

BRUSHES

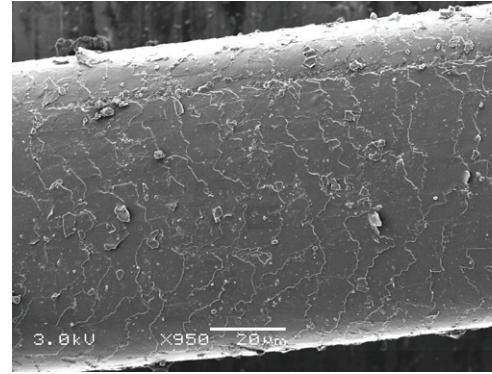
COLOR CARRYING CAPACITY:

The main role of your brush is to correctly absorb the paint and to apply it to the painting surface, in this case watercolor paper. To do this the hairs of the brush should be covered with scales. You can only find scales on natural hair and bristle. They can only be seen under a microscope (See examples to the right). The main hairs for this are sable, squirrel and boar bristle. The scales enable the brush to absorb a large amount of color. This becomes problematic when working with synthetic brushes, which contain very smooth and slippery hairs that do not retain the paint very well.

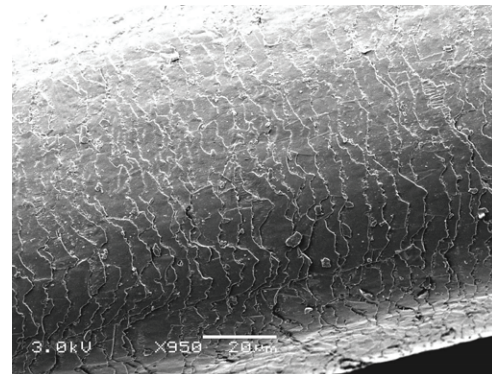
The shape and firmness of the brush hairs are very important as well. A sable or squirrel hair brush will have a fine tip, a boar bristle brush will have several points at the end. A bristle brush will function somewhat similar to a rack in the application of the paint. In some cases a bristle can be used with watercolor, especially for certain approaches to dry brushing. However, sable and squirrel hair brush are generally the most effective and useful. If they are cared for properly a natural sable hair brush will last you a lifetime.

Natural Hair and Synthetic Hair fibers under a microscope.

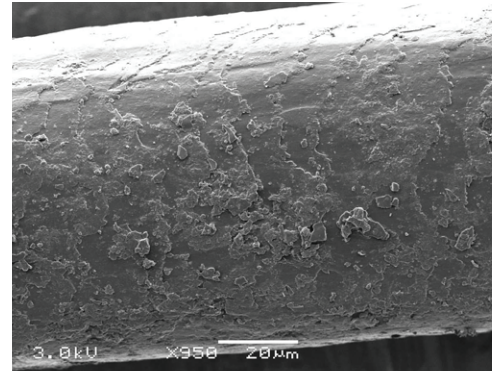
SABLE



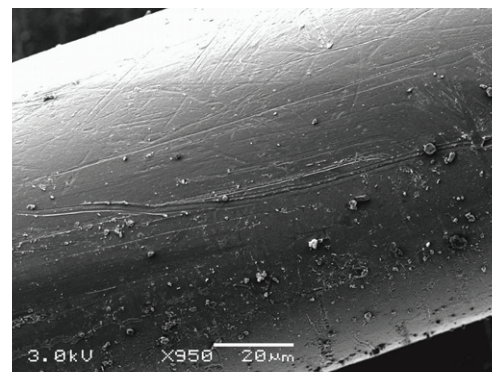
BOAR BRISTLE



SQUIRREL



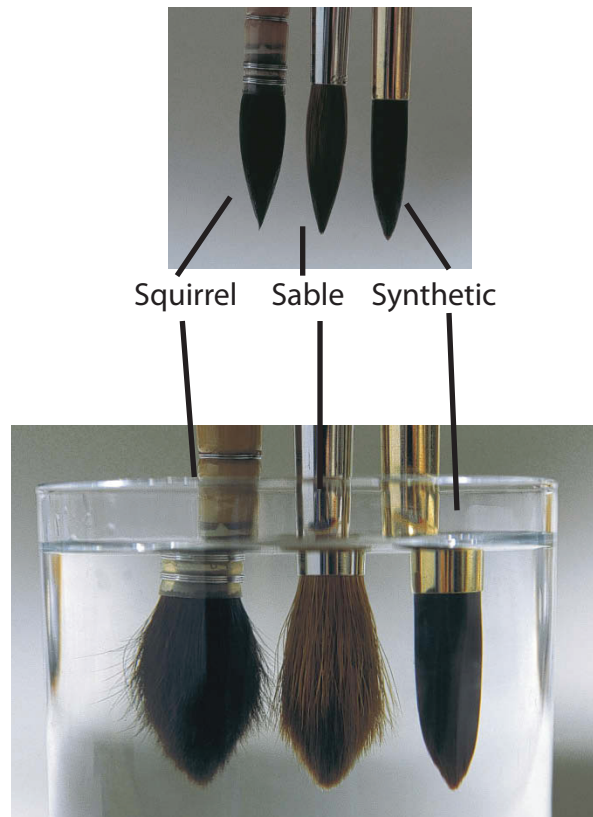
SYNTHETIC



BRUSHES

WATER HOLDING CAPACITY:

You should use a brush that can hold a large amount of water. Natural hair brushes will absorb and carry the water. Synthetic brushes tend to repel the water. In the example to the right you can see that the water seems to double the size of the two natural hair brushes. In the synthetic brush, there is no real change in the size when it is put into water. It is generally repelling the water while the two natural hair brushes are absorbing water.



APPLYING THE COLOR:

When you are applying the color the brush should have good shape retention, spring, responsiveness and elasticity. Sable is the most responsive of all of the hair types. It reacts very well to the lightest of pressures and can apply the paint in a long and even flow.

