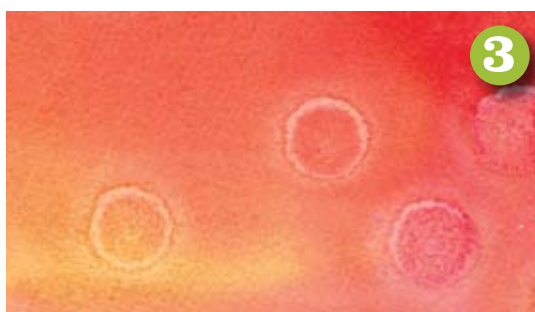
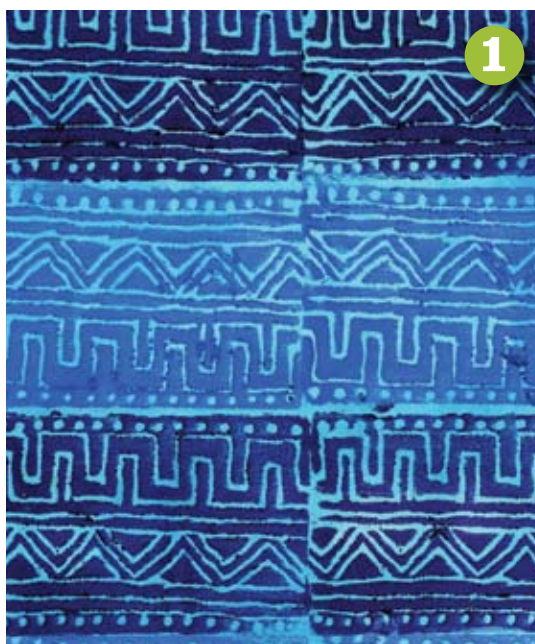


4 mixed-media art techniques

presented by cloth paper scissors®



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3 mixed-media watercolor techniques

JACQUELINE SULLIVAN

4 textured backgrounds for collage

MISTY MAWN



Here at CLOTH PAPER SCISSORS®, we're all about starting from scratch and that's why our first-ever eBook is a collection of four different approaches to mixed-media backgrounds. Whether you like to work on paper or canvas, these ideas will get you started. Use any or all of these techniques to jump start a day of creativity or work them into your own private day of experimentation.

We're starting things off with Moira Ackers's unique approach to resists, which are highlighted with acrylic wax. Next,

Traci Bautista's fascinating fusion-dyed collage process will have you running to the grocery store for the jumbo pack of paper towels. Those of you who enjoy the more transparent side of vibrancy will find Jacqueline Sullivan's mixed-media watercolor techniques both inspiring and approachable. And if you love texture, you'll appreciate Misty Mawn's article on textured backgrounds for collage.

Whether you like to lay it on thick or layer it on in transparent washes, this eBook contains ideas you can start using today to kick off a creative spell of art making.

Jenn

Jenn Mason
Editor

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COLLAGE ARTISTIC
MIXED-MEDIA DISCOVERY

4 Mixed-media Art Techniques

presented by
Cloth Paper Scissors®

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who can resist magic?

I didn't invent this simple resist printing technique, but over several years I have made it my own and I really love the results. Whether I use the papers created to further some design work, in my journals, or just as book covers or wrapping paper, I am always pleased with the results. What appeals to me most is that this technique is inexpensive, quick, safe, and very flexible. This is the sort of activity you can do at home, and you might even let the kids join in (once you've tried it out a couple of times). Moreover, it is a method that will provide you with wonderful surfaces to work on and develop in your own projects. It can be as sophisticated or as simple as you wish.

Once you've got your supplies together you need to set aside some time. I like to give myself a full day and really create a mountain of papers. They'll always be useful. You need to have a large surface to work on and make sure everything is covered to protect it. I like to work in my kitchen and put the wet papers to dry on plastic sheets on my living room floor. Wear plastic

gloves if you hate messy hands. And then kick the kids out, at least the first time you do this, and get to work.

For this project I worked from photos I'd taken of a wall in Cambridge, England. I loved the mix of windows and their chaotic placement. I created a brick wall block and several window blocks.

