

HOW TO CLEAN AND LOOK AFTER BRUSHES

The most important thing is to obey the following fundamental rules:

1. Water-soluble colours should be washed out with water.
2. Acrylic colour, as long as it is wet, should be washed out with water; when dried up it can only be dissolved with special cleaning agents.
3. Oil colours should be wiped off thoroughly with a piece of cloth. Afterwards the hair or bristles should be cleaned with a special soap that cleans and maintains the brush head on the basis of vegetable oils through its reconditioning action (our Order No. 4033 and 4433) and warm water until the soap begins to produce white lather. Do not use strongly fat removing soaps or detergents! Especially natural hair tends to break if they are missing their protecting fat contents.
4. To wash out the brush rub the hair body of the brush carefully and remove the remains of pigment that chiefly stick to the edge of the ferrule.
5. Afterwards wipe the brush with a fine piece of cloth and bring it to its original shape. Artists call this procedure „dressing“.
6. Let the brush dry completely before you use it again. Don't put it on the radiator to dry. There the hair will dry too quickly, the handle will shrink, and the brush head will come loose.

Brushes that have not been cleaned properly will lose their interlocking quality after short use, i.e. the hair will stand apart. Moreover, the hair and bristles may break at the edge of the ferrule.

There is a Chinese proverb that runs as follows: „The best memory is nothing compared to a good brush“. We may add: The best brush is nothing if its user forgets to look after it properly.

Most of our *da Vinci* brushes are gummed to make sure they reach their owners in good shape. We use the neutral, natural binder „gum arabic“ for the gumming of the head of the brush. Gum arabic is one of the traditional binders of water colours.

In addition to that the brushes are protected during transport by little plastic tubes that keep off the dust until the brush has found its owner. We have noticed that time and again these tubes are taken off and then put on again in a less than careful manner, with some of the hair being bent in the process. The damage done can be easily repaired. Put the brush in water and rub it carefully out towards the tip. After the drying which, depending on the brush size, may take between one and five hours, the plastic tube can be placed again over a completely intact brush.

If you put on the plastic tube when the brush is still wet, it will develop mould and smell bad. But that isn't a disaster either. Clean the brush thoroughly in mild soapy water, rub it out to its original shape and let it dry completely this time.

Another important thing to remember when using a brush:

Squirrel and red sable are too fine for rough surfaces of raw ceramics and stoneware.

It isn't good for a brush when you use it alternately with water colour and acrylic colour or even oil colour.

