

Glossary of Art terms & definitions



ENGLISH

SPANISH

A

ABSORBENT GROUND

TERRENO ABSORBENTE

A chalk ground that absorbs oil and is used in oil painting to achieve a matt effect and to speed up drying.

ACRYLIC EMULSION

EMULSIÓN DE ACRÍLICO

A water dispersion of polymers or co-polymers of acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, or acrylonitrile. Acrylic emulsions dry by evaporation of the water and film coalescence.

ACRYLIC SOLUTION

SOLUCIÓN ACRÍLICA

A solution of acrylic resin in a volatile solvent. Paints made with an acrylic solution binder resemble oil paints more than those made with acrylic emulsion binders.

ADDITIVE COLOR

COLOR ADITIVO

color that results from the mixture of two or more colored lights, the visual blending of separate spots of transmitted colored light.

ALKYD

ALQUÍDICO

Synthetic resin used in paints and mediums. As a medium Liquin from Winsor and Newton works as a binder that encapsulates the pigment and speeds the drying time. In Paints W&N Griffith paints are good example of alkyd paints. .

ALLA PRIMA

ALLA PRIMA

Technique in which the final surface of a painting is completed in one sitting, without under painting. Italian for "at the first". .

ANHYDROUS

ANHIDRO

Free from water.

ARCHIVAL

CALIDAD DE ARCHIVO

Refers to materials that meet certain criteria for permanence such as lignin-free, pH neutral, alkaline-buffered, stable in light, etc.

ASTM

The American Society for Testing and Materials. An independent standard for certain paint qualities, adopted by most manufacturers. .

B

BINDER

AGLUTINANTE

The nonvolatile adhesive liquid portion of a paint that attaches pigment particles and the paint film as a whole to the support. .

BISTRE

BISTRE

A brown, transparent pigment. .

BLEEDING

(el) MANCHADO

In artwork, the effect of a dark color seeping through a lighter color to the surface.

BLENDING

GRADACIÓN

Smoothing the edges of two colors together so that they have a smooth gradation where they meet.

BLOOM

LECHADA

A dull, progressively opaque, white effect caused on varnished surfaces by damp conditions. .

BODY COLOR

COLOR DE CUBIERTA

Opaque paint, such as gouache, which has the covering power to obliterate underlying color.

BRUSHWORK

PINCELADAS

The characteristic way each artist brushes paint onto a support.

C

CANVAS

LIENZO, TELA

Closely woven cloth used as a support for paintings.

CARTOON

BOCETO

Other than what we watch on TV, it is a planning device in mural painting, often a full-scale line drawing of the design, without color and tone.

CASEIN

CASEÍNA

A natural protein obtained from cow's milk. Produces a flat, water-resistant film.

CHIAROSCURO

CLAROSCURO

Term is used to describe the effect of light and shade in a painting or drawing, especially where strong tonal contrasts are used.

CROSSHATCHING

TRAMADO

More than one set of close parallel lines that crisscross each other at angles, to model and indicate tone.

CHROMA

CROMA

The relative intensity or purity of a hue when compared to grayness or lack of hue.

COCKLING

CORRUGADO, ENTRETELA

Wrinkling or puckering in paper supports, caused by applying washes onto a flimsy or improperly stretched surface.

COLLAGE

COLLAGE

A technique of picture making in which the artist uses materials other than the traditional paint, such as cut paper, wood, sand, and so on.

COMPOSITION

COMPOSICIÓN

The arrangement of elements by an artist in a painting or drawing.

CO-POLYMERS

COPOLÍMEROS

A polymer in which the molecule is of more than one type of structural unit.

COPAL

COPAL

A hard resin used in making varnishes and painting mediums.

D

DAMAR

DAMAR

A resin from conifer trees, used in making oil mediums and varnishes.

DEAD COLOR

COLOR CUBIERTO

A term for colors used in underpainting.

DECKLE EDGE

BARBA DEL PAPEL

The ragged edge found on handmade papers.

DECOUPAGE

DECOUPAGE

The act of cutting out paper designs and applying them to a surface to make an all over collage.

DESIGNER COLORS

COLORES DE DISEÑO

Best quality Gouache paints, often used in commercial art.

DILUENTS

DILUYENTES

Liquids, such as turpentine, used to dilute oil paint, the diluent for waterbased media is water.

