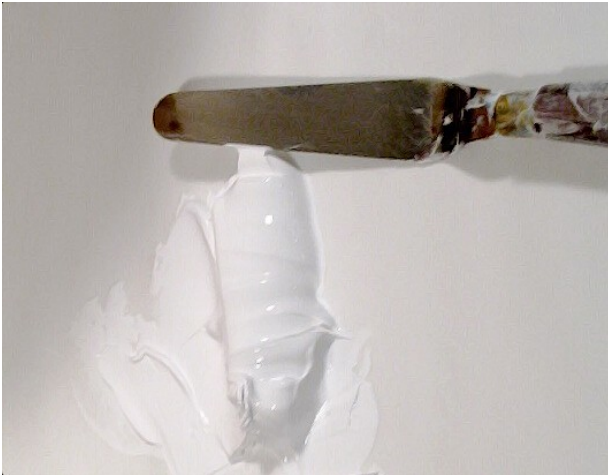


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ASK THE EXPERTS

## Utrecht Gesso: Sizing and Priming in One



**Ask the Experts: "You say Utrecht Gesso is sizing and priming both. I don't see how that's possible. Either it's one or the other, and it seems obvious to me that gesso is priming. Care to explain?"**

**A:** Ever since we first formulated Utrecht Acrylic Gesso in the mid-20th century, we have promoted its use as a one-step, ready-to-use combination sizing and priming, and we still stand by that description. In order to grasp the full significance of this development, it's necessary to understand how artists prepared canvas prior to the introduction of acrylic dispersion painting grounds.

Before Acrylic Gesso was introduced, priming canvas painting supports in-studio was a labor-intensive procedure spanning multiple days. Sizing (usually animal-based glue) was prepared over a double boiler and painted hot on stretched canvas. Once the sizing was completely dry, diluted white oil primer (usually

Dutch Boy lead white paste) was applied in multiple coats and allowed to dry. Traditional guidelines recommended using oil-primed supports within 2 weeks or after 6 months after preparation.

The introduction of Acrylic Gesso made it possible for the first time for artists to conveniently and quickly prepare painting supports in-studio for immediate use. Finally stretching and priming could be carried out the same day, and with acrylic priming, alternative support materials like hardboard, stone, paper and metal could be considered for permanent art.

The reason we say Utrecht Acrylic Gesso is sizing and priming in one is because our acrylic dispersion painting ground fulfills all essential functions of both. The role of sizing is to stiffen fabric to maintain a flat plane, and to isolate fabric from direct contact with oil paint. Primer is a uniform transitional layer between support and paint which provides texture and absorbency for good adhesion, and which also enhances paint appearance. Clearly, Utrecht Acrylic Gesso serves all of these functions, as well as a wide range of applications impossible with traditional hide glue/oil paint grounds.