

Escoda Versatil

Round size 10

Escoda's new line of synthetic brushes has finally arrived and at first glance they are absolutely beautiful.



The handle, which comes in both short and long, is a polished dark wood that is both inviting and comfortable.

The round 10 we'll be playing with feels a little long to be a short handle, but not uncomfortably so. So, I chock that up to personal tastes.



The bristles are slightly mottled which lends itself to the idea that this brush belongs next to your finest Kolinsky Sables. They also seem to have a slight crimping to them which might be part of the technology that gives these brushes their impressive water-retention and memory.



“Through my own fault, I damaged my sample brush. The brush was pressed against the side of my travel paint bag which left the bristles bent to one side. I’ve managed to reset them, but there is still a tilt. I consider that to be a testament to the bristle memory as it won’t release the last of that bend.”

So, don’t hurt this brush, as it never forgets! Treat it well and it should remember to treat you well in turn.”

These brushes may fill some gaps in your brush bag as the impressive range and *sable-like* qualities as Kolinsky brushes become harder to find in the American market.



The brush is truly luxurious to behold, but as Artists, a brush must pass more than a beauty pageant to make it into the tool box. So, let's take a look at the Versatil in action.

Escoda boasts this brush's performance and versatility as being superior, so those are the points we're going to address here.

On a general level the Versatil does exactly what Escoda says it will. The brush holds an impressive point, has an above average snap and has some of the best water retention I've seen on a synthetic brush.

The brush is a true joy to work with in Watercolor. I encountered a little "strangeness" when working in heavier media, such as Golden OPEN paints and Golden High Flow Acrylic. Though oddly enough, the brush performed superbly with Jack Richeson's heavier bodied Casein Paint.

Casein Paint

The brush really surprised me here. This is where the Versatil is truly at its most versatile. The brush handled the full body of the paint quite well as well as thinner consistencies.

The brush created lush strokes and held a fine enough point to create some finer lines. At size 10, it is still a hefty brush, but I felt comfortable enough to do some light line work with it.



“I decided to add Casein into this review because it is not your typical paint and might be odd enough to fool the brush. Casein in body is a lot like oil paint but has the solvency of acrylic and maintains its vibrancy when applied as a wash, much like watercolor. It offers a lot of opportunity to put this brush to the test (and Escoda may not have thought of this paint in their brush design)”

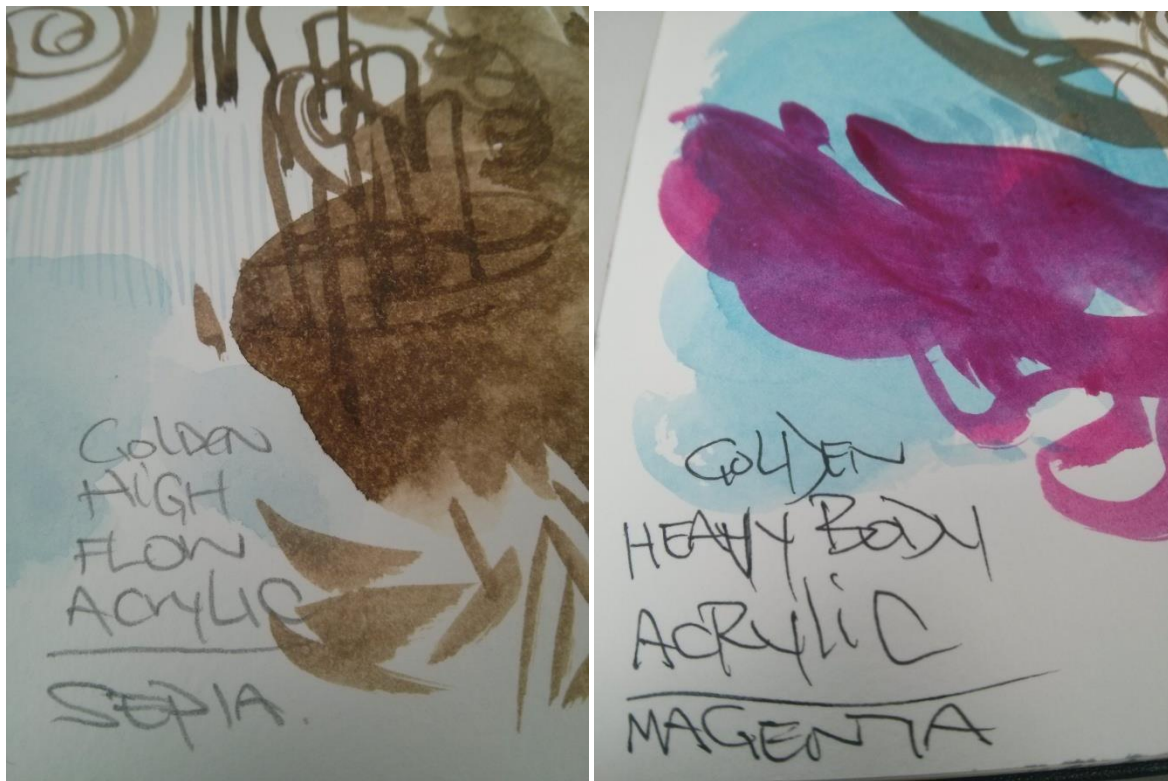
On a personal note, the Versatil will become my go-to brush for some time, while I work and experiment with Casein.

Oil Paint

N/A

I only had one Versatil to work with and did not want to contaminate the bristles with oil and alkyd when a majority of my media experiments were going to be water-based. (Stay tuned for an Oil Paint update to this review)

Acrylic (Golden OPEN & High Flow)



Using this brush with acrylics wasn't a bad experience, but of the media tested it gave the brush the most trouble. For this Golden OPEN (picture says Heavy Body) and Golden's new High Flow were used.

The brush performed adequately, however not to a degree that would separate it from the pack. It seemed all of the responsiveness and flex this brush boasts is diminished with acrylics. The bristles almost seem to stiffen and a little fraying took place, which was surprising when using the High Flow.

I thought maybe I had damaged the brush during one of my other tests, but when cleaned, the brush performed normally with watercolor.

I believe more acrylic experiments are warranted as I did not use typical heavy or soft bodied acrylics. (Readers are encouraged to leave the experiences with acrylics in the comments)

Watercolor

Using this brush with watercolor was the highlight of this experience. The brush simply *feels* strong. Every stroke goes down with deftness. I never felt the point would fray or jitter without my say-so. When leaning on it to get juicy strokes, the snap and responsiveness was really at its best. It is definitely a different experience from a Sable or even other synthetics I've used, but it was an equally positive experience. It's not a better brush per se, but absolutely a high quality tool.



Price point is also another issue I wish to cover. For being high end synthetic brushes, comparable to Escoda's Prado line or Loew Cornell's Halcyon brushes, they are reasonably priced, if still a little on the high side. For instance the Round 10 we used for this review retails for \$29.99. However at Art and Frame of Sarasota, this brush can be picked up for **\$17.99**.

All in all, the brush performed very well under a variety of conditions. It may not be ideal for some styles or media, but what brush is? Escoda definitely delivers on their promise of a versatile and high quality brush and the affordability of this brush is really something.

If you're still curious and in the area of Art and Frame of Sarasota, stop in and give one a try. Talk to one of our employees about what this line can offer you, it may surprise you. But if you've used an Escoda brush before, it won't be a surprise that their standard of quality has not changed.