

DEAR ERIC COLUMN - DECEMBER

VARNISH AND GLUE FOR WATERCOLORS

Dear Eric,

In your August newsletter, you mentioned framing without glass by gluing the watercolor paper on 1/4" Gatorboard and following with a varnish. I have 2 sprays, Krylon UV-Resistant Clear, Acrylic Coating (gloss). Also, I have Clapboard fixative, matte finish. Would either of these work, or do you recommend another product. And what kind of glue do you use to attach the paper to the Gatorboard?

Elizabeth from Springfield

Elizabeth,

Application of varnish on watercolor paper can be done by either spray can or by brushing it on. The advantage of spraying is that it is easy to apply and there is no disturbance imposed on the image, which could happen when using a brush. The disadvantage of spray is the need to protect against inhaling the mist, in a well-ventilated area - the outdoors can work great, but wind and rain can delay the process.

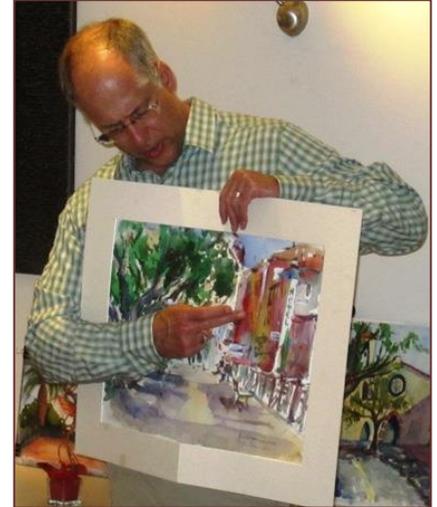
I prefer to use an acrylic gloss varnish diluted to the ratio of one-part varnish to three parts water. I apply it with an inexpensive three inch camel hair brush. A soft brush is critical; anything stiffer will cause the paint to drift. I do not over-stroke as this will also cause the image to drift. When it has dried, I apply another layer of the varnish, wait for it to dry again and then follow this with an oil painting medium: cold wax varnish. I hand rub this on the image with a soft cloth such as cheesecloth - this evens out the look and removes any imperfections the gloss varnish may have left.

Regarding your question as to attaching the paper to Gatorboard: any archival, or non yellowing, glue will work. I prefer to use a PVA glue, neutral PH Adhesive, made by Lineco. I think it doesn't pull on the paper as it dries, as other glues may.

I hope this helps you,

keep your brush wet!

Eric



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