

RECIPE Oil Paint

Most pigments can be mixed with oil. A few exceptions are: Caput Mortuum, Red Bole, Manganese Black, Graphite, Paris Blue.

Some pigments are easier to use with oil than others:
The only way to learn about the character of each pigment is through patient and systematic trial.

Additives can even out differences in paint consistency: Mark David Gottsegen recommends adding 1 oz. Bleached Beeswax (62210) to 7 fl.oz. gently heated oil as an additive to the Cold Pressed Linseed Oil (73054) used for grinding the pigments. Fillers such as Blanc Fixe (58700) and Aluminum Hydrate (58942) may be used to lower or raise the oil absorption.

One part Cold Pressed Linseed Oil is used for every 1-3 parts of pigment.
Add disperse aid for very fine powders. Work into a paste with a palette knife. Add oil, working it into the pigment slowly, until you have a firm paste. This should take 20-30 minutes.

Adding too much oil can cause yellowing, cracking and wrinkling. If you have added too much oil, let the paste drain on a paper plate.

As mixing tools you can use a palette knife on a glass surface; for larger amounts you will need a mortar and pestle, or a glass muller on a sandblasted piece of glass.

Store your paint in a jar, covered by a thin layer of oil or a piece of plastic wrap to prevent the top of the paste from drying. Keeping your colors in a jar makes them more accessible in case they settle or tend to separate from the oil. You can also tube them, if you don't plan to store them for a long time.

As you paint, add siccativ or fast drying medium for shorter drying time.

Making your own paints is a great way to learn about color and paint, about the nature of the vehicle and the different pigments. It saves money and guarantees the purest ingredients in your paint. If you are just starting out, use earth pigments, and check our booklist.

Specially recommended:
Mark David Gottsegen: The Painter's Handbook
Pip Seymour: A Short Book about Oil Painting.