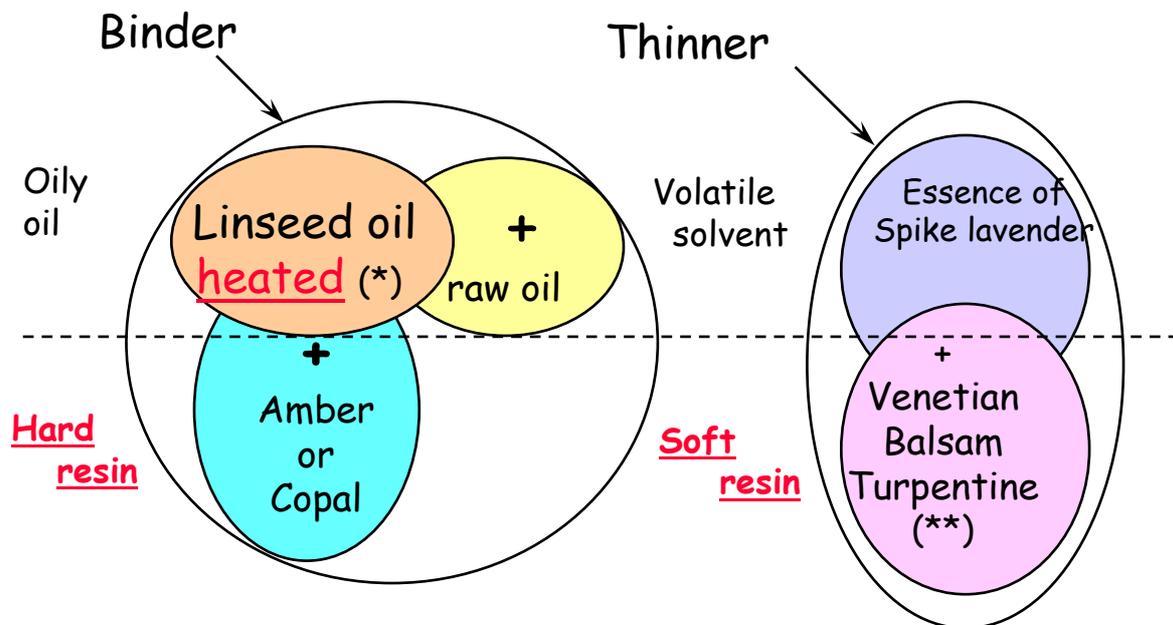


History of oil painting

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It was not until the early 15th century around 1410 that 2 Flemish painters, the VAN EYCK brothers, became more closely interested in the fragility of tempera painting. Through trial and error, different raw and heated oils were tested in combination with resin then pigments to give birth to the coloured varnishes that would gradually become oil paints

1. Van Eyck's recipe



(*) = Stand oil

(**) Resin from larch trees:
 fine strokes, superposition, enamel, plastifying action

Xavier de Langlais (*) describes this famous VAN EYCK recipe.

An extremely oily binder with a high resin content:

The binder contained 2 types of oils: heated oil and raw oil, to which were added a hard resin of amber or copal. It is assumed that this was more likely to be copal because research laboratories do not know how to dissolve amber even today!

A non-volatile thinner rich in soft resin:

Essence of spike lavender combined with the resin from larch trees gave a non-volatile thinner to allow the painting an even longer drying time.

This 'recipe' gives the paint its characteristics:

Rich in oil: Dries out slowly.

Rich in resin: Hardens at the surface (resin = glue), glossy, transparent paint layers, glaze technique.

(*) TECHNIQUE OF OIL PAINTING – Flammarion 1959 – Xavier De Langlais



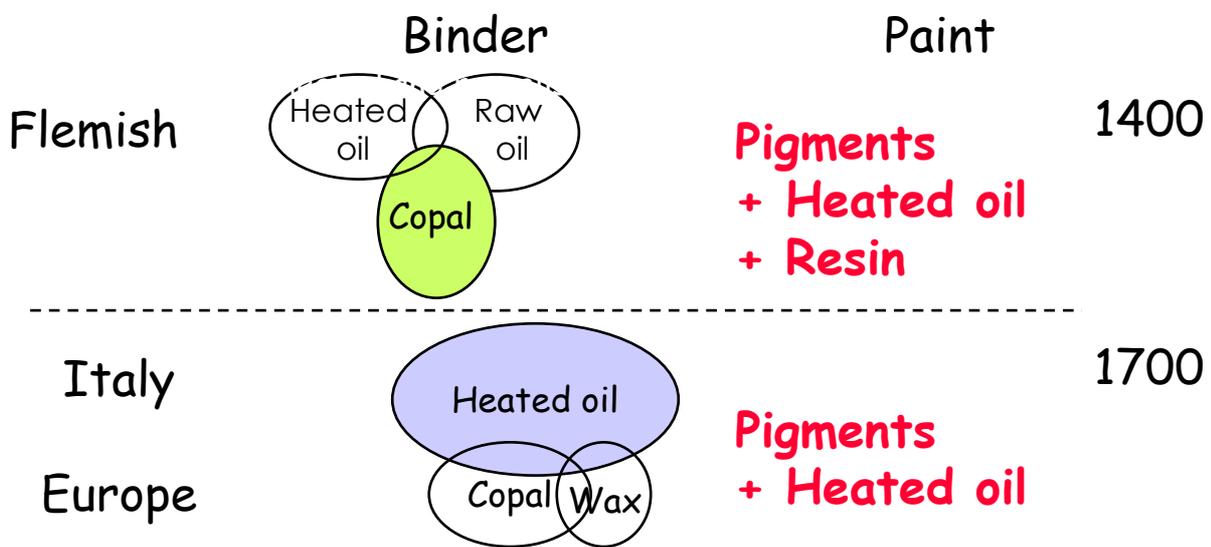
The Arnolfini's Marriage
Oil on oak (1434)
Jan VAN EYCK
London National Gallery

