

Materials and Suppliers

Suitable Supports: must be rigid

1. Birch Panel – available at most art supply outlets, usually “cradled” on a hardwood support frame – essential for larger pieces to avoid warping.
2. Masonite – must be untempered – tempered masonite has an oil based binder that is detrimental to adhesion of organic material.
3. MDF Hardboard – what we are using in this workshop – should be a minimum of 1/4” thickness to avoid warping – I would switch to cradled birch if working larger than 16” x 20”.
4. 300 lb watercolour paper – attractive because no gesso is required – use only for very small pieces 6” x 6”.
5. 140 lb hot pressed watercolour paper (no gesso needed) can be mounted on MDF 1/4” hardboard with the following method:
 - Cover both sides of board with one coat of acrylic gesso
 - Cut MDF board to desired size
 - Cut watercolour paper 1” larger than board
 - Coat one side of MDF board with generous amount of Acrylic Matte Medium
 - Place watercolour paper on smooth rigid surface
 - Press matte medium coated side of board firmly onto watercolour paper
 - turn over and use roller to squeeze out any lumps and air pockets -work from centre out.
 - Place a piece of paper on surface then weight down for 24 hours (change paper occasionally when wrinkled).
 - When dry, turn over so watercolour paper is on the bottom, and trim off excess with utility knife. Sand edges (downward from paper to wood).

All supports (except watercolour paper) should be sized with rabbit skin glue 24 hours before gesso is applied.

Gesso:

Traditional Gesso consists of marble dust (calcium carbonate extra fine 3um), rabbit skin glue and distilled water. I have attached the recipe recommended by the (now defunct) American Society of Egg Tempera. There is a wonderful supplier of raw artist materials called **Kama Pigments in Montreal** that carries high quality, reasonably priced artists' supplies that are not available anywhere else in Canada, and who have a comprehensive on-line catalogue and a great store with knowledgeable staff if you are up for a visit to Montreal. www.kamapigment.com

Traditional Gesso is also available as a pre-mix by **Fredrix** (available through **Curry's** on-line and at their stores www.currys.com) and as a pre-mix by **Gamblin** (available at various art suppliers)

Pigments:

Kama Pigments are by far your best bet...well sourced from around the world, half the price of brand name importers (Schminke, etc.) available online, and shipping is very reasonable.

If you don't want to initially purchase pigments, good quality chalk pastels (**Rembrandt**) are 90% pure pigment and can be shaved and finely ground and used in the same way.