

# Water-Mixable Oils/ REAL Oil Paint!

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Water-mixable oils (also known as water-miscible or water-soluble) can be a great asset to oil painters. I don't personally understand the naysayers that give them a bad name and am starting to work with them more. Those who know me and my art know that I generally am not a purist. I'm always on the lookout for new techniques and supplies to use in my art. I'm pretty excited to try more plein air and they would be easier to use in the field. Artists for centuries have been experimenting with new ways to paint and we now have more options than ever. It's worth giving them a shot especially given that we would no longer need solvents in our painting process. I'm constantly working to reduce how much I use them with my traditional oil paints. I'm currently starting to experiment with how water mixable oils can fit in my painting process. You can decide for yourself by trying them and not taking others word for it:)

Following is some information I found on water-mixable....

Water-mixable oils sound great: artist-grade pigments, easy clean-up, no solvent needed. They also dry faster in general than traditional oils thus great for travel, or under-painting with 'lean' layers.

**A Little Science Lesson: Yes the REALLY ARE OIL Paints!!**

Water-mixable paints in the tube contain no water, only oil/binder, pigment, and additives such as resin or emulsifiers. There is solid science behind the paint which has been around since 1990. Different brands of paint use different elements to allow the oil and water to mix. Either a fatty acid molecule in the oil has been modified or removed to allow for binding with water, or an emulsifier has been added. Sometimes it's a mix of factors. This is not necessarily a scary thing or 'too new' to use without question (like genetically altered food); oil and water have been mixed for centuries to make creamy things like mayonnaise, or tempera paint, with egg as an emulsifier. **Benefits Of Water-Mixables:**

**Better For Your Health,** as there is no need for solvent. Simply use water as your 'solvent' to thin the water-mixable paints and for clean up. You can tone your canvas, wipe areas out, or create a 'watercolor' thin under painting. Solvents are not healthy as all have a warning label, including so-called 'green' ones. Newer OMS solvents (Odorless Mineral Spirits) such as Gamesol is much better than turpentine or mineral spirits but are still toxic and should be used with ventilation and rubber gloves. Oil painting was invented in the 15th century and these solvents were not used for many many years. The masters used oil to clean their brushes and that is still an option today. I personally am moving more towards using the solvents as little as I can. They do however work very well.

**Faster Dry Time:**

Water-mixables dry in about half the drying time of traditional oils. The paints actually have two dry times. For thin watery mixes (like a watercolor wash or canvas tone) the water evaporates rapidly and is mostly dry to the light touch in 5-10 minutes. You can still re-wet areas to wipe out or re-mix. At this stage it is possible to start more direct painting, or layering with thicker strokes. To let a thin tone or grisaille layer fully dry (via oxidation) wait at least until the next day. The thicker the paint application (the less water used), the more your dry times will increase. Paint that contains a lot of oil already such as Cadmiums can take longer to dry.

**Clean Up Is Very Easy.** Just use soap and water. Also great for travel.

Excellent For Layers/OK to Intermix With Other Oils. Because the paints dry quickly if you know you like to layer, you can start your artwork with water-mixable oil paints and then move into more full-paint layers, or on to traditional oils (since the dry time is more with traditional oils they are therefore 'fatter'). You can inter-mix traditional and the water-mixables if you are painting directly. Once you cross over a 20% ratio (approximately) the water-mixable quality gets lost. You can intermix brands of water-mixable paints. Although manufactures say it's safe to intermix these paints with other media (watercolor, acrylic, alkyd) I would be cautious here. I believe after researching this paint, that with too much mixed stuff it is hard to control the dry times of the paint layers. Traditional oil paint still has it's place, especially for those who like a long time to maneuver wet paint on the canvas.

#### Drawbacks Of Water-Mixables:

Avoiding Sticky Paint. If you are not careful with how you use the paints they can become sticky, which is very unpleasant to paint with.

