

Oil Painting Mediums



True to historic working properties. Safer. More Permanent.

At Gamblin, our mission is to lead oil painting into the future. To us this means crafting materials as they ought to be, not just as they have been. Our contemporary mediums are true to historic working properties, yet safer and more permanent.

Painting mediums offer a great deal more than simply extending oil colors. Mediums modify the working properties of oil color from the tube – from a fluid consistency for expressive mark making to a stiff paste for creating thick, crisp marks. Painting mediums also broaden the visual qualities of our colors – from increasing the transparency of paint layers, to creating a range of surface qualities, from high gloss to matte.

When a painting is completed, all of the thought, effort and emotion that went into it are reflected in the artist's marks. Choosing the appropriate painting medium can be an essential part of making oil painting your own. With a painting medium that fits your needs, you can get into the flow of painting faster and stay there longer.

Our goal with this guide is to help you discover the materials that best support your work.



Dedicated.

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Authentic color. Naturally.

There is nothing more natural and enduring than oil painting. No other painting media holds the same raw power of communication, pigment load and artistic possibility. When an artist squeezes oil color from one of our tubes, they experience color at its maximum.

From a field to your palette.

We craft our paints from raw pigments and vegetable oil. The linseed oil we use comes from a field, not an oil refinery.

For over 600 years, the flax plant has given artists the oil we paint with and the canvas we paint on. Pressed flax seeds give us the linseed oil we bind our paints with. The stalk is separated and woven into the canvases painters have used for centuries.

Your painting. Your colors.

Making a painting is one of the most intricate things we do. We work with our head, heart, hands and intuition. And it all comes out, brushstroke by brushstroke.

When you approach your canvas, your oils stand ready to live up to all you put into your work. They are poised to express your thoughts, intentions and marks with an intensity, fidelity and range of possibilities that far surpasses acrylics.

When moving your brush or knife through oils the first time, you feel the difference. You know it. The intensity and depth of color. The texture. The luscious feel as it moves. And we know the simple, natural materials in oil colors endure for centuries.

Oil painting has endured, evolved and grown for centuries. Now is the best time to be an oil painter. We have more luscious and permanent colors. We have contemporary painting mediums that speed drying and broaden artistic possibilities, solvent-free painting mediums to create the safest studio environments and the raw materials to create traditional painting mediums.

Please refer to the Studio Safety page on our website for information on how to create without compromise in a safe studio.



Jamee Linton-Kelly

Contemporary Painting Mediums



GALKYD

Galkyd thins oil colors and increases transparency and gloss. When used in greater proportions with oil color, Galkyd will level brushstrokes, creating an enamel-like surface. Galkyd is our fastest-drying medium. Thin layers will be touch-dry in approximately 24 hours.



GALKYD LITE

Galkyd Lite thins oil colors and increases transparency and gloss. When used in moderation with oil colors, Galkyd Lite will retain brushstrokes. Galkyd Lite is more fluid and less glossy compared to Galkyd. Thin layers will be touch-dry in 24 to 30 hours.



GALKYD SLOW DRY

Galkyd Slow Dry thins oil colors and extends working time. Galkyd Slow Dry is more fluid and less glossy than Galkyd Lite. Use one part Galkyd Slow Dry to one part oil colors to paint wet-into-wet for at least a day.



NEO MEGILP

Neo Megilp is a contemporary version of Maroger. This soft gel medium maintains the body of oil colors, increases transparency and flow, and imparts a smooth, silky feel. Neo Megilp dries at a moderate rate and remains workable for hours. Neo Megilp gives colors a satin gloss.



GALKYD GEL

Galkyd Gel is a stiffer gel compared to Neo Megilp that holds thicker, sharper brushmarks and dries more quickly. Galkyd Gel increases transparency of oil colors and creates impasto.



COLD WAX MEDIUM

Cold Wax medium is made from naturally white, pure beeswax. Formulated to knife consistency, Cold Wax Medium makes oil colors thicker and more matte. Cold Wax Medium can be used to make Gamblin mediums and Gamvar more matte. It can also be applied alone as a matte varnish.

