

## WORKING ON PANELS – FRAMING WITHOUT GLASS by Marilyn Brandenburger



*Full Moon – 18 x 18, oil pastel over gouache and Claybord Smooth primed with Colourfix*

I have been researching the use of panels as a viable support for oil pastel for the past year. Here's the formula for a finishing treatment I am using successfully on my own oil pastel paintings:

### What you will need:

- **Support:** Ampersand's Claybord Smooth
- **Surface:** 4 thin coats of Art Spectrum's Colourfix primer. (You can thin with water) This will adhere beautifully to the Claybord and provide a really nice tooth for the oil pastel.
- **Fixative:** Sennelier's fixative for Oil Pastels (See the Oil Pastel Primer article on using fixatives.)
- **Varnish:** Golden's Archival Varnish #7736-X (Mineral Spirit Acrylic Aerosol with UVLS) This comes in satin, matte and gloss finishes.

I've probably tested about 20 different surfaces — all the panels Ampersand makes, gessoed plywood, hardboard, MultiMedia Artboard, regular canvas in a variety of surfaces, watercolor canvas, etc. I'll share this info in future articles.

I settled on Claybord Smooth because it has such a silken surface, and on some of my pieces I like to show that surface as a white border. I tape off a 3/4" border, then lay down the Colourfix inside the border. I like the Colourfix, because it has the finest tooth I've found. I've tried Liquitex's Fine Pumice Gel and Golden's Acrylic Ground for Pastels, too. They work OK, but they're a little too rough for my taste.

Susan Bennerstrom is working on different combinations of fix and varnish, too, so maybe I'll have some more to report after taking her workshop later this month.



*Twilight, Tobin Harbor – 24x30, oil pastel over acrylic, on Claybord Textured panel*

### To create your panels:

Prepare the Claybord panel by brushing on the Colourfix. I've tried both a brush and a sponge applicator. A bristle brush will leave brush-marks; a sponge is a little smoother, so I use a sponge brush. I may try a sponge roller one of these days, though, because I'd really like to get the same surface as Colourfix paper, but haven't been able to yet. I intend to contact the Colourfix people about this and ask them how to get that beautiful surface of their papers.

Use your oil pastels directly on the Colourfix or under-paint with acrylic and then add the oil pastel.

After you finish the painting, let it "gas off" and dry for 4 to 6 weeks.

After the drying stage, fix the oil pastel by applying 4 light coats of the Sennelier fixative for oil pastel, allowing the painting to dry thoroughly between each coat. After the fixative layer is thoroughly dry, spray the painting again, with 4 coats of the Golden varnish, letting the painting dry thoroughly between each coat of varnish.

This varnish is a new product from Golden and they really test their stuff and stand by it and I trust them when they say it will not yellow. It's an acrylic, so I wouldn't expect it to yellow.

Frame like an oil painting.....without glass!

Warning: This finish is still experimental. However, my research -- with fellow oil pastelists and with the Golden company -- convinced me that the Golden varnish is

# *Oil Pastel Primer*

compatible with both the Sennelier fixative and the oil pastels. I have been using it for all my recent work and I am quite happy with the results. I'll be sharing more of my research on panels in upcoming newsletters.



*The Part Harmony – 18x12, oil pastel over acrylic on Claybord Textured panel*