



CHROMA'S JULY ARTISTS' NEWSLETTER

Using the New Mediums In The Studio

I believe that one of the main reasons artists prefer a certain artistic medium (oils, acrylics, charcoal, etc.) over another is because of how it feels in your hand or under the brush. I like the physicality of paint: I like how it moves, the marks it makes, the textures and all the infinite colors I can mix. **Atelier Interactive Acrylic** is a fantastic acrylic on its own, with a heavy body that is quite malleable. But with the addition of these new Atelier Mediums, I find that the way the paint behaves is even better, and the effects I can get add a subtlety and dimension that wasn't there in the past.

In the Studio



Figure 1

One of the questions I often get asked is "What medium should I use?" and my response is usually "What are you trying to achieve?" The choice of medium will influence how the paint moves and behaves, so it is helpful to know what you want to do, and then choose the medium that best helps you achieve that goal. For example, for this painting, I knew my goal at this stage was to block in all of my major shapes. (Figure 1). Subtle blending was not my goal; getting the canvas covered was what was needed. I used **Atelier Free Flow Gesso** (Light Red Ochre) to prepare my canvas and give it some tooth, and then I roughed in a drawing using vine charcoal. For the color masses, I used the new **Thin Medium** to loosen my Atelier Interactive color mixtures and get my shapes down relatively quickly.

Once I had my major masses down, it was time to start building definition. I used the new **Middle Medium** as a way to create smoother paint mixtures that I could layer and blend, and I used **Unlocking Formula** as needed to create softer transitions. I found this medium worked very well with my process, and I would just keep the medium on my palette and mix as needed. (Figure 2).



Figure 2

Fixing the problems

Once I stepped away from my canvas, I realized all I had to fix (the face, the legs, the chair, the eyes!) Because I build my paintings up in layers, I used the **Thick Painting Medium** next. I chose this medium because I wanted to have more of an oil paint look, and I wanted that extra time to make those delicate gradations of color that add depth to forms. I still used the **Unlocking Formula** as needed, but I found I did not need it as much. In fact, there were times I needed to back off and stop working in certain sections so that they didn't become muddy or lift. At those points, I simply focused on another section of the painting or took a break.

From that point, I continued to use the **Thick Painting Medium** so I could keep the brushy transitions but be able to modulate as needed. (Figure 3). I was responding to the work, because I wanted to create an interesting painting, not a lifelike portrait. I used this medium, along with the **Thin Medium** to create glazes and scumbles of color to bring life to the painting. As someone who prefers "a painterly painting," I found the **Thin Medium** perfect for those times when I did not want painterly brushwork but needed to control the line – such as in highlights in the strands of hair, the creases of the eyes and the eye highlights.



Figure 3



ASK JEN

I am Jennifer VonStein, and I have been Chroma's Resident Art for almost 13 years. I work primarily with acrylics, oils, watercolors and mixed media/collage, and I do my best to help artists with their practical considerations or concerns about materials for their art. Although I am based in the USA, I consult with artists worldwide and will be writing some articles along with Chroma's founder, Jim Cobb. If you have feedback or any questions you would like answered in a future article, please email me at jvonstein@chromaonline.com.

A Personal Approach

These progress shots are simply my illustration of my painting process, and some of the thoughts that go into choosing a particular medium over another. You, as an artist, have your own unique voice, and ultimately, you decide on what may or may not work for you. Having familiarity about your tools, such as the new **Atelier Mediums**, can only help broaden your painting knowledge and help you explore as you achieve your vision.

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