



Varnishing

We get more questions about varnishing than with any other stage of the painting process.

Varnishing should be an almost mechanical process undertaken to give your painting a protective coating with the surface quality you prefer (gloss, satin, etc.) and possibly an enhancement of colour contrast. But if you leave it till the last moment and use a varnish you are not used to, you can ruin the work you are trying to protect.

Anxiety and disappointment can be avoided easily if you do sample pieces using the same materials as the painting and varnish them, not the painting, until you get the effect you wanted.

Water based varnishes are tricky to apply and not removable if you dislike the effect, so we suggest they should only be used by artists who already know them well and are not experimenting.

CHROMA SOLVENT FINISHING VARNISHES

We recommend and prefer our Chroma Solvent based varnishes because they can be used on all our Chroma paint brands, Atelier Interactive, Jo Sonja's, Absolute Matte, or Archival Oils.

Application of all these varnishes is by brush (a broad house paint brush), and clean up is with mineral turpentine. If applying multiple coats, allow 24 hours drying time between applications. Choose from these finishes:

Gloss

Apply as is for a full gloss, usually one coat. To reduce gloss add mineral turpentine to your taste. Try two parts varnish to 1 part turpentine, up to 1:1 for less sheen.

NOTE: The new varnishes have an anti-mould additive which is diluted when you add turpentine, so to maintain the mould protection for tropical conditions dilute with Invisible Varnish instead.

Satin

This is our most popular, most unobtrusive varnish.

- The satin finish contains a matting agent and the container needs to be shaken before use to make sure it is evenly suspended. For full bottles: remove some varnish so you can shake the contents easily, then return to the full bottle before using.
- Satin varnishes should not be diluted with turpentine because the ratio of matting agent within the varnish is critical to maintain a true satin finish. Adding turpentine will increase the sheen however for a satin/gloss finish we recommend diluting the gloss varnish as described above.

Invisible Varnish

This varnish offers mould protection without altering the look of the painting.

- It can also be used on oil paintings as a "retouch" varnish, while waiting out the advisable 3-6 month period for an oil painting to cure before applying a heavier protective varnish.
- On acrylics it can be used for mould protection. It does not alter the appearance of matte surfaces, including the very matte finish of Absolute Matte, and does not stain paper.
- If you are using any Chroma Solvent Varnish, you can go ahead and varnish uncured Atelier Interactive paintings.

RESOLABILITY

This is an attractive feature of all these solvent varnishes, which can be cleaned at some later date by swabbing with mineral turpentine, which does not attack either acrylic or oil paintings, but can be used to remove the varnish layer.

WATER BASED ACRYLIC VARNISHES - POPULAR BUT DIFFICULT TO USE

We get more distressed phone calls about water based varnishes which did not behave as expected, than on any other subject.

- All water based varnishes are non-removable. Solvents like acetone will remove them, but will also remove the painting.
- Water based varnishes are much more difficult to apply evenly than the turpentine based ones and there is always some apprehension when varnishing. We recommend water based varnishes should always be tried out first on a waste sample before used on a finished painting because once applied they can't be removed.
- Caution: Water based varnishes can pick up streaks of paint from any uncured Atelier Interactive painting and since it is difficult to predict how long curing will take, it is wise to apply one coat of Fast Medium/Fixer or Binder Medium before using the water based varnish.
- Do not over brush when applying as this can cause a cloudy finish.
- Water based varnishes can remain milky for a long time if some of the water gets trapped in the varnish layer. Placing near a heat source will usually fix this problem.
- Water should not be added to the varnish because it will alter the Ph of the formula and can cause it to separate and dry cloudy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE REFER TO

- [Atelier Guide To Grounds and Mediums](#)
- Atelier Interactive Website: www.atelierinteractive.com
- Archival Website: www.archivaloils.com