

FastMatte Alkyd Oil Colors: Underpainting & Beyond

FastMatte colors are a unique type of oil colors, every color dries fast, every color dries matte. These qualities make them perfect for underpainting techniques.

This newsletter explores using FastMatte for underpainting and features ways in which these colors fit into painters' work beyond underpainting.



Take your Painting Further, Faster

With FastMatte colors, artists can stay in the flow and take their paintings further, faster than ever before. FastMatte colors enable artists to extend painting sessions, use color and texture freely, and add layers without stopping, waiting or compromising.

For painters wanting the richness of color and texture found in oils without the long drying-rate, FastMatte colors are an excellent option. FastMatte colors carry the same intensity of color as our traditional oils and dry in 24 hours.

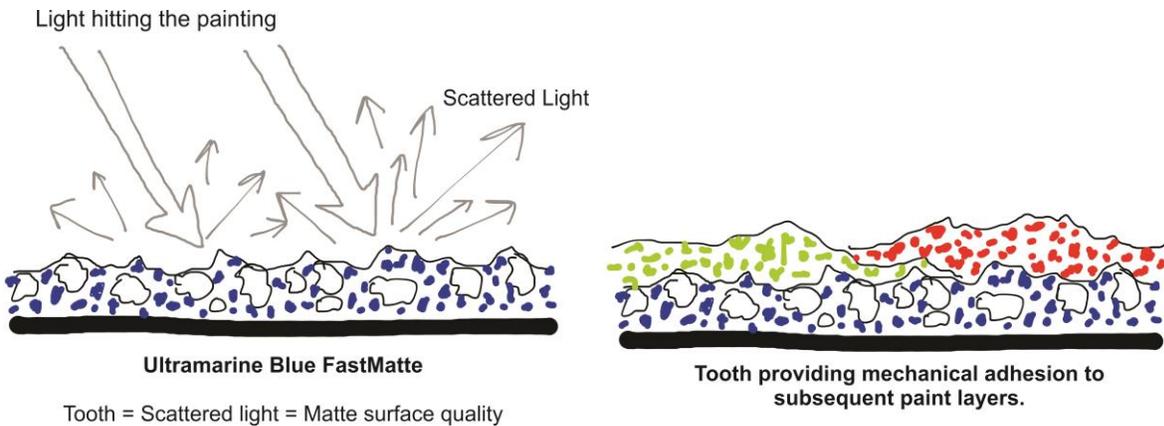
FastMatte serves as an excellent way to come back to oil painting for those painters who have switched to acrylics because of the need for a faster drying rate.

Underpainting

An important quality of the FastMatte colors is that they make an excellent base layer for a painting. Traditionally, earth colors have been widely used for underpainting in oils because they dry **fast**, due to their iron content, and **matte**, due to their large particle size. These are the two characteristics that we incorporated into a wider color range in our FastMatte line, making them ideal for underpainting techniques. The [24-color FastMatte palette](#) give painters a broad, intense color range for underpainting and indirect painting techniques.

The history of oil paintings has taught us that "like materials" are best used within the structure of a painting – the simpler the construction of the painting, the better its permanence. Therefore, the use of an oil-based color for underpainting is preferred over using a color of a totally different binder, such as acrylics.

The line of FastMatte Alkyd Oil Colors has a binder made from oil, so traditional oil paint films applied on top will form a chemical bond. These colors dry to a velvety, matte surface quality. This is a function of the dry paint layers having a subtle tooth, which creates a receptive surface for subsequent layers – whether they be traditional oil colors or additional FastMatte layers. This mechanical adhesion ensures that a strong physical bond is made in the foundation of the painting structure.



Underpainting is central to planning the painting's composition in traditional, indirect painting techniques. With few colors, a tonal foundation can effectively and quickly establish the painting's value scheme. Colors such as Transparent Earth Red, Yellow Ochre, Raw Umber, Titanium White and Ivory Black in the FastMatte line are well-suited for this technique.



Underpainting isn't limited to traditional techniques, however. The more intense FastMatte colors can allow for some vibrant base layers for all painting styles and techniques.

Colored Grounds

A number of painters we work with prefer to start with a toned or colored ground in their work. This can be strong, saturated color that is incorporated into the final image or simply a means to break the stark white of a primed support. Either way, the FastMatte colors are excellent for either toning an oil-based ground, such as Gamblin Oil Painting Ground, or used straight for a more saturated ground color.

Santa Fe artist Jamie Kirkland routinely prepares her supports with two coats of FastMatte Yellow Ochre.

"I love the matte surface. It accepts the paint so well. I prefer to use Yellow Ochre so that it gives the painting a warm undertone. I may not see it directly in the finished painting, but it adds a lusciousness to my paint surfaces."



FastMatte Yellow Ochre ground.

