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Preservation: From Material to Process and Protection Coating

Especially when commercial interests got involved with art or conversely, when art became a "commodity," investors wanted the product they bought to not fade, to be easily repairable, and a canvas free from rot and structural damages. The following are steps that art supply makers, preservation agencies, and artists have taken to protect the "commodity" from havoc of time from initial selection of materials to varnishing.

Varnishing:

Today, there exists a very easy way to varnish finished work because varnish is now available in your painting supply retailer as a spray (right).

Varnish offers not only a protective gloss finish, but matte, satin; etc... even UV protection too. Read the label and select the appropriate varnish for the desired effect. Gone are the days of ruining the painting by applying dammar varnish badly; however, you should follow step one of the trusted process by allowing the painting enough time to cure before varnishing. If not, the varnish may crack from movement on the painting surface as it dries. Below is the more traditional way to varnish the painting from

http://painting.about.com/cs/paintingknowhow/ht/Howto_Varnish.htm

One example of spray on varnish is this one by Winsor Newton 10 oz. about \$7- >>



1.Ensure your painting is completely dry... up to nine months!

- 2.Clean the painting so it's free from dust, dirt, and grease. Lay the painting flat, then dampen a bit of cotton wool with clean water.
- 3.Dry the painting with another bit of cotton wool. With your fingers, gently remove any cotton fibers that have been caught in the paint.
- 4.Leave your painting to dry for several hours, or overnight. Lean it against a wall, face inwards.
- 5.Use a (large) flat bristle brush to apply the varnish. If you don't want your painting to be too shiny, use a matt varnish rather than a gloss one.
- 6.With the painting flat, work from the top to the bottom, applying the varnish in parallel strokes from one edge of the painting to the other. Always work in the same direction.
- 7.When the first coat of varnish is dry, apply a second coat at right angles to the first. This will give you a good, even finish.
- 8.Leave the painting flat for at least 10 minutes after you've finished varnishing to stop the varnish running down the painting. Then prop it up against a wall to dry, face inwards.
- 9.To test whether the varnish is dry or not, touch the edge of the painting to see if it's still tacky. It should dry within a day or two, depending on the weather.

Other Steps Taken to Preserve the Art Commodity

Deterioration of material with time, exposure to the elements, and physical contact can wear even the marble steps of great Italian buildings making them resemble bowed wood-like planks. Luckily for painters, our creations are not usually touched and are kept indoors; however, ultra-violet light, contaminates in the air, and low quality materials used to fabricate the painting can quicken deterioration. A couple of things can be done even before you paint. You can select better materials like using only "**Archival Quality**" products that are guaranteed to be starve off deterioration for as long as possible because they **lack acid/base (pH neutral) and other chemicals** within their construction. For more information about the general idea of "Archival" (not just painting) see: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov> . Be warned! A high premium is charged for the products like hard wood stretcher frames, canvases that are **archivally sized/ triple-primed** with gesso, **non-yellowing** walnut medium, and first press cold pressed linseed oil paints (less yellowing); etc. There are also degrees of being "Archival" like those stipulated by the **ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials)** about tubes of paint. Read the labels! You are the ultimate decision maker of what is worth pre\$\$erving. Lastly, start your painting with thinned down paint and allow it to thicken as additional layers are applied for a good structural foundation.

Mastering Oil Painting > **Thank you for your participation**

This fall session flew by faster than the blink of an eye. It must mean I had fun... I did very much, and I hope you did too! I hope I lived up to my mission of helping you enjoy making art using your own hands while teaching you something new. I have been telling people how I love teaching here at Assabet, because my classes are filled with people who are interested in learning, and you pay to come learn new things; unlike the "required schooling" involving high school and even college students. There is not force feeding involved. It is **you** who asks me questions and try my suggestions.

You have all made beautiful paintings these ten weeks. I am sorry for the interruption of the blackout and the various personal hardships that I heard about. I would like to leave some parting words aimed at a few of you who are making exceptional strides in developing your work, but more importantly, I hope everyone can apply the following comments to your own art -- pushing it in a positive direction:



To those of you like Nadine who are making strides in creating a painting as a "composition" whether abstract or representational, I recommend you looking at an artist named **Giorgio Morandi** (left x2). Although his painting are recognizably representations of bottles, he uses **compositional strategies on a 2-dimensional levels (i.e.: Repeating shapes and hues; dividing up the rectangular canvas into other possible readings/framing; etc.) as well as in his illusionary of 3-dimensional spatial enclosures.**



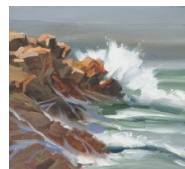
To those who are using some glazing technique like Susan and Judy, please look at paintings by older painters like **Rembrandt** and **Vermeer** (right). This website leads to additional advice on glazing and more about Vermeer: http://www.essentialvermeer.com/technique/technique_glazing.html **look not just at their painting in books or from far away, but get up close** enough to distinguish the glazed layers from the opaque layers and the fanciful detail/highlight strokes. I recommend that you get yelled at by the museum guards a few times and set off a few buzzers like me. :)



Iryna, and Janet, you capture light in your paintings exceptionally well. You may wish to look at Edward Hopper and the fine studies that Vinny does after Hopper, but be sure to also look closely at **J M W Turner** (right bottom) and other painters of the Romantic Period who paint brilliant & glorious sunsets, fires; etc. **See how they control not only their hue (color) but also value (greyscale) to create their illusions of light.**



And Tracie... Bev is right! In and Out. No details. **Try painting with a palette knife... mix the paint on the palette, then apply...** (works with knife, right)



<< Tom Brown paints en plein air with a knife
<http://tombrownstudio.com/>