



Utrecht Art Supplies

Studio Craft: On Preparing Hardboard Panels

Ask the Expert: "I want to use your Oil Priming White to prepare some panels and would like to know what you recommend in terms of preparation before priming. I've read on various forums online that you don't need to size masonite-type boards before oil priming- is that true?"



A: Our recommendation has always been to size hardboard prior to oil priming. Although hardboard doesn't suffer the same destructive effects as canvas when oil paint is applied directly, that type of panel does tend to wick away the primer and paint vehicle, leaving a weak, underbound ground and dull paint surface. We believe it's better to isolate the board to preserve the full strength of the primer and promote lustrous color.

For decades, our company founders together with art materials expert Ralph Mayer recommended Rabbit Skin Glue as the best panel sizing.



While we still think a skilled craftsman can get good results with RSG, today our first choice is Acrylic Sizing, a modern, more stable alternative to hide glue that is ready to use right from the container.



The reason some artists prefer not to size hardboard before oil priming is because water-borne acrylic dispersion size swells panel fibers and raises a texture some find undesirable. Of course, any roughness can be easily sanded smooth prior to priming.