

"Neo Megilp": A New Painting Medium from Gamblin Artists Colors

**Some of My Many Postings to the Portrait Artists Forum
In Response to *A No-lead Maroger Medium?* by Karin Wells**

February 15 through April 16, 2002 (and beyond)

February 15, 2002

It's Great!

I finally got my hands on a (small) sample of Neo Megilp (One local art store is giving away perhaps 1/2 oz. bottles of either Neo Megilp, Galkyd, or Gamsol with the purchase of two tubes of Gamblin oil colors), and it seems to be everything it's advertised to be (as in the new Gamblin "Oil Painting Mediums" brochures in art stores): A soft, silky gel that -- at least in my LIMITED experiments -- "melts" away brushmarks and leaves an "enamel-like" finish with color glowing from within.

I can appreciate what Turner and others saw in such stuff (My favorite term is "Ruben's Jelly").

And like the thicker true gel mediums, Gamblin says (as Karin quoted) you can add up to 90% Neo Megilp to 10% paint for an impasto glaze -- you're not supposed to add anywhere near that much of any other medium to your paint (the standard advice is that the strongest paint films are pure paint, although the Old Masters used handground paints that were much more fluid than today's tube paints).

It's truly "thixotropic" -- it looks like a stiff gel (which may hurt its sales, "off the shelf"); but it liquefies upon stirring or brushing, and then sets back up when left undisturbed (Amazing!).

Over at least my small test area, the "pull" was nice, not tacky (like gloss medium, for fellow former acrylic painters); and it doesn't "puddle" like more fluid media.

David, here's an idea I just read for reducing the tackiness of Galkyd, although slowing its drying somewhat: Add 10% stand oil (but no more, to prevent wrinkling). Just an idea from that new brochure.

Neo Megilp smells about like Galkyd (which has less "bite" than Liquin, to my nose), and includes Gamsol (which is virtually odorless, as opposed to the equally safe Sansodor).

It's not yet in our Los Angeles area stores, but I understand from Gamblin it's on its way (maybe in a week or two).

By the way, when asking for it, it's pronounced "NEE-oh muh-GILP" (Don't be surprised if the sales people laugh -- tell them how it's spelled).

The information about Neo Megilp can be found on the following page of the Gamblin website...

<http://www.gamblincolors.com/mediums/mediums.html>

As far as I'm concerned, as long as it's from Gamblin, it should be as safe as can be for us artists and also of conservation quality, based on his alkyd resins.

And here's some information (Please see a later post) about the original megilp and maroger mediums...

<http://www.jamescgroves.com/meguilp.htm>

Good luck!

P.S. Hope you're feeling better, Karin (Get lots of fresh air whenever you can)!

February 19, 2002

From Mr. Gamblin

Mr. Robert Gamblin, President of Gamblin Artists Colors Co. and "America's premier colorman" (as by virtue of his work with the ASTM, the Smithsonian, the National Gallery, and the Radio City Music Hall restoration) was gracious enough to recently reply to my questions about solvents and mediums, as I've posted on page 3 of this other thread...

<http://forum.portraitartist.com/showthread.php?pagenumber=3>

About Neo Megilp, I wrote: "My only question is, shall I handle it according to your standard advice for mediums [such as Galkyd]: 'In the under layers, thin medium with solvent in the proportion of 1 part medium to 1 part solvent. The middle layers, use 2 parts medium to 1 part solvent. In the upper layers, use medium only.'"

To which Mr. Gamblin responded: "You can certainly use the directive for Galkyd, fat over lean, and apply it to Neo-Megilp. But if you like the soft gel of the Neo, then do nothing to it except add a small amount of Gamsol." (I presume he meant adding solvent in the underlayers).

I certainly do like the soft gel of the Neo (so much so that I drove a hundred miles, each way, and picked up a couple bottles of Neo Megilp in Santa Barbara this weekend)!

Thank you again, Mr. Gamblin.

April 16, 2002

It was worth the trip!

I really enjoyed working with the Neo Megilp!

The only problem is that it dries slowly (typically two to three days between coats); and if you try to rush it, the topcoat will lift some of the undercoat -- you'll start "rolling up" little "pills" of paint film.

But properly handled, the paint blends and levels beautifully; and the glazes glow!

Here's my first effort, for Downing ART Auction Ltd., outside of Chicago (Mr. Downing & I are very pleased)...

Thanks again, Mr. Gamblin!

