Extra-fine Additives for Oils

Suggestions for use

Sennelier

Modern since 1887
Additives are essential to fully enjoy the qualities of extra-fine oil-based paint. There are four types of additives: Thinners, driers, mediums and varnishes.

**Thinners** are most often petroleum spirits and oils. They enable you to modify the liquidity of the paint. Petroleum spirits are used during the first stages of production, particularly when working «thick on thin» in order to guarantee high-quality «drying».

**Mediums** ensure the work’s cohesion to canvas, board and other surfaces, modifies the gloss, allows highlighting particular areas, facilitates impasto techniques and can modify the drying time (especially valuable when working Plein Air).

As is suggested by their names, the **Driers** speed up «drying» (more accurately, oil paint doesn’t dry, it hardens).

**Varnishes** change the final appearance of the painting prior to any preservation of the work.
Thinners enable you to dissolve the pastes and thus make it easier to work with colors. It is preferable to use spirits during the abbozzo or sketch phase in order for drying to take place more quickly and to respect the “thick on thin” rule.

Strictly speaking, oil paint does not dry, it hardens on contact with air. The oxygen in the ambient air very slowly penetrates through the different layers of paint and progressively causes the paint to solidify. This very slow process means that the canvas needs to “rest” for several months prior to final varnish (at least 6 months to a year, some canvases have been known to require several years before complete hardening of the paint layers because of the thickness of the paint and the additives used). If the varnish is applied too early, this will prevent oxidation and could result in problems.

An essential “Thick on Thin” rule: it is important to start painting with a greater proportion of thinner (spirits…) than binder (oil…). You should aim to progressively invert these proportions. This will result in canvas hardening taking place in the most favorable conditions.
Odor Free Mineral Spirits
(75 - 250 ml)

This thinner is used like petroleum spirit, but is strongly appreciated by users put off by the smell of solvent.

A new generation of solvent derived from oil for oil paints. This solvent evaporates slowly and does not deteriorate during its change while leaving no trace when dry. With a very low odor, it is perfectly suited to artists who are sensitive to the smell of solvents.

Rectified Turpentine Spirits
(75 - 250 - 500 ml - 1 l)

«The base product». Indispensable thinner. Very useful during the abbozzo or sketch phase. It is completely possible to produce a painting only using Rectified Turpentine Spirits.

Pure Landes pine gum spirits are obtained by distillation. Avoid contact with air. A traditional thinner, recommended for oil paint. Mixed with colors, it produces a very agreeable paste. Particularly suitable for the abbozzo or draft phase and for general work on the painting. When you want to paint Longer with fresh paint, a less volatile spirit such as Aspic oil or essential mineral oil is substituted.

Essential Mineral Oil
(75 ml)

A thicker thinner than those mentioned above, this thinner allows you to work the paste for longer periods while it is fresh.

Essential mineral oil evaporates more slowly than petroleum spirit. Thick on the brush, it leaves no trace following evaporation. Essential oil acts as a “delaying agent” and therefore allows you to work the paste while it is fresh for longer without significantly changing its final appearance.

Pure color and then a mixture of color + spirit to produce a graded wash

Mineral Spirits
(75 - 250 - 500 ml - 1 l)

A very volatile thinner which does not leave a thick film. It has less odor than Rectified Turpentine spirits.

Mineral spirits have an advantage over vegetable-based spirits that it keeps better on contact with air. It is a thinner solvent than vegetable-based spirits and evaporates more slowly than Rectified Turpentine spirits. It is used to spread out oil-based colors or certain varnishes. Because of its high penetrative power, petroleum spirit gets deep into the paint. An excess accentuates the matte finish. It is also used to clean brushes covered in fresh color and it does not dry out and does not stick like Rectified Turpentine spirits.

Spike lavender oil
(60 ml)

This is less volatile than the Rectified Turpentine spirits and allows you to work the paste while it is fresh for a longer time.

Aspic oil comes from the distillation of male lavender. It makes the finish thick. Has a higher solvent power than Turpentine, which encourages a better bond between layers. Its higher cost and strong odor restricts its use. It is also used as a thinner in colors for porcelain. Use with care and in moderation.