The slow setting of oil paint allowed the artist to add details and model the paste; aspects that no other technique equalled at the time. The resin in the paint made each layer indelible with respect to the others and gave transparent superpositions that created an entirely new depth and realism. This technique known as glazing gradually spread throughout Europe.



Detail of the mirror over which you can read:
Johannes Van Eyck was present.

2. Developments after Van Eyck

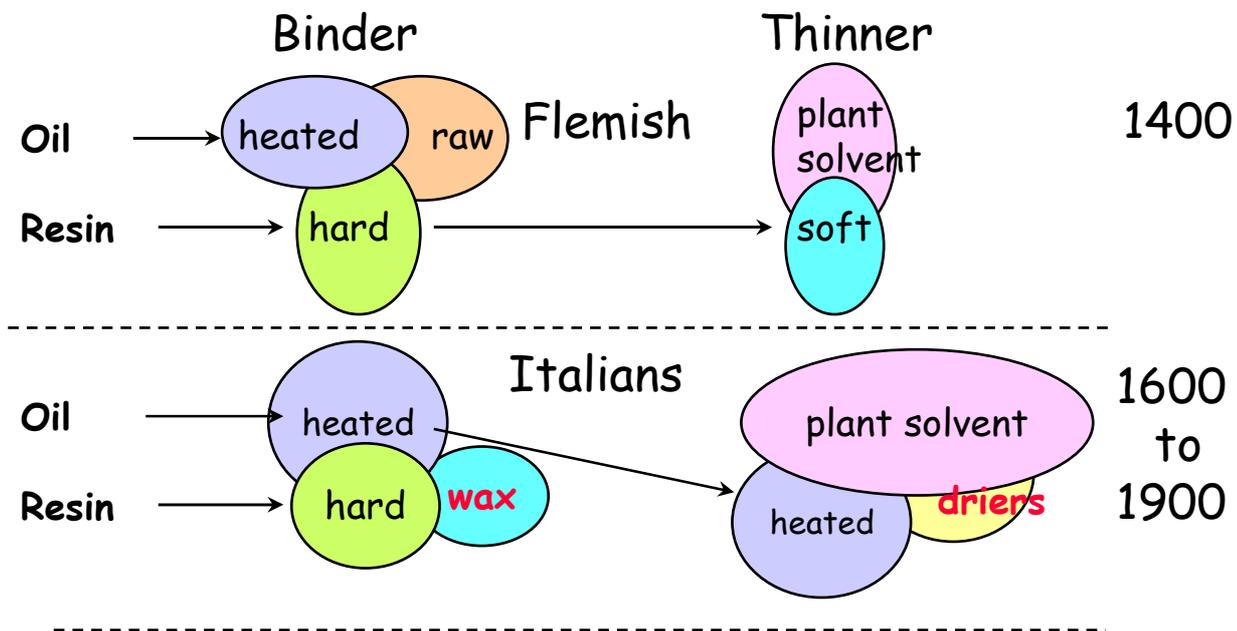


The first oil paints were rich in oil and gave a highly glossy, transparent finish enabling effects specific to the style of the Flemish painters to be used.

The influence of Italian Renaissance grand masters such as Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Tintoretto, Caravaggio or Veronese, would change the original formula, adapting it to the new styles. The artists of the Venetian school painted used thicker, more opaque and matt layers. Hence the amount of resin gradually disappeared while the amount heated oil increased, wax was added to make the paste heavier and give it a completely different feel.



3. From the Impressionists to our day and age



From the 17th century onwards, concerned about production, artists attempted to speed up the drying of their paintings. The proportion of additives in the oil formula was too high with driers in the thinner and waxes in the paint binder.

Unfortunately, many misused these components thus rendering the paint very fragile and breakable as it dried too quickly, or too oily, yellowing and sensitive to dust and impurities.

History shows us that oil painting refuses all forms of misuse.

Since the time of the Impressionists, oil paint only contains raw oil, linseed or poppy oil, ground with the pigment. It is through painting mediums that the artist can now recreate the formulas of the grand masters and rediscover the styles of the famous Flemish or Venetian schools of painting.