

# Small beauties of everyday

Stella Alesi discusses using oils on Gessobord™

I paint exclusively with oils on Ampersand's 2" Deep Cradled Gessobord™. I used to have my painting panels made for me by a friend, and although they were good quality, I could never get the smooth quality gesso surface I wanted without hours of sanding. Ampersand's gesso surface is flawless and perfect for the precise work I do. These paintings, "#147 Oranges" and "#136 Pyracantha" clearly show the level of detail I am able to achieve on the smooth Gessobord surface.

On a table in my studio, lay at least 100 tubes of paint, arranged like a rainbow in 4 rows. On the opposite wall, color charts hang with paints that I use. I find those

charts to be incredibly helpful when trying to match a color from a photograph or my imagination. I am the type of painter that shifts my color palette often. I enjoy paying close attention to the subtle differences in color and at times, how those colors are created by the layering or glazing of transparent or semi-transparent colors. When I first began to paint, I used the color charts often to tell me which paints were transparent and which were opaque.

Another artist's product I find helpful is Daniel Smith's oil painting medium that when added to my paints, helps with glazing and also speeds the drying time of the oils. Most often, the paints will dry overnight which allows me to paint day to day, in what I call "passes", slowly building depth and color.

The first step for me to beginning any painting is to decide subject matter, but before I begin, I protect the edges of my Gessobord cradle with painter's tape. From there, I cover the entire gesso surface with the paint I have chosen as a base color. This color sets the overall tone as well as serves as the first pass towards building depth and deeper colors.

I always mix at least 1/3 Daniel Smith's painting medium to this base color, so it will dry quickly. Once that is done and dry, I pick about 10-30 paints that will make up my palette. My palette is a large piece of glass that sits on a nearby table that is covered with white paper. I like the glass palette for the way it feels when I mix the paint and the ability to scrape away any old dry paint. I squeeze out a bit

## Materials

- Gessobord™ Deep 2" Cradle p.XX
- Daniel Smith Oil Colors p.XX
- Daniel Smith Oil Painting Medium p.XX



#147 Oranges, oil on Gessobord™ by Stella Alesi.

of each color in a big horseshoe shape on my palette and arrange the corresponding tubes around the wet paint. This saves me a great deal of time trying to locate those colors later on while I'm painting.

When painting from a photograph, I grid both the photograph and the Gessobord which helps me with the enlargement process. It is important to make sure the grid lines are very lightly applied to the panel, otherwise they can be difficult to cover. One of the nice things about drawing on the Gessobord, since it is a rigid panel and has such a smooth surface, it is much easier to get perfect lines when I do my initial "grid and sketch" and there is no bounce or stretch to contend with while drawing. I have found that these attributes allow me to achieve a higher level of detail for both the drawing and the painting process more so than on any other surface or substrate.

When a painting is complete, I remove the tape from the birch plywood cradle and have a perfectly clean edge. This way, no additional framing is necessary. ■



#147 Oranges detail.

"The Gessobord™ surface is flawless and perfect for the precise work I do."



#136 Pyracantha, oil on Gessobord™ by Stella Alesi.

Stella Alesi lives and works in Austin, Texas, not far from where Ampersand Gessobord™ is manufactured. She is both an accomplished painter and a photographer. For more information: [www.alesiart.com](http://www.alesiart.com)

