended in a water binder. Water-based paints are much easier to clean up, are easily blended, and allow for a translucency, or near transparency. This translucency is very difficult to achieve with other types of paint, even when thinning them down. Some artists find that they produce a more natural or realistic color effect. This can be open to interpretation, particularly with objects such as water or the sky, where the colors tend to fade into each other.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Below is an example of a watercolor painting.



Separation in the Evening by Paul Klee



#### TERM TO KNOW

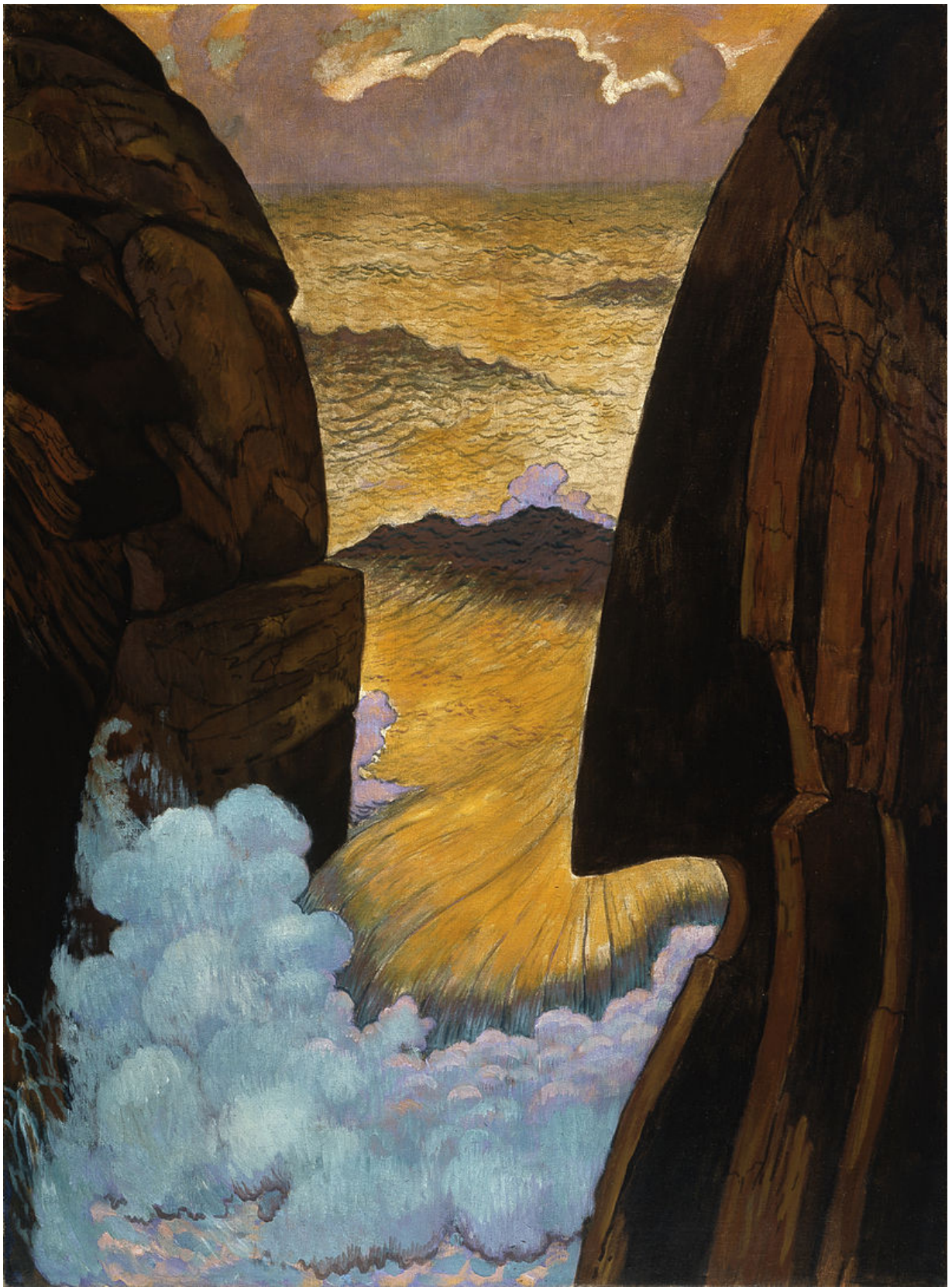
**Watercolor Paint**

## 4. Tempera Paint

**Tempera paint** is pigment suspended in a protein binder, typically egg yolk or milk casein, or milk protein. It's one of the earliest types of paint used, and it tends to produce a nice glossy finish. Long-lasting and durable, tempera paint is used in Fresco Secco, which is painting on dry plaster. The binder in the tempera paint helps moisten the plaster to create adhesion.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Below is an example of a tempera painting.





Georges Lacombe

*The Green Wave by Georges Lacombe*



TERM TO KNOW

**Tempera Paint**

## 5. Encaustic Paint

**Encaustic paint** is pigment suspended in a beeswax binder. It is also one of the earliest types of paint. Interestingly, in order to work with it, the artist uses hot metal tools to help manipulate and blend the wax, rather than the typical paint brush. The earliest examples of encaustic painting are the Fayum mummy portraits from Egypt, dated between 100 and 300 AD.

➞ **EXAMPLE** Below is an example of an encaustic painting.





Fayum mummy portraits



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### Encaustic Paint

Type of paint that uses beeswax as a binder



#### SUMMARY

Paint is a combination of pigment, or color, with a binder, a liquid that keeps it all together. There are several different kinds of paint, and each has its own characteristics. In this lesson, you learned about the advantages and disadvantages of **oil paint**, **acrylic paint**, **watercolor paint**, **tempera paint**, and **encaustic paint**.

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#### TERMS TO KNOW

##### Acrylic

A type of paint developed in the late twentieth century that uses synthetic polymers as binders. It is very fast drying compared to oil.

##### Binder

The liquid substance that holds pigments together and helps them adhere to the surface of a painting.

##### Encaustic

A type of painting that uses beeswax as a binder.



**Oil**

A type of paint that uses linseed oil as a binder.

**Pigment**

Fragments of color, usually ground minerals, sometimes also plant dyes or synthetic colors.

**Tempera**

A type of paint that uses egg yolk as a binder.

**Watercolor**

A type of paint in which the pigment is temporarily suspended in water.