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Olive oil is used to clean brushes covered in fresh color and it does not dry out and does not stick like Rectified Turpentine spirits.
Oils

Oils, of vegetable origin, play the part of a binder which combines with pigment and forms the protection for the finish. Several oils are used for oil paints and the choice of oil is made using several criteria: the desired thickness of the paste, texture, yellowing to nothing, incidence on tones, speed of drying and mechanical solidity of the film. Often, the artist has their own recipe and uses one or more oils.

Clarified Linseed Oil

(75 - 250 - 500 ml - 1 l)

Enables you to liquify the paint while retaining its original appearance.

Purified oil, with a natural amber tint, extracted from linseed. More siccative than most other oils, it adds body to the paste. Very transparent, but has a tendency to turn yellow over time. Best with dark or slow drying colors. Does not affect drying time. Avoid excess.

Boiled Linseed Oil

(75 - 250 ml)

It liquefies the paint and accelerates hardening and a gloss finish.

Boiled linseed oil encourages the finish to dry deeply. Gives texture and roundness to the finish while drying more quickly than normal linseed oil and it adds a brilliant, slightly amber finish. Avoid excess. For artists who wish to make their own paints using oil, it is recommended to grind pigments to 50% with clarified linseed oil. It is also used in recipes of mediums and paint.

Refined Safflower Oil

(75 - 250 ml)

Refined Safflower Oil is the oil used to produce colors with Sennelier extra-fine oil. It yellows less than linseed oil.

Clarified vegetable oil, a good drier with low acidity is characterised by resistance to yellowing and has an excellent compatibility with pigments. Because of its pale color, it is recommended to grind with white and clear tones. Mixed with oil colors to accentuate their fluidity, transparency and gloss without altering the hue’s brilliance during drying. It dries more slowly than linseed oil, but may be safely mixed with it. Add 25% maximum to total paint mixture.

Small preparation to paint:

You can produce your own paint medium by mixing 2/3 extra-fine varnish and 1/3 boiled linseed oil.
Venice Turpentine
(32 - 120 ml)
Pure natural balsam with the consistency of honey. Resin extracted from larch. Add as a plasticizer and gloss enhancing agent to oil colors, varnishes and mediums. Creates a jewel-like quality with a tough enamel-like surface. Use with care (maximum 5%), as excess will make the film more brittle. Recommended thinner: turpentine (up to 20%).

Prepare your own medium mix:
- 1/3 linseed oil
- 1/3 mastic varnish
- 1/3 petroleum spirit
You will obtain paint with a shimmering gloss appearance with depth and vibration in the tones.

Variation: reduce the proportion of linseed oil by 3% and add 3% Venice turpentine (well known for its plasticising qualities).

Clarified Poppy Seed Oil
(75 - 250 ml)
Poppy seed oil dries more slowly than linseed oil. Use in moderation. Add a maximum of 2% drier.

Extracted from poppy seeds, it is clearer and has a less yellowing tendency than linseed oils. Recommended for light colors and blues, in particular. Less effective as a drier than linseed and safflower oil. The drying speed may be balanced by adding the correct amount of Sennelier Courtrai drier. Avoid excess.

Stand Oil
(75 - 250 ml)
Allows you to significantly attenuate or smooth thin brush strokes.

Linseed oil polymerised in the absence of air. Full bodied, very bright, clear, honey-like viscosity medium made by heating pure linseed. Improves transparency, fluidity and smoothness brushstrokes. Can be used straight but, due to high viscosity, it is preferable to thin with spirits. Excellent medium for glazing and detail work. Reduces possible appearance of cracking. Slows drying. Slightly yellowing. Favors gloss.
The vegetable oils used in paint dry naturally... however, it is sometimes necessary to increase drying qualities and to harmonise hardening type, that is the role of driers. Driers must be used in moderation, and the recommended doses must be respected. Products fully mixable with oil, combining a minimum of coloration with regular, deep drying.

