



Utrecht Art Supplies Product Profiles: Retarder Gel



Ask the Expert: "I recently transitioned from oils to acrylics and I'm having a hard time getting the effects I want. The paint dries so fast I can't blend or brush out smooth layers. I'm using gloss medium but it's still not smooth enough. Is there something else I need to be using?"

A: Retarder Gel can be used to slow drying and increase the "open" time of acrylic colors and mediums. Retarder Gel is a water-clear, colorless additive that can be added directly to paints or blended with an acrylic medium.

How Retarder Gel Works:

An acrylic dispersion is made up of tiny polymer microparticles kept separate by water and glycols. When an acrylic paint film dries, as water and other coalescents evaporate, polymer microparticles contact each other and stick together. Water evaporates first and glycols leave more gradually so a strong, stable film can form. Retarder Gel slows drying by introducing

additional water and propylene glycol to mixtures.

How it's used:

Retarder Gel can be added directly to colors or mixed with any acrylic painting medium to extend drying time. Add a small amount to an entire pile of color to prevent paints from skinning over. Blend into mediums to create slow-drying versions of your favorites.

Limitations:

Because it's not strictly speaking an acrylic medium on its own and does not contain any binders, Retarder Gel should make up no more than 25% of total paint volume. Excessive use can result in a persistent sticky paint surface.

Questions? [Ask the Expert](#)

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