



V.A. CLAESSENS NV/SA
ARTISTS' CANVAS



www.claessens-v.a.be

Disclaimer

Claessens declines any responsibility for problems caused by the improper use of its canvases, such as unsuitable paints or aggressive techniques. The canvases may look and feel slightly different from one another given the natural products used to make them and the traditional production techniques. No claims will be accepted for such differences.

Quality Guarantee

Congratulations on your purchase of an authentic Claessens canvas. Claessens has over a century of craftsmanship behind its name and is considered a leader in its field. The production of a Claessens canvas is still inspired today by the proven techniques and methods from the times of the great Flemish and Dutch Masters. Craftsmanship and attention to detail are key elements. Experts and internationally renowned artists alike appreciate the qualities of a Claessens canvas. We guarantee an archival support of exceptional quality which will enhance your creative process.

A 'Living' Product of Nature

A Claessens canvas is made exclusively from natural materials like linen, cotton and jute. These materials are grown, sorted and processed with the greatest care. These are truly natural products, with small differences in their color, composition and feel, and this can occasionally lead to minute differences in the end result. However, this is to be expected from a canvas made according to traditional methods. In fact, from an artistic and creative point of view, such small differences are considered to be more of a pro than a con.

Handling and Care

■ preparation

Each Claessens canvas is fully prepared in the factory and is ready for immediate use. Preparations include careful use of various layers of glue, primers and of a final coating.

■ storage

If you are not going to use the canvas right away, keep it in a cool and dry environment. That way you can preserve the canvas until you are ready to use it. It is best to keep oil-prepared canvases stretched on the frame.

■ stretching

We recommend that you stretch the canvas in a dry place, so with little ambient humidity. This guarantees that when the canvas is exposed to the humidity in the air at a later point, it will retain its original stretch.

■ painting

Claessens makes special canvases for different types of paint and painting techniques. Keep this in mind and choose the right canvas for your work. The greatest care has been taken with the preparations and inspections of the fabric. We NEVER use toxic lead paint! Each canvas comes with a double layer of glue to make it smoother and sturdier and to help resist the acids in oil paints.

Oil-prepared canvas:

This type of canvas is prepared with two layers of paint on a base of linseed oil. This type of canvas is only for oil painting.

Chalk-prepared canvas:

This canvas has two primer layers of powdered chalk, bonded with skin glue. It is specially designed for TEMPERA.

Universal canvas:

This canvas comes with two layers of titanium white primer and an acrylic binder. It can be used for ALL TYPES OF PAINT, including ACRYLICS.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I prevent creases in the canvas?

Creases are bad for any canvas. Work carefully when stretching the canvas and keep any unused canvases rolled up. Slight creases will disappear during the stretching process, but heavier creases are almost impossible to eliminate!

What if the canvas gets loose?

When you stretch the canvas out in a humid environment, you run the risk of it slacking when placed in dry environment. Therefore, always stretch your canvas in an area with as little humidity as possible. Temporarily stretching the canvas and letting it dry thoroughly before affixing it permanently is another solution. The natural fiber is at the longest when it is dry and it shrinks when the humidity rises. Given the natural properties of its fibers, the canvas reacts to both climatic conditions and the paint which is applied.

Can I still use older canvases?

Oil-prepared canvases tend to dry and become hard over time. Yet this does not make them totally unusable. You can paint on older canvases, but often it is harder to stretch them. You can slow down the ageing process by rolling up the canvas for storage and keeping it upright against a wall. Never store it flat on the ground or on a table.

How exactly are oil-prepared canvases made?

Claessens takes the greatest care in producing its oil-prepared canvases. Synthetic glue, which is less sensitive to humidity, is used rather than hide glue. We have not used white lead for many years, in accordance with Belgian and European legislation. The coating itself consists of an oil paint, linseed oil as a binder and chalk, zinc white or titanium white as grounds and pigments.

What about cracks around the edges?

Older oil-prepared canvases may get cracks along the edges of the canvas stretcher. These are entirely superficial and are related to the ageing process, so there is no need to worry. This will have no effect on the painting. At worst, this area will have increased absorbency, but the double layer of glue should protect the fibers adequately.

Can I stretch a slack canvas using water?

Avoid doing this at all costs: it is bad for the painting. When a canvas gets slack, you can easily fix it by adjusting the wedges in the corners. If this does not work, you can always consider removing the canvas and stretching it again following the rules of the art. Do not use water because water will only temporarily tighten the canvas, it will slacken again once it is dry.

What is the best way of storing a stretched canvas?

Lean the stretched canvas in an upright position against a wall. Do not lean smaller canvases against larger ones as this can lead to denting. It is best to

store the canvases according to size, back to back and front to front.

How can I get rid of the yellow discoloration?

The front of oil-prepared canvases can occasionally have yellow discoloration. This is caused by the linseed oil when there is not enough daylight around. This can also happen when one canvas is placed in front of another for a long period of time. This discoloration is a natural phenomenon and will rapidly disappear when the canvas is once again exposed to daylight or sunlight.

Is there a way of preventing slight dimples?

Slight dimples in the canvas can be caused by small differences in tension in the fabric during manufacturing. The only way to get rid of such dimples is to stretch the canvas harder. Sometimes you can see such dimples on the sides of the canvas rolls. You can solve this problem by cutting these sides.

What if the canvas is too smooth?

If the canvas is too smooth for your taste, you can roughen it up using a pumice stone or very fine sandpaper. Try to work as evenly as possible across the entire surface area of the canvas.

How hard can I stretch my canvas?

Always stretch the canvas as evenly as possible. How hard you stretch it is a question of personal preference. Some painters prefer a very taut canvas while others do not. The following is one of the methods you can use:

- centre the canvas carefully on the frame
- affix it temporarily, for example by the corners
- start in the middle of one side and work toward the edges
- use a nail or a staple every 4 - 8 cm
- now work on the opposite side and stretch the canvas using a canvas plier.
- use the same method for the third and fourth sides
- while stretching; check the front or finished canvas continually to ensure the stretch is correct otherwise make adjustments as needed.
- do the corners last

Sometimes there are visible parallel lines over the width of the oil-primed canvas. What causes this?

The final layer of paint is rolled out using large paint rollers. The rolls are made by stretching a velvet fabric around a wooden core. The edges of the velvet meet up at a certain point on the length of the roller, thereby creating a seam. This seam can sometimes leave an imprint in the paint and this imprint can sometimes be repeated over the width of the canvas. This is not a defect, just an optical effect in the top layer. There is certainly no crease or irregularity in the canvas or the paint.