**White Drier**
(75 - 250 ml)

Colorless drier containing calcium salts (which activate the natural drying characteristics of the pigments). No effect on hue or quality of the brushstroke. Non-yellowing. Up to 15% may be added.

**Courtrai drier**
(75 - 250 ml)

In brief, the Courtrai drier makes the oil «hyperventilate» to demand more oxygen and accelerate the hardening of the layers of paint.

Contains calcium and zirconium salts. Greater drying power than White drier. Dries the oil in-depth. Reduces the difference that naturally exists between the normal drying nature of most colors and the slow drying tendency of certain other colors. May be mixed directly with the oil color (2% maximum) or thinner, adding several drops (5 maximum) per 5 ml. An excess of drier impairs drying quality and therefore the paint film.

**Cobalt Drier**
(75 ml)

This drier is so effective that an excess dose can cause the opposite effect. Therefore use sparingly (0.5% approx.). May slightly tint the color.

Contains cobalt, zirconium, zinc and calcium salts. Highly concentrated: use in small doses, i.e. a few drops for a knob of color (less than 0.5%). Any excess may cause difficulties during drying. Provides well-balanced drying of the oil color, both on the surface and in depth. No effect on hue or gloss.
Mediums are produced from natural resins (Dammar gum, Mastic gum) or synthetic resins (acrylic), oils and solvents. They allow the work to be cohesive and favor its longevity. Mediums can change the consistency and the appearance of the finish by giving it a transparent, matte, satin or gloss appearance and also increase the tack of the painted surface allowing additional layers while painting Plein Air.

**LIQUID MEDIUMS**

**Turner Painting Medium**

(75 - 250 ml - 1 l)

Based on Dammar gum (natural resin). May be mixed with oil colors in all proportions, particularly suited for work with fresh paints. Reinforces the cohesion of the brushstroke and accentuates gloss. Useful for glazing and transparent washes. Thinners: mineral spirits and turpentine. It is a ready-to-use medium that can be used throughout the production of a painting.

**Flow ‘n Dry (Alkyd Medium)**

(75 - 250 - 500 ml - 1 l)

Modified alkyd oil medium gives a slightly gel consistency, improves the thickness of the finish, accelerates drying, liquefies the paste when working thanks to its thixotropic qualities. Gives a gloss finish, resists yellowing, very suitable for glazing and mixes in any proportion with oil colors. Good for general use and Plein Air studies.

**Fluid ‘n Dry (Fluid Alkyd Medium)**

(75 - 250 ml)

Alkyd resin medium that shortens drying time, improves fluidity, and increases gloss and transparency.

**Universal medium**

(75 - 250 ml)

This medium has the same properties as the Turner paint medium, but it is produced using a synthetic base.

Clear, gloss ketone resin based liquid medium, gives a high-build finish and allows glazing and « alla prima » paint by accelerating drying. Universal medium improves the tones by adding bright and glossy appearance. Reinforces the mechanical properties of the finish and can be mixed with colors in any proportion. It can be diluted in petroleum spirit, turpentine and odor free spirits.

**Hint: Begin your painting with Rectified Turpentine Spirits and then half Turner Painting Medium, half Rectified Turpentine Spirits, and finally with pure slightly diluted Turner Painting Medium.**

**Application of a mix of color + Flow’n dry**

**Mix of color + Flow’n Dry**
PASTE MEDIUMS

Gel ’n Dry (Gel Alkyd Medium)  
(tube 40 ml)

Gel ’n Dry is a medium which makes impastos easy, very useful for those who wish to work thickly. Clear, it does not alter the color.

Gel version (in a tube) of the alkyd medium Flow ’n Dry. It becomes flexible when mixed with the color, which allows for thick work. Accelerates drying, improves fluidity as well as the gloss. Suitable for impasto techniques it can be mixed in any proportion with oil colors.

Van Eyck Medium  
(tube 40 ml)

Use when you wish to work transparently using the glazing method. Use preferably with transparent or semi-transparent colors.

