

by Barry Waldman

First, because of shipping regulations with the United States Post Office and shippers like Fedex and UPS, I cannot ship flammable materials like turpentine and oil painting media like linseed oil.

For students who are enrolled in the full Course who have the Final Lesson Art Textbook "Art School" that comes with the full course student kit Enrolled full course can start by reading the section on "Dilutents, Mediums and Varnishes" which is on page 160 in the copy I have (the page can vary by the various editions of "Art School" but you can find it in the index at the back of the book under "D", Dilutents"... There are many more pages in that book on oil paints as well.

For those students who do not have the "Art School" book, the following:

Many artists don't use any mediums at all. Others use artist's turpentine or linseed oil as a medium to get more "flow" to their oil paints (to make the paint more workable, as some paints are quite thick straight from the tube). Other artists swear by a whole range of mediums.

What you should try to find your personal oil painting "feel" is to go to an art supply store (if you have one convenient to you in) or go to an online art supplier. I use Dick Blick at www.DickBlick.com

Here is an article to read about adding oil painting mediums to your oils:

<http://www.articlesbase.com/art-articles/oil-painting-lesson-introduction-to-oil-painting-mediums-128804.html>

The highest end online supplier is Gamblin oil painting media at this page on the Dick Blick web site:

<http://www.dickblick.com/products/gamblin-oil-mediums/>

(Gamblin itself does not ship from the USA to overseas unless one places a very large order – last I looked it had to be over \$ 400.00 USD. I had a student in England that ran into this minimum order problem, but then an art supply store in England took on the Gamblin line. Check local art suppliers.)

Dick Blick web site has a Gamblin Oil Media SET which offers a whole range of oil mediums:

Dick Blick catalog # 00456-0019 Mediums Set List \$27.95 \$20.96

Or start small with a small bottle of linseed oil from the Web art supply stores or from a local art supply store or sometimes art supplies are carried in stationary stores:

Here are some from the Dick Blick web site:

Dick Blick catalog # 00456-1303 Cold Pressed Linseed Oil 2 oz List \$7.45 \$5.59

And with either of the above, buy this also:

Dick Blick catalog # 00456-1016 Gamsol Odorless Mineral Spirits (OMS) 16 oz List \$13.95 \$10.46

Try mixtures of the oil paints with the media like the linseed oil and the mineral spirits to seek your personal “creaminess” or flow of the oils.

A basic starting formula is:

1 Part Linseed Oil + 5 Parts Odorless Mineral Spirits (most artists use Gum Turpentine where I specify the OMS) but the Gamsol Odorless Mineral Oil has less odor and is a “safer” material.

Every artist needs to find their own personal way of working ... hope the above helps you find yours.

The recommended material (medium) to mix with oils from the Ralph Mayer's “The Artist's Handbook”

THE ARTIST'S HANDBOOK: A quote:

... For fluent operations with the brush and free manipulation, the oil colors are thinned by mixing with just the right amount turpentine or mineral spirit—not too little, not too little, not too much. For manipulations which require still greater facility, further desirable properties can be given to the paint by a sparing addition of a painting or glaze medium such as the one described on page 224. Avoid the use of complex mediums or plain linseed oil.

Page 224:

A useful glaze medium which I recommend for general purposes is the following:

Stand oil—I fluid ounce

Damar varnish (5-pound cut)—1 fluid ounce

Pure gum turpentine—5 fluid ounces

Cobalt drier—about 15 drops

The proportions of varnish and oil may be varied some suit the preference and requirements of the user; a little less varnish will make the results more oily in handling, a little more varnish or a 6 & ½ pound cut instead of the 5-pound cut will make it tackier. Up to two additional ounces of turpentine can be added when circumstances require a thinner medium. The stand oil content is designed to reinforce the elasticity of the paint film, thus compensating for any tendency toward embrittlement that might be caused by the resin, Also to maintain its resistance to solvents. In order to employ a minimum of drier it is best not to adhere to any set quantity.

Shipping and Traveling with Artists' Mediums and Solvents (this from Gamblin art supply site on the WEB): <http://www.gamblincolors.com/>

In this time of heightened airport security, many artists are asking us about flying with their studio supplies.

