



# T A R A W I N O N A

## ACRYLIC INK ON CANVAS

I love painting Acrylic inks onto canvases that have been specially prepared with several coats of Watercolour Ground. It gives them an extra tooth and a beautiful flow without the manufactured ridge marks of the canvas texture.

### 1. THE BLANK CANVAS - PREPARING YOUR CANVAS

Watercolour ground needs a 'normal' gesso to adhere to, so canvases must first be prepared as you would for an acrylic or oil painting. Easiest is to buy shop-prepped canvases. If you do it yourself, a minimum of 2 coats, 3 is preferable, smooth.

Now for the watercolour ground - Prep your canvases with 2 - 3 layers of watercolour ground 2 days before you wish to paint. I suggest spreading it on with a palette knife and then brushing it smooth with a wide soft brush. You can use a very small amount of water to wet your brush and help smooth it. Make sure each coat is dry before adding the next coat. Watercolour gesso brands vary in their dry time, so check the instructions.

Schmincke, Daniel Smith and Golden make watercolour grounds or gessoes which are all great and give different effects. The Schmincke and Daniel Smith smooth grounds are similar. Golden gives a more hard edge feel to the paint.

Watercolour grounds come in white, transparent and in the Daniel Smith range other colours such as beige, gold and black. You can also tint the grounds yourself. Schmincke make smooth (like hot press paper) and rough grounds. The rough gessoes are fun to paint on. They also absorb more of the pigment though, so be aware that paintings will dry lighter.

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### 3. PAINT - THE FUN PART!

#### TIPS

- Use a binder medium to dilute your acrylic ink instead of water. Matisse make a gorgeous one - Acrylic Painting Medium - which allows a wonderful flow
- Plan your painting in stages. The inks are hard to control and will tend to go where it is wet. If you are creating a detailed section, think about allowing this to dry first before painting next to it.
- Babysit your painting. As it dries, lines/tide marks may appear that you do not like. You can easily remove these.
- Do not fiddle! Put a sign on your desk to remind you. Allowing the pigment to swirl and settle without disturbing it will give your painting greater clarity and luminosity.
- Be patient! It does take a while to dry.
- Have plenty of paper towels to dab with and wipe excess water /binder off your brush
- if you want to create a wash, first paint a layer of binder medium, then add the ink over the top
- Experiment!

#### MAGICAL MAGIC ERASERS

Hint - try using Magic Erasers for some great effects and to get rid of unwanted 'mistakes' (use the erasers without the chamois layer or detergents) You can buy these in Woolies in the cleaning section. They are fabulous! Be aware that they will remove a small amount of the gesso as you use them. Once the ink is completely dry they wont remove everything, but they are a great help

They can also be used gently on paper. I also use them to paint with sometimes

## 4. VARNISH

Acrylic ink tends to be painted in thin layers, hence I strongly recommend varnishing to protect it from UV rays. **IMPORTANT** - make sure your painting is dry before you varnish!!! I leave mine for a good week to be sure.

### SOFT GEL GLOSS - ARCHIVAL SACRIFICIAL LAYER

For the highest archival purposes, Golden recommends that you add a protective coat of soft gel gloss before varnishing. This becomes a permanent non-removable part of the painting and means that any varnish following this coat can be removed for archival purposes. If you are not worried about archival purposes, you can go ignore this step and go straight to varnishing.

### VARNISHING

**WATER BASED VARNISH** - the first 2 coats of varnish should be water based. I prefer to use a UV protective water based varnish for this. Brush it on or airbrush it. Make sure it is dry before adding another layer and follow instructions closely.

These coats should be gloss. If you want to really seal your painting, after this stage you can use solvent based varnish.

**SOLVENT BASED VARNISH** - Solvent based varnishes seal your painting in and give it the best protection. In Australia I use Matisse UV varnish as the Golden solvent varnishes are not available. If you would like a less shiny look to your painting, you can use a matt varnish for the final coat.

Matisse do not make a satin or matt UV varnish in their solvent range, so I use the spray varnish to reduce the glare. I have found that on dark paintings, using the matt post gloss coats make it look speckled or a bit cloudy, whereas painted matt varnish looks great (but you can't get Golden matt solvent based varnish in Australia) **ALWAYS test first!**

**SPRAY VARNISH** - Golden and Krylon make the best spray varnishes to the highest archival standards. Golden say that 2-3 coats of spray varnish equal 1 coat of painted varnish. The first 6 coats must be gloss, the final few matt to reduce the sheen. I put between 8 and 12 coats of varnish on, leaving about 20 mins between coats for drying. Make sure you wear a high spec respirator mask.



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## IMPORTANT POINTS

THE GLOSS VARNISH RULE - always do the first layers of varnish with gloss. Once you are satisfied that the painting is protected, then you can give it the sheen that you desire.

Always begin with gloss varnish until you are happy that your painting is protected - and then apply matt or satin based varnishes to create the sheen you want. Test first. Golden recommends you use satin on top of their gloss as sometimes the matt reacts strangely.

Remember to brush or blow dust off before you varnish.

Make sure your painting is dry!

ALWAYS test varnish first when you are using different sheens on a small corner of the painting. Sometimes the matt varnishes can behave strangely when painted over the gloss.

If it is raining or very humid it is best not to varnish. First the varnish may dry too quickly or cloud (the best place to varnish is in an air-conditioned room) Also the watercolour will absorb the moisture in the air and possibly re-active - do not put your painting in front of a heater to dry it as it will crack - if you are concerned direct a (non heat) fan onto the surface before varnishing.

Always begin with gloss coats and then move on to satin or matt. No more than 2 coats of satin or matt spray is recommended as they can begin to cloud the painting.