MATERIALS

- A thin, foam-based material such as Quickprint (UK), Darice Foamies, or a styrofoam meat tray (thoroughly washed and dried)
- Acrylic paints
- Water-based pigments or inks, Procion dye powders, or food coloring
- Papers
- Ballpoint pen
- Plastic sheeting to protect work surface
- 2" to 3" paint brushes or sponge brushes
- Brayers
- Tubs or old trays to mix your colors
- Acrylic wax
- Scissors
- Pens
- Rubber gloves (optional)
- A container of water (for soaking brushes)

Left: Building shapes and spires in resist with a red/orange wash.

BY Moira Ackers



A window from a wall in Cambridge, England, inspiration for the project on the following pages.

directions

create your printing blocks

1. Cut your foam (Quickprint, Darice Foamies, or styrofoam meat tray, washed and dried) into shapes that suit your design source. Cut your blocks, taking care to size them appropriately. Blocks bigger than your hand can be difficult to grasp, while blocks cut too small are also awkward to work with.
2. Lightly draw your design onto your foam sheet but don't press into the foam yet.
3. When you're happy with your outlines, go over them using a ballpoint pen, pressing firmly to pierce the skin of the sheet and create an impression.
4. This is not a precise process, so go for simple, bold designs at first.



Brick wall and window blocks created in foam. Images were lightly drawn and then etched into the foam with a ballpoint pen.

You can always add lines for details later. It is important to note that Quickprint has a grain. If you work against it with your pen, you'll get a more jagged line. This can be an advantage giving your line interest, but if you don't like it, turn it around and work in the other direction. Remember that this is a negative process so the lines you've drawn are where the paint won't be, and details like writing need to be reversed.

acrylic wax

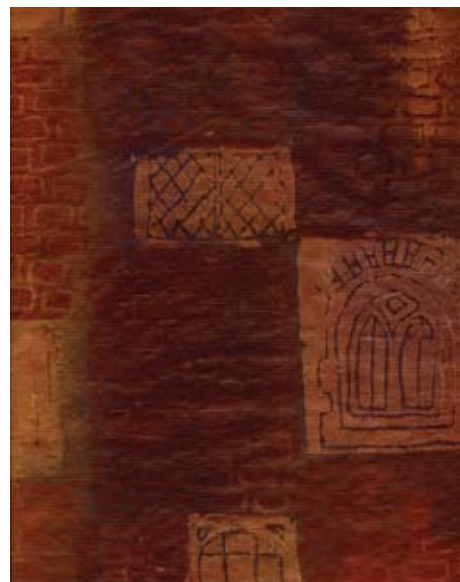
Acrylic wax has the appearance and feel of wax but is actually a water-based medium. It can be mixed with color or bronze powders and dries with a slightly less transparent finish than acrylic varnish. It gives an unusual and mysterious finish to artwork and is useful for a wide range of applications as it is resistant to water and heat.



Sample 1: Paper stamped with the brick wall design and some window designs, in different colors.



Sample 2: The stamped paper with a watercolor wash.



Sample 3: A coat of acrylic wax applied over all.

printing (see sample 1)

1. Lay your paper out on the table. You can scrunch it first and then smooth it flat for added texture. This technique is a simple printing process.
2. Mix your acrylic paint using a small amount at a time. This allows you to add and change your colors as you like. Acrylic paints dry fast, which is great for this process but bad for the brushes. If the brushes dry there is no saving them; that's why I use cheap brushes.
3. Brush a light covering of your acrylic onto your print block (too much paint will cause the image to smudge). Place the block face down on your paper.
4. Run the brayer over the block and then peel the block off the paper.
5. Repeat the printing process, covering as much or as little of the paper as you wish. Remember that this is the beginning, so it won't look magical yet (especially if you're

using light colors on dark paper as they'll look a bit sad and dull at first). Don't despair—there are a lot of experiments you can do at this stage. For example, by printing twice from the block without adding paint, you'll get a much fainter second print. You can also rotate or stagger your block.

the watercolor wash (see sample 2)

While the acrylic paint dries, make up your watercolor wash of inks, dyes, or food coloring. Mix them in tubs with mouths wide enough for you to dip your brushes in.

Wash over the entire surface of your printed paper. The dry acrylic, now a plastic surface, will “resist” the watercolor paint, just like in batik. This is where the magic happens. Suddenly your printed designs jump out at you.

You can cover the whole paper with one color wash, but I like to start at one end with one color and work through the sheet using other colors, allowing them to mix and blend.



A variety of line motifs repeated, with a wash in shades of blue.

You can leave the paint as is to dry or pat or dab the excess paint with paper toweling to speed up the drying time.

