



Utrecht Art Supplies

Studio Craft: Tubing Your Own Mixtures

Tubing Your Own Mixtures



Batch-mixed colors help give a signature look to your palette, lend uniformity where broad coverage is needed and eliminate the need to re-mix the same hue repeatedly.



Supplies needed:

- A bulk quantity of white
- An assortment of tube colors
- Glass palette
- Mixing knife (trowel)
- Putty knife
- Empty collapsible aluminum tubes
- Essential oil of clove
- Cotton swabs
- Small bench vise
- Rags
- Odorless mineral spirits
- White bond paper (several sheets)
- Paper glue/glue stick



Aluminum paint tubes come in two sizes. Tubes are prepared with a contact seal at the open end to prevent leakage.



When dispensing paint from a can, it's important to skim (rather than gouge) the paint surface; this reduces surface area and prevents paint drying out. Flatten paint surface by tapping the bottom of the (closed) can on the floor. Do not mix dry paint residue with fresh.

Bulk cans of oil paint are packaged with a paper insert to prevent skinning. Remove insert and retain for storing the remainder.



Use the palette knife and putty knife together on the glass palette, scraping paint alternately from each tool.



Rough measurement of color volume can be done by measuring the length of a bead of paint from the tube. Precise measurement for exact duplication of a mixture can be done using a set of measuring spoons and cups used only for paint.

If you plan to duplicate a batch later, take careful notes; when measuring, take care to eliminate air pockets, and use the palette knife to level the paint surface in cups and spoons.



In order to achieve a homogeneous mixture, blend paint by alternately gathering and drawing down the mass.

Every few draws, gather all paint on the palette to make sure no under-mixed material is left at the edges.

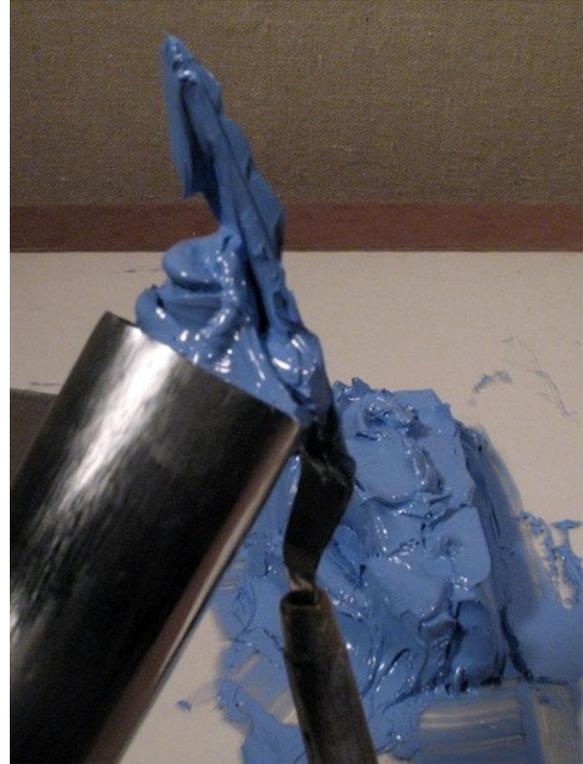


Scrape excess off the putty knife to prevent unblended streaks.





When mixing is complete, gather the mass of paint into a compact pile.



Before filling, make sure caps are tightly in place. Use the mixing trowel to fill tubes. Periodically tap the inverted tube cap-down on the work bench to drive paint into the tube and chase off air pockets. Take care not to over-fill.



Optional: Prepare tubes by swabbing a small amount of essential oil of clove in the cap to retard drying; replace caps tightly.



Carefully wipe excess paint from tube seal using clean rags and a small amount of odorless mineral spirits



Pinch to flatten the end of the tube.



Use a bench vise to seal the tube end. Take care not to over-tighten (tubes can puncture)



Use a clean palette knife to emboss a crease at the tube end. Fold over and press in the vise.



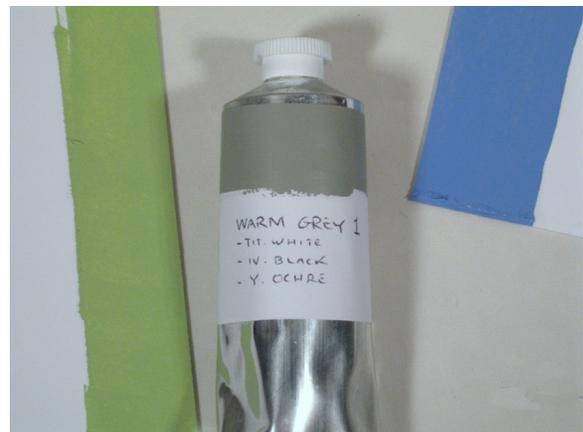
Repeat embossing, folding and pressing once again.



Tube should be completely sealed.



Use paint residue on the putty knife to create a color sample on bond paper; allow to dry.



Once the color sample is dry, cut a label for the corresponding tube. Indicate component colors and proportions for later reference.



Bulk cans of oil colors can dry out if only a small amount remains. Moving remaining paint to tubes is a great way to avoid waste.



Create unique batches from odds and ends to use up remnants in old tubes.



Build a collection of signature colors for a broad palette tailored to your specific style

Questions? [Ask the Expert](#)

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