DISPERSION

DISPERSIÓN

Applied to paint, a smooth, homogeneous mixture of ingredients; the process of dispersal, in which pigment particles are evenly distributed throughout the vehicle. .

DISTEMPER

PINTURA AL TEMPLE

A blend of glue, chalk and water-based paint, used mostly for murals and posters.

DRIER

(MATERIAL) SECANTE

A material that accelerates or initiates the drying of an oil paint or oil by promoting oxidation.

DRYING OIL

ÓLEO FIRME

An oil that, when spread into a thin layer and exposed to air, absorbs oxygen and converts into a tough film.

E

EMULSION

EMULSIÓN

A liquid in which small droplets of one liquid are immiscible in, but thoroughly and evenly dispersed throughout, a second liquid. i.e. Acrylic Emulsion.

ENCAUSTIC

ENCÁUSTICA

Literally, to burn in. A painting technique in which the binder is melted wax.

F

FAT

A term used to describe paints which have a high oil content.

FILLER

RELLENO

Inert pigment added to paint to increase its bulk, also called extender.

FILM

PELÍCULA

A thin coating or layer of paint, ink, etc. .

FIXATIVE

FIJADOR

A solution, usually of shellac and alcohol, sprayed onto drawings, to prevent their smudging or crumbling off the support. .

FRESCO

FRESCO

A painting technique in which the pigments are dispersed in plain water and applied to a damp plaster wall. The wall becomes the binder, as well as the support. .

FUGITIVE COLORS

COLORES FUGITIVOS

Pigment or dye colors that fade when exposed to light.

G

GESSO

YESO

A white ground material for preparing rigid supports for

painting, made of a mixture of chalk, white pigment, and glue. Same name applied to acrylic bound chalk and pigment used on flexible supports as well as rigid.

GLAZE

VELADURA, VELAR

A very thin, transparent colored paint applied over a previously painted surface to alter the appearance and color of the surface.

GOUACHE

GOUACHE, AGUADA

Opaque watercolors used for illustrations.

GRISSAILLE

A monochromatic painting, usually in gray, which can be used under colored glazes.

GROUND

Coating material, usually white, applied to a support to make it ready for painting.

GUM

RESINA

A plant substance that is soluble in water.

GUM ARABIC

GOMA ARÁBIGA

A gum, extracted from Acacia trees, used in solution as a medium for watercolor paints.

H

HATCHING

SOMBREADO

A technique of modeling, indicating tone and suggesting light and shade in drawing or tempera painting, using closely set parallel line.

HUE

TONO

The perceived color of an object, identified by a common name such as red, orange, blue.

HYGROSCOPIC

HIDROSCÓPICO

Absorbing or attracting moisture from the air.

I

IMPASTO

IMPASTO

A style of painting characterized by thick, juicy color application.

IMPRIMATURA

GRABADO, MARCA

A thin, veil of paint, or paint-tinted size, applied to a ground to lessen the ground's absorbency or to tint the ground to a middle value.

INTENSITY

INTENSIDAD

The purity and brightness of a color. Also called saturation.

K

KEY

TONO

Used to describe the prevailing tone of a painting. A predominantly light painting is said to have a high key. In contemporary mural painting, the key is the result of scratching a walls surface to prepare for final layer of plaster. similar to "tooth."

L

LAKE

LACA

A dye that has been chemically or electrically attached to a particle and does not bleed or migrate. _

LATEX

LÁTEX

A dispersion in water of a solid polymeric material.

LEACHING

FILTRADO

The process of drawing out excess liquid through a porous substance.

LEAN

RESECO

Used as an adjective to describe paint thinned with a spirit, which therefore has low oil content.

LEVIGATING

LEVIGACIÓN

A method of water-washing pulverized pigments to clear the particles of dissolved salts or organic matter.

LIGHTFAST

COLOR INALTERABLE

Resistant to fading or other changes due to light.

LOCAL COLOR

COLOR LOCAL

The actual color of an object or surface, unaffected by shadow coloring, light quality or other factors

LOOM STATE

TELA SIN PREPARAR

Canvas that has not been primed, sized or otherwise prepared beforehand for painting.

M

MATIERE

PINTURA

Paint.

MAROUFLAGE

MAROUFLAGE

A technique for attaching, with glue, mural size painting on paper or fabric to a wall.