Remember that wet paper is fragile and will tear. Also, the watercolors will dry lighter since they are transparent. If you scrunched the paper at the beginning, the broken fibers of the paper will absorb more paint, giving added texture. Any spare paint can be stored in a jar for future use.

adding the acrylic wax

(see sample 3)

Allow your paper to dry. Don't be disappointed that some of the "magic" has gone as your paper dries with a dull look. Water down your acrylic wax (1:1) and then brush this over your paper. I usually do several coats and this gives it a lovely gleam. When brushing on the wax it will appear milky but like PVA glue it dries clear. Let it dry for at least a day. Store the diluted wax in a jar for future use; it will last for ages.

So there you have it. Beautiful papers for you to work with. I'm sure once you have a go you'll keep doing it and work it to suit your own style. ●

You can reach Moira by emailing:
moira.ackers@ntlworld.com.

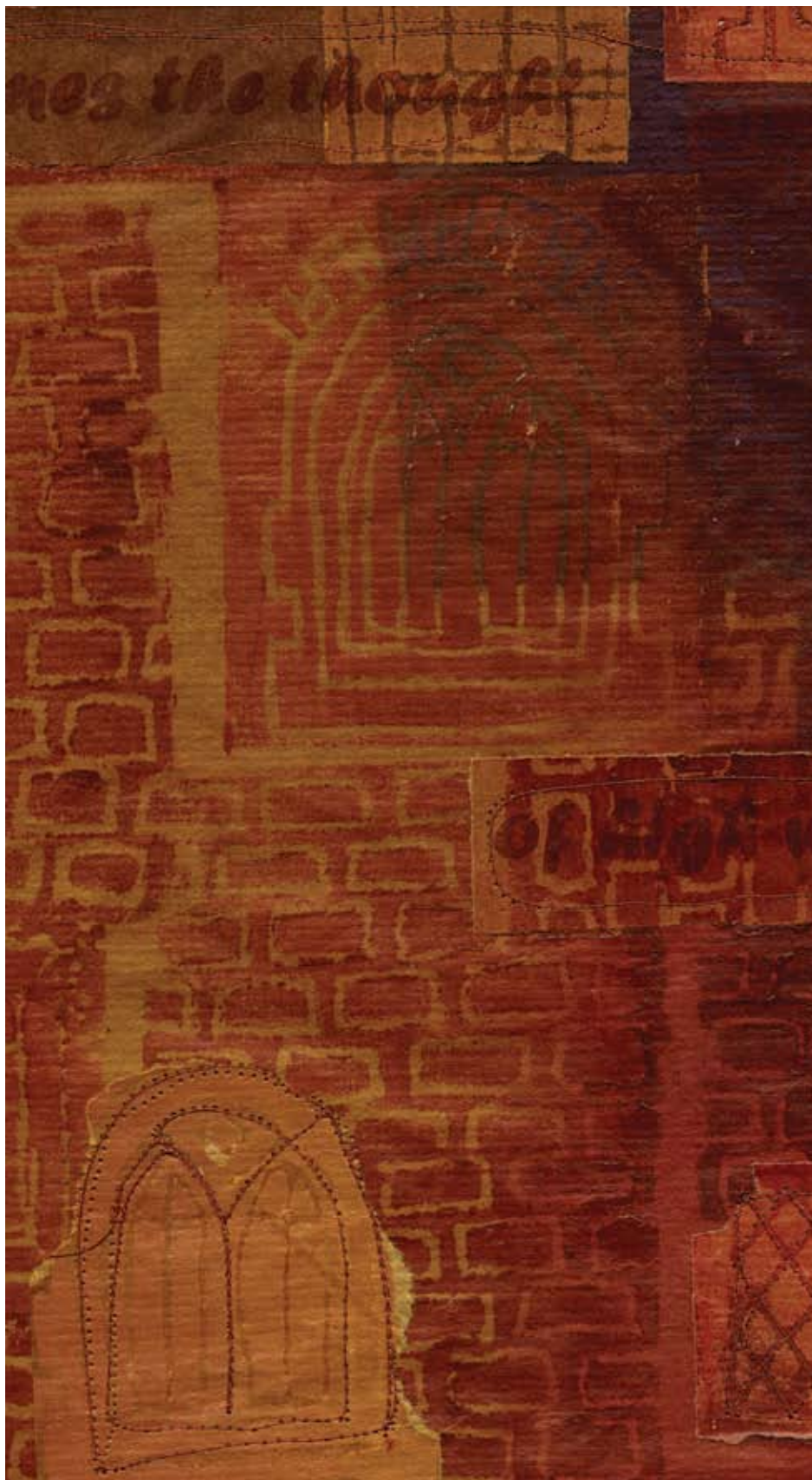
RESOURCES

Darice Foamies

- Available at Michael's and at Jo-Ann Fabrics

acrylic wax

- Polyvine Products (U.S.)
www.polyvine.com
- Art Van Go (U.K. & Europe)
www.artvango.co.uk



