

1. **Sealing and Waxing Watercolors**

2. **Welcome**

Introduction

3. **Disclaimer**

I am not an expert of any sort

I am here to share what I have learned and what I find works for me.

There is a lot of information available

DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH

4. **About Sealing Watercolors**

5. **Tools & Products I use**

- a. Paper: 140 lb Arches
- b. Substrate: "Basswood" Canvas
- c. Gesso
- d. Impasto Clear Gel Acrylic Medium- used as adhesive for bonding painting to substrate (\$16.00/16 oz, Amazon)
- e. Acrylic Sealer Gloss Finish (Look for Archival qualities: Non-Yellowing)
- f. Acrylic Sealer Matte Finish (Look for Archival qualities: Non-Yellowing)
- g. Dorland's Wax (\$25.00 Amazon)
- h. Brayer
- i. "Combing" Tool/Spreader (Used with Gesso and Impasto) (Walmart)
- j. Lint Free cloth

6. **Process**

- a. Complete Painting*
- b. Prepare Substrate
- c. Mount painting to substrate
- d. Spray Varnish Painting
- e. Waxing or Brush Varnish Painting

* When starting your painting, consider lining up placement of the substrate on the back of your paper and draw the perimeter limits so lining it up later will be easy.

Introduction

Good morning all and thank you for inviting me to share what I know about sealing and waxing watercolors.

Let me introduce myself

I am Lizabeth Castellano-King

I live in Stafford, been here since 1995

Married to a Marine Corps Officer for 42 Years, 2 grown kids

Worked as a Gov't employee for 17 years at the Pentagon and Joint Base Andrews as a graphic designer

Retired in 2017

Started watercolor painting around 1978 so I guess you can say it's been a few years, no need to say more

I am self-taught so I can't say I'm an expert, just tried and true

I have won numerous awards in major competitions, I have been published in a couple of Watercolor Publications, recently in The Art of Watercolour, a French publication, a big deal for me, quite exciting

I did the mural on Canal Quarter Arts Building down the road

I have participated in Via Colori, street painting chalk festival

I first entered the Fredericksburg Fine Art Show back in 1996 but working up in DC took precedence so now that I am retired, painting is my passion and whenever I can, I paint Originally Buzzy asked if I would do this presentation back in 2020 but due to the pandemic we had to postpone.

I will be posting my slides on my website for the summer months for you go copy, look at, whatever you wish.

You can also see my work on Instagram and Facebook.

I will list a few sites you can visit with info and demos of this process at the end of the presentation.

I hope you find this presentation informative and enjoyable. Have fun!

So that's about me in a nutshell, let's get started.

About Sealing Watercolors

I first saw an article on line about waxing watercolors about 4 years ago. It is still a relatively new concept and there is probably more info being published every day. I cannot stress enough that you must do your own research so you can make decisions based on your knowledge and understanding. The one advantage to waxing your watercolor is there is no longer a need for glass, which many consider to be a “barrier” when viewing a watercolor. The glass often has a glare so it’s hard to appreciate the piece of art. The fact that you are mounting, spraying varnish and waxing your watercolor is something that not all people will understand. I asked a well-known watercolorist from Chestertown MD, Marc Castelli, how he felt about waxing watercolors and he looked at me like I had two heads, he couldn’t understand why someone would take a perfectly good watercolor and do that to it. So, there are many opinions on this. If you are considering entering your waxed piece into a competition, you should check the rules and regulations as not all competitions accept waxed watercolors.

When you are starting this process, you need to be aware of the products you choose to use. Look for products that will not harm your art, archival products, non-yellowing products. Your substrate, what you will mount your art to, needs to be sealed so that it will not eventually destroy your paper. Wood products, like bass wood panels, contain toxic chemicals that down the road will destroy your paper. Before applying gesso to the substrate, you might want to decide if you would like to paint or stain the sides of your substrate. If so, complete that step before applying the gesso. Another thought you might consider... for easy alignment of your painting onto the board, consider laying your painting face down, place the board in position and draw a line on the back of your painting so you can line it up when ready to adhere.

Applying the Gesso to the Substrate

I primarily use the Basswood panels for my paintings.

Amazon 4 Pk 1.5" thick = 20.00

Basswood= lightweight, sturdy- wont warp, must be sealed

If they are on the large size, as some are, my husband will create my board for me. If I am making them, I will use Birch plywood mounted onto a frame or brace so as to keep the plywood from warping. I learned from experience how strong paper is and that it can bend wood.

