

We do not care to talk about art.

Dear reader here you may find just a few notes about the content and use of our “artist suitcase” where we draw our painting's clothes.

## PREFACE

This written shows our way to work with paintings in the third millennium A.D. using the techniques of integrated old and modern masters and globalized in a “contemporary do”, where passion, technology and quotidian research expand the limits of tradition in an open and boundless process.

### 0.- The Support

The maximum attention is necessary to choose the support because when the lime plaster is dry it does not have elasticity, so it's absolutely important to work with a stable surface, without forgetting the coefficients of thermal expansion, mechanical stress etc.

In the present the suitable types of material for the fresco are extremely various, curled in concrete walls, concrete slabs, reed, plywood panels, sandwich panels of various materials, crockery, sheets, plastic or metal nets, etc.

In some cases it is possible, with the right devices on the blocks and on the dough, to work on canvases, tarpaulins, fabric, fabric non fabric, or other flexible supports in order to make the transportation of large works possible.

### 1.- The LIME: Preparation and Application.

We use different types of dough depending on the effect that we want to reach.

The lime is used as slaked enriched with glue, kneaded with marble dust and l or river sand.

We can also use others types of dough. That have in their inside cement in relation to the support: wall, panel, metal, etc.

What's important for us is to have a flat surface of homogenous thickness that allows the draw incision and lay down the color with slow dry and slow hardening.

According to what we want to achieve, it's important to choose earlier what to use because when the surface will be dry it could result very different rougher, flatter, or more subject to the effect crackle. So is very important to test the materials, the time and effects obtained, before the actual use.

In our case, we use a spatula to spread the lime, It can be of various forms, adequate to the measures that we are handling, we can also use trowels, ladles or other

instruments.

### Historic Note

The fresco was born in the prehistoric caves of Lascaux as a "spontaneous physiologic phenomenon" of fixing the color. In the third millennium B.C. in the Aegean islands begins the use of lime, therefore the wall painting "fresco". Mineral pigments and / or earths are dissolved in water and spread out on the still wet plaster, thanks to the process of incorporation and carbonation processes, is obtained with the dry plaster the permanent fixation of the color.

### 2.- The Engraving

Below the ancient frescoes, we'll often find the sinopias that bloom out under the color.

The ancients not having our technology were forced to use preparatory sketches on the wall or on cardboard to bring out the drawing on the painting surface, since the fresco dries too quickly and doesn't allow to finalize drawing's details.

Everything related with the proportions and geometries must be completely taken care of before starting. We usually do it in a preliminary sketch: on the computer or by testing. When we start to work everything is already perfectly decided.

The still wet and fresh lime surface comes engraved with the lines that will determinate the idea of what we want to achieve. They could be lines that just profile the figures or maybe lines that define contrasts or even background lines.

The design has to be recognizable at finished work; in the end the sketch will reappear in its immediacy, in its execution speed while keeping the excitement of the gesture.

To etch the lime we use porcupine pens, spatulas, engravers, everything we can use to draw strong lines

### 3.- The Color Application

Finished the engraved, we'll start to paint on the still fresh surface. To paint means giving color to the draw, that could also only mean a monochrome game of light and darkness which helps us to perceive the depth of the forms or geometries, or the use of different colors that enforce the drawing below. Also a juxtaposition of the different tones of the same color. Most of these colors are mineral colors, oxides or lands. We can also simply use the pigments used in building construction. The fresco isn't a rigid surface and it doesn't allow color overlay, however, it has thickness, and it can be exploited to paint in more levels, making the color penetrate, mixing it and giving the dough various effects, always according to what we want to achieve.

The tools used, range from brushes as "muccino" (round) up to flat ones, we can use hands, fingers, big brushes and palette knives.

It is important to understand that the color isn't something unique, so you can work with tempera, water color, encaustic, with a range of density of colors in order to have

very different effects.

#### 4.-The Drying

When a table has been treated with lime, the drawing has been engraved and the color has been put, we need to let it dry. It's necessary to give the lime enough time to let it expel the water in its interior. At this stage we can give a further contribution to what will be the final effect by playing with the drying speed. This rapidity can create collapse effects to the material and then obtain "the crackle". This particular effect of surface cracks can be emphasized or eliminated, it depends on what kind of dough we used on, the heat source (if it is the sun, a hair dryer, a stove, etc).

