

Albright Art Supply

A Quick Guide to Oil Painting

Oil Paint

Oil paint contains ground up pigment suspended in a binder. The binder such as linseed oil is a drying oil absorbing oxygen from the air. As a layer of paint is applied, it dries out forming a flexible and resistant layer. The binder dries slower than other mediums giving an artist more work time. Pigments can be suspended in walnut or sesame oil instead of linseed oil. M. Graham Oils use walnut oil as their binder because it tends to yellow less over time.

Albright Art Supply, we sell three artist grade paint: Michael Harding Handmade Oil Colours, Gamblin Oils, and M. Graham Oils.

Drying times vary because of a few factors such as:

- Environment: temperature, light, wind, etc.
- Pigment Color: some colors will dry faster than others.
- Adding Oil Mediums to paint.
- Brand of Paint.
- Quality of Paint.

Fast Drying Colors: Burnt Umber, Cobalt Blue, Raw Sienna, and Burnt Sienna.

Slow Drying Colors: Blacks, Sap Green, Alizarin Crimson and many reds, and Cadmium colors.

Painting Mediums

Artists can mix paints with a variety of mediums also known as solvents. Mediums speed up (linseed oil and alkyds) or slow down (poppyseed oil) the drying time of oils. Mediums will also change the way the paint performs making it easier to apply and blend.

A common solvent is turpentine—a transparent liquid with a slight yellowing color. It has a strong odor, which may bother some individuals. It is harmful if ingested and its fumes can irritate skin if an individual is exposed for an extended period. There are other alternatives such as white spirits or odorless mineral spirits. Gamsol and Turpenoid are types of odorless mineral spirits. Eco-House Mild Citrus Thinner is another type using orange peel oil with highly purified mineral oils. Gamsol, Turpenoid, and Eco-House Mild Citrus Thinner are sold at Albright Art Supply and can be used to thin oils and clean up your working surface and paint brushes.

Please note Many towns collect paints and solvents during their Hazard Waste Collection dates.

Varnishes

Varnishes protect oil paintings from pollutants and dust. They can be a matte or glossy variety. Many can be removed, if necessary, for touch ups or restoration. Quality varnishes have filters for ultraviolet light diminishing the effect of light on a painting. Albright Art Supply sells varnishes that can be applied with a brush or sprayed onto the surface.

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Painting Surfaces

The most common surface is canvas made from cotton, linen and hemp. We carry cotton and linen at the shop. Canvas can be pre-stretched or applied to a panel. Artists can stretch the canvas themselves to the specific size needed for a project. Wood, glass, and metal are other surfaces for oil painting. A gesso primer would be applied first so the oil will stick to surface and preventing it from peeling or cracking. Arches Oil Paper is another option for painters.

Cleaning Brushes

Once a painting is finished, it is best to clean up afterwards. Remove excess paint off the brush, some artists will use newspaper for this purpose. Mineral spirits dissolve paint remaining within the bristles. After this step, it is advised to further clean the brush with soap and water. Masterson's Brush Cleaner and Preserver is a cream for cleaning brushes that will reshape and condition the bristles.

And finally, a word about Fat-over-Lean

Some may have heard of fat-over-lean but never fully understood the concept. Fat-over-lean means the first few layers are applied thin (lean), so they dry faster than subsequent layers. This process is done to avoid cracking. To achieve a lean layer, paint needs to have its oiliness reduced by adding a medium like an alkyd. The lean layer will create a stronger foundation for the subsequent layers above, which are oilier because they are fatty and sometimes thicker.

Classes:

Interested in instructional or online classes? Remember to check out Concord Art and The Umbrella Arts Center.

References for Extra Reading

Canal, Maria Fernanda. 2008. *Complete Guide to Materials and Techniques for Drawing and Painting*

Oil Paint Drying Time and How You Can Manipulate by Dan Scott

<https://drawpaintacademy.com/oil-paint-drying-time/>

The Truth About Oil Painting Mediums and How to Use Them

<https://www.malcolmdeweyfineart.com/blog/the-truth-about-oil-painting-mediums-and-how-to-use-them#.YJ8VcuspDyI>

M. Graham & Co. FAQ

<https://mgraham.com/artist-resources/faq/>

Video Reference

Albright Art Tip of the Week: Knowing the Hazard Waste Collection Information for Your Town

<https://www.facebook.com/141264825912953/videos/1055215067997775>

Albright Art Tip of the Week: Know How to Properly Dispose of Materials Used in Oil Painting

<https://www.facebook.com/141264825912953/videos/356986625176180>