

# Color Matching Techniques for Restoration

*The more practice you have mixing colors, the easier it becomes. Don't be afraid to experiment with variations of mediums, formulas and applications.*



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By DiAnna Tindell

Restoration requires color matching to blend, touch-up and/or add to the existing colorations of the

original body of an object that has been damaged. As an example, I will reference color matching to restore damaged areas of various frame types.

Matching colors will come easily to some but not so easily to others. This can probably be attributed to an individual's innate artistic abilities. Despite an individual's natural talent, however, it often takes knowledge and practice to hone a person's ability to properly match colors.

The use of a test sample, such as a tile or comparable body type to the object being restored, is the best habit to continue. If you

apply each step to your test sample prior to committing it to the original object, any mistakes can be taken into consideration and corrected more easily.

Factors that should be considered when attempting to match colors to restore a damaged area of a frame may include:

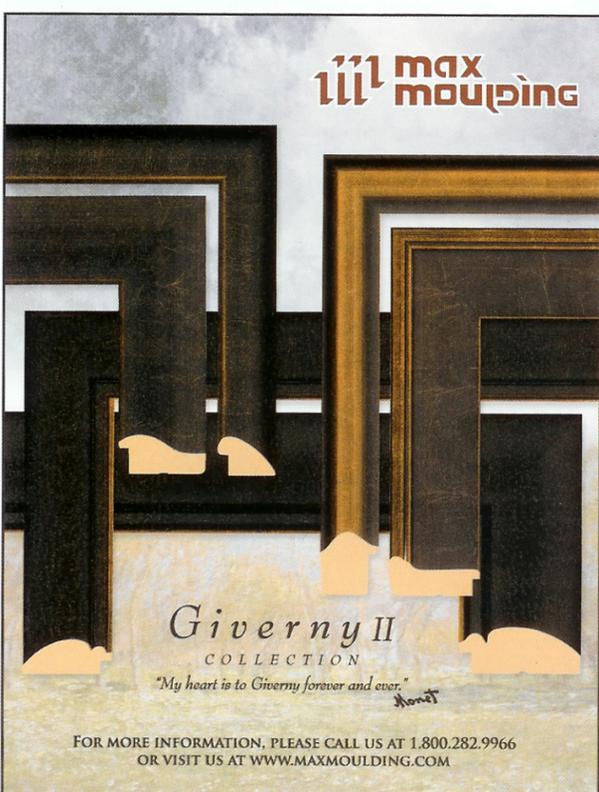
- **The painting mediums** - These might require the use of charcoals, inks, watercolors, pastels, dry pigments, acrylics or oils. When you decide to use a particular paint, you have a choice of how you mix it. I prefer a student to first learn with oils because, when mixed and applied wet, they normally

remain the same tone as when dry.

Also, the overlay of one layer onto another can be manipulated more easily. Many other paint mediums have a different tone after drying than how they looked when mixed wet. So, they require more practice and time to develop the correct final color.

- **The formulations and applications** - These will vary for each paint type. Some variables that can remain common for the paint mediums are how thin, thick, flat, semi-gloss, glossy or textured their formula is adjusted. There are more variances as to the final look

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Sampling of color matching process on a test tile with the aid of books, color wheel and color labels of paint tubes.

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of paint mediums when compared as applied.

For example, not all paint mediums can be applied with the advantages of an airbrush. Application techniques can be limited for some painting mediums due to how thick they are or how fast they dry.

- **The lighting perspectives** - This can be a frustrating challenge. I recommend to my students that they try using different light sources all through the restoration process.

Different times of the day for natural light variances in combination with multiple artificial light types may give the best advantage for a correct color matching when displayed in its final location.

A combination of multiple spectrum artificial lights, such as spectrum, color correcting or even halogen positioned at the restore area from various angles, can sometimes provide enough variances to overcome a challenging final display.



Test tile airbrush samples 1 thru 3 with labeled jars with frame for comparison.

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## Color Matching Techniques...continued

when selecting the paint medium to restore its damaged areas. The choice of

medium can often be limited if the frame must be durable enough to withstand abuse in



Artist paint palette with primary and secondary oil paints to sample mixes for a match to airbrush damaged corner area of frame.

- **The tools to apply color** - These can really make a difference, such as brush types, faux devices and airbrushing. The display of the exact same color combinations can visually change when viewed differently (for example, as faux blended tiny dots, or strained dry brush strokes of two colors overlapped, giving the impression of a third, or a thin airbrushed glaze of one color over the other to change its tone. So, color matching may not always be as simple as just the mix, if the tools used to apply the layers create variances.

- **The surface types** - If the frame surface has a busy, textured, sculpted, pastel or dull appearance, it may be more easily color matched. Those surface types have the advantage of hiding and/or blending color application in a more agreeable fashion. Frame types with a translucent, high gloss, mirrored gold or luster appearance can be much more demanding to correctly match color over the restored areas.

- **The environment** -

How a frame is to be displayed may be taken into consideration

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Final test color #3 selected as correct color match to airbrush over restored damage for the corner of the frame.

a more open air, outdoor space. Therefore, the matching of a durable paint medium may not allow as easy a manipulation for various visual effects.

Naturally, the more exposure and practice you have with mixing colors,

the easier it will become. Do not be afraid to experiment with variations of mediums, formulas and applications. Some quick ways to begin selecting the different colors that may be needed to match a surface are simple considerations, such as the use of a color wheel, designer paint formula strips and comparison with the paint tube color on its label to the object being restored.

This should be enough to aid in selecting at least some of the primary colors readily apparent for the restore. However, the selection of some secondary or accent colors can be a little more tricky and may take a little more time, practice and experience to master. There are many resources available to gain more knowledge and expertise for color matching, such as art instructional books, videos, product reviews and training courses.

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