

Do It Yourself Making a Painting Panel



I have tried painting on many different surfaces including, paper, wood, canvas, linen, and solid aluminum. For small work, I am currently using a very stable surface - an aluminum composite material (ACM). It is made of two pre-painted sheets of thin aluminum with a solid polyethylene core. It is often referred to by one of the brand names such as *Dibond*. The surface can be prepared in a variety of ways including gluing on linen. After much research, I have simplified the surface using just Gesso on the aluminum and painting directly on this. This document outlines the procedures to make these very stable & affordable paint panels. They also happen to have a perfect "tooth" to grab the paint and they allow the artist to customize the surface texture to meet their taste/needs. Most importantly, this panel provides an archival quality surface that will last.

Pros:

- inexpensive
- archival - will last forever
- easy to make
- great surface to work on

Cons:

- the paint tends to sink in a bit. I personally like this, but if you do not you can elevate this with a thin coating of shellac.
- the panels can be damaged/bent if they are dropped (be careful)
- bending under stress/heat (be careful)
- scratching/damage (be careful)
- a little heavy in weight, but not bad

Time to make: about 1 hour

Materials 4'x8' Dibond - roughly \$80.00 - check with your local sign making shop

Quality Acrylic Ground/Gesso - About \$30.00

Additional materials you likely have access to steel ruler, marker, utility knife, paint brushes, rubbing alcohol, wet sand paper, sponge

Cost: Material Total: about \$110.00 divided by 60 panels

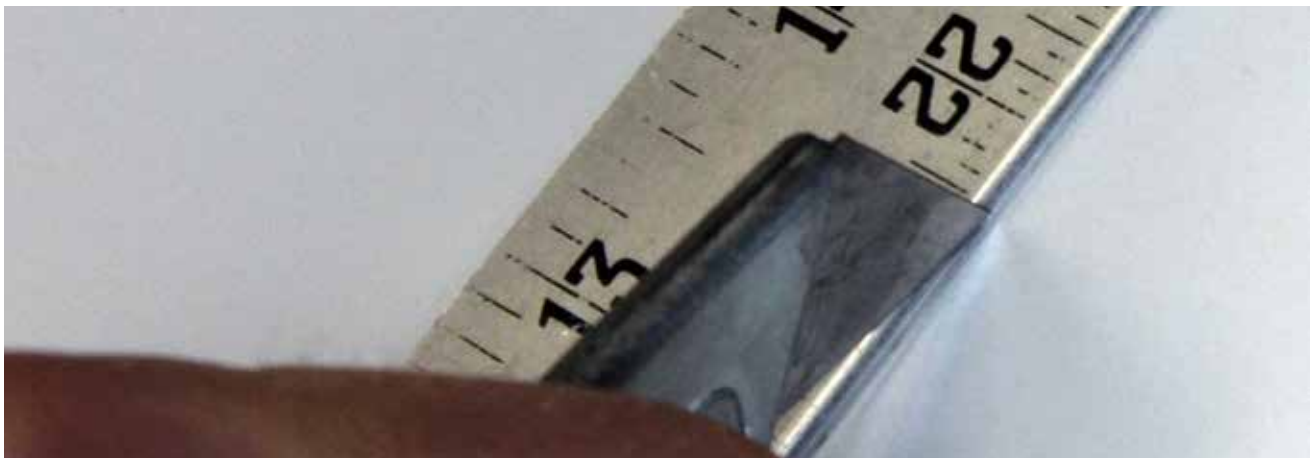
(based on all 9"x12" cut out of the 4'x8' large panel) = **\$1.83** per panel

Cut the Panel to Size

Remove the plastic covering and mark the size you wish to make on the panel



Score the panel using a steel ruler and a utility knife with several passes
(CAUTION - knives are very dangerous - be very careful using this knife - follow manufacturer's suggestions for safe use, or have a professional complete this task).



Place the panel on the edge of a stable desk and apply pressure to snap - similar to breaking drywall). Again - be careful as the edges are dangerously sharp. Bend the panel back and forth several times until the metal stresses and breaks.



Prepare the Panel Surface

Sand the surface with medium grit sandpaper



Wipe the surface with rubbing alcohol to remove any grease



Apply Gesso

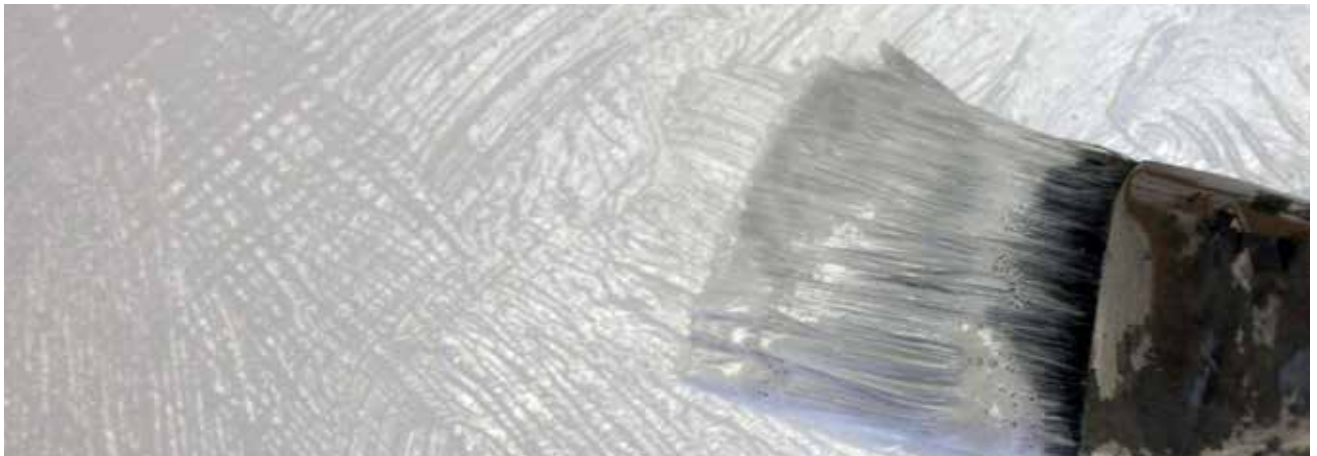
For the first of three coats - apply in one direction and allow to dry.



For the second of three coats - apply in the opposite direction of the first coat and allow to dry. This will simulate linen weave.



For the third and final coat - apply in a broken/multi-direction and allow to dry.



Wet-Sand Surface

Using a wet sponge and fine wet sandpaper, wet-sand in circular motions until a "slurry" forms. Continue to sand until the desired surface texture appears. Do not sand too much as you don't want to expose the original aluminum below. The result should be a very nice texture painterly texture/surface to work on.



Wipe off the slurry with a damp sponge. Allow the panel to dry and you are ready to paint. If you want the surface to be less absorbent - apply a thin coat of shellac.

