Preparation, Painting and Decorating of Fiberglass Ichabod

If you are an artist or designer painting or decorating a fiberglass Ichabod, the following general guidelines will help you have a stress-free and successful experience.

Your Ichabod is made of fiberglass, a plastic, unsaturated polyester resin, catalyzed with MEK Peroxide and laminated with glass fiber inside mold cavities to give you the solid form in front of you. In some cases parts are cast as solid resin with specialty fillers for strength or parts can be made of epoxy or urethane resins and high density foams.

The Ichabod has been burnished with various grade sanding media and prepared for the primer coat of paint. **The piece you will receive has been prepared and primed with Sherwin Williams Opex Primer Surfacer P61 W1.** It is universal in that a great variety of top coatings can be applied to its surface. For the purposes of the artistic applications you are involved with, we recommend high quality EXTERIOR acrylic and acrylic latex paints for the application. There are a great number of brands available. As an art professional you may wish to use your favorite. As with all paint products it is vital to read all application instructions and do test areas for the system prior to full application. It is advisable to sand the primer coat lightly with a 400 grit paper before painting to help the bonding and will smooth and clean the surface prior to the next paint application.

What is ultimately critical beyond the application of the artwork is the EXTERIOR grade clear coat sealer that will protect the art from the elements. The clear coat must be compatible with the color coat application. Your paint supplier will have recommendations for the clear coat based on the system you choose to use for your color coat. Read and follow all application instructions and maintenance requirements for a long lasting presentation. Always do a test area to gauge results.

The fabricator recommends using DTM acrylic industrial paints, artist’s acrylics such as Golden Acrylic Paints, and Liquitex Acrylic paints. High quality EXTERIOR acrylic latex paints will perform well also.

Exterior clear coat possibilities over the water based acrylics that we use here at CFW:

- Old Masters Gloss or Satin exterior spar urethane
- PPG product Break-Through which is a water born acrylic finish
  [http://www.flints.co.uk/pdffiles/breakthrough_gloss_pds.pdf](http://www.flints.co.uk/pdffiles/breakthrough_gloss_pds.pdf)
Varathane brand spar urethane water based exterior clear satin or gloss is available at Menards and has been the best price value. It is a RustOleum product.

EXTERIOR grade enamels paint systems are also perfectly acceptable and durable. Follow manufacturer’s usage instructions.

Many Public Art exhibits will contract a local auto body painting business to clear coat all the finished artwork with an automotive grade clear coat. This will generally be a commercial urethane product. Consult your auto body paint professional for more information.

In the event you wish to add physical items like glass tile it is recommended that the area for the adhesive to bond to be sanded thoroughly down to the fiberglass gel coat. Solvent based adhesives may break down the primer coat and cause adhesion problems so the advice is to bond with adhesives directly to the fiberglass surface with the primer removed.

Items can be screwed into the fiberglass also but should be utilized with a glue or adhesive or sealant applied to the hole prior to setting the screw. Pilot holes need to be drilled slightly smaller than the screw to be used. Drill slowly and allow the drill bit to do the work or you risk shattering the fiberglass in the area of the hole. When driving the screw only use as much pressure as is needed to make the screw snug. Holes and screws should be sealed with epoxy or paintable putty/caulk as you go to insure no moisture can get through.

Other Considerations:

**Design:** Your finished Ichabod must be the same design that is approved by the committee. Any changes to the design must be pre-approved.

**Materials Log:** Please keep a record, for future owners, of all materials used including brands, colors and return the log with your completed Ichabod.

**Exhibit:** Please remember the Ichabod will be outside and will be exposed to variable Kansas weather conditions. Warning: do not use hot glue or, in summer heat, it will melt again. Also, do not modify the Ichabod in such a way that it will trap water or debris.

**Safety:** In addition to being outside, the Ichabod will be in public spaces which means there will be a great deal of contact with the finished piece including touching and climbing. Please be sure that all materials are safely and securely attached to the Ichabod.