



Utrecht Art Supplies

Product Profiles: Type 79D Linen and Sizings



Ask the Expert: "The package insert for Type 79D Linen says this canvas can't be used with Rabbit Skin Glue. Why not? Are other sizings going to work as well or last as long as my favorite RSG? Also, what about my old canvases done on this linen?"

A: Type 79D linen can develop an irregular weave pattern when prepared with Rabbit Skin Glue. When wet size is applied, a wavy pattern appears across the fabric. This happens regardless of glue strength, or whether the fabric has been washed or moistened prior to sizing. The Belgian mill that produces this canvas to our specifications has offered a few ideas as to the source of the issue. The most likely explanation is a difference in strength between warp and weft yarns.

After extensive testing, we have decided to recommend this fabric be used with synthetic size only. Acrylic and PVA-based

products are suitable for use on Type 79D linen. Acrylic Gesso is also compatible with this fabric. Once sized with a synthetic product, 79D canvas can accept oil or alkyd-oil priming.

While synthetics (introduced in the 1950s) have not been in use for nearly as long as protein glues, the art materials industry and museum conservation professionals have tested synthetic sizings and grounds since their introduction and found the performance of PVA and acrylic sizings to be significantly better than historical materials in terms of durability and stability. We still feel historical materials like RSG can be used effectively by skilled craftsmen, but if the question is which type of sizing is likely to yield more durable results, acrylic and PVA are the clear winners.

There is no cause for concern regarding distortion manifesting in finished paintings or on dry, prepared canvases. The wavy pattern develops strictly in the preparation stage while wet yarns are actively shrinking. If weave distortion did not occur during sizing and priming, it will not appear later.

Questions? [Ask the Expert](#)

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