

87060 BEVA® Gesso-P

Description and Instruction for Use

BEVA® Gesso, or putty, combines a compressible, chemically inert mineral powder, a pH buffer, oxidation inhibitors, UV stabilizers, and BEVA® resins. BEVA® Gesso-p contains a fine grained mineral filler.

BEVA® Gesso has the following properties:

1. It is a highly elastic material capable of following the movements of the original material as are caused by fluctuations in the environment or by vibrations during transport.
2. It is stable and expected to maintain its qualities for about 100 years (a Grade A Material, according to Dr. Feller)
3. It adheres firmly to most substrates, such as cardboard, canvas, wood, mosaics, plastics, metals, and paint without danger of interacting with them¹.
4. It has a wide range of flexibility. This flexibility can be increased, if required, by adding a small quantity of BEVA® 371.
5. It can be shaped or textured while wet, or when dry – with heat (65-75°C) and pressure. In other words, it can be made to reproduce the optical effects of a surface matching that of the original (see also # 8).
6. Untinted BEVA® Gesso-p dries white. The gesso can be tinted by adding dry artists' pigments, or Maimeri. It can also be stained with dyes, especially oil and alcohol dyes (takes also water colors and dyes, but to a lesser degree).
7. It is compatible with every retouch (paint) medium, such as watercolor, acrylic emulsions, B-72, varnish, varnish-based paints, French polish and Chinese tung oil.
8. It can be made to reproduce the optical effects of the surface being reconstructed, from the roughness of sand paper and stone to the silky sheen of textiles and the brilliance of high polish.
9. It has been buffered to maintain a non-acidic pH.
10. It can be used straight from the can and does not require any prior warming.
11. Once dried on the art work, BEVA® Gesso keeps its dimensions almost unchanged. Since BEVA® Gesso is non-absorbent when dry, retouches can be applied directly on the levelled fillings. Drying time is shorter than required by glue or oil putty.
12. Unlike other organic materials, BEVA® Gesso does not decay if kept in a closed jar or can, and it is always ready for use. If it hardens, whether in storage or on the object, BEVA® Gesso can be regenerated with toluene, xylene or low-aromatic petroleum solvents.

¹ We are indebted to Professor Isaac Domingo Tellechea of San Paolo, Brazil, who pioneered the use of the filler mixed with BEVA® 371. We also have introduced further improvements before offering it to the American public. – CPC.

The Filler

The fillers used are crystalline materials of high porosity and, therefore, of greatly increased volume and low density. BEVA® Gesso-p with fine and medium grained fillers can be made to match the texture of the object. The filler is insoluble in water (its water absorption is less than 1%). It is also insoluble in organic solvents. For wood and frame repairs, BEVA® Gesso can be transformed into a clay-like mass by adding plaster of Paris and kneading by hand.

Reversibility

Like all BEVA® products, BEVA® Gesso is reversible with heat or low-aromatic hydrocarbon solvents. This makes it easier and safer to remove than any other filler.

Instructions for use

1. Clean the surface to be filled of any old gesso, dirt and dust thoroughly.
2. Apply BEVA® Gesso with a spatula or paint knife. Don't be afraid of covering too much. The surplus gesso can be removed later without any difficulty.
3. After the surface has dried, apply a thin coat of low-aromatic petroleum solvents to soften the surface for easier removal of surplus gesso. The surplus gesso can be removed with a blunt scalpel, or paint knife small enough to follow or match the desired texture or levelling.
4. When large areas of a painting are missing and the texture needs to be reproduced, a fitting piece of a monofilament screen can be pressed into the gesso using heat. Alternately, a silicone mould of the original texture of an area adjacent to the damaged one can be prepared and pressed in using heat.
5. The surface can also be lightly washed with a soft brush to show the grain of the filler.
6. After drying, inpainting can be done directly on the gesso, without disturbing or covering its texture.

Laboratory Tests

The application of BEVA® Gesso to canvas paintings is advantageous both from physical and chemical points of view. This has been confirmed by tests performed in the laboratory of Prof. Tellechea and the condition of the first objects treated with it in 1993. The Weather-Ometer-Atlas Test was used to test the materials under controlled environmental conditions by exposing the samples to Xenon Lamp radiation of 5,000 watts in cycles of 60 minutes duration and six hours humidification (Rock spray). The number of cycles corresponded to more than 15 years and no sign of degradation was found even by X-ray inspection.

Five monumental canvases by Jose Maria Bert (8.9 x 5.5 meters each) in the Brazilian Embassy in Argentina were heavily damaged during the bombing of the nearby Israeli Embassy. It was important to use a gesso which would enable the conservators to roll up the huge paintings during their attachment to the ceiling without producing strain or detachment. Tellechea believes that the use of BEVA® Gesso has facilitated the retouching and reduced his work by about approximately 70%.

(Original text by CPC)