Avoid using the paints with a small amount of water, as they don't thin very well with a few dots of water (to make it more viscous). Instead, a little water-mixable linseed oil or water-mixable medium will work wonders to make the paint more spreadable. Ironically, it's fine to thin the paints with a lot of water (to make a puddle that looks like milk) to start your drawing or 'block-in' stage, grisalle layer, or to tone the canvas. Remember, that this watery layer should only be an under-painting. Layers that are too thin will not stand up to the ravages of time and are not archival. That is true in traditional oil painting and acyclic painting as well. The fat over lean rule still applies.

Paints can freeze more quickly in winter conditions if you paint outside in the winter.

Rain Texture. Paints will not work well in the rain or mist (obviously), although rain can create some interesting texture effects, so this could be a good thing.

Paints can dry with a more matte finish, but a simple varnish layer, or working with a medium or a touch of oil will fix this.

I found that a certain brand tends to dry in the tube. That did not make me happy. It took about 10 years but regular oil paints I THINK would tend to last longer in the tubes. The brand that did that was Winsor & Newton Artisan brand which I find puzzling because Winsor & Newton Watercolor in my mind are at the top of their field. Needless to say I was disappointed. I had better luck with Hobein and those are the only two brands I have tried up to this point.

# “Can I mix water soluble oils with traditional oil paints?”

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“Yes, you can.” Normal or traditional oil paints will mix with water soluble oil paints (also called water mixable or water miscible oil paints), but you will find that the more traditional oil paint you add, the less water-mixable the paint becomes. This is logical, as traditional oils don’t mix with water, only specially formulated water soluble or water mixable oil paints do.

The general guideline is to mix traditional oil paints and mediums with water soluble oil paints in small amounts (about 25% traditional oil) in order for the mixture to retain its solubility in water.

You can also mix mediums made for traditional oils with water soluble oil paints, although, these, too, will affect the water solubility of the paint. It is better to use water soluble mediums made specifically for this type of paint.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF WATER SOLUBLE OIL PAINTS

Water soluble oil paints are real oil paints; they are not a water-based medium. They are just like regular oil paints except that they are made with linseed oil modified with an emulsifier that enables the oil paints to be thinned with water and to be cleaned up using only soap and water. This means that no solvents are required to paint with them or to clean up after using them.

Water soluble oil paints are good for people who are allergic to the solvents normally used with oil paints, work in close quarters or with other people in a studio and want to eliminate the odor and fumes of the solvents.

Thinning water soluble oil paints with water can cause a color shift. The paint becomes lighter in color but darkens to its original color as the water quickly evaporates. Water soluble mediums made for use with water soluble oil paints do not have this effect.

If using water as a thinner with water soluble oil paints, once the initial water has evaporated it leaves a paint film which can be slightly tacky. Water soluble oils mixed with linseed oil and water soluble mediums do not have this tackiness.

Like traditional oil paints, water soluble oils dry by oxidation. They dry a little faster than traditional oils but much more slowly than acrylics, remaining workable for approximately forty-eight hours.

Water soluble oils offer versatility that traditional oils do not while still offering many of the traditional benefits of oil painting, including color brilliance, paint texture, and body.

Water mixable mediums are available to mix with the water soluble oil paints that make them virtually the same as traditional oil paints while still being able to clean them with water.

Synthetic brushes are recommended for use with water soluble oil paints since they are more durable in water than are bristle and other brushes made of natural hair.

The Winsor & Newton Artisan Water Mixable Oil Colors (Buy from Amazon) pictured here is a good economically priced set to try out these paints for the first time. The set includes ten 21 ml tubes of the following colors: Lemon Yellow Hue, Cadmium Yellow Pale Hue, Cadmium Red Hue, Permanent Alizarin Crimson, Cerulean Blue Hue, French Ultramarine, Phthalo Green (Blue Shade), Yellow Ochre, Burnt Umber, Titanium White.