

# LEARNING TRADE SECRETS WORKSHOPS

## Varnish Retouching

September 20-25, 2020

Suggested Enrollment Cap: 12

### Course Information

**Course Description:** Retouching varnish is perhaps the most difficult aspect of a successful repair. In this class, tools, materials and techniques will be explored with a heavy emphasis on demonstration and analysis. Instruction will be generated in part by the projects on hand. Professionals in the field will find this a valuable opportunity to develop and refine their skills.

**Course Objective:** This course is designed to provide a solid baseline from which to address most varnish retouching scenarios. Participants will arrive with their own projects in need of varnish retouching. All wood-working and structural repairs will have already been completed. Each project will proceed from initial varnish analysis, cleaning, color and varnish application to finishing off with final surface treatment and patina.

**Course Topics:** Topics will encompass the most common retouch challenges that one will encounter in a professional repair shop, including crack repair, retouching new wood, refinishing necks, injury to the varnish and excessive wear.

### Resource and Supplementary Materials

Basic retouch materials such as varnishes and color pigments will be provided so that participants may try techniques exactly as demonstrated by the instructor. However, participants will be expected to bring some of their own materials and especially their own brushes. In addition, a small library of relevant publications will be available for perusal and discussion.

### Materials List

- 2-3 projects that need varnish retouching
- Projects should be carefully cleaned and with structural aspects of restoration complete, such as gluing of cracks filled level and any new wood shaping finished
- Brushes can be purchased online at [dickblick.com](http://dickblick.com)
  - DaVinci Maestro Kolinsky “Miniaturist” Series 1505 Retouch Size 5 (Item #06759-1005)
    - A very fine Kolinsky sable brush with a somewhat shorter hair length
  - Cotman (Winsor Newton) Series 668 Filbert 10mm (Item #06716-5038)
  - Cotman (Winsor Newton) Series 668 Filbert 13mm (Item #06716-5012)
    - The Cotman are synthetic sable

## Materials List Continued

- If possible, bring these as well
  - Winsor Newton Series 7 Miniatures #4 (Item #05002-1004)  
Hairs are longer than the DaVinci 1505
  - Winsor Newton Series Sceptre Gold II Series 606 13mm flat  
(Item #05843-1004) This is a synthetic sable
- In addition to brushes, please bring:
  - Small sharp scrapers of various shapes
  - Palette knife
  - Fine sandpaper, micromesh
  - Micro fiber polishing cloth
  - Small set of watercolors
  - Boxwood burnishing stick (art store ceramic supply)
  - Rug or mat for your work area (yoga mat works well)
- Instructor will provide less frequently used materials for experimentation, such as alcohol based varnishes, dry and liquid pigments, coloring agents and stains, filler materials, abrasive compounds and oils, cleaning agents, solvents, small containers and palette tiles. Please direct any specific questions to your instructor.

## Instructor Information

Stacey will provide contact information to participants at the workshop. While she is happy to discuss the appropriateness of projects, or answer questions about the course content, general questions about enrollment and the logistics of your stay in Ashland should be directed to Learning Trade Secrets staff.

## Course Contents

The contents of this course include the following topics:

- ◆ Using UV light as a means to understand and approach the restoration of damaged varnish.
- ◆ Cleaning and removal of old retouch.
- ◆ Filling cracks and voids.
- ◆ Coloring new wood repairs to match old wood.
- ◆ Mixing varnishes, including the introduction of matting agents.
- ◆ Understanding the layering of materials, recognizing qualities and features that can be used to facilitate successful retouching.
- ◆ Applying retouch with use of a microscope.
- ◆ Color and quality, “eye psychology” and how to minimize the effects of injury while maximizing on the grace of natural wear patterns.
- ◆ Blending old and new, adding patina.

## Participation & Instructions

**Participation:** With varying degrees of background experience in the class, please try to keep questions and communication during class time directly with your instructor. If you *do have* something important that you would like to share with the class, try to arrange a time with your instructor so all students can benefit from the information at the same time.

**Punctuality:** Please be respectful of all students attending, and arrive no later than the expected class start time set by your instructor. If an emergency arises or another start time needs to be arranged, please be sure to communicate that directly with your instructor.

**Digital Data Policy:** Cell phone pictures will be allowed. They are for your own use and reference. Please no posting on social media platforms. Any pictures to be used to help promote a future *Retouching Varnish* class will need to be pre-approved and shared with Learning Trade Secrets LLC. Out of respect to your fellow students who have spent large sums of money to attend this class, **no video will be allowed during class time.**

## Course Ground Rules

**Syllabus Changes:** While every attempt has been made to prepare this syllabus in final form, it will be at the instructor's discretion to make any changes as he/she may deem necessary in order to meet the learning outcomes of the course.

**General Policies:** The instructor expects attention to detail and meeting course expectations, including participation in discussions and addressing technical problems immediately.

**Phones:** Please be courteous of your bench partners by silencing your cell phone during work hours and taking calls outside the workshop. Minimum texting will be allowed if it does not interfere with lecture time or others around you.

**Tools:** Do not borrow tools without permission.

**Safety Concerns:** A First Aid and Eye Wash Station are available should injury occur. Should an injury occur, please see your instructor immediately and then dial 9-1-1. Any injury requires a completed *Injury Form* located on the clip board next to the eye wash station. Your safety and well-being are our number one priority.