Solvent-free Painting Mediums



SOLVENT-FREE GEL

Solvent-Free Gel gives colors more flow and transparency, yet holds the shape of your brushmark. Solvent-Free Gel has a moderately fast drying rate and increases gloss. Made from safflower oil and alkyd resin, Gamblin Solvent-Free Gel is non-toxic and contains no Gamsol or petroleum distillates.



SOLVENT-FREE FLUID

Gamblin Solvent-Free Fluid painting medium gives oil colors more flow and transparency. It has a moderately fast drying rate and increases gloss. Made from safflower oil and alkyd resin, Gamblin Solvent-Free Fluid is non-toxic and contains no Gamsol or petroleum distillates.



SAFFLOWER OIL

To paint solvent-free, we recommend Gamblin Safflower Oil for cleaning brushes while you are working. After your painting session, brushes can be further cleaned using Gamsol and/or soap and water. Gamblin Safflower Oil is a pale drying oil, which increases the flow and slows drying.

Raw Materials



REFINED LINSEED OIL

Gamblin Refined Linseed Oil is the palest of linseed oils. Adding Refined Linseed Oil to colors increases flow and slows dry times. Use sparingly or mix with an equal amount Gamsol to create a traditional slow-drying, low-viscosity painting medium.



STAND OIL

Gamblin Stand Oil is a thickened version of Refined Linseed Oil. Modifying oil colors with Gamblin Stand Oil increases flow and gloss and slows dry time. Colors mixed with Stand Oil will dry to a smooth, enamel-like finish. Use sparingly or mix with an equal amount Gamsol to create a traditional, slow-drying, high-viscosity painting medium.



POPPY OIL

Gamblin Poppy Oil is the slowest-drying oil we offer. It is useful to painters working in traditional, wet-into-wet techniques that want the longest possible working time. Use sparingly or mix with an equal amount Gamsol to create a traditional slow-drying, low-viscosity painting medium. Do not dilute Gamblin painting mediums by more than 10% with Poppy Oil.



COLD PRESSED LINSEED OIL

Gamblin Cold Pressed Linseed Oil is the most traditional oil we offer. Using Cold Pressed instead of Gamblin Refined Linseed Oil will slow drying and increase yellowing. For modifying painting mediums and colors we recommend Refined Linseed Oil or Poppy Oil instead of Cold Pressed. Use sparingly or mix with an equal amount Gamsol to create a traditional slow-drying, low-viscosity painting medium.



GAMSOL












The Standard for Studio Safety.™ Gamsol is the safest solvent that allows artists to work in traditional and contemporary techniques without compromise. Gamsol can be used to thin oil colors and painting mediums, and for general studio clean-up. Gamsol is reusable and non-toxic when used as recommended.



WORKING PROPERTIES & DRYING RATES

The chart below details differences in **working properties** and **drying rates** among Gamblin painting mediums. Also included are 50/50 mixtures of Stand Oil, Refined Linseed Oil, Poppy Oil and Gamsol. As with all painting mediums ever invented, our mediums fall into three categories: **Low Viscosity** (thin), **High Viscosity** (thick) and **Gel**. Within each type of viscosity is a variety of drying rates. You will discover one or two mediums that will be perfect for your work. Robert Gamblin uses the fluid Galkyd Lite in earlier layers of his painting because it thins paint quickly and dries fast. In subsequent glaze layers he switches to the gel Neo Megilp because he needs more working time and wants the glazes to stay put.

To modify your painting medium, add a moderate amount of Gamsol to reduce the viscosity and/or a moderate amount of Refined Linseed, Stand or Poppy Oil to slow drying. All Gamblin mediums are compatible with each other. For information on customizing your medium to fit your needs, please refer to the **Interactive Mediums Guide** on our website.