Above: The final product, brick and window images covering the sheet. Unique paper for a variety of uses.

fashion-dyed collage

Adapted from
CLOTH PAPER SCISSORS®
Summer 2005

BY Traci Bautista

One of my favorite art materials is the unassuming paper towel. Because of its absorbent nature and various textures, the paper towel is a great canvas on which to create beautifully dyed papers. After teaching kids' art workshops, I found that paper towels became an inexpensive, readily available alternative to high-end rice paper for teaching the Japanese art of dyeing paper known as orizomegami. Needless to say, I have stacks of dyed paper towels and napkins anxiously waiting to be used in my artwork.

From this, fusion-dyed papers were born. This collage technique merges layers of dyed paper towels, ephemera, and paint to create beautiful, transparent, textured pieces of art.



"Funky Heart" • Collage created with glued layers of dyed paper towels, accented with a stencilled heart and a square pattern created with square brushes.

dyeing

MATERIALS

- Various water-based media
- Liquid watercolors
- Dye-based ink refills
- Pigment ink refills
- Iridescent calligraphy inks
- Golden® fluid acrylics
- Ultra-fine art glitter
- 3 oz. plastic Dixie® cups

- Craft sticks
- 2-ply paper towels
- Pipette/eye dropper
- Freezer paper
- Spray water bottle
- Brayer

creating the dye

Using a separate cup for each color, mix your choice of water-based dye medium with a bit of water. Depending on the intensity of color you desire, add more

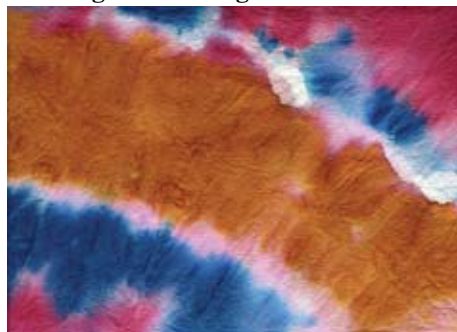
Dyed paper towels.

or less water. To create a metallic dye, add a few drops of gold or silver fluid acrylic or iridescent acrylic ink to your mixture. To add sparkle, drop a pinch of glitter into your dye mixture. Stir dye with a craft stick.

dyeing the paper

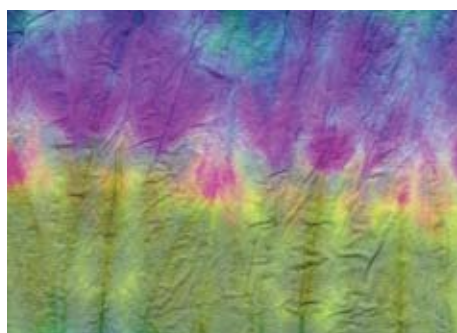
FOLDED DIP DYEING

This method creates controlled patterns. To begin, fold a paper towel. Experiment with different folds; squares, rectangles, triangles, and accordion pleats will all produce different and interesting patterns. Dip the folded paper towel into various dye colors (I use 2–3 colors). Fill a pipette with dye and squeeze some onto the paper towel to spot dye and create lines of color. The colors will begin to run together in some spots, blending and creating new colors.



SCRUNCH DYEING

This method creates free-form/tie-dye patterns. Crumple a paper towel and dip it into various colors. Squeeze the paper towel to spread color. Take another paper towel and squeeze out the extra dye onto it and you'll have an extra dyed paper towel.



