

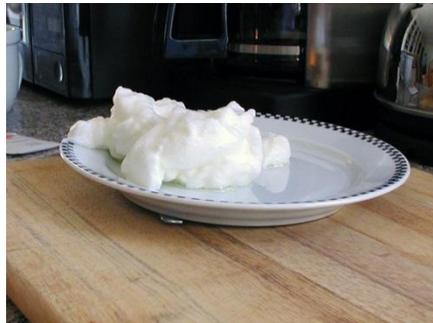
HOW TO DILUTE TITANIUM DIOXIDE LIQUID GESSO

You should use glair to thin this liquid gesso to the consistency you need. The preparation of glair is simple. Take the white of an egg and beat it to a stiff froth. Allow it to settle overnight—the liquid that collects at the bottom of the bowl is the glair. It can be used full strength, but I prefer adding an equal amount of water to the glair in the bowl. Allow it to sit undisturbed for a day; then strain, as there may be some stringiness leftover from the frothing. It is now ready to use.

One or two drops of the glair into the liquid gesso will thin the mix. Stir until the gesso has absorbed the glair. The amount of thinning needed depends on the instrument used. For example, I do not thin the gesso when using a ruling pen, but a dip pen may require the mix to be thinner. Do not use water alone to thin, as it can do more harm than good. This is true of both this formula (using titanium dioxide) and Cennini's original formula.

Glair is a wonderful natural product that has many applications. As glair ages, it becomes an adhesive. In this particular usage, it is best to use it fresh. If we were using Cennini's white lead formula, it would be best to use glair at least 6 to 9 months old. The glair that is not used should be refrigerated. Glair will hold up for years in the refrigerator, but you need to re-strain stored glair before use. Without refrigeration, it does have a tendency to break down and putrefaction does occur. It was traditionally called la putrido, the stinky method. Refrigeration thickens the gesso; it will be more liquid when it warms up. Before doing any thinning, first let the gesso come to room temperature.

How to make glair. See the photos below. It's a simple method that can be used full strength or diluted with an equal amount of water. In either scenario, glair becomes waterproof in 24 hours. It is strongly suggested, when diluting any gesso for raised gilding that the gold be applied within that 24 hour window.



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