



## T A R A   W I N O N A

### ACRYLIC INK ON CANVAS

Acrylic inks are the highest form of pigment in the most liquid state in acrylics. They have a wonderful flow and life to paint with - like painting with watercolour but with more surprises! The inks lend themselves to wild flow, complex glazes, precision lines and experimental techniques, with a vibrancy of colour and luminosity.

#### 1. THE BLANK CANVAS - WATERCOLOUR GROUNDS

I paint acrylic inks onto canvases that have been pre-prepared with watercolour grounds. The grounds create a beautiful surface to work on and an added layer to bind the inks to. Grounds come in different textures from smooth to rough -

**SMOOTH** - like hot pressed paper. The Schmincke and Daniel Smith smooth grounds are similar and allow free flowing effects. Golden gives more hard-edge precision

**ROUGH** - gives a textured surface like lumpy cold pressed paper. Can be sculpted with a palette knife. The rough grounds do absorb more of the pigment, so be aware that paintings will dry lighter. Schmincke and Golden make rough grounds.

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.

Canvases should be prepped with 2 - 3 layers of watercolour ground 2 days before you wish to paint. I suggest spreading it on with a palette knife and for the smooth grounds, then brushing it 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.

Schmincke, Daniel Smith and Golden make watercolour grounds which are all great and give different effects. They come in white and transparent, and in the Daniel Smith range colours such as beige, gold and black. You can also tint the grounds yourself with acrylic paint or ink - read instructions on the labels as to dilution quantity

### 3. PAINT - THE FUN PART!

#### INKS

There are fabulous acrylic ink brands to choose from - Schminke Aerocolour, Liquitex, Matisse (very liquid flow) and FW (slightly thicker). The most important thing is to go for high light fastness ratings. If the light fastness is fragile, even if you love the colour, don't use it!

#### BINDER MEDIUMS

With acrylic inks, you must use a binder medium to dilute your paint (like water being added to watercolour) The binder ensures the paint will stay on the canvas for years to come and won't crack. If you first prep your paintings with a background wash, do use a binder, not water. Different brands of binders create different effects -

MATISSE Acrylic Painting Medium - my favourite for flow and washes. It is just gorgeous and the closest in feeling to painting in watercolour with water

SCHMINCKE AERO MEDIUM - thicker than Matisse. It creates some wonderful hair like effects. Experiment with painting a thick area and dropping a small amount of ink into it.

GOLDEN AIRBRUSH TRANSPARENT EXTENDER - great for diluting inks when you want to lighten the pigments and paint with more control and less flow.

#### TIPS

- Plan your painting in stages. The inks can be hard to control.
- Wet will flow where it is wet. If you are creating a detailed section, think about allowing this to dry first before painting next to it. If you want a hard line blending to flowing area, paint a hard line and then drag a loaded brush of binder along one side of it. The hard edge will remain where you have not added the binder.
- Babysit your painting. As it dries, tide marks may appear or the ink may wander.
- Don't fiddle. Allowing the pigment to swirl and settle without disturbing it will give your painting greater luminosity and life. And perhaps some wonderful surprises!
- Be patient! Sometimes it takes time for the effects to reveal themselves.

#### 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 online or from supermarkets. They are fabulous! Be aware that they will remove a small amount of the gesso as you use them. Have a separate pot of water handy to rinse them off in - as you use them they break down and tiny particles of the white clouds the water and hence your paints. They can also be used gently on paper. I also use them to paint with sometimes

## 4. VARNISH

All pigments are affected by light. The better you protect them, the longer they will last. I strongly recommend varnishing to protect from UV rays. Varnishing is a tricky thing and is not something you should leave as an after thought. It needs to be planned out and given your full attention. I have had many discussions with scientists at Golden and Matisse and established my varnishing routine below. The whole process can take up to 2 weeks.

### IMPORTANT

- Make sure your painting is dry before you varnish!!! I leave mine for a good couple of weeks to be sure. If it is not dry, ultimately wht varnish will crack
- Make sure the painting is clean of dust. I use a tack cloth or blow with a compressor
- As much as possible, varnish in a dust free space.

### STEP 1 - 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 below.

### STEP 2 - WATER BASED VARNISH

I like my first 2 coats of varnish to be with a UV-protective water based varnish. Brushed on or airbrushed. Make sure it is dry before adding another layer and follow instructions closely. These coats should be gloss.

### STEP 3 - SOLVENT BASED VARNISH

Solvent based varnishes completely seal your painting in and give it the best protection. Solvent UV varnishes come in tins or aerosol cans. The general rule is 2-3 coats of aerosol spray varnish equals one coat of painted. I like to have the equivilant of at least 2 coats of varnish at this stage, so 4 - 6 aerosol.

Painting solvent varnish can be tricky and I am leaning towards spraying as I get fine coats that don't pool and puddle or streak.

IMPORTANT - 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. Too many coats of satin or matt spray can begin to cloud, so be careful

Troubleshooting - I have found that if I use a matt spray over the gloss coats on a dark painting, a slight speckling appears, so I prefer to stick to satin now. If this does happen, you can always bring it back by painting a layer of gloss on the top.

Make sure you wear a high spec respirator mask and gloves. When spraying I also wear eye protection and a disposable painting suit. It is toxic so look after yourself!

BRANDS - Golden and Krylon make the best varnishes to the highest archival standards. You can buy both as aerosols and Golden as a paint on in a tin. Matisse also makes a great UV solvent in a tin. A good rule is to use the one brand all the way through the process - so for this reason I tend to stick to Golden.

## 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. No more than 2 painted coats of satin or matt

HUMIDITY - If it is raining or very humid it is best not to varnish as the varnish may dry too quickly or cloud (the best place to varnish is in an air-conditioned room)

NEVER 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.

Happy painting and experimenting!