



How Atelier Interactive works

Atelier Interactive used to be known as just plain Atelier. It was a standard acrylic with a luscious smooth buttery consistency, lightfast colours and a very high pigment load. Today it still has these wonderful characteristics but now it's also the most versatile acrylic paint on the market. This information sheet will explain in simple terms how the unique and patented Atelier Interactive formula works.

NOTES ON STANDARD ACRYLICS

Acrylics can be made into a myriad of different things from aircraft windows to bath tubs, dental fillings and of course paints. The acrylic for paints is made by first turning it into an emulsion which is then forced through fine eyelets that create small droplet particles of acrylic after which it is then suspended into water at varying ratios of about 40% to 45%.

To make paint you add this acrylic suspended in water mixture with other components such as pigments, preservatives, Ph additives, surfactants, dispersants etc - this is the simplified recipe for modern acrylic paints.

The standard acrylics cure when all the water has evaporated and all the acrylic that was suspended starts to link together forming a weave of the remaining components into a solid paint film.

ATELIER INTERACTIVE EXPLANATION

Atelier Interactive is made from similar components but with a unique (and patented) difference - a chemical called an alkali soluble polymer, dissolved with water and amine, that coats the acrylic particles and slows down the adhesion of the particles, which occurs more rapidly in standard acrylics.

This action is slowed down only until the amine totally evaporates, typically within a day or two, and then the acrylic particles bond just as strongly as conventional acrylics. The process begins as soon as the paint becomes touch dry; as the amine evaporates the bonds become stronger and the paint more waterproof.

The acrylic particles are not fully bonded until the amine has evaporated so water can be added back into the paint layer and it will rewet allowing the artist to work for longer periods wet in wet.

Atelier Interactive becomes touch dry at the same rate as standard acrylics and if an artists wants to overpaint right away then the bonds between the acrylic particles are sufficiently strong to allow for this but some extra care should be taken in the first hour. This tender stage can be easily worked around by using a soft brush, a gentle touch, a hair dryer to speed drying or with the use of mediums.

Note. Adding any of the "traditional" fast mediums to the paint will make Atelier Interactive resilient and quick drying. Binder Medium, Fast Medium/Fixer and Impasto Gel are popular "traditional" mediums. (* see the end of document for complete list). These mediums cause the amine to evaporate more quickly and make Atelier Interactive feel and perform like a standard acrylic. Please note that once you use these products, the paint can't be reopened because the bonding of the acrylic particles has taken place.

THE PLUSES AND MINUSES OF A TOUGH SKIN

Standard acrylics dry by forming a tough plastic skin, providing a real benefit for those artists who like to progress their painting quickly. The downside is that this skin formation only offers around 10-20 minutes to blend and work wet in wet. Standard acrylics force artists to work wet over dry, where edge feathering and blending becomes much more difficult. The only option to achieving longer blending times is to use a retarder which makes the paint thin and syrupy and if not used carefully can create an unstable sticky paint that never dries properly. Once the paint is finally dry you cannot decide to make any changes because it will not rewet.

It is still very easy to do fast layering techniques like glazing and scumbling with Atelier Interactive, either through the use of traditional mediums or just by using a soft brush and waiting a little longer for the paint to dry. Using Atelier Interactive you can quickly progress your painting which is not possible if you use a retarder.

Atelier Interactive's versatility gives it a clear advantage over standard acrylics and once understood you may never wish to go back to your old acrylics again.

ATELIER INTERACTIVE IS NOT A SLOW DRYING PAINT

The well known slow drying acrylic paints and mediums on the market are all based on glycol retarders that act to slow the evaporation rate of water. This means that the paint actually stays wet for an extended period of time. That is very different to how Atelier Interactive works; it dries at about the same rate as standard acrylics with the extra blending time only being achieved if the artist chooses to use a water sprayer or damp brush to rewet the painting.

Slow drying glycol based paints and mediums don't have the great versatility of Atelier Interactive because they dry far too slowly for standard acrylic techniques and can only be used for slow wet in wet blending. They are much slower and less convenient to use because when you have finished each stage of a painting you need to wait a very long time to overpaint or varnish, more like an Oil than acrylic.

