



**Utrecht Art Supplies**

## **Product Profiles: Retouching with Alkyd**

**Ask the Expert:** "I recently did some touch-ups on an older painting done in oils with alkyd medium. I used the same materials for the revisions, let it dry overnight, and varnished it with a spray product. After the varnish dried there were dull and shiny spots all over. Should I remove the varnish and start over?"



**A:** Irregularity in varnish sheen is usually caused by differences in absorbency or fatness from passage to passage. When a dull patch manifests in fresh varnish, it's called "sinking". This often happens when a painting is varnished before it's completely dry, especially when very absorbent or "fat" colors are used.

You may be able to overcome the dull spots by applying more varnish now, but since some of the paint is still fresh it may be better to just wait a couple of months and revisit once everything has settled down, chemically and dimensionally.



*Utrecht Alkyd Gel*

Oil-modified alkyds dry to the touch faster than traditional oil paint, but alkyds still need time to cure to a stable film. Once the inpainted passages have achieved a stable state, you'll likely be able to achieve a better result. It's probably not necessary to remove the initial coat of varnish; subsequent applications of the same product should redissolve the first layer into a more consistent top coat. Just make sure the surface is totally clean with no dust or lint before re-coating.

If this painting needs to be released to a gallery or collector right away and you won't be able to apply the top coat yourself, make sure to provide them with information about what varnish you've used so a framer or restorer can complete the task.

Questions? [Ask the Expert](#)

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