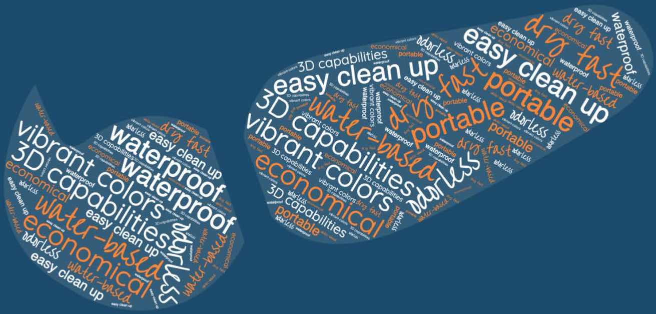
RETHINK ACRYLIC

History of Acrylic Paint

Developed in Germany in 1934, acrylic paint was a groundbreaking discovery combining the best of oil and watercolor paints. Initially sold as house paint, artists began experimenting with it in the 1950s. To put this in perspective, the earliest painting ever created (to date) was created 40,000 years ago. That's 39,940 years artists have created art without acrylic paints.

Benefits of Acrylic Paints



Who Uses Acrylic Paints?

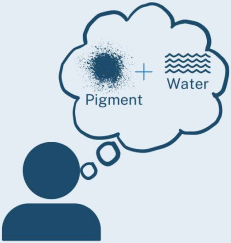
Painters | Mixed Media Artists | Muralists | Art Schools |
K12 schools with art programs | Art classes/workshops | Hobbyist & Crafters | Others

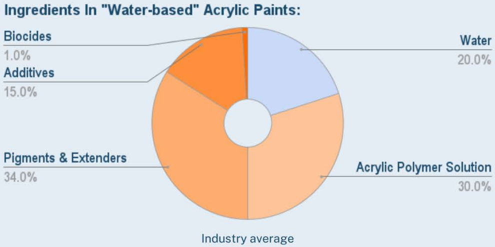
Famous Acrylic Painters

Andy Warhol
David Hockney
Mark Rothko
Jackson Pollock
Helen Frankenthaler

What is in "water-based" acrylic paint?

What we believe:





The Chemistry for "water-based" acrylic paints:
Water evaporates as the paint dries allowing it to harden to a **plastic-like**, waterproof form.

Is acrylic paint environmentally friendly?

The raw materials for petroleum-based polymers come from fossil fuels.
In addition, the production of petroleum-based plastics requires a large amount of energy which is derived from fossil fuels as well.
This means that acrylic paints have a huge environmental impact.

Acrylic paint production contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and unsustainable natural gas and petroleum sourcing which are both contributing factors to climate change.

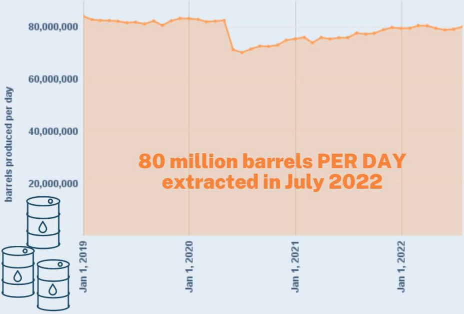
On top of that, acrylic paints leak microplastics which flow into our waterways harming the ecosystems of the oceans & waterways, and contribute to global warming.

Let's look at the journey of acrylic paint to really understand what it's impact is.

The Paint Journey

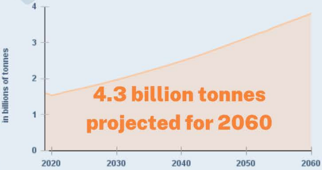
Global Crude Oil Production Increasing

Crude oil/petroleum extracted for raw materials



80 million barrels PER DAY extracted in July 2022

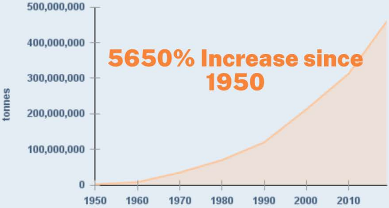
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Expected to More Than Double Globally by 2060



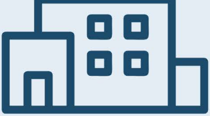
4.3 billion tonnes projected for 2060

Oil/petroleum refinery processes raw materials for paint manufacturers

We are creating more petroleum-based plastics every year globally



5650% Increase since 1950



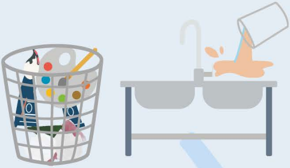
Paint created & packaged
at manufacturing facilities

52 million tonnes of paint
produced every year.

If we were to convert 52 million tonnes of paint to something easier for an artist to visualize such as a tube of paint, it would equal:

917,123,009,608
tubes of 2 oz paint

Use



Studio waste

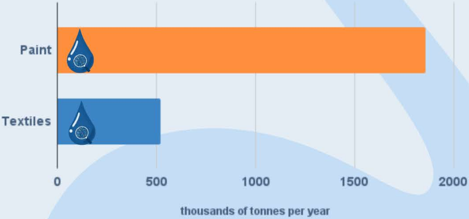
Landfill

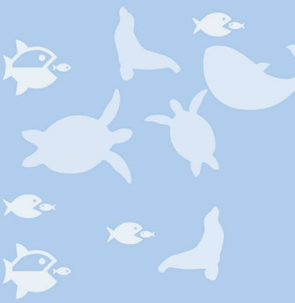
7.4 million tonnes of paint is leaked into oceans, waterways & land each year.

Of that, 1.9 million tonnes are microplastics.

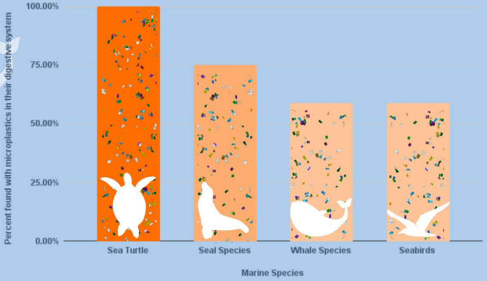
Until recently, it was assumed that textiles were the main contributor to microplastic leakage into the oceans and waterways.

Paint contributes 256% more microplastics to oceans & waterways than textiles





100% of sea turtles studied have been found with microplastics in their digestive systems



What can you do about it?

1

Reduce

Saying NO to acrylic paints reduces the demand for them from the manufacturer.

So manufacturers will stop creating acrylic paints,

which will reduce demand for petroleum-based polymers from refineries.

Which will reduce demand for fossil fuels,

Which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions &

microplastics in our world

2

Find Alternatives

Remember, painters were painting for thousands of years before acrylic paints were even invented.

Make your own paint like the Old Masters.
Here are some "old" recipes for a new sustainable age

Watercolor:

Oil Paint:

Printing Ink:

Egg Tempera:

Natural Pigment
+
Gum Arabic
+
Honey

Natural Pigment
+
Walnut Oil

Natural Pigment
+
Walnut Oil
+
Gum Arabic
+
Rice Starch

Natural Pigment
+
Egg Yolk
+
Water

3

Recycle

Mix all your leftover paint together and you'll never have to buy black paint again.

When you are finished with your paint, ALWAYS recycle the paint, the waste water, & any paint towels at the appropriate recycling center for hazardous household waste in your area.

Reuse/reimagine paintings that were never finished, or didn't sell. Either paint over them, or repurpose them into other projects.

Sources

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