



Utrecht Art Supplies

Ask the Expert: Gesso Compatibility

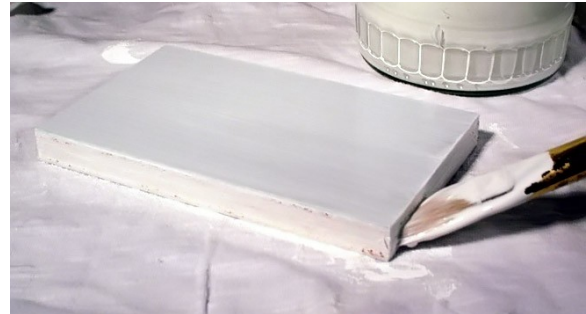
Ask the Expert: "How many surfaces can you use gesso on?"



A: The short answer is, *"We don't know, but it's a lot."*

There's simply no way for us to test each and every material for compatibility, but over the decades artists have tried to use gesso on just about everything one could imagine. We've tested many materials ourselves, and have learned quite a lot from artists who have shared their results.

Most porous, non-oily materials will accept Utrecht Acrylic Gesso, including wood, hardboard, plywood, paper, cloth, cardboard and leather. In addition, gesso can be used on many semi-porous supports including stone, plaster, masonry and bisque-fired ceramic. Acrylic gesso is also highly compatible with fired polymer clay (itself an acrylic compound). Acrylic Gesso is great for mixed media techniques to combine collage and 3-dimensional elements.



(Image: Acrylic Gesso applied to an aluminum-faced plywood panel)

Even some types of metal will accept our acrylic primers, but careful preparation is key. Aluminum can be primed with Acrylic Gesso, provided the surface is sanded for texture, cleaned prior to priming and sufficient time is allowed to achieve full curing. (For interior display only.)

When long-term durability is a priority it's a good idea to adhere to tried-and-true combinations, but experiments in the studio can reveal exciting new applications and techniques. Artists working with an experimental approach can reduce the chance of unpredictable results by executing test "tiles" or swatches. Prepare small samples of each test material coated with gesso; allow each to cure thoroughly, then evaluate adhesion by attempting to scratch away the gesso coating. Flexible supports can be tested by deliberately distorting or stretching to reveal signs of failure (cracking, peeling or wrinkling). Observe carefully for stains or discoloration from the support material.

In 1957, the introduction of Utrecht Acrylic Gesso made it possible to prepare a huge range of materials as painting supports, including many that would have been impossible to use with old-fashioned sizing/primer combinations. Even now, artists still surprise us with innovative ways to use this modern studio staple!

Questions? [Ask the Expert](#)

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