Half-chalk ground for egg tempera

by Eunkyung Lee

When I was looking for a certain type of ground which is absorbent and suitable for the large size of egg tempera paintings (roughly 150x180cm), half-chalk ground was a perfect solution.

The ground itself lacks resilience, so it needs rigid support such as plywood. when it comes to stretching canvas, linen is strongly recommended because it is less sensitive to humidity comparing to cotton fabric.



Making glue size

1:15 and 1:30 glue size are needed. (ex. 1:15= 10g rabbit skin glue: 150ml water) Normally it takes 6-7 hours to soak rabbit skin glue, so it is convenient to do this overnight. When it is swollen enough, you can put it in the double boiler. It doesn't need hight temperature, so you would better keep it under 80°C until it becomes murky.



Sizing canvas

It needs two coats of 1:30 glue size for filling the holes in the fabric. In the first layer, you push the glue size ahead of the bush(hog hair) by angling at 45-90 degrees so that the glue size is settled on the surface well. After drying, you gently put the second layer either vertically or horizontally.



Making half-chalk ground

1 part	titanium white pigment
3 parts	chalk
1 part	linseed oil
3 parts	glue size (1:15)
and 1:30)glue size



Titanium white pigment and chalk are mixed on the glass slab with a palette knife. And you make a form of well with the mixture and fill the centre with linseed oil and glue size. You fold the mixture from the centre to the edge gradually using the palette knife until it becomes a firm and glossy paste like cream cheese. You can adjust texture with the white mixture and glue size.

You put the lump of paste into the double boiler and diluted it with 1:30 glue size to make brushable consistency.

The leftover can be stored in the fridge for two weeks.



Applying the ground

In the first layer, you push the ground ahead of the bush(hog hair) by angling at 45-90 degrees so that the glue size is settled on the surface well. After drying, you gently put the second layer horizontally. Third coat is applied vertically in order to get a sturdy structure.



* You can see the process in the link below. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FZBIZ6WpdM

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