



Utrecht Art Supplies Studio Craft: Rabbit Skin Glue Shelf Life

Ask the Expert: "I received a vintage bag of Utrecht Rabbit Skin Glue. I'm not sure how old, but it's at least ten years. Is there any way to tell if the glue is still good?"



Vintage label from a bag of Utrecht Rabbit Skin Glue

A: While ten years is considerably longer than we would keep Rabbit Skin Glue (RSG) on the shelf in stores, we think there is a good chance your glue is still in usable condition. RSG has a pretty long shelf life, as long as storage conditions are good.

RSG is an animal-derived protein glue, very similar to plain gelatin. It takes up moisture from the air, and can be susceptible to clumping and mold growth if not kept dry. (Glue granules can be stored short-term in the original bag, but it's a good idea to transfer RSG to a container with a tight-fitting lid or a zip-seal bag for long-term storage.)

Inspect the product and look for clumping or signs of mold colonies. If the glue is not loose and granular, has an odd color or musty smell, it should be discarded.

Age-induced change in the glue proteins can also affect whether an old container of RSG is still usable. Over time, glue granules become gradually less soluble, and it becomes harder to dissolve the product to prepare sizing. It's possible to test a small amount in boiling water. Strength of a sizing determines how well it can protect canvas, so if a significant number of granules sink to the bottom and will not dissolve, it means the glue won't achieve full strength and should be discarded.

Questions? [Ask the Expert](#).

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