MASSTONE

COLOR DE LA MASA

The top tone or body color of a paint seen only by reflected light.

MAT

CARTÓN VISIBLE

A stiff cardboard with a window cut out of the center, attached to a backboard.

MATTE

MATE, SIN BRILLO

Flat, non-glossy; having a dull surface appearance. Variant spelling . matt. [_](#)

MEDIUM

TÉCNICA

The liquid in which pigments are suspended. Also a material chosen by the artist for working. Plural is media.

MIGRATION

MIGRACIÓN

The action of a pigment or dye moving through a dried film above or below it.

MIXED MEDIA

TÉCNICA MIXTA

In drawing and painting this refers to the use of different media in the same picture.

MONOMER

MONÓMERO

A material with low molecular weight that can react with similar or dissimilar materials to form a polymer.

MOSAIC

MOSAICO

Picture making technique using small units of variously colored materials (glass, tile, stone) set in a mortar.

MURAL

MURAL

Also referred to as wall painting. this word describes any painting made directly on the wall.

MUSEUM BOARD

CARTULINA DE MUSEO

Multi ply board made of cotton rags or buffered cellulose to ensure chemical stability and neutrality.

P

PALETTE

PALETA

The surface which a painter will mix his colors. Also the range of colors used by an artist. _.

PATINA

PÁTINA

Originally the green brown encrustation on bronze, this now includes the natural effects of age or exposure on a surface.

PENTIMENTO

PENTIMENTO

A condition of old paintings where lead-containing pigments have become more transparent over time, revealing earlier layers.

PIGMENTS

PIGMENTOS

particles with inherent color that can be mixed with adhesive binders to form paint. _.

PLASTICIZER

PLASTIFICANTE

Ingredients added to paint to either make it flow or be easily re-dissolved.

PLEIN AIR

AL AIRE LIBRE

French for "open air". Term describing paintings done outside directly from the subject.

POLYMER

POLÍMERO

A series of monomers strung together in a repeating

chainlike form. That really makes it clear.

PRECIPITATE

PRECIPITADO

An inert particle to which dyes can be laked.

PRESERVATIVE

PRESERVATIVO

A material that prevents or inhibits the growth of micro-organisms in organic mixtures.

PRIMER

IMPRIMACIÓN

Coating material, usually white, applied to a support to prepare it for painting.

PVA

ACETATO DE POLIVINILO

Polyvinyl acetate, a manmade resin used as a paint medium and in varnish.

R

REFRACTION

REFRACCIÓN

The bending of light from one course in one medium to a different course through another medium of different refractive index.

REFRACTIVE INDEX

ÍNDICE REFRACTARIO

The numerical ratio of the speed of light in a vacuum to its speed in a substance.

RESINS

RESINAS

A general term for a wide variety of more or less transparent, fusible materials. The term is used to designate any polymer that is a basic material for paints and plastics.[_.](#)

S

SANQUINE

A red-brown chalk.

SAPONIFICATION

SAPONIFICACIÓN

The process in which a paint binder, under moist and alkaline conditions, becomes transparent or discolored.

SCUMBLING

ESFUMADO

The technique of applying a thin, semi-opaque or translucent coating of paint over a previously painted surface to alter the color or appearance of the surface without totally obscuring it.

SECCO

SECADO

Italian for "dry". A technique of wall-painting onto dry plaster, or lime plaster that is dampened shortly before paint is applied.

SFUMATO

ESFUMADO

Italian for "shaded off". Gradual, almost imperceptible transitions of color from light to dark.

SGRAFFITO

SGRAFFITO

Technique in which the surface layer is incised or cut away to reveal a contrasting color.

SHADE

SOMBRA

Term for a color darkened with black.

SHELLAC

LACA

A yellow resin formed from secretions of the LAC insect, used in making varnish.

SILICATE

SILICATO

Material, such as sand, that is composed of a metal, oxygen, and silicon.

SILVERPOINT

SILVERPOINT

A drawing method using a piece of metal, usually silver wire, drawn on a ground prepared with Chinese white, sometimes with pigment added.

SINOPIA

A red-brown chalk used for marking frescoes; also the preliminary drawing itself.

SIZE

Material applied to a surface as a penetrating sealer, to alter or lessen its absorbency and isolate it from subsequent coatings.

SKETCH

SKETCH, BOCETO

A preliminary drawing of a composition.

