

# Acrylic Paintings

Contributed by Ken Marlborough

Acrylic paintings are relatively new as acrylic paint for painting was first introduced around 1950. Acrylic paint has now become an essential element of the arts and craft market. Many artists consider acrylic paint as a viable option for oil paints. Acrylic paints differ from the conventional oil paints in terms of their physical and chemical properties and thus necessitates special care of acrylic paintings.

Typically, acrylic paints are of two types, namely water-based and solvent-based. However, water-based acrylics are more popular among painters. Acrylic paints dry quickly as compared to oil paints and may hardly require half an hour for the entire painting to dry. Acrylic films are not very hard and may easily gather dust and grime.

Various types of additives, such as stabilizers, defoamers, coalescing solvents, thickeners, and preservatives, are added to the acrylic paint to produce the desired results.

The chances of acrylic paintings cracking are relatively low as the paint is flexible and can withstand pressure. However, acrylic paintings may become very brittle and crack in freezing temperatures. Sometimes acrylic paintings may develop a gray veil on the surface or form a yellow discoloration over a long period of time.

Since acrylic films are soft at room temperature, dust particles can settle on the surface and become mixed with the paint, resulting in stained paintings. Protective framing can combat this problem up to a certain extent. Varnishes can protect the paintings considerably from scratches and dust. Many artists do not like to varnish their paintings. Another major problem faced by acrylic painters is that of mold growth and as of now, no perfect solution has been devised for this problem.

There is a wide range of acrylic paints available in the market. It is imperative for acrylic painters to purchased superior quality products as poor quality paints fade easily when exposed to ultra violet light.

Regardless of high standards of care and maintenance, many artists continue to use acrylic paints because of their fast-drying quality and versatility.

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