



Artist Preparation and Painting Tips

for Working with Fiberglass Forms rev.9.23.04

I. Preparation

Wash the surface while checking it over carefully to see if there are any holes to fill, defects in the surface or flaking of primer that require fixing before proceeding. Lightly sand any rough areas you find in the primer. If primer is flaking: sand those areas, wipe down with denatured alcohol, and prime with KILZ. If small holes are found: fill with a bondo-type product such as "body putty" (in a tube) available at auto supply stores. Squeeze a small amount onto the area, smooth quickly with spatula and let set. Repaired areas should be ready to sand after an hour; then wash the entire surface thoroughly. If these repair steps need to be taken, we would suggest re-priming the entire form with latex KILZ primer (Home Depot, Wal-Mart).

II. Under-painting (This step is not necessary if you have re-primed the form with latex Kilz.)

Under-painting with a coat of gesso, or white acrylic paint diluted to the consistency of cream, provides a good surface for painting. This step is not necessary if you are going to glue, decoupage, or apply mosaics to your form.

Cowpainters medium: 1/4Cup golden polymer gloss medium in quart of water. We use this (in place of plain water) to dilute our acrylics to the desired consistency for painting, when necessary.

III. Paint and Varnish

Preferred Paint Brands: Acrylics by Golden, Windsor-Newton, Daler-Rowney, Pebeo, Lascaux and Liquitex. You can also use the oil paints of your choice. Avoid latex wall paint, as the colors are not as durable as artists' acrylics. Please read your paint labels carefully and avoid paints that do not have a high colorfast rating. You don't want your design to disappear in the sunlight!

Varnish before Clear-Coating: THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT STEP. Protect your acrylic-painted artwork before clear-coating using Lascaux UV-1 acrylic gloss varnish (the best). Order from Jerry's Artarama Catalog (800-827-8478), p. 106 of 2004 Catalog, item #59751 250 ml or 62070, one liter. One coat of Lascaux, diluted 4 parts varnish to 1 part water, will protect your work until it is clear-coated. Other choices are Golden's polymer acrylic varnish, but be aware that Golden's varnish is for indoor use and should be used only when auto-body clear coat will be applied. Ronan brand Aquathane UV Absorber available at www.dickblick.com is also a suitable varnish and should NOT be diluted.

IV. Clear-Coating

We recommend a final finish with an auto-body clear coat. This step should be provided by your project. Our auto-body shop uses Sherwin-Williams' automotive urethane ultra 7000 clear-coat (with appropriate hardener and catalyst), cured at no more than 110 degrees for no longer than 20 minutes or air-dried for 24 hours. We highly recommend clear-coating as it will leave a hard-shell high-gloss finish with UV-protection. DO NOT USE LACQUER, WHICH WILL DISSOLVE ACRYLIC PAINTS!!!!!!!!!!!!.

Alternative to Clear-Coat: "Frog Juice!" Go to www.farfromnormal.com and check out Frog Juice Sunscreen Clear 7000 Waterbase. Technical questions: 218-236-7000. They will tell you where it can be purchased in your area. It can be applied with a sprayer, will not yellow and does not have to be mixed. The Coeur d'Alene, Idaho project protected its NoMooseLeftBehind moose forms with Frog Juice.

V. Additions and Extensions (best done by professionals)

Remember that anything you add to the creature will be vulnerable. Vandals (and the weather) will try to remove anything you add, so think "permanence" when planning and executing your design. There are professionals in your community who can help you do this, such as auto-body shops and other experts who work with fiberglass. We at Cowpainters can add things like wings, at the factory, for an additional cost.

If you wish to sculpt forms onto your fiberglass form, or alter surface areas, use epoxy putty. The product name is "Magic Sculp". Go on the Internet to "restorersupplies.com", to order Magic Sculp and get tech support for using the product. To glue stuff onto your creature, use liquid nails or Magic Sculp. We do NOT recommend that you add hats, bags, and other fabric items as they will deteriorate outside. You can create them with Magic Sculp, or make them out of foam and cover that with Magic Sculp. It is non-toxic, easy to handle, air dries and is paintable. It can be kept in sealed Ziploc bags until time to mix the two parts together and sculpt or glue. REMEMBER, BUYERS WILL NOT BE HAPPY WITH FAULTY ARTWORK. THINK PERMANENCE!!!!!! ORDER SUPPLIES AS SOON AS YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR DESIGN.

VI. A Few Important Notes

Please regard all of the above information as suggestions on how to proceed. The entire process depends upon an artist's knowledge of materials and proper application. If in doubt --- EXPERIMENT.

MAKE USE OF COWPAINTER'S HOTLINE FOR ANSWERS TO YOUR TECHNICAL QUESTIONS.

FOR YOUR HEALTH ALWAYS WEAR VINYL GLOVES AND DUST MASKS OR RESPIRATORS WHEN PREPPING CRITTERS. WORK IN A WELL-VENTILATED SPACE. CLEAN UP THE DUST WITH A DAMP MOP; DON'T SWEEP!

QUESTIONS? CALL OR EMAIL ATTENTION ART DIRECTOR and we will respond as soon as possible.

Rev. 9/23/04

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