Medium with a gel-like consistency, based on mastic resin and oil thickened in the presence of metal oxides. Thixotropic. It has an easy application, fixes brushstrokes and increases gloss, transparency and depth of color. Allows oil colors to be superimposed rapidly, even when paint is fresh, without diluting the underlying coats. For rough sketches, thin the medium with turpentine or petroleum spirits. Enrich as the work proceeds. Provides rapid setting followed by progressive drying. Van Eyck medium gives the brushstrokes (even when using impasto techniques) a varnished, enamel finish. Also suitable for glazing and modeling.

Veronese Medium  
(tube 40 ml)

This medium allows you to work finish by finish quickly by avoiding mixing with colors on lower layers.

Paste medium, based on beeswax, which provides a uniform matte finish. Ideal for «alla prima» studies, large pieces and exterior work due to the rapid setting of impastos, the ease of carrying out superimpositions, its flexibility of use and its rapid drying characteristics. Veronese medium covers quickly and the pastes are richer. At times, it must be thinned. Vary fluidity and setting time with liquids such as essential petroleum/mineral oil or Aspic oil (adding several drops per knob of color). This medium melds adjacent brushstrokes.

Turner Transparent Medium  
(tube 40 ml)

Very transparent gel medium.

Used for glazing and the finish. Completely clear vegetable oil based medium, gives transparency and lightness to the finish. It does not have a noticeable impact on drying time and retains the color’s form and satin finish. Thinner: Rectified Turpentine spirit.

Impasto Medium  
(200 ml jars - 2.5 kg jars)

With oils, it is impossible to obtain similar impastos to acrylics unless you first work with a pure impasto medium. Wait for it to dry and then apply the color. This is an economic solution for thick work. It is possible to use an acrylic type base impasto medium which will dry much more quickly.

A vegetable oil and natural resin based medium, which allows for different thicknesses and reliefs. It is a paste which is firm, yet light to use on the brush. For layers a few millimetres or more thick, it is essential to mix some Van Eyck medium or oil color into the impasto medium, in order to make the paste more flexible and therefore to reduce the danger of cracks appearing. It becomes more matte by adding Turpentine spirits. Do not add drier.

Application of a mix of color + Van Eyck Medium

Application of a mix of color + Veronese Medium

Application of a mix of color + impasto medium

Application of a mix of color + Van Eyck Medium
The varnishes allow you to protect a work from natural and chemical attacks. They give the painting a uniform matte, satin or gloss appearance. Varnishes are preliminary varnishes (touch-up varnishes) or final varnishes to preserve the work. The choice of varnish depends on the nature of the work, the desired effect and the speed of drying.

Apply to a work which is completely dry; this means waiting one year before applying the final varnish. This application of the final varnish must take place in 2 stages: firstly, an application of a first coat of varnish diluted to 10-20%, then after drying for a day or two, of a second coat of varnish which is undiluted or diluted to 10%.

Spread the varnish well by brushing in each direction when applying.

**FINAL PAINTING VARNISHES**

**Extra Fine Painting Varnish**

(75 - 250 ml - 1 l)

**High gloss varnish.**

Concentrated Dammar gum based final painting varnish. Gives an attractive, gloss, high build film. Only apply on completely dry paint. Avoid application in damp weather. Thin with petroleum/mineral spirits or turpentine.

**Pur Mastic Gum Varnish**

(75 ml)

This is a very attractive varnish with an unbeatable gloss appearance, and it is also one of the most expensive! Used a great deal by past generations of painters.

33% Mastic gum (from Chios) final painting varnish. Resistant film, high gloss and high build, with a tendency to discolor slightly over time. Easily reversible. Only apply on completely dry paint. Thinner: Rectified Turpentine spirit.

**Gloss Painting Varnish**

(75 - 250 ml - 1 l)


**Satin Painting Varnish**

(75 - 250 ml - 1 l)

Synthetic resin based final varnish, intermediate between the gloss and matte varnishes. Rapid drying (only several hours are needed to obtain the final finish). Colorless, satin finish film, non-yellowing and highly resistant. Transparent and reflection-free finish. Not easily reversible. Only apply to completely dry paint. Thinner: turpentine.

