

**MATTING and POWDERING SILICONE**

We powder and matte silicone for several reasons:

- 1) **REDUCE SHINE:** After painting, silicone has a pronounced shine. It looks wet.
- 2) **KEEP SILICONE CLEAN:** Between layers of paint and before matting, silicone rubber is like a dirt and dust magnet. Raw silicone rubber seems to grab dirt, dust and hairs out of the air. When powder is the first thing to come into contact with silicone it prevents dirt and dust from sticking. Dust and dirt tend to roll off the new microsphere powders, while fumed silica and ground mineral powders like talcum powder grab onto dust because of their rough texture.
- 3) **PROVIDE 'SLIP':** Compared to other rubbers, silicone has a moist, clammy feel to it, especially soft silicones. Raw silicone does not slide well against itself and other materials. It is difficult to slide clothes on and off a raw silicone doll or medical prosthetic.
- 4) **ABSORB SILICONE FLUID:** The softer a silicone, the more prone it is to have silicone 'fluid' bleed out at some point. This is more pronounced with Tin Cure silicone rubbers and silicone caulking than with Platinum Cure silicones. But in time even soft Platinum silicones will have silicone fluid migrate to the surface.
- 5) **VISUAL EFFECT:** Some powders give a more natural look than others. Some give 'glow' effects. Others give a "soft focus" effect. Others give a dead matte effect that can look unnatural. Some seem to magnify and accentuate silicone paint underneath.

Materials:

**TALCUM POWDER:** Talcum powder will work OK to cut shine, but adds a gray cast to a paint job. It is cheap and readily available, but it is not ideal as a matting powder. Some brands of talc based baby powder have a sheen to them. Talcum powder will not harm silicone. Doll owners and collectors can freely powder silicone baby doll bottoms with baby powder. It washes off with water.

**CORN STARCH:** Corn Starch is not an ideal matting powder with it's yellow cast, but does enable clothes to slide on and off of dolls easier. As a food stuff, corn starch promotes bacteria growth and attracts bugs and rodents. Corn Starch has been replaced with the newer Microsphere matting powders with their ball bearing action.

**ICING SUGAR:** Fine Icing Sugar (Confectioner's Sugar) can be used to matte silicone. It is applied to a clear coat of silicone, the silicone allowed to set, then the Icing Sugar washed off with water. This leaves tiny holes in the silicone that refract light and gives a matting effect. Any silicone fluid migrating to the surface of the casting will create shine, which wants to be matted with another matting powder. As a food stuff, Icing Sugar promotes bacteria growth and attracts bugs and vermin.

**BAKING SODA:** (Sodium Bicarbonate) is used in a similar way to Icing Sugar.

**SANDING SILICONE:** Roughing up the surface of silicone with Sandpaper, pumice powder or even kitchen scouring powder like Comet or Ajax will give a matting effect. The tiny scratches reduce shine but leave the surface rough and prone to collecting dirt and dust.

**SILICA:** Silicone is made from silica - sand.  
There are many types of silica, some can be used for matting silicone.

**CRYSTALLINE SILICA:** Widely used to matte house paints and reinforce gypsum products (plaster, Ultracal), Crystalline Silica is shard shaped. Like little arrows. Because this shape keeps going deep into human tissue and doesn't come out, Crystalline Silica is classified as a carcinogen. We do not use Crystalline Silica as a matting agent for silicone.

**FUMED SILICA:** Fumed Silica is one of the ingredients of silicone rubber. It is possibly the oldest matting agent for silicone. Under a microscope the particles look like irregular shaped snow flakes. Fumed Silica has a slight blue cast to it. As a matting powder, Fumed Silica gives an ultra-matte finish that can look unnatural. Fumed Silica makes silicone grab even more than it does before powdering. Clothes do not slide well on and off dolls and prosthetics. Fumed Silica is excellent for powdering silicone between paint layers so you can see what the paint looks like without shine. It is also good between paint layers to keep it clean of dirt and hairs. Fumed Silica is the least expensive matting powder.

#### **MICROSPHERES:**

Tom McLaughlin introduced microsphere matting technology to the silicone doll and FX community more than 6 years ago with Silicone Art Materials' SFP Silicone Finishing Powder.

You have to be careful in choosing a microsphere powder to matte silicone with. There are dozens of variations of each material out there. What they all have in common is that the particles are round. Some are smoother than others and seem to magnify paint jobs and add shine. Others look too matte. Some are too slick.

#### **SAM SFP Silicone Finishing Powder**

SAM SFP Silicone Finishing Powder is a blend of 100% cosmetic grade microspheres. Microspheres of Silicone, Acrylic, Silica and Nylon that give a natural look, feel and finish like no single material micro powder can. SAM SFP is considered the ultimate matting experience. SAM SFP Silicone Finishing Powder is excellent for powdering silicone between paint layers so you can see what the paint looks like without shine. It is good to keep silicone clean of dirt and hairs between paint layers. It can be painted over. Can be used as a makeup finishing powder.

#### **SAM 100% Silica Microsphere Powder**

SAM 100% Silica Microsphere Powder can be used to matte silicone and add "slip". SAM 100% Silica Microsphere Powder is excellent for powdering silicone between paint layers so you can see what the paint looks like without shine. It is good to keep silicone clean of dirt and hairs between paint layers. It can be painted over. Can be used as a makeup finishing powder.

#### **SAM 100% Silicone Microsphere Powder**

SAM 100% Silicone Microsphere Powder can be used to matte silicone and add "slip". SAM 100% Silicone Microsphere Powder is good for powdering silicone between paint layers so you can see what the paint looks like without shine. It is good to keep silicone clean of dirt and hairs between paint layers. It can be painted over. Can be used as a makeup finishing powder.

#### **SAM 100% Acrylic Microsphere Powder**

SAM 100% Acrylic Microsphere Powder can be used to matte silicone and add "slip". Can be used as a makeup finishing powder. Can be used as a dry lubricant when sanding silicone with "wet & dry" and regular sandpaper.

#### **SAM 100% Fumed Silica Powder**

Fumed Silica is excellent for powdering silicone between paint layers so you can see what the paint looks like without shine. It is good to keep silicone clean of dirt and hairs between paint layers. It can be painted over. Unlike the other SAM Matting Powders, Fumed Silica does not add "slip" and can make silicone "grab" when rubbed against itself and other materials.