HOW UNLOCKING FORMULA WORKS

Unlocking formula is a mix of isopropyl alcohol and water and it can be used to re-wet Atelier Interactive for a few days to a week after it has cured - even after all of the amine has evaporated. This is possible because we have used an acrylic polymer which is sensitive to alcohol. Once the alcohol has evaporated the acrylic particles re-bond into a strong paint film - using Unlocking Formula does not damage the painting or reduce the archival qualities of the paint.

Over time the acrylic becomes less and less sensitive to alcohol so after a few days Unlocking Formula becomes much less effective. Atelier Interactive paintings that are varnished with the Chroma removable solvent varnishes can be safely stripped back with mineral spirits or turpentine because by the time restoration work is done the acrylic polymer will have certainly become insensitive to alcohol and solvents. Very rough and continuous scrubbing is required to damage a fully cured Atelier Interactive painting.

Unlocking Formula will not work if a "traditional" fast drying mediums like Binder Medium or Impasto Gel have been mixed with the paint because they contain a standard acrylic binder which is insensitive to alcohol.

HOW ATELIER INTERACTIVE WORKS WITH STANDARD ACRYLICS

Atelier Interactive is 100% compatible with all other artists acrylics. The relatively small addition of the amine does not cause any problems when it is mixed with a standard acrylic binder, in fact a lot of Atelier Mediums contain a standard acrylic binder and they of course are compatible with Atelier Interactive.

When Atelier Interactive is mixed with a standard acrylic binder, be it in the form of a medium or another brand of paint it will dry fast with a waterproof skin - to do the slow blending techniques with Atelier Interactive you have to use only "Interactive" colours and "Interactive" mediums like Slow Medium.

If you want to try Atelier Interactive for the first time you can mix it with your standard acrylic paints and it will perform just like a normal high quality artists acrylic. A good idea is to use Atelier Interactive mixed with your old standard acrylics in the early layers of your painting and then finish off your artwork by switching exclusively to Interactive colours so that you can take advantage of the longer working time to feather edges, get your blends just right and make all of those important final adjustments.

ATELIER INTERACTIVE AND VARNISHING

Atelier Interactive can be rewet with water so it is not surprising that some extra care needs to be taken when varnishing, especially when using water-based varnishes like the Atelier Varnish. It is recommended that you let your Atelier Interactive painting dry for a week before applying any water-based or solvent based varnishes. If slow drying mediums or retarder are used then you should wait longer. As an extra precaution a layer of Binder Medium or Fast Medium/Fixer can be applied prior to varnishing as an isolating layer. When varnishing an Atelier Interactive painting we recommend you always use the water-based Atelier Varnish or the Chroma Solvent Finishing Varnish.

“TRADITIONAL” FAST DRYING MEDIUMS

- **NEW** Gloss Medium
- **NEW** Matte Medium (US Only)
- **NEW** Satin Medium (US Only)
- **NEW** Glazing Liquid
- **NEW** Regular Gel (Gloss)
- **NEW** Regular Gel (Matte) (US Only)
- Heavy Gel (Gloss) (Previously Impasto Gel)
- **NEW** Heavy Gel (Matte) (US Only)
- Binder Medium
- Fast Medium/Fixer
- Moulding Paste (Previously Modelling Compound)
- Matte Varnish (Previously Matte Medium & Varnish)
- Satin Varnish (Previously Satin Medium & Varnish)
- Gloss Varnish (Previously Gloss Medium & Varnish)

For more information on using these mediums, please see [Atelier Interactive Fast and Slow Painting Techniques Info sheet 102](#) and [Atelier Guide to Grounds & Mediums](#). When these fast mediums are used, the advantage of reopening layers and colour matching between layers is lost. Atelier Interactive is compatible with conventional acrylics, but these mixtures revert to fast drying mode and are best used for under painting.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE REFER TO

- [Atelier Interactive Fast and Slow Painting Techniques Info sheet 102](#)
- [Plein Air Painting with Atelier Interactive Info Sheet 103](#)
- [Tips For Using Mediums with Atelier Interactive Info Sheet 104](#)
- [How Atelier Interactive Dries Info Sheet 107](#)
- [Atelier Guide to Grounds & Mediums](#).
- [Atelier Interactive Q & A Flier](#)
- [Atelier Interactive Colour Chart](#)
- Atelier Interactive Website: www.atelierinteractive.com