Another type of substrate is Aluminum Composite Material (ACM) With these you can get the Aluminum panel finished with paper already adhered or you can get the plain aluminum panel.

Raymart.com Ex. 9 x 12 finished panel =2 pack = \$32.00

ACM= lightweight, sturdy- wont warp, must be sealed

I have heard people use Gatorboard. It is sturdy and lightweight but I also understand it contains Toxic Chemicals so it isn't good for archival purposes,

If you are going to use gesso on your board you will want to apply at least two coats with light sanding in between coats. Be sure each coat is thoroughly dry before sanding and continuing. Be sure you have covered all of the wood. I use this combing tool for spreading the gesso, found it at Walmart. I will use the smooth side for the gesso and the tiny ridge side for the Impasto. If you are thinking about painting your basswood panel's sides, do that before applying gesso and painting. Also be sure to wipe off any gesso on the sides before it dries. To speed up drying time you can use a hair dryer or the sun.

NEXT STEP: APPLYING IMPASTO (GLUE) TO SUBSTRATE

Applying Impasto

After your gesso has dried you will be applying the Impasto or “glue” to the board. Again, I use my combing tool with the tiny ridge side. Be sure to clean your tools after each use as once it hardens it’s tough to clean.

Now you’re ready to place your painting onto the board.

Regarding your painting, you have either cut it to size or have a small amount of overhang to cut off after it has dried. Trying to line up a painting exactly can be frustrating.

ALSO, SOME GOOD ADVICE: On your painting it’s a good idea to make any pencil lines for size bigger than the finished project. If you don’t line it up precisely you will not be able to erase them.

Once you have placed your painting onto the substrate place a clean piece of paper over your painting and use a brayer to roll out any excess Impasto, working from the center out. This will also remove any air bubbles. If you turn over the board and see excess Impasto coming out from underneath, use an exacto knife to scrape it out.

Now you will need to let this dry overnight. I usually lay out a clean piece of paper, place the board face down and stack heavy books on it. This will help ensure it dries flat. You can also place a piece of glass over your painting and then stack books on top to let dry.

NEXT STEP: SPRAY VARNISHING

Spray Varnish Your Watercolor

A quick word about spraying varnish, the video shows that I sprayed the painting before mounting, I will say that I believe through experience that it is better to spray the painting after it is mounted. The varnish can cause the painting to stick to the paper placed on it with weights. So, I will suggest you mount your art before varnishing.

Now it's time to spray your watercolor.

You will want to do this in a well-ventilated area, preferably outside. I do caution though, if its windy or buggy, beware that stuff can get caught onto the sticky varnish surface.

First you will start with a gloss spray. You will do about 5 coats allowing each coat to dry thoroughly before applying next one. Be sure not to be heavy handed, you do not want pooling of the spray that could cause drips. You will see the varnish adhere more to heavily painted areas before thinly painted areas. By about the 5th coat it should look evenly varnished. I also find that the varnish makes the surface of the painting a little "Rough", so I will brush the surface with my hand in between coats.

After the gloss coats if you want you can apply about 3 matte coats. I'm not so sure that the matte coat actually reduces the gloss of the gloss coats but I believe the waxing will eliminate some of the shine.

Be sure to let his thoroughly dry, preferably overnight.

At this point you can do one of two things:

1. Hand brush a varnish over your painting (I have never done this)
2. Wax your painting

NEXT STEP: WAXING

Applying the Wax

I use Dorland's Wax

Amazon 16 oz=\$25.00

You will apply 3-4 coats of the wax. Use a lint-free cloth to apply.

Let the wax dry before adding next coat.

Buff out each coat well before applying next coat with a clean lint-free cloth.

You have now finished sealing and waxing your painting.

Some sites to view for references:

For Mounting and Varnishing (not waxing)

You Tube :

Mounting and Varnishing A Watercolor by Katheen Giles

Matthew Bird Blog <https://matthewbird.com/blog> "Without Reflection" and he has also added a small discussion about Dorland's Wax. He applies it directly to his paintings without varnish. Again, it's up to you to decide.

For Mounting and Varnishing and Waxing

You Tube :

Framing Watercolors Without Glass: Varnishing and Framing by Brienne M Brown

Website: Lizabethcastellano-king.com

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