Many oil mediums contain solvents or oils in such concentration that they could present a fire hazard if the container were damaged. We cannot ship such solvents to you by air express.

Please be aware of these restrictions if you plan to take your studio supplies with you when you travel.

How do I clean oil paint from my brushes?

Cleaning your brushes is a very important step in ensuring a longer life for your brush. In the case of oil paints, the brush should be cleaned off thoroughly starting with solvent and rags or tissue. Once the brush is fairly clean from the solvent, rub the bristles in a glass or plastic jar with either a brush conditioner or a human hair shampoo. Give the brush a good final rinse and squeeze out any water. Dry the brush with its hair end lower than the handle end to prevent water from loosening the handle and the ferrule. Dry brushes can be stored bristle up in a jar, or laid flat. Protective storage containers are available too.

Brush cleaning products on Dick Blick WEB site:

<http://www.dickblick.com/categories/brushwashers/>

<http://www.dickblick.com/zz057/01/>

<http://www.dickblick.com/zz057/05/>

Also take a look at the Gamblin web site at:

<http://www.gamblincolors.com/solvents/index.html>

for brush cleaning and more oil painting tips and supplies:

GAMSOL - Odorless Mineral Spirits

Excellent solvent for thinning Gamblin mediums and for general painting, including studio and brush cleanup.

What does "Fat Over Lean" mean?

This is a traditional rule of oil painting. "Fat" paint has more oil in it, and "lean" paint has less oil in it. As artists paint layers onto paintings, they make each progressive layer "fatter" than the one before by adding more medium. The more oil the paint has the more flexible it is. When the overpainting is more flexible than the underpainting, the paint is less likely to crack as it dries.

The Gamblin Medium – Highly Recommended to Use as Oil Paint Medium (mixers): <http://www.gamblincolors.com/>

Cold Pressed Linseed Oil — Pressed from flax seeds in Canada without using heat or chemicals of any kind. However, when used to thin oil colors, it increases the tendency to yellow over time. 8 oz (237 ml) bottle. AP non-toxic.

Cold Wax Medium — Gamblin's Cold Wax Medium is a soft paste formulated to make oil colors thicker and more matte. Cold Wax Medium is made with beeswax, resin, and mineral spirits. It can also be used as a final varnish over a dry painting.

Galkyd Gel — This gelled alkyd resin painting medium creates transparent impasto of approximately ¼" thick. Holds marks and brush strokes. It does not dry as fast as most gel mediums, and it can be applied in multiple layers. 150 ml.

Galkyd Lite — Made from alkyd resin; Galkyd Lite has a lower viscosity and lower gloss than Galkyd Medium #1.

Galkyd Medium #1 — Thins oil color for painting and glazing while speeding drying time. Galkyd medium is made with alkyd resins. Similar to traditional painting mediums.

Galkyd Slow Dry — Formulated to have strength and flexibility and to keep the surface of oil paintings open for approximately three days. Galkyd Slow Dry is a good choice for painters who blend or work wet into wet.

Gamsol Odorless Mineral Spirits — An excellent solvent for thinning Gamblin mediums and for general painting, including studio and brush clean up.

Gamvar Varnish — Synthetic resin gloss varnish developed by conservators at the National Gallery. Can be used on acrylic painting as well as oils. Includes a 5.4 oz solvent bottle and 5.4 oz resin mixture jar.

Neo-megilp — Soft, silky gel that gives body to paint, decreases viscosity, and can produce a luminous atmosphere. Base of alkyd resin, without toxic lead or other materials. Will not turn yellow or darken.

Poppy Oil — Slows down drying time. Especially useful for painters using "wet into wet" techniques. Add 10% by volume to slow down the drying time of Gamblin Galkyd painting mediums. 8 oz (237 ml) bottle. AP non-toxic.

Refined Linseed Oil — Pressed from American flax seeds, this low acid oil is about as light and pure as it gets. Use in moderation to thin oil colors, or use as an ingredient in traditional painting mediums. AP non-toxic.

Refined Stand Oil — Heavy oil that wets pigments well. 8 oz (237 ml). AP non-toxic.

Wax Pastilles — These small beads of naturally white unbleached beeswax can be used in making your own wax medium. 16 oz.

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