FREEZER PAPER DYEING

This creates random spotted patterns. Drizzle various watercolors, inks, and fluid acrylics over the shiny side of a large piece of freezer paper. Sprinkle glitter over the paper and then spray with a water bottle to disperse and mix the colors. Place a paper towel over the top of the freezer paper to pick up the paint and continue to spray water to blend the colors on the paper towel. Continue to add color to the freezer paper and then roll a brayer over the top until the paper towel is completely dyed. Drizzle interference colors over the top of the dyed paper towel.

tips on dyeing

- All water-based media are intermixable.
- Avoid dipping into the three primary colors (red, yellow, and blue) as this creates muddy brown.
- Metallic paint will settle to the bottom of cups; stir completely and often.
- Clean tools, cups, and brushes with paper towels and use those in your art—never waste them!
- Dyed paper towels can be used wet or dry for collage techniques.
- Do not use waterproof or solvent-based inks; they create a gum-like solution when mixed.
- If using watercolors to dye, the papers will bleed when collaged together. After dyeing a paper towel, place it between two pieces of white construction paper and rub gently to take a monoprint.



Various collage ephemera including black-and-white photocopies, Asian joss papers, dyed paper towel cut-outs, and printed napkins.

collage

MATERIALS

- Craft glue
- Water
- 2" flat paintbrush
- Various collage ephemera (Japanese lace paper, tissue paper, joss paper, napkins, maps, music sheets, dictionary pages)
- Black-and-white photocopies
- 1" foam brush
- Various size flat paintbrushes
- Golden heavy body acrylic paint
- Rubber/foam stamps (I prefer unmounted.)
- Stencils
- Golden glossy soft gel medium
- optional
 - Miscellaneous flat brushes
 - Wite-Out pen
 - Dimensional glitter paint
 - Metallic crayons
 - Portfolio oil pastels
 - Black Sumi or India ink



The fusion-dyed technique with layered paper towels creates transparent paper.

creating fusion-dyed collage

BASIC TECHNIQUE — LAYERING DYED PAPER TOWELS

1. Mix glue with water (use a 4:1 ratio, glue to water) in a large plastic cup.
2. With a 2" flat brush, spread the glue mixture over the shiny surface of an 18" x 30" piece of freezer paper.
3. Pull apart the layers of pre-dyed 2-ply paper towels and place a single layer of the dyed paper towel onto the glued surface.



"Three Hearts" • A collage created with freezer paper dyed paper towels. Repeating heart pattern created with heavy-body acrylics painted through a handmade heart stencil.

4. Coat the top of the paper towel with a layer of the glue mixture. Continue to layer dyed paper towels, overlapping the edges to fill the entire piece of freezer paper. Be sure to coat each layer of the collage with the glue mixture as you go.
5. Cut shapes like hearts or flowers from the dyed towels and adhere with the glue mixture, building up the layers of the collage. Let collage dry completely.
6. Once dry, carefully peel it from freezer paper and you have a beautiful transparent collage.

VARIATIONS:

1. Seal the collage with a coat of glossy soft gel medium to create a shiny finish. Accent the top layer by painting patterns with heavy-body acrylics using stencils, stamps, and flat brushes.
2. Follow the basic technique and then layer ephemera to create a focal point. Coat the layer with the glue mixture and then write words and phrases over the top of collage with dimensional glitter paint or WiteOut pens.
3. Follow the basic technique and then cut a shape from one of your dyed paper towels. Place the cutout onto your collage and apply a coat of the

uses for your collage papers

- Create an artful wall hanging.
- Use as book/journal covers and pages.
- Cover a composition book.
- Make invitations or cards.
- Make scrapbook page backgrounds.
- Make fusion-dyed ATCs.
- Create themed backgrounds with various words and symbols in Photoshop or Microsoft® Word.
- Enlarge fonts, dictionary pages, and maps.
- Create brush marks with black Sumi ink or use an eyedropper to make ink doodle backgrounds.
- Copy and enlarge written journal pages or handwritten letters.

ACCENTING OVER FUSION-DYED COLLAGE

- Apply heavy-body acrylic with a foam brush through stencils to create patterns.
- Apply heavy-body acrylic paint with a foam brush to a stamp and stamp a pattern.
- Paint repeating square patterns with flat brushes.
- Paint more ink drawings with a pipette using black Sumi or waterproof India ink.
- Drip melted metallic crayon over the top of collage.
- Use rub-on letters over the top of the collage.
- Draw designs with water-soluble oil pastels.
- Stitch a photo to your collage.

The basic technique and variations are a jumpstart for you to create endless

art. Play, explore, dream, create. I like to work on multiple large pieces at a time so I can let layers dry and keep my ideas fresh and not focused on just one collage. Explore the variations of this technique to create your very own fusion-dyed collage. ●

To see more of Traci's work visit www.treicdesigns.com.

