

Embellishing Laminated Allure Aqueous Metal Prints



Carnie Littlefield shares his experience on embellishing Quartz laminated aqueous metal prints with acrylic, oil, and oil-based sharpies.

If you remember [the recent discussion](#) on embellishing our Award-winning [Aqueous Allure metal](#), today we're going to discuss the different ways to embellish the Allure with a laminate.

In the previous article, we showed you that you can create two or more unique artistic originals starting from the same digital giclee print. This article covers the actual embellishments and best methods and materials to do so.

For this demo, I've tested oil-based paints, acrylic paints, acrylics with water, and finally oil-based Sharpies.

While there are a variety of different mediums that exist and that may work with Allure, I've only tested the most common types: acrylic and oils.

HERE'S WHAT WE TESTED



This image was printed using our Epson 9900 with OEM manufacturer inks onto our signature Aqueous Allure metal 13"x19" metal panels. No special inks or prep methods were required.

Once they were left to briefly outgas, the metal prints were then laminated on the Drytac JetMounter JM26 Laminator with our Quartz laminate product in both matte and gloss.

And finally, they were cut using a [Baileigh Industrial](#) sheet metal shear for this demo.

Based on my results, I've broken down this article in three different sections: The "good", "better", and "best" solutions for embellishing a laminated print.

I think you'll be surprised at the results!

FIRST, THE "GOOD" – OIL-BASED PAINTS

Oils aren't my preferred medium, but my first observations of oils on the matte Quartz laminate is that they work wonderfully and paint on the surface of the matte laminate just like you'd expect oils to do.

No oil-slicking or stains appear around the oil-based paints. The Quartz Matte has plenty of tooth to grab the pigmented oils and they don't cause the laminate to break down or peel up.



One significant benefit of the Quartz laminate is that the paints stay true to color during the painting process.

As you can see in the GIF above, the slight embellishments I've done blend well and don't interrupt the flow of the print.

The first and only real concern I have with oil-based paints is the **drying times**. Oil-based paints can take a week up to six months to dry, depending on the amount of oils used.

This can be a challenge if you're planning to hand the embellished print off to someone else, or to sell it at a show.



This oil-based test was done yesterday and yet the oils are still wet to the touch. As you can see from the close up detail shot, the oils sit on the surface of the laminate and don't absorb.

This can add a much longer dry time to your oil-based embellishment. This is the only reason I'd say this solution was "good" and not "great".

SECOND, THE "BETTER" – ACRYLIC-BASED PAINTS

Acrylics should be everyone's favorite medium. I love them and I'm so glad to report how well they work on our Quartz laminates.

For this test, I painted on Quartz Gloss and Quartz Matte to test tooth, color-fastness, and compatibility.

My first observations of acrylics **without water** is that they work well and blend well, just as you'd expect acrylics to behave.

Like the oil-based paints, Quartz Matte has plenty of tooth for the acrylics to grab onto, the colors stay true, and dry as bright and clear as when I painted them.



Quartz Gloss on the left and Quartz Matte on the right

The acrylics stay color-fast, dry quickly, and blend well on the Quartz Matte laminate, but the only real concern I have is with **acrylics and water**.

Unfortunately, any excess moisture in the acrylics will cause them to bead up or pool, so don't plan on using a heavy-water style paint technique.



To best show you the pooling, I saturated the bright blue in this shot with a lot of water, and you can see how it beaded and pulled away from the laminate.

Not ideal for close details or small embellishments.

Besides not using water, acrylics are a much nicer and easier method of embellishment than oil-based paints.

Considering the fast dry times and blendability of colors, acrylics should be considered for all Allure Metal artistic embellishments!

→ [Click here to shop Allure and start creating metal embellishments today!](#)

AND LASTLY, THE “BEST” SOLUTION – SHARPIE OIL-BASED PAINT PENS

Now you’re probably saying “Carnie, you just told us that acrylics are the best ever, and now you’re saying oil-based Sharpies are better?” And as funny as it sounds, my answer is yes!

The most important benefit of oil-based Sharpies is that they can be used with either matte or gloss Quartz laminate.

If your clients like a glossy print, laminate it with Quartz Gloss and add your artistic touches and you're done!



The oil-based paint pens are highly resistance to wear, tear, scuffing, color fading, and scratches. An added bonus is the ability to work directly on the print, no laminate required.

You can embellish directly on your print, without any smearing of your printed inks, no oil stains, or long dry times.

The best thing about Sharpie is that they carry their oil-based markers in a variety of flesh-tone colors as well as every other color you could need. This makes oil-based paint pens a powerful solution for your Allure metal prints.

Not only can you use them to embellish your laminated prints, but you can fix slight imperfections in a non-laminated print such as cuts or small nicks in your Allure Metal.

Since oil-based paint pens doesn't rub off, dry quickly, and can be opaque or transparent, you'll have a great resource for adding those artistic "pops" to your prints with little to no dry times.

It's like the best of both acrylic and oils together!

“WHAT’S THIS QUARTZ YOU KEEP MENTIONING?”

We’ve reviewed a few great ways to add “pop” or give your Allure metal prints a unique look, through artistic embellishments with oils, acrylics, or even oil-based pens.



Without the Quartz Matte laminate, you wouldn’t be able to add artistic embellishments without the risk of oil-smears, acrylic paints blending with your printed inks and running off, or having to risk leaving your Allure metal print un-laminated and exposed to air.

It’s ideal to laminate to avoid issues with color-fastness, resistance dust, excess heat, or excess moisture.

The long term display benefits of a laminated print far outweigh the time it takes to laminate.

If you’re an artist like me or a print shop that works with artists like me, get your hands on a sheet of [Allure](#) today!



R. Carnie Littlefield is a mixed media artist. He focuses on animals and nature, and all things geeky. He runs an art shop called “[MindcaveCreations](#)” on Etsy and is a ‘master of the timelapse’ videos on Instagram: [@DesignNinja2015](#).