

## **ADDING COLOR MEDIUMS TO LIGHTWEIGHT SPACKLING & LIGHTWEIGHT JOINT COMPOUND**

See the photos of the samples that follow. This experiment tested 12 different color mediums mixed with "Lightweight Spackling" by Red Devil and "Lightweight All Purpose Joint Compound" by Sheetrock. Note that it is not advisable to use regular joint compound. It is much heavier than the lightweight joint compound used here. The reasoning behind this experiment was to create a color base for textured surfaces and bas relief work that would be more cost efficient, yet remained structurally sound. The following method can also be applied to acrylic paste. However, using acrylic paste was not as cost efficient as using the spackling and joint compound, especially when painting large surfaces. Each of the color mediums measured 1/8 teaspoon and were mixed with either 1 tablespoon of spackling or 1 Tablespoon of joint compound so that there were two samples for each color medium. Each textured application was applied between 1/8" and 1/4" thick on a canvas panel. Each sample was cured for 72 hours.

Once dried completely, the spackling color samples were more intense than the joint compound samples. The samples that were mixed with acrylic color medium were more flexible and appeared more durable than those without it.

I applied a coat of liquid acrylic gloss medium over half of each of the samples and allowed them to cure for another 24 hours. There were noticeable differences in durability with each sample; more so with the samples that contained an acrylic color medium.

After letting the samples cure for an additional 4.5 months, they all appeared even more durable than before when touched. Again, the samples that contained an acrylic color medium were noticeably stronger than before.

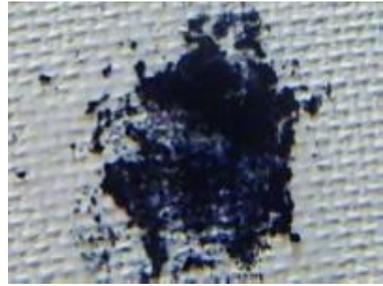
\* Take note of the major color differences between the two samples in row #3. This may be due to a chemical reaction between the alcohol and the chemical structure of the spackling. Here is a prime example of why it is best to test before applying materials to your composition.

**A - Spackling**

**B - Joint Compound**

**C- Color Medium**

**# 1**



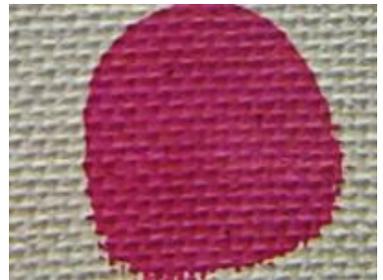
**# 2**



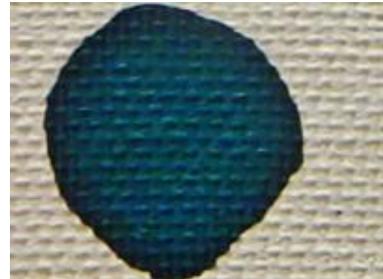
**# 3**



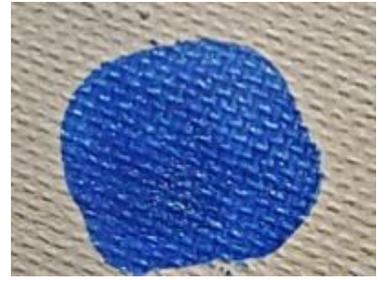
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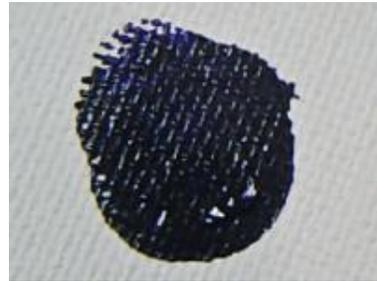
**# 5**