SQUARING UP

ENCUADRAR

A method for transferring an image to a larger or smaller format.

STRAINER

DEPURADOR

A wooden chassis for textile supports that has rigid, immovable corners.

STRETCHER

BASTIDOR

A wooden chassis for textile supports that has expandable corners.

SUBTRACTIVE COLOR

COLOR RESULTANTE

Color resulting from the absorption of light.

STUDY

PRUEBA DE ARTISTA

A detailed drawing or painting made of one or more parts of a final composition, but not the whole work.

SUPPORT

BASE

The basic substrata of the painting; paper, cotton, linen, wall, etc.

T

TEMPERA

TEMPERA

Technique of painting in which water and egg yolk or whole egg and oil mixture form the binder for the paint. Used also as a term for cheap opaque paints used in schools.

THIXOTROPIC

Referring to materials that are thick and viscous while at rest but will flow if brushed, stirred, or shaken. Resumes its viscous state when the agitation stops.

TINT

PLUMEADO,

SOMBREADO (en grabado)

Term for a color lightened with white. Also, in a mixture of colors, the tint is the dominant color.

TONER

VIRADOR

An unlaked dye that can bleed or migrate through dried paint films.

TOOTH

ESMALTE

Small grained but even texture. Tooth provides for the attachment of succeeding layers of paint.

TRACTION

ADHESIÓN

In oils, the movement of one paint layer over another.

TRAGACANTH

TRAGACANTO

A gum, extracted from certain Astragalus plants, used as a binding agent in watercolor paints and pastels.

TROMPE L'OEIL

TROMPE L'OEIL, EFECTO

French for "deceive the eye". A painting with extreme naturalistic details, aiming to persuade the viewer that they are looking at an actual object, not a representation.

U

UNDERPAINTING

FONDO

The traditional stage in oil painting of using a monochrome or dead color as a base for composition. Also known as laying in.

V

VALUE

VALOR (del color)

The relative lightness or darkness of a hue. Black is low value. White is a high value.

VARNISH

BARNIZ

Generally, a more or less transparent film-forming liquid that dries into a solid film. [_](#)

VEDUTA

VEDUTA, VISTA

Italian for "view". An accurate representation of an urban landscape.

VEHICLE

VEHÍCULO

The entire liquid contents of a paint.

VENICE TURPENTINE

TREMENTINA DE VENECIA

An oil resin - the semisolid mixture of a resin and an essential

oil - derived from the larch and used primarily in making mediums and diluents for oil painting.

VERDACCIO

VERDACCIO, FONDO VERDE

Old term for green underpainting.

VOLATILE

VOLÁTIL

Evaporating rapidly or easily.

VOLUME

VOLUMEN

The space that an object or figure fills in a drawing or painting.

W

WASH

AGUADA

A thin, usually broadly applied, layer of transparent or heavily diluted paint or ink.

WATERCOLOR

ACUARELA

A technique of painting using a binder made from a water-soluble gum. Watercolors can be transparent or opaque.

WATER TENSION BREAKER

LICUADOR

Substance added to water or to water-based paints in order to reduce surface tension. Por ej. "Ox Gall".

WAX PAINTING

See Encaustic.

ENCÁUSTICA

WAX RESIST

CONTRA CERA

The use of a waxy medium to make a design over which a colored wash is spread.

WET ON WET

SOBRE MOJADO

The application of fresh paint over an area on which the paint is still wet.

WETTING AGENT

AGENTE HUMECTANTE

See Water Tension Breaker.

WHITE SPIRITS

DESTILADOR, AGUARRÁS

A thinner used with oil paints replacing Turpentine.

WHITING

PIGMENTO DE TIZA

Chalk that is purified, ground with water and dried to form an inert pigment.

X

XYLOGRAPHY

XILOGRAFÍA

Rarely used term for woodblock printing. Also the mechanical reproduction of wood grain for decorative purposes. .

Y

YELLOWING

AMARILLEAR, ENVEJECIMIENTO

This effect on oil paintings is usually caused by one of three reasons: excessive use of linseed oil medium; applying any of the varnishes that are prone to yellow with age; or most often, an accumulation of dirt embedded into the varnish.

Z

ZOOMORPHIC

ZOOMÓRFICO

Describes the forms of works of art and ornaments based on animal shapes.