

Oil painting kits are sold by hobby, artist and craft stores, either at a physical location or through online websites. The three basic types of artistic oil painting kits are: the paint-by-number style of kit; the kind of kit that contains all the necessary components to complete one particular canvas artwork painting project; or the sort that provides no specific painting to complete but that acts as a beginner's kit, which contains the basics for budding artists to start enjoying their new hobby.

Paint-by-number oil painting kits enjoyed their heyday during the 1950s, but the interest in them has waned since. These kits were the brainchild of Dan Robbins, who invented the concept and whose company, Craft Master, manufactured millions of units during the craze. The paint-by-number craft kits allowed anyone to become an artist almost overnight. The subject of the framed paintings ranged from animals to landscapes to replicas of the greatest masterpieces of the ages. People who purchased the paint-by-number oil painting kits found them entertaining and simple to complete. The kits included a pre-stamped number-coded canvas; a brush; and small marked containers of paint that corresponded to the numbers on the canvas. Would-be artists would simply consult the color chart and fill in the stamped sections with the appropriate paint color, Voila-a masterpiece was created with little or no artistic training.

While paint-by-numbers kits are less popular than in year's past, some manufacturers continue to make them. The kits today are geared more toward children, and many of the oil paints have been replaced with easier to use acrylics. Some companies offer to customize a paint-by-number image - you can take a photograph, send it in, and the company will generate a computerized image that will become a personalized art masterpiece.

The other types of traditional oil painting kits leave more to the imagination - and rely on a good deal more artistic talent or training. Some of these kits include a canvas, brushes, the pigments needed to paint a particular image, and instructions on the techniques needed to complete a specific canvas painting. The other type that falls into this same category includes the basic beginner's kit. This kind of kit, sometimes called a set, doesn't provide instruction for any specific painting; it simply includes items that all beginners need such as an assortment of oil colors, brushes, and palettes. Many of these oil painting kits come in special boxes or cases to keep all your tools and supplies together.

One more word about the paint-by-number type of oil painting kits: while you are still able to order new kits, collectors have now begun snapping up the vintage kits as collectibles. Whether you are an artist or not, you may want to pick one up at your local garage sale or flea market.

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Some of those old-school kits that originally sold for only a few dollars are now selling as collectibles for as much as \$250 each.