

Paper Marbling



INTRODUCTION

In this project, you will create marble-like designs with Acrylic Ink on a viscous solution known as a size, and carefully transfer them to an absorbent paper. After dry, your paper marbling creations can be used for various applications such as collage, book covers, cards, mixed media painting and more.

Time: 2-hours recommended. Add 1-2 hours paper drying time (preferably overnight).

NOTE

Alum (aluminum sulfate) is a mineral commonly used in deodorant and items like styptic pencils. **Methocel** (Methyl Cellulose) is a PH balanced plant derived thickener. **Carrageenan**, Like Methocel, it is a thickener derived from red seaweed and often used in food like yogurt and ice-cream.

Jacquard makes good quality alum and size and is sold at various art stores - along with all of the other supplies you will need!

MATERIALS LIST

1. Liquitex Acrylic Inks (colors of your choice)
 2. Liquitex Airbrush Medium
 3. Alum (Aluminum Sulfate)
 4. Methocel (Methyl Cellulose) or Carrageenan Size
 5. Alum solution treated paper
 6. Marbling Pan (butcher tray, cake pan, acrylic paint palette)
 7. Paint pulling tools (toothpicks, combs, rakes, skewers, forks)
 8. Paint application tools (eyedroppers, paint brushes, splatter tools, spritzers)
 9. Rinsing pan / or sink
- Optional:**
- Acrylic Markers
 - Blotters for drying paper
 - Newsprint paper





PROJECT STEPS



STEP 1: Setup and Prep

Paper marbling can get a bit messy - so make sure to set-up with lots of room to work and a clear path to the sink.

Before you can start marbling, you will need to coat your paper with a fixative like Alum, which will allow your paint to bind to the paper permanently and not wash off. Evenly coat one side of the paper using a sponge or brush and let dry thoroughly before using. Treated paper should be used within 4 days of coating for best results.

You will also need to make the bath solution that your paint will float on. This is called the size. To make the size, mix a thickening agent with water. Methyl Cellulose or Carrageenan are two of the most commonly used thickeners in marbling and either will work (see supply list). It is best to prepare your size solution as per the packaging instructions of the thickening agent you choose. I personally prefer Methyl Cellulose (sometimes goes by the name Methocel) because I can adjust the recipe and make a thicker batch that can be used as a glue for bookbinding, paper collage and more!

TIP

When you're looking for a paper to marble, it should generally be an absorbent, lightly-sized and uncoated. This may be a drawing, printmaking, or sketch paper. Cotton fiber works well because it's absorbent and has good wetting strength. Wet strength is important because you need it to be able to withstand some handling. Also consider what you will be doing with the paper you made (collage, book covers, cards, mixed media painting?). A good strong paper will withstand all of that!



PROJECT STEPS



STEP 2:

Testing the "Float"

Pour the size solution into your pan and let it settle out.

Do a test float with your selected acrylics. I use a white plastic paint palette with rectangular wells to do this. Add the size and then drop the paint in order to test the paint properties. This is really helpful when using pigmented acrylics.

Each pigment has unique properties and some will be heavier than others. Add a few drops of Liquitex Airbrush Medium if the colors sink. Add a bit more color if they spread too thin across the surface.



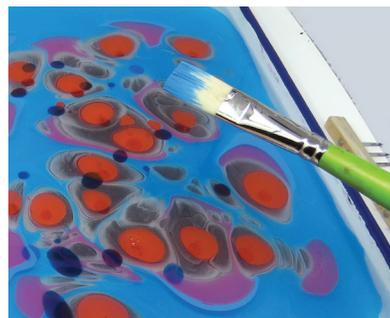
STEP 3:

Floating Colors

When ready - begin to float your colors into the marbling pan. You want to gently drop the colors onto the surface of the size. Keep adding paint to the surface until they seem intense or you are happy with the proportion of the colors.

Add additional colors by dropping them into the previous color or next to it. The colors will push each other apart and not mix. The order in which you apply the color will affect the end result (colors added first will be pushed furthest apart). More deliberate drops can be made with an eyedropper.

Splatter effects can be achieved by flicking a paint brush or using the Liquitex Freestyle Splatter Brush. Consider using a spritzer or a flooded Liquitex Acrylic Marker to get different viscosities of splatter.





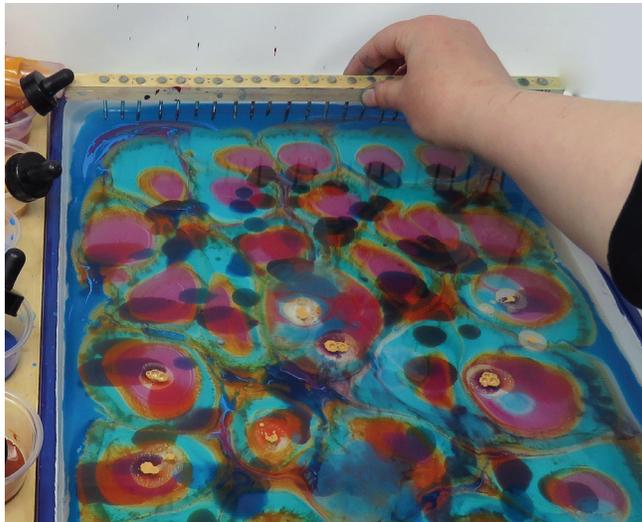
PROJECT STEPS



STEP 4:

Designing on Water

Once you have all of your colors floating on the surface of the size, it's time to move things around! Using toothpicks, combs, rakes - and anything else you can think of - pull through the color to create patterns.



Using a rake or comb will create more uniform and possibly repeatable patterns, while a toothpick or skewer will give a looser and more freeform design.



STEP 5:

Applying the Paint to the Paper

Once you are satisfied with your design, you are going to take your treated paper (alum side down) to the surface. You want to lay the middle of the paper (hold the top right and bottom left edge of the paper) down first and let the ends roll out onto the surface, so no air is trapped underneath. You can tap on the paper once it is down a bit to try and knock any out. Do not submerge the paper.

Leave the paper on the surface for 2-5 seconds before lifting. When lifting, try to "peel" the paper off the surface from one edge.



PROJECT STEPS



STEP 6:

Lifting the Printed Paper

Once removed, run cold water gently across the surface in the sink - do not scrub. Alternatively, you can lay it into a bucket and let cold water wash over it (again do not agitate the surface - the colors are not completely set until dry).

Lay flat to dry (color will become more prominent once dry). And repeat! You can clear the surface with newsprint or you can continue working on the surface as is!

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Marta Kepka

Marta Kepka is an artist working in central NJ. She plays conceptually with social complexities through her constructed environments. Filtering through a feminist lens, she dismisses oppositional binaries by embracing the ideas of pure difference and material agency. Her cross-disciplinary interests led her to earn her BFA alongside a Psychology minor and Women's Studies collateral program. She undertook her MFA at Montclair State University and has received several awards for her work which have been exhibited in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Alongside her studio practice; Marta works as a creative director for a graphic design firm, adjunct professor at MCC and Brookdale college and TFAC artist for Winsor Newton and Liquitex. Her work can be found at www.martakepka.com.

FOR MORE INSPIRATION, VISIT: <https://www.liquitex.com/us/>

ABOUT LIQUITEX

FOUNDED 1955

Challenging the established ways of doing things is in our DNA. It's how we invented the first water-based acrylic paint, and the reason why we have been innovating ever since. Empowering all artists to create with confidence and no limits. Challenging the established ways of doing things is in our DNA. It's how we invented the first water-based acrylic paint, and the reason why we have been innovating ever since. Empowering all artists to create with confidence and no limits.

