



Types of Fixatives

Fixatives are very thin, fast drying solutions of clear acrylic or vinyl resin in a solvent, such as alcohol or mineral spirits. The amount of resin is usually very low compared to the amount in varnishes to avoid disrupting the appearance of fragile dry media like charcoal and pastel. Essentially, there are two main types of fixatives: workable and final.

Workable Fixative

A workable fixative is primarily meant to be used while you are creating your artwork. It is helpful to add layers of workable fixative occasionally to protect against smudging pencil, pastel or charcoal. It can also help provide texture when you've applied so many layers of dry media that the paper won't accept anymore. A workable fixative is light enough to allow you continue adding more dry media on top, and sometimes light enough to erase through.

Final Fixative

A final fixative is meant for use once you've completed your artwork for a final layer of protection. You must still be very careful not to spray too heavily or too close to your art because it can alter the appearance significantly. Heavy applications can dissolve pigments and darken colors. When a workable fixative is used throughout the art creation process, fewer coats of final fixative will be required.

Some final fixatives are available in your choice of gloss or matte finish. Because some dry media, like soft pastels and charcoal, are very absorbent, it's important to avoid using a matte finish on those particular media. Matte fixatives contain additives that can reduce the clarity of the finish and can make absorbent dry media look dull or hazy. Using a gloss spray lightly will actually appear matte over these absorbent materials, while it will appear gloss over other art materials.

Some fixatives, like Krylon® Fine Art Fixatif can be used as both a workable fixative, and a final fixative, by adding additional layers when your artwork is completed.

Not all fixatives are created equally and care should be used in selecting the right fixative to protect your artwork. Most fixatives dissolve the whites and light colors of chalks and pastels to some degree. Additionally, pump sprays easily spatter and will not provide the fine, even mist of aerosol fixatives. Never use hairspray – it will yellow your artwork over time. Most hairsprays also contain hair conditioners, which are oils that could leave grease spots on your art. A high quality UV protective artist fixative is your best choice for a final fixative, and you should always test the product to be sure it performs to your expectations. Krylon® Fine Art Fixatif contains an exclusive blend of powerful UV light absorbers (UVA) and stabilizers (HALS) to protect your dry media, invisibly safeguards the look of your original art without dissolving whites and lights, and can be used as both a workable and final fixative.

For more information on Krylon® artist products, visit krylon.com/galleryseries.