



## DATA SHEET NUMBER 6

# TALCUM POWDER

**FOR: GESSO - UNBELIEVEABLE DECORATIVE FINISHES, WOODGRAIN FILLER AND MORE**

*The following extracted from "A Polishers Handbook" available from U-Beaut Polishers*

Gesso is a mixture of glue and talcum powder or calcium carbonate, and is used as a base for other finishes, notably gold leaf. When dry the gesso is extremely hard and durable. It can be sanded to give a silky smooth finish and burnished to produce a shine.

The uses I will describe to you in the following pages have nothing to do with gilding, but will give you some ideas for finishes that will open up a whole new world of possibilities.

Many of the gesso finishes are particularly well suited to woodturned items and can be used on both spindle and bowl work. They are also suitable for use on most furniture, especially vertical surfaces. Some can be used for table tops etc. but take the time to experiment with them first & know their limitations.

### TEXTURED GESSO

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

A plastic or glass container with lid (water tight) - Talcum Powder (super fine) - PVA glue - Water - Small paint brush approx. 25mm wide, or an artists oil brush about no 14 (buy cheap ones from the market - A piece of timber to work on. (for this exercise it is a good idea to use a small square of 18mm customwood or chipboard) - Shellac and universal tint (colour of your choice) Some 00 steel wool

In your container mix (by volume) 1 part of PVA glue with approx. 4 parts of water. When completely mixed, slowly add and blend in the talc (approx. twice as much talc by volume as there is liquid) keep adding and mixing talc until you have a mixture that resembles a pancake batter. If the mix is too thick add a little water if too thin add more talc.

You have just made your first batch of gesso. This will keep in an airtight container for a long time, at least twelve to eighteen months.

### STIPPLED GESSO EFFECT

1/ Paint your piece of timber with the gesso. Just slop it on to cover the whole surface. Don't worry too much about brush marks these will disappear later on. This first coat keys the gesso to the wood and will be the base for the final coat.

This first coat could take anything up to a couple of hours to dry. I sometimes help the drying process along a little through the application of heat by way of a small hair dryer. This can speed up the drying time considerably to around ten to fifteen minutes.

2/ Once the first coat is dry you can apply the second and final coat. Once again just slop it on but try and get a reasonably even coat. Leave this second coat to dry for a little while, say five minutes. By this time the gesso should

have a slightly tacky feel to it. If you touch it with your finger it should peak like beaten egg-white when your finger is removed.

3/ Now take your brush and with the handle in a vertical position tap the bristles down and then up on the surface of the tacky gesso, continue to do this over the entire surface of the wood until the whole thing is covered with little peaks. This is called a stippled effect. Leave this to dry overnight.

4/ To a small quantity of shellac add some universal tint. e.g.: 4 tablespoons of shellac plus 4 drops of green tint. Mix thoroughly then apply an even coat of the coloured shellac to the surface of the now dried gesso.

Leave this to dry thoroughly. (approx. 15 minutes) You should now have a green coloured, stippled gesso, board.

5/ Next make a tight wad of steel wool about the size of a golf ball and briskly rub the green stippled surface until the white of the gesso start to shine through on the peaks, this white highlight is the effect you are after. Make sure that you keep the steel wool in a tight wad throughout the rubbing process.

You have finished your first gesso effect. I'll wager you haven't seen anything quite like that before, eh!

### SANDABLE GESSO

*Used for grain filling and other exciting decorative finishes.....*

To 1 part pearl hide glue add 2 parts water allow the glue to soak in the water for about 15 minutes to half an hour, until it has expanded and soaked up some of the water, now place the mixture in a double boiler and heat the glue until liquid, stirring occasionally.

Once the glue has become liquid slowly add talc (whilst constantly stirring) and keep adding it until you have a mix resembling batter. If the mixture is too thick add some more water.

An example of quantities for a gesso mix is as follows: ¼ cup pearl glue, ½ cup water, 1 to 1½ cups of talc.

Keep the mixture warm to keep it liquid, as it cools it will start to thicken and get hard. More water can be added to retard the drying process, if required, this could be up to an extra ½ cup for the above mix.

Unfortunately there is no exact science to making gesso. Each job and application can demand a slightly different mixture, just as different users will find they have a preference for their own consistency of mix. I suggest that you experiment with the base mixtures described

herein until you have a mix that suits your particular application.

### (Decorated oak)

Take a piece of white Oak with a beautiful swirling grain, water down some hide glue gesso to make a runny batter, mix in some red universal tint until you get a bright red, then apply the gesso to the oak using a wad of hessian or a piece of old towel. Rub the gesso hard across the grain, pushing it in to the open pores of the timber. When the whole piece is done, put it aside to dry thoroughly.

When completely dry sand the surface back to clean bare timber you should now have a white piece of Oak with a magnificent red grain that almost leaps off the board at you. Make sure that the board is free from dust and apply white shellac or whatever finish you desire.

*Talc packed and distributed by 'u Beaut Polishers*

### A POLISHERS HANDBOOK

*The above information was taken from: "A Polishers Handbook" written by Neil Ellis founder of Central Victorian School of Woodcrafts & 'u Beaut Polishers. This book contains many more recipes and ideas for using gesso as a decorative finish, many of which are unlike anything seen before. The book also contains a wealth of information on other finishes including a comprehensive section on French polishing. Also includes sections on Staining & Dying, Glues, Spraying, Waxes, Oil Finishes, Marbling, Gilding, Recipes and much more.*

### A POLISHERS HANDBOOK

A concise textbook on French Polishing, Furniture Restoration and Finishing Techniques, is available direct from 'u Beaut Polishers and most distributors

*For more information or to find your local distributor. Phone, fax, write to or e-mail*

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*All Australian and proud of it*

Factory & Office: 74 Anomaly Street  
Moolap Vic 3224 Australia  
Phone / Fax: 03 5248 3030  
Web site: www.ubeaut.com.au  
E-mail: info@ubeaut.com.au