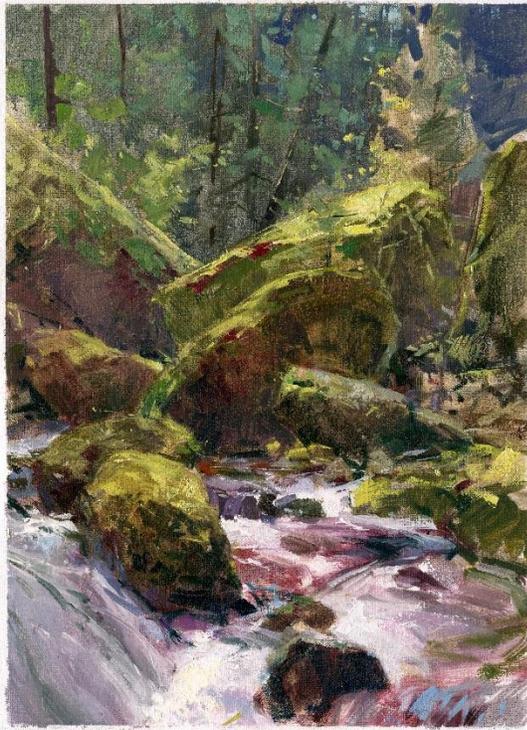


Jaime Kirkland, *Home Before Dark*, 50" x 40".

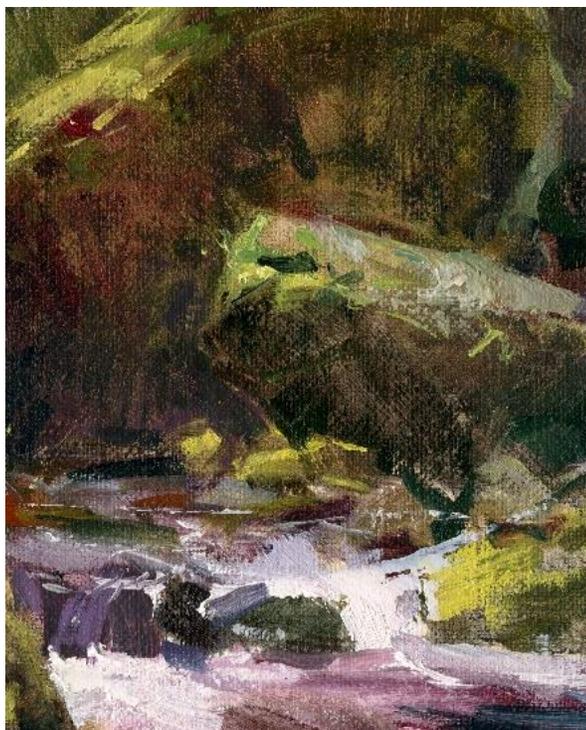
Thomas Jefferson Kitts: Descriptive Mark-Making

Landscape painter and instructor, Thomas Kitts, was an early adopter of FastMatte colors due to their unique handling properties and mark-making potential. Lately, Thomas has focused on incorporating the **FastMatte Titanium White** into his palette, alongside traditional Titanium Zinc White, to gain a broader versatility in the texture and brush work in his paint layers.

In the work shown here, Thomas' full color palette is mostly comprised of modern organic pigments, which are generally transparent. The transparency of these colors work well for darker passages of the painting, where light penetrates paint layers to accentuate the deepest values of the painting. As a contrast to this, built-up textural, opaque highlights reflect light off their surface, which not only broadens the value range, but also increases the visual interest of the painting. These qualities are captured in Thomas' plein air painting, "Tumble and Flow."



Thomas Jefferson Kitts, *Tumble and Flow*, 9" x 12".



Tumble and Flow, detail.

"With the whites in line like this I can use a brush or knife to quickly scoop up one or the other as needed. Or I can easily pick up a little of both if I want an intermediate mixture. FastMatte Titanium White softens the opacity of the T/ZW, and the shorter, stiffer characteristics retain the texture of your brush strokes. It's great for quickly building up a series of paint layers, scumbling on top of wet paint, or for applying those last touches of juicy impasto."

The "shorter, stiffer" characteristics of the FastMatte white allows the physicality of the paint to describe the subject matter in the painting. The texture of the mossy rocks and directional movement of the water in "Tumble and Flow" are heightened by the dry-brush qualities of the FastMatte white. As are the highlights of "Cats of Vernazza." In the detail shown below, thick, crisp impasto marks are juxtaposed with more "rounded" impasto, a contrast created when Thomas incorporated Gamblin Solvent-Free Gel into the FastMatte white. The gel increased the flow of the white off the brush to create more of a fluid mark.

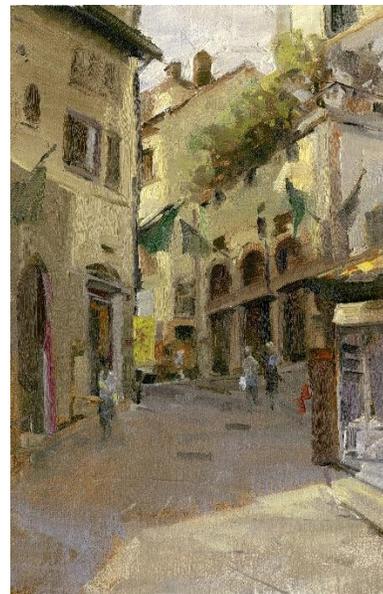


Thomas Jefferson Kitts, *Cats of Vernazza*, 9" x 12".



