



Utrecht Art Supplies

Product Profiles: Seasoning a Palette for First Use



Some palettes must be seasoned or otherwise prepared before use with paint to provide a good mixing surface and to impart a neutral tone that assists in color mixing.

Depending on materials used in manufacture, advance preparation can either be a custom option or a necessary prerequisite. Either way, many artists find some modification of the original surface can help enhance color mixing, paint handling and cleanup.

Lightweight wooden palettes are still favored by many artists for the ease with which the paint can be held close to the painting to see both in similar light. Wooden palettes for oil painting should be sealed before use to prevent absorption of too much vehicle from the paint.

Plain linseed oil can be applied with a rag to take advantage of the warm color of natural wood as a counterpoint for color mixing. Alternately, some prefer to mix a specific color of oil paint to coat the palette, ranging from white to gray to some other nondescript warm neutral. Titanium white mixed with raw umber is a good choice, or select a neutral derived from your own color assortment.



Pigment residue collected from solvent containers is an excellent toning color for a new palette; mix with linseed oil for binding strength.

Palettes made of impermeable materials may not require seasoning before use, but they can still be prepared or toned if the artist prefers. Hardboard palettes are pre-coated with a white enamel-like surface that is easy to clean and will not absorb the vehicle from paint. After a few sessions, the white coating will stain to a pleasant neutral. To speed up the staining process, rub in some color right away; ivory black or raw umber can be rubbed very thinly onto the palette to achieve a subtle stain. Once dry, the tone will allow easy side-by-side comparison of chromatic colors.

A tempered glass palette is a favorite for acrylic painters. Dry paint can be easily scraped or peeled away, leaving the surface like new. Some brands are frosted on the underside to enhance color mixing, but it's also possible to tape a sheet of toned paper to the underside of a glass palette to provide a neutral, uniform mixing color.