

Priming ground

Q:

You use an acrylic gesso/ modeling paste ground, on store bought canvas. How do you feel about traditional glue/ marble dust/ chalk grounds on a canvas you stretch and prime yourself? This has always been a problem for me. I like the smooth texture of a canvas that has lots of gesso smoothed down so that the canvas texture is gone. However when I make a glue gesso and lay it on thick it cracks almost every other time. Any clues? I like it because it is sandable, but it is brittle and doesn't have any flexibility. On the other hand acrylic gesso feels rubbery and seems impossible to smooth. It also seems to crack if I put it on thick or in multiple layers. What I need to know is whether it is better to lay down the ground in a few thick coats or several thin coats? Should the layers be thoroughly dry before the next coat or somewhat damp. I have read the classical material on this and tried different variations but none that give consistant results. I would so like to paint on a polished smooth surface with no defects to haunt me throughout the painting. I tried the gesso/modelingpaste mixture you use and couldn't remove the the remnant texture with razor blade. Whats the trick? Just scrape more and longer? It feels rubbery and definitely is not sandable(I realize that you recommend against sand paper and your advice is sound. I have never tried the scraping method and may not realize that it takes time. About how long should it take to smooth out the canvas?) Any advice on this is appreciated.

A:

Probably you have you have wrong proportion of gesso to modelling paste or you have wrong kind of modelling paste."Rubbery" is because of excess of acrylic medium . Try to use instead of modelling paste the powder gesso, in order to decrease the rubbery. Adding water will add some sandability