



Detail of "Starting Point" by Jennifer Phillips, oil on Ampersand Gessobord™

How to get more out of your painting surface

Working with oils on Gessobord™ by Jennifer Phillips



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I am always looking for ways to create subtle contrast between hard and soft edges in my work. While using a brush to create some of the softer applications of paint, I often use other tools like palette knives, needle tools, and oil bars to create my heavier textures. These materials work best on a firm support, therefore choosing the right substrate to paint on is very important. Unlike canvas, which can be flexible, Gessobord™ from Ampersand provides me with a strong rigid support that withstands a heavier hand and meets the demands of oil bars, palette knives, and texturing mediums. The surface also allows me to work in thinner washes and with soft blended brush strokes. The 2" Deep Cradle Gessobord, with its attractive wood sides, is gallery ready to hang and does not require framing, giving it a modern look when hanging on the wall.

To begin this painting, I prepared a 16x20 Deep Cradle Gessobord by first taping off the natural wood edges with painter's tape to keep the area clean. Using a palette knife, I applied a combination of Golden's Molding Paste and Crackle Paste to the lower half of the board to give texture to the grassy field area. After it dried, I sealed it with Golden Soft Gel Medium and then gave the whole surface a layer of Daniel Smith Venetian Red Gesso. Portions of the red color peak through the final layers of my painting and unify the color palette. I then sketched in the composition using a dark brown Conte pencil.

I developed the initial stages of the painting using a mixture of oil bar colors and a low toxicity mineral spirit called Daniel Smith Sol. I spread a wash of the spirits over the surface, and then used a raw umber and burnt sienna oil bar to develop

the tree forms (A). While the surface was still wet, I used a rag to wipe out shapes along the base of the trees to show soft light coming through (B). The even smooth texture of the Gessobord enables me to get these super soft effects unlike any other surface.

Next, I used a variety of oil colors to blend in the sky and to create the soft edges of the tree tops (C). For the sky, I used a mixture of zinc white with hansa and yellow ochre for the warmer areas and raw umber for the cooler areas. I used mixtures of olive green and raw umber to create the trees in the distance, and then began to lay in the rich yellows of the distant field. At this point, I began defining the areas of light at the base of the trees using a mixture of hansa and yellow ochre, zinc white and a little raw umber. This was when I started refining the shapes and creating hard edge contrast. I did this by scraping paint away with a needle tool, drawing back into the surface to create a suggestion of branches. Then, I went back and added delicate colored lines with a #4 script brush. Because the Gessobord is so rigid and durable, I can scrape away paint without harming the surface and still go back in and paint fine linear details.

Working dark to light, I focused on laying down initial layers of raw umber oil bar in the foreground and then, using a heavy hand, scumbling across the surface in a horizontal linear pattern with raw sienna oil bar. Subsequent colors of oil bar were used to build up the color and surface of the field. They were heavily applied to the surface, scraped away, and then reapplied using a palette knife (D).

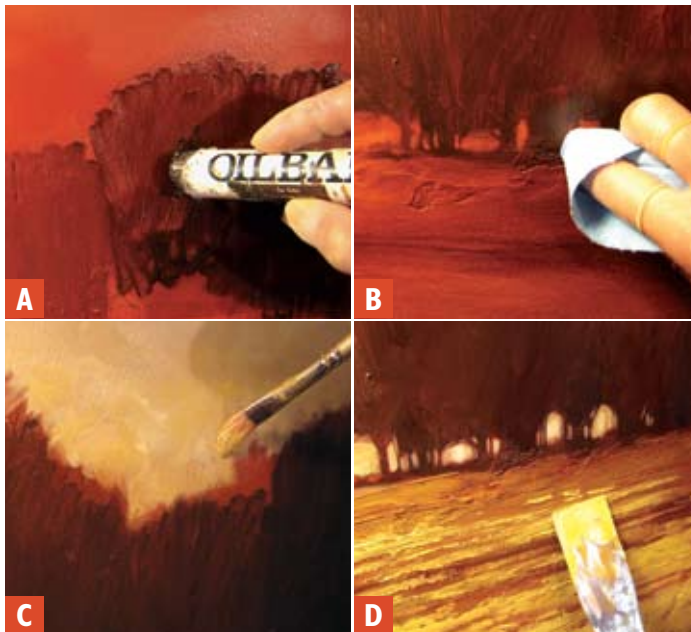
To finish, I used a #12 fan bristle brush to blend the trees and parts of the foreground. Once the painting was dry to the touch, I used a damar retouch spray to unify the surface of the painting. This varnish will allow the painting to continue drying until a final varnish is applied. I removed the tape that was protecting the

sides of the Gessobord and my painting is now ready to hang! ■



To learn more about Jennifer Phillips and to see a slide show of this exercise, visit:

www.jenniferphillipsart.com



MATERIALS

Ampersand™
• Gessobord™ Deep Cradle 16x20

Golden®
• Crackle Paste
• Soft Gel Medium
• Light Molding Paste

Daniel Smith
• Oil Paints
• Sol
• Venetian Red Gesso
• Platinum Series 10 Hog Bristle Brushes
• Platinum Series 23 #4 Script Brush
• #12 Fan Bristle Brush

Other
• Winsor & Newton™ Oil Bars
• Needle Tool
• Conte pencil
• Damar Retouch Varnish
• Liquitex® Trowel Palette Knife
• Painter's Tape



AMPERSAND

1500 E. 4th St.
Austin, TX USA 78702
800-822-1939

www.ampersandart.com