

# Technical Note: Storage (Oil based)

## Ageing of Oil Based Paint and Ink

Linseed oil used in our ink and paint is natural organic material which gradually reacts with oxygen becoming more solid. This is a very important characteristic, without which your work would remain forever wet and tacky. It starts from the moment oil is liberated from the flaxseed, and is controlled along its journey to ensure its characteristics are a perfect consistency for the production of high-quality artist materials. During storage the drying process will continue at a very slow rate due to the very low levels of oxygen in its container. As the process is often slow and gradual, you may not notice this change until you finish your current supply, and the new fresher tube/tin may feel comparatively soft and more fluid. The formation of skin or gummed material may occur with the right amount of time and conditions. There are some factors which will influence how quickly this process can take place. This technical note will help guide you on how to best conserve the lifespan of your stored materials.

### Temperature

The single most important factor effecting storage is temperature. Higher temperatures will speed up polymerisation, reducing the storage/shelf life of your material. So store your ink, paint and ancillaries in a cool location away from sources of heat. Consider excluding the following sources of heat from your storage area:

- Heating elements, radiators,
- Hot pipes
- Direct sunlight (sunlight can be extremely effective at increasing temperatures – think of how a car in direct summer sunlight (even if only an hour) can produce enough heat to burn your skin).
- High locations - warm air rises. If you have a studio in a converted roof space, or upper level of an open plan building etc, it may be worth considering storing your material on lower levels.

Temperature also affects how the material behaves, so it's important to recognise that whilst storage should be cool, the low temperature will reduce the viscosity (thicker, more body) and slow down the initial drying, therefore; it's advantageous to warm your materials back to ambient room temperature just prior to use.

### Oxygen

The other big factor is oxygen. The less oxygen available, the less curing takes place. If you're not using large volumes then consider purchasing tubes. These can provide a better seal and more effective at excluding air from the remaining material. It may be your fast-moving colours e.g. black and white, can be purchased in tins, whilst your less utilised colours in tubes.

Top tips:

Tubes	Tins
Keep the thread and cap clear of ink/paint to ensure a better seal	Check for skin or gumming of the surface. If present, remove using a filling knife or similar. Never try to mix it into the remaining material.
Replace the cap quickly	Don't dig chunks out, try to scrape the ink/paint from along the surface. This reduces the area of ink exposed to air and is easier to cover (see below point).
Secure the cap firmly	Don't mix or stir the ink in the tin. All mixing should be done to removed ink that's intended for immediate use.
	Don't return unused ink back to the tin, and especially don't mix it back in. It's time outside the tin, and being worked/mixed, will result in rapid polymerisation, likely resulting in lumps in your ink.
	Cover the surface with the supplied plastic skin or similar.
	A fast squirt of WD40 can displace air and provide a thin barrier between the air and ink/paint.
	Seal the tin with tape.

If you have any specific questions relating to storage or other matters, please don't hesitate to contact us at [hello@cranfield-colours.co.uk](mailto:hello@cranfield-colours.co.uk)  
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