

Artistry of Science Guide to Mixing Acrylic Paints for Fluid Art

Acrylic Paint Mixture for Pours, Flips, and Swipes

For many fluid art techniques using medium body acrylic paints we use the following recipe:

Ingredients:

Medium body paints of good quality - such as Amsterdam, Golden, Artist Loft.

American Floetrol paint extender - as a pouring medium

Optional: Silicone Oil or Coconut Milk Hair Serum - to create cells

Plastic cups to mix each paint color in

Stirring sticks to mix each color of paint- wooden popsicle sticks work great

Directions:

Mix 1 part paint to 3 parts Floetrol by weight

It is a good idea to use a small kitchen scale to weight your ingredients rather than just guessing. The reason is that many paints, even by the same manufacturer, or even the same color, may weigh differently. So 1 ounce of Artist Loft Red by volume may weigh less than 1 ounce of Artist Loft Yellow. So when you first start, weigh your paint and your Floetrol.

Once you have added your paint and Floetrol to a cup mix it well so the Floetrol is full incorporated. Repeat this process with the other colors you want to use. Once you have all of the cups of mixed paint it is time to check that they all have the same fluidity. To test this you can use the mixing stick for each color and scoop some paint up on the stick and let it run off into the cup. You will see that the paint, as it hits the surface of the paint in the cup, will mound up and then that mound will disappear. The time it takes for the mound to disappear is how you can check each paint's fluidity. For most techniques you want the mound on all of your colors to last 1 second or less. Add more Floetrol if needed to make the mixture more fluid. If the paint is thicker you can add a little distilled water, but don't add much as water can cause the paint binders to break down.

Mixing can introduce air bubble so it is a good idea to cover the mixture with some plastic wrap and let it for an hour or so to allow the bubble to rise to the surface and pop.

If you want cells in your painting add 2 to 3 drops of either silicone oil or coconut hair serum oil to each of your colors and gently stir in just before using the paint.

Now your paint is ready to use.

Acrylic Paint Mixture for Dutch Pours and Swipes

For Dutch Pour fluid art techniques using medium body acrylic paints we use the following recipe:

Dutch Pours use a very fluid paint mixture and are often blown around on the canvas with a hairdryer (it must have a cold setting or button as heat will dry the paint and for a skin that will crack), or they can be swiped with pallet knives, paper towels, or plastic sheets.

Ingredients:

Medium body paints of good quality - such as Amsterdam, Golden, Artist Loft.

American Floetrol paint extender - as a pouring medium

Optional: Silicone Oil or Coconut Milk Hair Serum - to create cells

Plastic cups to mix each paint color in

Stirring sticks to mix each color of paint- wooden popsicle sticks work great

Directions:

Mix 1 part paint to 5 parts Floetrol by weight

So for example, if you weight 1 ounce of White paint you will add 5 ounces of Floetrol and mix.

Once you have added your paint and Floetrol to a cup mix it well so the Floetrol is full incorporated. Repeat this process with the other colors you want to use. Once you have all of the cups of mixed paint it is time to check that they all have the same fluidity. To test this you can use the mixing stick for each color and scoop some paint up on the stick and let it run off into the cup. You will see that the paint, as it hits the surface of the paint in the cup, should leave NO Mound, or it might even dip into the paint surface for a moment. Add more Floetrol if needed to make the mixture more fluid. If the paint is thicker you can add a little distilled water, but don't add much as water can cause the paint binders to break down.

Mixing can introduce air bubble so it is a good idea to cover the mixture with some plastic wrap and let it for an hour or so to allow the bubble to rise to the surface and pop.

Now your paint is ready to use.