



Natalie Oswald is a fine artist and illustrator living in Seattle, WA. She is represented by Pacini Lubel Gallery in Seattle. To learn more, visit her web site at www.natalieoswald.com

Exploring New Mediums & Techniques on Gessobord™

with artist Natalie Oswald

Exploring new mediums and techniques keeps your painting process exciting and can lead to stylistic breakthroughs. I enjoy working in layers and playing with decorative elements such as gold leaf and repetitive patterns in order to make my painting surfaces richer and more interesting. Beginning my painting with Ampersand Gessobord™ is essential to my process. Many of the techniques I use require a rigid support with a smooth and consistent surface—Gessobord has both of these qualities. I prefer the 2" deep cradled boards as they can be finished on the sides and hung without additional framing. The new large sizes of deep Gessobord are ideal for creating my large and dramatic works.

Block Printing on Gessobord™

Gessobord is a wonderful surface for patterns made with stencils or block prints. For this painting, I carved a koi design into a soft rubber block of Safety-Kut™ using Speedball® linoleum block cutters. I mixed acrylic paint and GOLDEN® Acrylic Glazing Liquid (this keeps the acrylic from drying too fast) and applied it to the block with a rubber brayer (fig. 1). I positioned the block face down on the panel and applied pressure with a rolling pin to transfer the image. I repeated this process multiple times (fig. 2-3).



Fig. 1 Apply paint with a rubber brayer to the carved block.



Fig. 2 Apply pressure with a rolling pin to transfer the image.



Fig. 3 Transfer the image multiple times to the Gessobord.



Fig. 7 Painting in the Japanese crane details with oils.

Creating Depth with Layers

Unlike printing on paper, a print on Gessobord will have a slightly textured quality because it is not as absorbent as paper. This unique look is magical under layers of acrylic paint. For this painting, I applied several acrylic colors over the printed koi patterns in thin layers. Quinacridones and other transparent pigments are my favorites as they allow the patterns to show through. Sanding through the paint layers or applying metallic paints can also create lovely and aged-looking results.



Fig. 4 Apply the glue size over the acrylics for the gold leaf.



Fig. 5 Carefully apply the gold leaf to the size.



Fig. 6 Remove the excess gold leaf with a soft brush.

Applying Gold Leaf

Gold leaf adds a dramatic touch of sparkle. Gessobord is an ideal surface for gold leaf because it is rigid and smooth. You can apply the leaf directly to the panel or over the acrylic paint layers as I have done here. Brush on a thin layer of DANIEL SMITH Quick Size (fig. 4) and wait ten or fifteen minutes until the glue is almost dry yet still tacky. Gently



Fig. 8 "Koi and Cranes", acrylic, oil & gold leaf on Gessobord, 36" x 48".

apply the gold leaf to the sizing using the backing papers or a squirrel-hair brush (fig. 5) and then remove the excess leaf (fig. 6).

Adding Imagery in Oil or Acrylic

The final layer of this painting was painted using traditional oil techniques. I used DANIEL SMITH Oils and painting mediums to paint two very detailed Japanese cranes (figs. 7-8). The elaborate printed surface underneath complements the two birds nicely. My favorite brushes are the DANIEL SMITH Series 85-01 Oil Blender brush for softening brush strokes and the Series 44-12 Rigger to create flowing lines. To finish the painting, I use GOLDEN® MSA UVLS Gloss Varnish to protect the delicate gold leaf and to give the painting a uniform glossy surface. ■

Featured Products

- Daniel Smith Quick Size 284 900 014
- Daniel Smith Oil Blender Brush 063 700 002
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- Daniel Smith Oil Painting Medium p. 60
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