

Craquelure



Decorators in 18th century France were inspired by the delicate network of cracks found on lacquered furniture and developed a water/oil based system to mimic the effect. Applicraft Craquelure is a simple two-part water-based system which reproduces this interesting antique effect. It is ideal for use on painted surfaces and objets d'art.

Step 1 + Step 2 = Craquelure

Select the size of crack you require in Step 1: small, medium or large crack. Step 2 in universal

Materials and tools

Applicraft Craquelure Step 1 and Step 2. Tube of artists oil colour e.g. Raw Umber, white spirit, oil based varnish, White Polish Shellac (optional), cotton rags and 2 varnish brushes.

Preparation

Craquelure can be applied to water-based and oil-based painted surfaces. Oil-based surfaces will require either a light sanding or a coat of White Polish Shellac before proceeding. Apply a coat of Shellac to hand painted motifs or decoupage prints & allow to dry before proceeding.

Application

1. Apply a thick coat of Step 1 with a clean dry varnish brush. Do not overwork it. Allow to dry completely.
2. Step 2 can be applied now or at a later time. Use a clean varnish brush, making sure you cover the area and don't miss out bits. Brush it out smoothly as it is thick and sticky.
3. Leave it to dry for about 8 hours.
4. Dab a little white spirit on a rag followed by the artists oil colour and rub it over the surface and into the cracks. Wait for 20 minutes and gently wipe away excess until you achieve the tint you require. Let it dry for a while. Use a little white spirit to help remove any oil residue if necessary.
5. Leave to dry for 24 hours. Apply a coat of oil-based varnish to seal the surface.

IF YOU ARE IN A HURRY PROCEED AS FOLLOWS...

5. Having achieved the tint you require, seal the surface with a coat of Shellac which will dry in about 30 minutes.
6. Apply a coat of water or oil-based varnish to complete and protect the surface.

Washing up

Craquelure brushes - wash brushes in warm soapy water.

Oil-based varnish brushes – white spirit followed by warm soapy water.

Help

1. If the Step 2 is very thick, put the jar in a bowl of hot water whilst working with it. Moisten the brush with water.
2. The Step 2 has a minute or 2 of 'open time'. Immediately after application, lightly brush out any areas which have 'pooled'.
3. Once dry, don't panic if the cracks are not obvious. Apply a little oil colour, the cracks will inevitably be there.
4. No cracks? If you have not applied enough Step 1 or you have missed out bits when applying Step 2.

Tips

Craquelure is not an exact science and no two pieces will be the same. The cracks will vary depending on how thickly it is applied and the temperature and humidity of the workroom. Only use oil paints or gilt creams and not acrylics to colour the cracks. Craquelure is not suitable to use in areas exposed to moisture or extreme heat.

Coverage: 500ml – approx 8 sq metres

Batches may vary slightly in colour.

