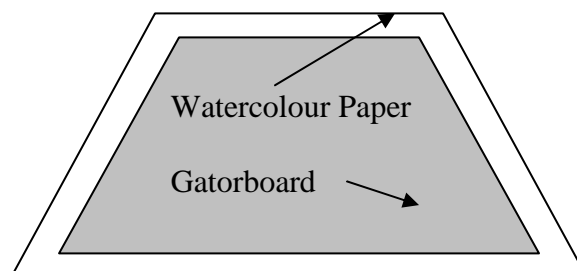


Steps to Varnishing a Watercolour

It is important to note that I use only recognized, artist quality products. Therefore when people ask me if the colours and/or the brilliance of the watercolour stands up over time with this process, I tell them that the product manufacturers such as Golden Acrylics guarantee their products and it is these assurances that I rely on.

1. I paint the watercolour as per usual on 140 Cold Press paper. I predetermine the size of my painting so that it corresponds with a standard size picture frame size. For example, a 16" x 20" frame would mean that my paper size (painting) should be at least 16 1/2" x 20 1/2". The excess will be trimmed later.
2. When the watercolour is fully dry and with the painting side up, I thumb tack the corners to a rigid board such as foam core.
3. I take it to a well-ventilated area and with the painting lying completely horizontal; I give it a light coating using Golden's Acrylic Spray. You can give it a second light coat after about an hour or 2 but try not to go too heavy with each coat. Follow the directions for nozzle distance and motion. This spray application fixes (seals) the watercolour pigment.
4. 24 hours later I bring the painting back into my studio (you may still smell lingering aerosol fumes) and remove the thumb tacks.
5. I have purchased a sheet of 1/2" gatorboard from my art supplier. The gatorboard becomes the mounting surface for the watercolour.
6. Using Golden's gel medium (glue) I coat both the entire back of the watercolour paper and one surface of the gator board (which has been pre-cut to 16" x 20").
7. On a clean substrate I place the watercolour face down (i.e. glue side up) and then position the pre-glued gatorboard over the W/C paper and allow both glued surfaces to make contact.
8. Ensure the painting is parallel with the bottom and top edge of the gatorboard. This becomes an issue if you have a composition such as a landscape where the distant horizon must be level or you will have an optical conflict. Abstracts may get away with unevenness. You should be able to see about a 1/4" of excess W/C paper all around.
9. Turn the glued pieces over with the painting facing up and using a 1" to 1 1/2" wallpaper roller, I lightly work any bubbles from the centre to the outer edge of the gator board. Don't press too firmly or you could indent the paper and gator board.
10. When I'm satisfied the bubbles have been removed and the painting is still even I prepare a clean surface area and place the painting and gatorboard with the painting side down on the surface.
11. I place a piece a 1/2 inch sheet of acrylic (Plexiglas) roughly 24 inches x 30 inches on the gatorboard and then I evenly stack about 20 to 30 lbs of art books on top and leave them for 24 hours.
12. The next day I remove the weight and using an exacto knife I trim the excess watercolour paper edge so that the paper is now 16 in x 20 in.
13. Now the painting is ready to receive the final 4 to 5 coats of Golden's acrylic varnish which can be purchased in matte, satin or gloss finish.
14. I apply the final coats with a good quality 2" acrylic brush and use a top to bottom brush stroke which prevents possible overhead light reflections. Allow a minimum of an hour between coats.
15. Place the fully dried painting into the frame and hang it.



Watercolour image side down