

GENERAL MUDDING AND VARNISHING INFORMATION

Please read "**Preparing Old and New Tinware for Painting** on my website under **Della's Painting Tips** before you start to paint your design on your tin so you will understand the process from beginning to end. Your tin piece will have a properly prepared surface to paint on. It will be mudded properly and you will understand the final steps for varnishing and waxing. This has a lot of information, all of it is important and is not difficult to follow.

You will have all the information needed to complete the aged look on your tin. It is a technique that I have developed over the years to transform my painting into an aged and mellow work of art. I call it "mudding". This takes it beyond the look of antiquing. Usually antiquing is simply dulling your surface to make something look old and used. That is not your goal. Your goal is to divide and separate the elements in your design. It is placed in what would be shadowed areas giving more depth and dimension to the painting.

Before I start the "mudding" process I spray the whole piece, even the bottom, with the spray listed in your supply list in the document following this one. Spraying with a matte varnish after the "mudding" process is completed and dry is very important. For those of you that do not use oil paints I want you to be aware of the following information. You do not use a spray varnish that you have not tested or know with certainty that it is intended to be used on oil paint. If you use a varnish that is only compatible on acrylics it will very likely cause it to turn white, crack, craze or bubble your painted surface. You can use the spray I have listed with safety.

When using this technique it is important to use the best quality of oil paint available. However, it is not necessary to purchase the most expensive artists linseed oil. The less expensive works equally as well. Make sure it is artist linseed oil. I use flat and angle brushes that are appropriate to the size of the area that I am working on to apply the oil paint. (NOTE: These brushes can only be used in oil, do not use them in acrylic after they have been used in oils.)

You will be using Mop Brushes to blend and soften the painting. Not all mops are the same. I must have tried every mop brush that is on the market and could not find one that worked for my technique. They were either too limp, too stiff, too long, too short or inferior in quality. I have mop brushes in four sizes, Della's Mop Brush made by Bettye Byrd Brushes. Unfortunately, the company has recently gone out of business. In the near future another company will be producing them for me. At the time of the writing of this information all the details have not been worked out. I do have a few of my mops made by the company that is no longer in business. Email for information. As soon as the replacement brushes are completed they will be added to my web site.


I apply a gloss varnish on the bottom of my pieces. I have a large collection of Peter Ompir, Warner Wrede and John Dunn pieces. All of these men did this to their tin pieces. It is interesting to note that the bottom surface was never painted a color used for the rest of the piece of tin. It was generally Sable Brown or Teal and the covered with a gloss varnish. I liked the look so I now use it on mine. They also aged their piece, but in a totally different method than mine.

Joyce Howard used a similar process and called it "mudding". I was fortunate to be able to paint with both Joyce Howard and John Dunn. The procedure for finishing my pieces is not like the method either of these artists used to complete their paintings. Mine is much different and I achieve a different look.

The very last step that I use in my finishing process is to wax my piece. Normally you think of waxing only designs painted on wood. Using it on tin adds to the beauty of your tin. I do not buff the wax excessively since I do not want a shiny finish, rather, a matte or satin look. I use only Goddard's Wax as it will not yellow the finish since it contains no silicone. So be aware that all waxes are not compatible for use on your painted pieces. It is manufactured in England and is an exceptionally good wax. It is available on our web site.

Having read the above information you can understand more of what the next set of instructions that you will use to actually "mud" your completed design. The **Finishing Touches** information below lists all the supplies that you will need for mudding and varnishing your tin when you have completed painting the design area.

Finishing Touches

Della Wetterman © 1986  Updated 2012

SUPPLIES

Flat Brushes or Angle Brushes (use a size appropriate for the design you are working on.)

Burnt Umber Oil Paint (best quality as it has more pigment)

Black Oil Paint (best quality as it has more pigment)

Artist Boiled Linseed Oil (the least expensive brand is OK)

Della's Mudding Mops 3/5, 5/8, 3/4 or 1 inch (depending on the size of your project)

Soft Lint Free Cloth and Viva Paper Towels (cut in 2 to 3 inch squares)

Q-Tips

Paint Thinner or Murphy's Oil Soap (to clean the oil out of your brushes)

Palette Knife

Disposable Palette

Goddard's Wax

BRUSHES (how they are used)

Flats and Angles

The flats or angle brushes should be in good condition and have a good chisel edge. Be certain to clean them well after mudding and before you put them away. They should be designated for use with oil paint only. You cannot use your oil brushes for acrylics as the two paints are not compatible. Even if they are cleaned well there will be chemical residue left from the paint used and it will have a chemical reaction if you "crossover" from oil to acrylic. Cleaning the oil paint from your brush is a must. When they are cleaned you should shape them and store them so they will retain their shape.