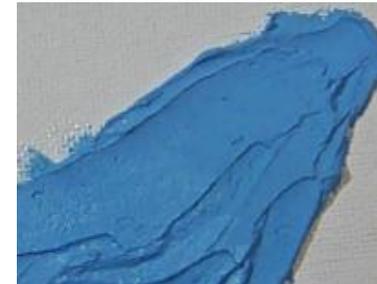
# 6



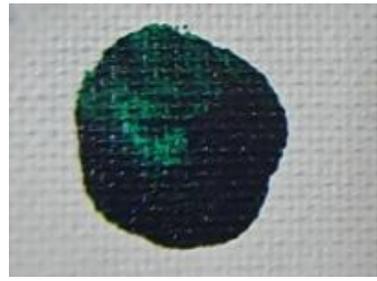
# 7



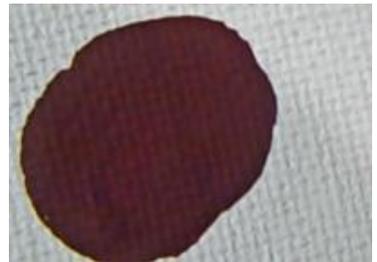
# 8



# 9



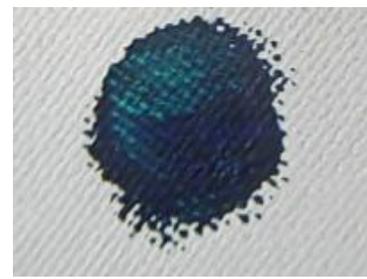
#10



# 11



# 12



**Color mediums used and their manufacturers:**

# 1 Concentrated Pigment Powder (blue m370-4141) by Mohawk

# 2 Jacquard Mica Powder (turquoise) by Rupert, Gibbon & Spider

# 3 Alcohol Ink (currant) by Adirondack

# 4 Ink Jet Printer Ink (magenta) unknown manufacturer

# 5 Waterproof Ink (transparent green, universal 3080-F) by Koh-i-Noor

# 6 Acrylic Ink (galactic blue) by Pearlescent

# 7 Acrylic Heavy Body Paint (dioxazine purple) by Liquitex

# 8 Acrylic Soft Body Paint (brilliant blue) by Liquitex

# 9 Acrylic Air Brush Paint (forest green) by Createx

# 10 Acrylic Craft Paint (napa red) by Americana

# 11 Leather Dye (wine #11) by Tarrago

# 12 Watercolor Paint (viridian) by Winsor & Newton

Here are two additional methods to help strengthen lightweight spackling and lightweight joint compound before mixing in a color medium.

The following compounds were tested:

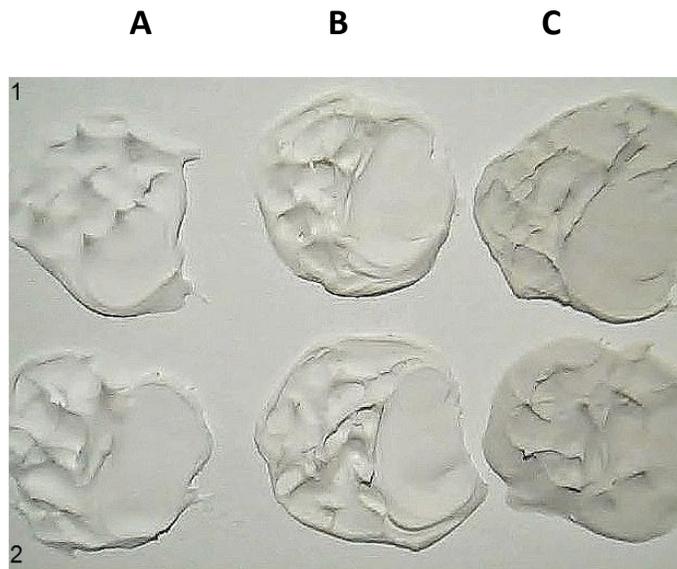
**A** Lightweight Spackling by Masilla Liviana

**B** Vinyl Spacking by Ace

**C** Lightweight All Purpose Joint Compound by Sheetrock

**Note:** It is not advisable to use regular joint compound. It is much heavier than the lightweight joint compound used here.

Each medium in the first row was mixed with Liquid Polymer Medium by Golden. The second row was mixed with Gloss Gel by Liquitex. Any brand of gel medium can be used. Do not use a glazing medium. It is too thin and will do very little to strengthen the compounds.



## **Increase Durability of Spackling & Joint Compound**

Methods to strengthen spackling and lightweight joint compound for mixed media and bas relief paintings. Do not use acrylic glazing medium. It is too thin and will do very little to increase durability.

**1.** Mix in 1/4 Polymer Medium by Golden Paints. Use either gloss or matte. Mix thoroughly with a palette knife. You can slightly adjust the amount of polymer medium added to achieve a desired consistency. There is less chance of hairline cracks using this recipe when applied no more than approximately 1/8" thick. Thicker applications showed larger cracks.

**2.** Add 1/4 acrylic gel to the spackling or joint compound and mix thoroughly. The student grade gel "Basics" by Liquitex worked just as well for this recipe.

This method has a lesser chance of hairline cracks with a thick application. You may notice a few very fine hairline cracks with this method if applied too thick.

**NOTE:** Even the lightweight joint compound tends to crack if applied too thick. The accidental cracks offer an organic feel, but this may not be a desired result in some cases. To avoid cracks, it is best to apply joint compound no more than 1/8" thick and allow it to dry without disturbing the surface. It is not advised that joint compound be used to sculpt unless a solid material such as pulp is added to one of the above recipes. Add enough pulp (shredded wet paper squeezed) to the recipe to get the consistency of mashed potatoes. Mix well or use a blender. You can then apply a thicker layer to a surface or armature. It can be sanded smooth once it has dried completely.

Joint compound can be thinned with water to the consistency of a heavy clay slip to fill in unwanted surface cracks or gaps for bas relief work.

## **UPDATES:**

11/29/12 - "Elastomeric Custom Patch Smooth" was also tested and was found to be much softer and flexible once cured, so there was no need to add acrylic polymer medium or gel medium to it. This product is not meant to be sanded and therefore can be a setback when controlled detail is desired as in bas relief work or sculpting. It is a wonderful medium to create surface texture and impasto with painting knife.

12/04/2013 - Larger amounts of color medium can be added to Elastomeric, especially acrylic paint while not weakening the compound once cured. When low saturated or inexpensive color mediums were added to Elastomeric, the results were much paler than when added to the spackling and joint compound samples. Professional high saturated acrylic color can be added to the Elastomeric even in larger amounts for more intense color without weakening it as was the case with the joint compound or spackling samples. This is because Elastomeric is an acrylic base material with a fair amount of polymer emulsion.

Thin the Elastomeric with a liquid acrylic medium or professional soft body color when necessary for application purposes. Golden liquid paint, Golden fluid paint, various airbrush paints, and Liquitex soft body paint maintain intense color, even though lighter than paint straight from the tube. Use heavy body paint if you want to tint the Elastomeric without thinning it.