#### 5.- The Sand Paper use

This caress is about the process of removing from the painting surface those parts that aren't used or aren't convincing. The perfectly dried table, presents flaws after being painted, just as material parts in relief on the surface that are derived from the draw engraving.

Using sand paper, spatulas, trowels or sander wood, you can obtain a more/less flat or smooth surface.

This process also consents to obtain very flat surfaces and to start the graffiti work eliminating some of the previous work. Putting and removing will continue during all stages, this is our basis technique, to cancel, to cover, to eliminate what was made earlier to make the contradiction become a certainty affirmation.

#### 6.- The Retouch

We have already discarded the board, we have eliminated the excess parts that wasn't interesting, and the exceed color parts. Right now we can't really see very well the work, because the contrast and brightness got lost.

To give freshness, details precision, depth richness back to the board, we can use techniques as watercolor, tempera, etc.

However, the main idea is adding color to the fresco in order to retouch it, to incorporate the given color with adds that, without distorting everything, may be of essential importance.

The materials are various just as the tools, and the water is absolutely fundamental. Everything must always be water based. In some particular cases, besides the water, we can use other solvents that consent the spreading of the pigments, resins, waxes, lime water, etc.

To extend the color we can use different tools, just as brushes, spatulas, sponges, paper. Basically in the retouches and in the further steps, is fundamental to add/remove the color to get to the chromatic balance.

## 7.- The Fixation

We painted and retouched the table, at this point we have to stop the work, not definitely of course. This fixation can be more or less important depending on which dough we used; there are situations where that's not necessary because we didn't intervene heavily on the surface. On the contrary other times it is very important to consolidate and stabilize the fresco. The materials can be various, from natural things as rabbit skin glue, fish glue, to vinyl resin, varnishes, industrial resin, etc. We don't have prejudgments nor certainties, we always choose according to what the board presents, to what we are interested in at the moment and to what we have this. Could also be a process made of several passages: before in some parts and after in others; the assembling or fixing serves to obtain a surface on which we can work again.

## 8.- The Wax

At this point that our drawing has been, discarded, retouched, fixated. It's time to bring out the draw. What we decided at the beginning, the graphic, the engraving, the texture, the base structure of our work must now to back on the sight. We may use one or more colored wax (encaustic) that will saturate the engraves making the surface smooth, emphasizing the contrasts, just like a reverse print job. The encaustic preparation is made: with beeswax, essence of turpentine, greek tar, etc. It's possible to use the encaustic warm or cold, before applying it you may also heat the surface, ( and also here a world opens up, that according on what we are doing and what we want to obtain, every time, change.

## 9.- The Watercolor Wax

We can obtain another small but fundamental add to the work with light glazings, or rather with a water color wax. What we are looking for at this stage is the color depth given by the various draft levels. This may allow a very serious work on the details, on the particulars and, sometimes it can be very simple, but nevertheless sophisticated.

## 10.- The Coating

Our work has now been treated with encaustic and, when the wax is dry, we can proceed to the coating surface. Here is where we find all of what is related to the old masters work with wood. The idea of coating is being able to transform something new in a lived and intriguing matter. Bitumen, clay, wax, earths, etc. help us to transform our opera depending on the application. So the choices, even extemporary, between materials, to obtain particular effects in order to enhance or hide, darker or lighter, etc.

## 11.- The final Varnishing

The final varnishing is the tie that we put at the end of the painting. Varnishing means protecting, giving transparency, brilliance, uniformity, definition. Not all the varnishes are equal, and it's difficult to obtain a quality one, we often use a long process to obtain varnishes that lead us to dedicate a lot of time to its preparation. Our favorites are the Shellac, The Sandarac, The Damar, an amount of natural or not natural resins that can help giving better uniformity, brightness, transparency to the painting surface.

## 12.- The Frame

The fresco is born on a rigid surface, and it often occupies just a part of it so in that case the frame isn't needed. When we work at the panel, the frame becomes, as for the old masters, an integral part of the opera. Sometimes even a little uniform outline is enough to frame, in other occasions passepartout, golden borders, moldings and carvings are indispensable. In the old Florentine tradition the masters used to dedicate to the making of the frame the same attention devoted to the paintings.

Conclusions: the other caress, and the author skills are finished, now to present the painting are required other very important caress:  
the position and the lighting