Mops

These are key to achieving the look that we want. I have a series of mops manufactured that perfectly meet the needs for this process. There are many mops on the market, but mine work best for my method. They have the correct balance of length, firmness and yet soft enough to blend the oil paint. I clean my mop with Murphy's oil.

Paint Thinner

Any paint thinner will clean your brushes. Wipe all of the oil out of your brush on a Viva paper towel. Dip the brush in a bit of the thinner and wipe it off on the paper towel; repeat until it is clean. (Dipping into the bottle or can of paint thinner will leave residue in your container resulting in "dirty" cleaner for future uses.)

Containers for Oil Painting Brushes

Containers with coils in the bottom are sold for cleaning your brushes when using paint thinner.

Murphy's Oil Soap (shampoo can also be used)

My cleaner of choice is Murphy's. I can clean my brushes and not have to use a strong chemical. Wipe the excess paint from your brush and then work it back and forth in a puddle of Murphy's placed in the bottom of my sink. Wipe the brush and repeat the process a couple of times. Most of the oil will have been removed. Add water to the brush and mix it into the puddle of Murphy's Oil. Repeat this until the stains no longer show on your paper towel.

IMPORTANT: Place linseed cloths in a baggie filled with water. Dispose of it in an outside container with a lid. Do not leave it in your house as Linseed Oil is **highly flammable** and a fire could occur. To **antique or mud** I use the best quality Black or Burnt Umber oil paint available. I use Black, Burnt Umber or a combination of the two. You will learn as you work which one or combinations works with the color palette you are using. Antiquing or mudding sets shadows, divides, separates, ages and mellows the painting. If you use a pastel background or palette you will not mud heavily. Mudding will make the surface look dirty as opposed to antique or aged. Our goal is to mellow the piece and age it slightly. Spray the finished project with DecoArt Spray Matte Varnish. Allow to dry well. Apply a coat of Linseed Oil with a lint free cloth all over the surface. Wipe as much off as possible with a clean lint free cloth or Viva towels. It is almost impossible to wipe too much of the oil away. Leaving too much oil on the surface makes it difficult to control the pigment. Using the same Linseed Oil cloth you applied the oil with can be used to remove any mudding that you do not like without changing the look of your painting so you can reapply your mudding. When the mudding has dried **Do Not** mud again without first using the matte spray and then applying the Linseed Oil. Both of these steps are absolutely necessary.

Apply the oil with a side loaded flat or angled brush in the shadow areas and between design elements. I use brushes appropriate to the size of the design. Load your brush and dress it on your palette just as you would when painting with acrylics. Blend the edge so the darkest area is in the shadowed area. Cotton swabs work well in small areas, i.e. grapes or berries, to remove a little of the oil so it can be softly blended. For larger areas use a cloth or square of Viva wrapped around your index finger to blend out the edges before using the mop.

Use a mop that is appropriate for the size of your design to soften and blend the edges until they disappear. Reinforce the dark in the shadow area as needed. Your mop acquires a soft buildup of oil paint when blending. I brush softly across the design area with it. This distributes a faint amount of mud across your work. It will be subtle, not visible, and creates a lovely glow that will add to the aged look.

When painting folk art figures I **never** mud on a face. On occasion I will use a very small amount on a Santa's beard if it is a large Santa. Mud can make your folk art people look grungy and unsightly. Use very little, if any, on clothing. I do use some around the outside of their bodies to create a faint shadow, to separate them from the background. It should fade softly and add depth to your piece.

When the project is dry, usually in 24 hours (48 hours if it is cold or raining), spray with matte varnish. If more mudding is needed you can repeat the steps again. Allow ample drying time before mudding again. Spray with matte spray and apply Linseed Oil again before applying oil paint. Highlights or a forgotten line can be added with your acrylics if you first spray a coat of matte spray to seal and create a barrier between the oil paint and the acrylic.

Enjoy, remember to "think with your heart" as life is so much brighter when you do... Della

For information on Traveling Seminars contact me at Della@DellaAndCompany.com. You can visit my web site to see samples of my painting. www.DellaAndCompany.com