**Matte Painting Varnish**

(75 - 250 ml - 1 l)

By mixing a larger or smaller proportion of gloss varnish with this varnish (which is completely matte), you can obtain the desired satin effect, without losing the brightness of the colors.

Synthetic resin based final varnish. Colorless, high resistance film. Rapid drying. Only apply to completely dry paint. Thinner: Rectified Turpentine spirit. We recommend that you first apply a coat of diluted satin varnish/insulating varnish/ or gloss varnish, prior to applying the matte varnish. Shake the container well before use.

**Barrier Painting Varnish**

(250 ml)

Creates an insulating film between two coats of paint. Because it cannot be reversed using solvents which allow layers of varnish applied over the top to be removed, this varnish is very popular among restorers since it enables them to return to the previous layer in the event of a mistake. Use with great care.

Intermediate varnish used to isolate oil based paint layers. Particularly useful for the double varnishing technique. Only apply to fully dried paint layers (minimum 6 months). Reduces the risk of sinkage, and allows repainting by isolating the previous coats. May be over-coated with any final painting varnish without risk of distempering the paint coats. 40% solids content. Gives a clear, gloss film. Thinner: alcohol.
TOUCH UP VARNISHES

The role of touch-up varnishes are to locally mask any sinkage, to brighten colors and above all, to provide a good anchor for fresh paint when restarting work on paint that has already dried. They may also be used as provisional varnishes while waiting for a final varnish to be applied.

**Turner Touch Up Varnish**
(75 - 250 - 500 ml - 1 l - Aerosol 400ml)

This is used as a temporary varnish to protect the canvas from dust or during early transport. Since it has a very diluted base, it does not suffocate the painting and does not slow down the oxidation process very much. Reduces in strength over time.

**Touch Up Varnish (Alcohol Based)**
(75 ml)

Recommended for professionals and art restorers due to its delicate use and opening of the paint layer.


**Dammar Gum in Solution (33%)**
(250 ml - 1 l)

Pure Dammar gum in a 33% solution of mineral spirits. Should be used as the basis for manufacturing varnishes or mediums. Thinner: mineral spirits. The product should not be used on its own.

**Oil and Acrylic Brush Cleaner**
(75 ml)

Ideal for cleaning brushes, palette knives, palettes, which are coated with color (oil or acrylic), dry mediums and varnishes. Tools cleaned with this product may then be rinsed in water.

**Dammar gum based light varnish, fast drying. To correct sinkage, brighten the tones or restart oil work on a dry base. It provides a good anchor between layers of paint and can also be used as a temporary painting varnish. Thinners: Petroleum spirits or turpentine.**
The choice of additives

Rectified Turpentine Spirits
Abbozzo (sketching) phase
Mattifies
Respects the «THICK ON THIN» rule

Courtrai drier
To accelerate hardening
(useful during the first stages)

Van Eyck Medium
Can also be used with transparent colors, for superimposition while fresh, enhances the gloss

Veronese Medium
Mattifies
Makes melding easy
Brush strokes are softened

Flow 'n Dry
For glazing, glossiness and the thickness of the finish - Adds a fast tack

Extra-fine Sennelier oil colors used to produce this painting:

205 Raw umber
215 Cassel earth
315 Ultramarine deep
326 Phthalo blue
535 Cadmium yellow lemon
645 Chinese orange
537 Indian yellow hue
605 Cadmium red light
619 Permanent intense red
123 Zinc titanium white

Influences the final finish

Visually, the painting finish is completely different according to the additive used

Gloss Painting Varnish
Use according to the desired type of finish

Matte Painting Varnish
Use according to the desired type of finish

Gloss Painting
Use according to the desired type of finish

Veronese Medium
Mattifies
Makes melding easy
Brush strokes are softened

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Impasto Medium
If you wish to add thickness, texture to the paste. Here mix the color with the medium on the palette and then apply with an artist’s knife.

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Here are a study carried out on the same subject, but treated with different additives. Visually, the painting finish is completely different according to the additive used.

