

L A U R E N S A U D E R

the Deeply
Mindful
Process of
Earth
Pigments

THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS HEIGHTENED AWARENESS AND
GENUINE REVERENCE FOR THE NATURAL WORLD.



I am one with

the Earth.

Learning its language,

and uncovering its

beauty.

Introduction

My curiosity in creating handmade paints began long ago when I felt a specific inspiration from the landscape. Each place more beautiful than the next, I wanted to translate every detail in my artistic practice, including color. I desired to create not only something about the landscape but something from the landscape. I surrounded myself with readings and teachings that I hoped I could piece together to bring light to the beautiful process of natural earth pigments.

Natural earth pigments are lush, they hold color in a unique way not like any other. They are textural and reflect fragments of light, revealing the true beauty of iron. They are deep, full of secret beauty. They hide in earth crevices emitting energy waiting for discovery.

Natural earth pigments have several names - native earth pigments, earth colors, earth ochres, iron oxide pigments, or any variation of those words. This material dates back to over 40,000 years ago, when mankind used pigments, primarily red ochre, in rituals and ceremonies. Later, they began to use it as an artistic material to create pictorial drawings. It wasn't until the 1700's when mankind first created color synthetically. Before then, color remained primarily the same - colors derived from natural earth pigments.

For personal use, a curious eye can find natural earth pigments anywhere. Iron covers the Earth's crust. As long as you keep your mind open and develop an awareness of the earth color around you, you will find natural earth pigments in abundance.



Earth Pigments

Pigments are insoluble in water and are physically and chemically unaffected by mediums they are mixed with.

Earth pigments are powder that comes from pulverizing geological material. Ochre is a subset of this material containing primarily iron and oxygen.

EARTH PIGMENTS

Powder that comes from pulverizing geological material.

MORTAR & PESTLE

A mortar & pestle will serve as the primary tool to grind earth materials into powder form.

GLASS MULLER

A muller is a glass tool with a rough, flat bottom that helps evenly distribute pigment powder in binder.

GLASS SLAB

A glass slab is what you will use to mix and mull the paint on.

SIEVE

A sieve is used to sift powder to a uniform size after it's pulverized just before you mull the mineral into paint.

PALETTE KNIFE

A mixing tool to blend pigments and binder before mulling.

BINDER

Glue that holds pigment particles together.

GLASS JAR

Storage for pigment powder.

PAINT STORAGE

Paint tubes or flat pans.



Collecting Natural Earth Pigments

Finding and collecting natural earth pigments is a gift. It hones your senses to the environment around you, connecting you to the landscape in ways you haven't felt before. Finding natural earth pigments is about being aware. No more or no less. You have to open your eyes and become conscious of the environment around you. When you begin to see colors pop from the soil, you know you're where the Earth is calling you.

The first time you search for natural earth pigments, start in locations that expose the raw earth. Seek out spaces that lack earth coverage, like grasses and mosses. Often, these areas are near water banks, quarries, road cuts, or uproots in forests.

Natural earth pigments are frequently found in the form of rocks. Despite common assumptions about rocks, these minerals come in all shapes, sizes, hardnesses and even colors. Once you locate a space that lacks greenery, begin to look for only colored objects. You'll see rocks and soils emerge in colors you never thought possible.

Start collecting anything that ranges in color from yellow to red, brown to white and green earths. Even if you are unsure, bring the material back to your studio to build a foundation of understanding for materiality.

As you collect, it's important to stay aware of your surroundings. Don't take without seeking permission, and don't take while harming. Keep in mind the rules and regulations of the areas where you choose to collect natural earth pigments. Collect earth pigments that won't harm surrounding ecosystems, and lastly, leave no trace.

Keep your mind open as you collect. Use this time as a moment of gratitude, reflection, and mindfulness. Finding and collecting natural earth pigments is a gift and it only brings you closer to the magic of the land. It's all about curiosity, staying aware, and letting the Earth speak to you

Mineral to Powder

1

Gauge the hardness of your iron ore. For a rock that is very hard, cover it with a cloth and use a hammer to break it into manageable pieces.

Place the small bits into your mortar & pestle. Further hammer the rock with the bottom part of the pestle. Begin to grind down into a powder pigment.

2

Place your sieve over your glass slab. Begin to brush pigment powder from your mortar & pestle into your sieve and shake to sift out the finer pigment powder.

Your sieve will help collect particles on your glass slab that are similarly sized. Collect the powder that did not fall through the sieve and rework it in your mortar & pestle until all pigment falls through the sieve.

3

Once your pigment powder is evenly sifted, measure out about 2 drams of powder (0.5 tbsp) on your glass slab.

4

Use your palette knife to make a small hole in the center of your mound. Slowly add about 20 drops of binder to your pigment powder.

5

Begin to mix with your palette knife until all powder is combined with liquid binder.

6

Use your glass muller to evenly coat each pigment powder with binder, working it in circular motions. Use your palette knife to gather it back into the center of your slab and repeat. Remember, this process is slow and mindful. To create a high quality paint, you may need to mull paint several times.

7

Once your pigment powder is evenly coated with binder and the paint feels smooth under the glass muller, gather the paint with your palette knife and scoop into a paint storage container (watercolor well, paint tube, etc.)