	FAST DRY (1-2 DAYS)	MODERATE DRY (3-4 DAYS)	SLOW DRY (4-6 DAYS)
<p>LOW VISCOSITY (thin)</p> <p>Low viscosity painting mediums quickly increase the flow of oil colors off the brush. When using low viscosity mediums in moderation, brushmarks will be retained. Excellent for expressive, “painterly” effects.</p> 	 <p>GALKYD LITE</p>	 <p>SOLVENT-FREE FLUID</p> <p>GALKYD SLOW DRY</p>	 <p>50% REFINED LINSEED OIL/ 50% GAMSOL</p> <p>50% POPPY OIL/ 50% GAMSOL</p>
<p>HIGH VISCOSITY (thick)</p> <p>High viscosity painting mediums increase the flow of oil colors, yet impart a “sticky” quality. When used in greater proportions with oil colors, high viscosity mediums self-level brushmarks, giving oil colors an enamel-like quality.</p> 	 <p>GALKYD</p>	<p>A NOTE ON DRYING RATES...</p> <p>The differences in drying rates were determined by testing mediums as follows: 2 parts medium were mixed with 5 parts Gamblin Titanium White oil color. Each mixture was applied in a 20ml thickness (1/50th of an inch) on coated paper.</p> <p>Each sample was allowed to dry in a 70 degree F environment. The drying rates indicated below for each medium were determined by the length of time until each sample became “touch-dry.”</p> <p>Keep in mind that temperature, humidity, thickness of application and absorbcency of the substrate all affect the drying rates of oil painting materials.</p>	 <p>50% STAND OIL/ 50% GAMSOL</p>
<p>GEL & WAX</p> <p>Gel & Wax painting mediums extend oil colors, yet do not make them fluid. Gel mediums are excellent for painters who create thicker impasto marks.</p> 	 <p>GALKYD GEL</p>	 <p>SOLVENT-FREE GEL</p> <p>NEO MEGILP</p>	 <p>COLD WAX MEDIUM</p>

Glazing: Materials & Techniques

Glazes are thin, transparent layers of paint. Glazes are used over paint layers to build depth and add color in a painting. A glaze must be completely dry before another is applied on top. Several mediums can be used for glazing. A glaze layer should contain at least 10% oil color.

Low Viscosity Fluid Mediums

Low viscosity (thin) fluid mediums make very thin glazes, which conform to the texture of paint layers below. Consider Galkyd Lite or Galkyd thinned with Gamsol for making the thinnest glaze layers.



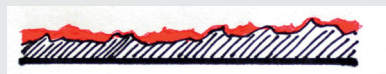
High Viscosity Fluid Mediums

High viscosity (thick) fluid mediums make thicker glaze layers compared to low viscosity mediums. High viscosity mediums level brushmarks and create an enamel-like surface. Galkyd and Stand Oil are high-viscosity fluid mediums.



Gel Mediums

Gel mediums can be used to make thicker glazes which retain their own texture. Some artists glaze “wet-into-wet” using gel mediums. Neo Megilp is an excellent choice for this technique.



Why is Gamsol the best Artist’s Solvent?

Not all solvents used in oil painting are created equal. Gamsol allows painters to work in traditional and contemporary techniques without compromising artistic possibilities, permanence or your well-being. Gamsol is also reusable and nontoxic when used as recommended.

For an artist, there are a number of factors to consider when judging a solvent’s safety. Aromatic solvents are the most harmful type of mineral spirits. Gamsol is an odorless mineral spirit which has all of the aromatic component refined out of it – less than .005% remains. In addition, Gamsol has a slow evaporation rate, high flash point and is not absorbed through healthy skin.

These factors have led to Gamsol being The Standard for Studio Safety, and the solvent of choice among artists and instructors in classrooms and home studios.

Gamblin’s family of Galkyd painting mediums, Cold Wax, Gamvar Picture Varnish and Ground are all formulated with Gamsol. We recommend only Gamsol for thinning these materials.



Varnishing

We recommend varnishing paintings unless you truly dislike the look. Unvarnished paintings are vulnerable to aging in ways that varnished paintings are not.

Oil painting mediums should not be used as a varnish or final coat. Picture varnishes should be colorless and removable.¹

Gamblin Gamvar saturates and gives greater depth to the colors in your painting and gives your work a unified and protective semi-gloss surface. Developed in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art, Gamvar goes on water-clear, stays water-clear and can be easily and safely removed with Gamsol. Gamvar is virtually odorless and ready to apply. For most paintings, there is no need to wait 6 to 12 months before varnishing with Gamvar. Gamvar can be applied when the thickest areas of your painting are thoroughly dry and firm to the touch.

For application instructions and additional information on varnishing, please visit our website.

¹ *The Painter’s Handbook*, Mark David Gottsegen, Watson-Guptill Publications, 2006.

