

INTRODUCTION

Beva Gel is a long-time product in the Beva adhesive system. It combines the trademark 'EVA' ethylene vinyl acetate with acrylic resins in an aqueous dispersion. It is primarily used to cold line paintings, and the majority of conservation literature details this type of treatment. Beva Gel is thixotropic, and heat activation occurs at 150-160°F. It is compatible with both Beva 371 and Beva D8 and can be softened or reversed with water, toluene, xylene, isopropyl alcohol, or ethanol. Applying any of these solvents to the surface of a dried Beva Gel film will reactivate its adhesive properties.

BACKGROUND

Prior to its inclusion in MoMA's 2019 expansion reopening, the wax and plaster artwork Woman With a Veil by Medardo Rosso (1895) displayed several areas of wax loss along the edges and highpoints of the artwork that required fills. Beva Gel was chosen to complete the treatment because it had an affinity for and an appearance similar to the surrounding wax, while being chemically dissimilar enough to minimize interaction between the fills and artwork. As a thixotropic material, Beva Gel could perform as a fill over areas with significant contours without sagging or changing shape while it dried. The dried film could be resurfaced or reshaped with water to match the texture and shape of the surrounding artwork, and could also be toned with a variety of inpainting media.

GOAL

This poster will review the application of Beva Gel in the treatment of the Medardo Rosso and its advantages and limitations as a fill material when working with wax. Tips for successful use for further areas and investigation will also be outlined.



losso. Woman with a Veil. 1895. Artwork prio to treatment in 2019, areas of wax loss outlined in red.



CONTACT INFO

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BEVA GEL AS A FILL MATERIAL FOR WAX ARTWORKS Megan Randall **Objects Conservator** Midwest Art Conservation Center



BEFORE TREATMENT



AFTER TREATMENT



PL edge BEFORE TREATMENT

Bottom edge, PR

Back of head, PL

BEFORE TREATMENT

BEVA GEL TEST FILLS

Performed tests toning the Beva Gel with dry pigments and Golden Acrylic Fluid paints to match the wax.

- Both dry pigments and Golden Acrylics worked well to tone the Beva Gel.
- The variation of wax color, texture, and grime accumulation of the artwork gave preference for using the Beva Gel untoned (pale yellow/ochre) and inpainting on the dried fill.

Cast out strips of Beva Gel to cut and layer into voids by first softening via heat activation.

- Heat activation using a temperature control heat gun was difficult. Any film over 1/16" did not readily respond to heat.
- Dried Beva Gel films are quite hard and can be difficult to shape. Opted to apply the Beva Gel directly to areas of loss.

TREATMENT APPLICATION

- Consolidated and sealed exposed plaster with Lascaux Consolidation Medium prior to filling. This will act as an isolating layer if removal of the fills is necessary in the future.
- Applied thin layers (~1/16") of Beva Gel via syringe in areas of loss
- Smoothed and slightly sculpted the layer with a brush or rubber-tipped shaper while the layer was still wet
- The completed fills were toned with Golden Acrylic Matte paints and pastels

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONDITION - WAX LOSSES

- Old and new wax losses across high points and edges - Losses ranged in thickness
- from 1/16" to 3/16" - Losses ranged in width and length from 1/4" to several inches

AFTER TREATMENT





AFTER TREATMENT

Once the layer was mostly cured, after 24 hours, further shaped the surface with cotton swabs and water



Texture samples. Left: Beva Gel cast directly onto textured HDPE. Right: Beva Gel embossed with textured HDPE after softening the Beva Gel surface for 10 minutes with water. The embossed sample was left under pressure for 24 hours

FURTHER RESEARCH-ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS



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PROS & CONS OF BEVA GEL AS A FILL MATERIAL

-	Low toxicity No solvent introduction into the wax Surface can be reshaped and reactivated with water Materially distinct from wax Reversible	-	Long cure time, this increases with application thickness Natural color may be unsuitable for some waxes Hard and rigid when cured, especially if thickness is >1/16"

TIPS AND TRICKS

Build up thin layers for thicker fills

Beva Gel can be cast in a mold for texture, or the surface can be embossed after softening

Dry pigments and acrylic mediums can be used to tone Beva Gel. Use a clear mixing container to ensure even distribution of the colorant.

Cured Beva Gel is <u>NOT</u> suitable for sanding or carving Give the Beva Gel container a good stir before using!



with Golden Acrylic paints (top row), and dry pigments (bottom row). The right-most top and bottom samples are pure Beva Gel.

Beva Gel could be a suitable fill material for other organic materials, including plastics. Paper-thin layers of Beva Gel remain flexible and could be used for very shallow fills with or without an embedded support (e.g. Japanese paper or Reemay). Additional investigations into the manipulation of Beva Gel with solvents and heat as well as evaluations on its reversibility would be useful to establish its suitability as a fill material.