Here mix the color with the medium on the palette and then apply with an artist’s knife.
easy reference
## OILS

### SPIRITS

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<th>Delays hardening, Work with fresh paint for longer</th>
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### MEDIUMS

* Warning, an excess of matte using this technique may result in the film becoming brittle.
# Varnishes

**Product to use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Abbozzo (sketching) phase</th>
<th>Mattify</th>
<th>Delays hardening, work with fresh paint for longer</th>
<th>Accelerates hardening</th>
<th>Liquifies the paste</th>
<th>Improves the thickness of the finish</th>
<th>Work thickly</th>
<th>Pick out details, finishes</th>
<th>Soften brush strokes</th>
<th>Produce glazing</th>
<th>Increase transparency</th>
<th>Facilitates superimposition, “alla prima” painting</th>
<th>Brighten the tones</th>
<th>Restart work on a dry base</th>
<th>Temporarily or finally protect</th>
<th>Reduce sinkage</th>
<th>Clean tools</th>
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**ANCILLARY PRODUCTS**

**Between the production of varnishes and mediums - Do not use the product as it is**

- Dammar Gum in Solution (33%)
- Oil and Acrylic Brush Cleaner
**Glossary**

**« alla prima »**
Mixture made directly on the canvas, in the fresh. The first color is applied and then, without waiting, a second color is applied, which by juxtaposition will more or less vary the hue. This mixture, which is voluntarily imperfect, allows you to make the color vibrate. This is a very common technique among Impressionists.

**Distemper**
Pigment-based paint to which a fish skin glue type binder is added, in order to thin or dilute the pigments and which gives a reversible paint, which is sensitive to water. The term “distemper” can also define an alteration to the lower layer when the solvent in the second layer dilutes the first layer which becomes too thin.

**Sinkage**
Areas which have sunk due to a larger absorption of binder by some pigments, particularly dark ones (we know from experience that ivory black sinks). Hint, use a touch-up varnish.

**Glazing**
Superimposition of layers of paint which is transparent but can be colored, since the transparency is obtained by a greater or lesser dilution of the paste which will be applied in several successive layers, each one thicker, respecting the thick on thin rule (see page 5). Glazing allows you to intensify a color, give it depth, and even to completely modify it. It is obtained by applying a clear layer of paint to a dry base which has already been painted.

**Imprimatura**
This technique involves painting the entire canvas in a single shade between starting the motif. Even when covered by subsequent layers, the original tone remains visible to the eye. A sombre background compared to a pastel background will alter the global perception of colors.

**Oxidation**
An inaccurate term, which expresses the chemical combination between the layers of paint and the molecules of oxygen that results in the paint hardening.

**Ketone resin**
A synthetic resin with high build capabilities, low density and good stability.

**Sgraffito**
The term, which means “scratch”, means the act of scraping the layer of fresh paint with the point of the brush or a knife to reveal the base. This technique allows you to reveal sub-layers of paint and even to scratch and clean unwanted parts of the canvas.

**Drying**
Hardening of the paste thanks to the enhanced action of the oxygen molecules (also see Oxidation).

**Thixotropic**
Said of a product which at rest appears as a gel and when shaken or in contact with a source of heat liquefies. It regains its original appearance after it has been left.

**Toxicology**

- Harmful to the environment
- Easily or Extremely Inflammable
- Harmful or irritant
- Environmentally-friendly packaging
- Toxic
- Danger warning can be detected using touch

**About extra-fine oils**

Don't hesitate to test the quality of our Sennelier extra-fine oils, a marriage of tradition and modern chemistry:

- the pigments are strictly selected to offer fresh, intense tones which present excellent stability in light. The maximum concentrations and the extremely fine grinding of the color materials guarantee that over time, Sennelier colors will remain intense, fresh and bright.
- Safflower oil, a binder which yellows very little and with balanced drying qualities gives a thick paste which dries uniformly over the entire range, and gives the paint layer an attractive satin appearance.

For your safety, precautions for use are described case by case on each container and in line with current legislation.