

## **Let's Talk Brushes**

### **Cleaning Stiff Brushes**

If you have brushes that are stiff, especially at the ferrule you need them cleaned before use. There are several ways to do this.

I prefer to use a little lemon essence...it really softens stiff brushes quick.

If you don't have lemon essence on hand, as a second choice you can use a 50/50 mix of mineral oil and lavender oil.

For both these cleaners, soak the brush. Once soft start cleaning in your brush. Hold the brush as flat as possible and wiggle it side to side on a clean tile. Turn brush over and repeat. Then, with brush flat use your finger to press it out on a clean lint free cloth. This will help pull some of the crud out. Do not hold brush at much of an angle or you risk breaking the hairs. Put brush in cleaner again and repeat wiggle/press, repeat until you no longer see any dirt, lint, or paint coming from the ferrule. Once you THINK the brush is clean do the process one more time. Now it should be soft up to the ferrule and ready for conditioning.

### **Conditioning Brushes (Open Mediums)**

#### *Square Shaders*

This type of brush needs to be conditioned well and often. The process is: dip your brush in oil up to the ferrule. Then lay the brush almost horizontal on a tile and wiggle the brush in a side to side motion. Turn brush over and repeat. Press out excess oil from the tip half of the brush on a lint free cloth again with brush horizontal. The oil left in the upper half of the brush and ferrule will help with smooth painting. Conditioning should be repeated when the hairs start to split. The brush should look like a perfect wedge with no splits in the hairs.

When following this procedure, be sure not to press down vertically with the brush handle, if the hairs are pressed against the edge of the ferrule or quill it will weaken them and cause the brush to lose hairs. Another practice which results in loss of hairs is pressing down and out with your finger when pressing out excess oil. This pulls hairs out of the brush. Just use a light downward press.

#### *Pointer Brushes*

Dip in oil and wiggle on a tile, the same as a shader. Then roll on a rag to shape the point, do not press out or you will lose the point.