Cats of Vernazza, detail

The fast drying rate of the FastMatte colors also supported Thomas' painting plein air overseas. With the combination of FastMatte white and Solvent-Free Gel, his plein air paintings on linen dried to the touch in approximately 18 hours.



Thomas Jefferson Kitts,

Evening in Cortona, 9" x 12".

Todd Sargood: Intersections of Painting & Drawing

Abstract painter Todd Sargood incorporates many different media in his paint layers and needs a fast-drying paint that has a smooth, flat, moderately toothy surface that can hold pencil, graphite and pen marks. The tooth is

important for providing a stable ground for successive layers of paint. High opacity and pigment density is also important. In the past, Todd has used various painting media and additives to get a specific surface texture and drying time, but often achieved inconsistent and/or unstable results. It was also difficult to get deep, rich, and opaque colors because of all of the additives he was putting into the paint.



Todd Sargood, *Acumen Rhythms*, 48" x 72".

Todd states, "I have used Gamblin's regular oil paints for quite some time, so when I ran across Gamblin Fastmatte colors in the art store, I decided to give them a try. The first time I used them I was amazed, they have all the traits I've been searching for without all the futzing with media to get the paint right. They have greatly simplified my set-up and have freed up more time for me to actually paint. I am also able to achieve more consistent, dependable and repeatable outcomes. It's like you guys read my mind. Freaky."

Todd tried acrylics mixed with matte medium or acrylic gesso, which can hold pen and pencil marks well, but, he explains, "they could never get the pigment density and opacity that I can with FastMatte colors. FastMatte also dries quickly, but not too quickly. I put paint down in large swathes and then push it around a bit with a palette knife over a period of time. Acrylics also have a very short working time, and would set up before I could sculpt the paint to the desired texture. With Fastmatte, I'm usually able to work over even thickly applied layers in a day or so—but it has a long enough working time so that I can push it around and work other colors into it for some time before it sets up too much."



Todd Sargood, *Catechism*, 48" x 72".

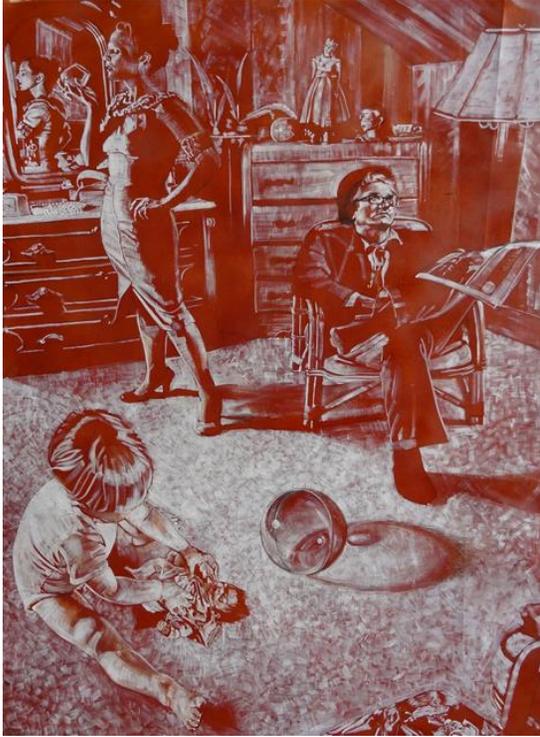
Cynda Valle: In search for a Super White

For years, California figurative painter Cynda Valle has used strong contrast between thin, transparent dark glazes and thicker, opaque lights to create the overall illusion of space and light. She was searching for a way to "beef up" the white she uses in the thickest highlights of her work. She also wanted an opaque, fast-drying white to use as a foundation for her richly-colored glaze layers. The result is a color sensibility in her work that is as electric as it is naturalistic. "I was so excited to find FastMatte Titanium White was the answer to both! It's responsible for the higher key and saturation of my recent work and the greater contrast between the thin and thick parts of my painting!"



Cynda Valle, *All that Glitters*, 60" x 40"

The FastMatte Transparent Earth Red and Titanium White are incorporated into the detailed underpainting for her painting "Family Circle." For her underpainting efforts, Transparent Earth Red makes a highly saturated, yet transparent ground color.



Cynda Valle, *Family Circle*, underpainting



Family Circle, 52" x 42"

Painters are taking FastMatte colors beyond the line's original intentions because of their unique qualities. For more information on our palette of FastMatte colors, and for a [video on working with FastMatte](#), please visit us [online](#).

Thank you for supporting an independent and American colorhouse.

Scott Gellatly
GM Product Management
Gamblin Artists Colors

Featured Artists' Websites:

Jamie Kirkland: www.kirklandart.com

Thomas Jefferson Kitts: www.thomaskitts.com

Todd Sargood: www.toddsargood.com

Cynda Valle: www.cyndavalle.deviantart.com