



Utrecht Art Supplies

Product Profiles: Driers in Oil Paint



Ask the Expert: “I read that some brands of oil paint have driers mixed in. Do you put them in yours? If so, for what purpose?”

A: We do add driers to our oil paints, depending on the color. Use of catalytic siccatives (driers) in manufactured oil paint is an industry-standard practice. Practically every manufacturer uses them, except for a few small, boutique paint makers who claim not to add any.

Driers are metallic salts which change the rate of oxidation in drying oils, causing paint to form a solid film faster. Driers can be “top”, “bottom” or “through”, depending on how and where they act within the paint film.

Driers help overcome the slow drying rate of some pigments, making all colors in the assortment dry at a rate that promotes durable results and is practical for the artist. Not all pigments need to be amended with driers. Some earth colors like Raw and Burnt Umber have small amounts of naturally occurring metallic salts, and do not require any extra siccatives.

Very “fat” pigments (those requiring a lot of oil to produce paint) often have an extremely slow drying rate, and in some cases might never dry thoroughly if driers were not added.

The use of driers in manufacture is strictly controlled by paint chemists and expert craftsmen, who test and evaluate each batch carefully. In general, due to the degree of difficulty involved in measuring and testing, driers should not be used directly on the palette by artists, but may be added in small amounts to large batches of medium in order to gently support faster drying.

Questions? [Ask the Expert](#)

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