

Product Review: Transparent Acrylic Paint by Chris Peters cpetersusa@gmail.com

Types of paints, for example, oil paint, acrylic paint or watercolor paint are differentiated by the binder used to contain dry pigment. Same pigment, different binder. A binder could be oil, acrylic polymer or even egg yolk. The binder is what gives each paint its characteristics. Today, we'll talk about acrylic paint.

The binder for acrylic paint is acrylic polymer emulsion. Since water is the vehicle for the acrylic polymer emulsion, acrylic paint dries by evaporation. And, because water evaporates quickly, acrylics are fast drying but that means it has a short 'working time' (this can vary slightly, depending on the heat and humidity of the environment you're painting in).

Opaque—what does it mean? A pigment that doesn't allow light through is opaque, as opposed to transparent which is the opposite, and does let light through. Every paint pigment varies in its opacity due to its ingredients. Opaque paint hides what's underneath it. Transparent paints allow what's underneath to show through, such as a mottled gourd skin coloration. How can you tell if your paint is transparent? Do not rely on what others say or what a manufacturer may report. Create a color chart to test your paints. It is the best way to know and you might just make some wonderful discoveries. It is most helpful to identify the paints that are very transparent and those that are very opaque. Most will fall somewhere in the middle and can be called translucent. Refer to the photos showing color charts on a gourd.

TRANSPARENCY WITHOUT ALCOHOL PRODUCT

So many of us have used dyes or inks referred to as "alcohol inks". These inks are actually dyes dissolved in chemicals including Ethanol (65%) and Propylene Glycol Monomethyl ether (25%). The product being reviewed today is not an alcohol ink, instead it is transparent pigment paints made by Golden. Golden is known for its professional-quality paints with excellent lightfastness. Golden Artist Colors High Flow™ Acrylics are highly intense, permanent acrylic colors with an ink-like consistency. Produced from lightfast pigments, not dyes, they offer very strong colors with thin consistencies. They are compatible with most Golden Artist Colors™ paints and mediums. Used alone the dry time is several minutes.

I have found them to be dependable and consistent in quality. They have a fluidity, flowing easily without drag. That said, you'll need to hold the gourd surface somewhat level to prevent drips and runs. The paints are highly saturated with a brightness and shiny finish, not dull or flat. In each of the photos you may notice a sheen. This sheen is the paint itself—no top coat was applied. They come in a wide range of colors. For starting out I'd recommend purchasing a set of ten 1 oz. bottles because buying a set is a better value than purchasing them individually and you'll have a variety of colors to play with. When I began using these paints I bought a set of the transparent and a set of the opaque paints, Fluid™, (which I love, by the way). These pigments are so strong in color a little drop goes a long ways.

APPLICATION

Paint on with a brush or use in pens and markers as well as air brush systems. Apply wet-in-wet and wet on already dried paint. Thin with water. Adding more than 20% water begins to change other paint properties but using a blend of airbrush transparent extenders and water can thin the paint and maintain the paint's integrity. Shake the bottle thoroughly before use. The bottles have steel balls to help mix the paint.

When using the transparent Golden paints on the body of a gourd use a piece of felt, cotton round or a bit of sheep wool. It spreads out evenly and dries fast. You can add successive layers after the prior one is dry. Allow colors to dry before spraying a top coat. Refer to my piece, the Hummingbirds, shown. I used Golden High Flow Yellow Iron Oxide applied with sheep wool. If you look at my Morning Glory woodburned green piece, I used the same paint but instead the colors were two of them—Phthalo Green (Blue shade) and Phthalo Blue (Green shade). It is my opinion that these are outstanding paints and easier to work with than alcohol ink dyes. Current prices for a set of 10 1 oz. transparent Golden paints: Amazon: \$38.49; Dick Blick: \$35.69; Cheap Joe: \$35.69; Michaels: \$54.99.

ALTERNATIVE

I decided to try another brand which costs less, U.S. Art Supply Airbrush Colors™ for a comparison. According to the manufacturer the colors are ready to spray professional grade acrylic airbrush colors. They are water-based acrylic made from lightfast pigments and permanent when dry. Several light coats (allow to dry between coats) is better than one thicker one. Because the bottle doesn't have any mixing balls inside, shake the bottle thoroughly before use. Allow colors to dry before spraying a top coat. I have not used these except for this article so it will take experience to have a

valid opinion. First impression, however, I feel these paints are quite good for transparent acrylics. I like the price. A set of 12 1 oz. bottles cost about \$10 less than Golden High Flow Acrylics, a good value. The set also includes a bottle each of airbrush cleaner and extender. I purchased my set from Amazon for \$26.96. The parent company of U.S. Art Supply is TCP Global and can be found at www.tcpglobal.com.

ACRYLIC VS INK DYES PRICE CONSIDERATIONS

Let's say you think the product in this review is too expensive. Consider for a moment the price per ounce of ink dyes. These run about \$6 to \$8 per ounce! Golden's transparent acrylic is about \$3.80 per ounce, U.S. Art Supply Airbrush colors are \$2.25 per ounce. Indeed, this isn't an apples to apples comparison but I think it is worth considering how you use ink dyes. Could you achieve similar results using transparent acrylics instead? Let's see.





Naphthol Red Lt	G	Yellow Lt Hansa	LQ-HB
Quin. Magenta	B	Hansa Yellow Lt	G
Deep Magenta	LQ-HB	Hansa Yellow Med	G-flow
Quin. Magenta	G-flow	Cad. Yellow Red	Hue-B
Magenta	LAS	Cad. Medium Azo	LQ
Pyrolo Crimson	LQ-HB	Lemon Yellow	LK
Cadmium Red Lt	LQ-HB	Cad. Yellow Lt	LQ
Cadmium Red Lt	LQ	Yellow Oxide	LQ
Cadmium Red Lt	LK	Azo Yellow Lemon	B
Permanent Rose	LK	Naples Yellow	LK
Pyrolo Red	G-flow	Naples Yellow Hue	HR
Alizarin Crimson	Hue-LQ	Yellow Oxide	G-flow

Do you know the transparency and opacity of your paints?



By nature, some paint pigments are more transparent than others. To find out if your paints are transparent, simply draw a line using a permanent black marker. Then, paint an even coat of the color in question over this. When the paint dries, if you can clearly see the black line under the paint then your paint is transparent. Certain pigments, such as Yellow Ochre are quite opaque. Alizarin Crimson is a classic example of a transparent paint pigment. Transparent colors are great for glazes and opaque colors are great for covering things up.

Some content is courtesy of *Thalo Artist Community* and *Will Kemp Art School* and *Helloartsy* and *Celebratingcolor*