RESOURCES

Liquid watercolor, pipettes, craft sticks, art glitter, iridescent colors

- Available at local craft and art supply stores
- www.dickblick.com

Brilliance and Opalite Pigment ink refills

- www.tsukineko.com

Golden fluids, glazes, heavy body acrylics

- www.goldenpaints.com

Unmounted stamps, stencils

- Available at a variety of craft and art supply stores

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mixed-media watercolor techniques

Adapted from
CLOTH PAPER SCISSORS®
Spring 2005

BY Jacqueline Sullivan

When we think of watercolor painting, often images of flower bouquets or serene landscapes come to mind. However, one does not need to know how to paint a scene or a still life (or want to) in order to enjoy the lush beauty and benefits of watercolor paints. A few years ago I began experimenting by adding other media to my watercolor paints and was amazed with the resulting papers. I use transparent watercolor techniques with mixed media to create colorful, textured backgrounds for my calligraphic works, collage, mixed media, and handmade books.

MATERIALS

- Several plastic water bottles with squirt-top caps
- Transparent watercolors
- Watercolor paper
- A shallow tray (like a cookie sheet)
- Spray bottle
- Small palette
- Distilled water
- 2 large containers for water
- An inexpensive, flat, 1" brush
- Masonite board (optional)
- Dust mask

transparent watercolors

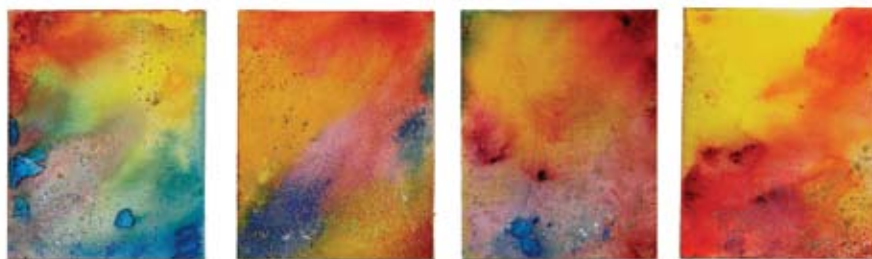
The trick to mixing transparent watercolors is to mix the color with the water before it is applied to the paper. After you premix the colors, you can then use the plastic water bottle to pour them on the paper, rather than using the traditional palette and brush. By minimizing direct contact with the paper surface, you will achieve transparent color with glazing. Glazing is a technique of layering transparent

colors over one another, allowing the colors underneath to shine through the top color.

colors and paints

It is best to stay within a limited palette. A palette of primary colors (red, yellow, and blue) plus some earth colors will help build shadows and tonal qualities. While you are learning, it is a good idea to have no more than three colors on your paper; they will blend and form other colors. Make your fourth color a neutral. I use Payne's gray as a neutral color. It blends with all colors and quiets





I felt a certain power of color awakening in me.
Vincent van Gogh

down some of the more brilliant colors. Some brands of burnt umber also work well as a neutralizing color.

One group of premixed colors that I use is alizarin crimson, phthalo blue, hansa yellow, quinacridone gold, sap green, burnt sienna, and Payne's gray. To this group I sometimes add burnt umber, quinacridone violet, and yellow ochre.

In addition to having these pre-mixed colors in bottles, a small palette with the same colors on it can be used to enhance areas of color while the paper is wet.

My preferred brands of watercolor paints are American Journey or Daniel Smith (see Resources). Less expensive brands of paint can be grainy and pale, but both of these brands offer a wide range of

colors of fairly good quality. Pigments from different manufacturers are usually compatible. For these techniques, you just need to be sure that you are using "transparent watercolors." However, be aware that colors with the same name will vary from one manufacturer to another, and some research and experimentation may be necessary to come up with a palette that works for you.

painting mixing the paint

To mix the paint, put a small amount of water in the bottom of a bottle. Add about 2.5 ML ($\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.) of paint to the water and shake to mix. Add another 4 ounces of water to the bottle and shake again, thoroughly dissolving all of the pigment. The strength of pigment varies greatly from one manufacture to another. These proportions may be changed depending on the depth of color you are looking for.

Once you have your paints mixed and have selected your paper, it is time to get your work area ready. Be sure to have all of the listed materials on hand. You may want to have a few other colors for adding details to your paintings. Fill the spray bottle with clear water. The shallow tray is necessary for catching drips and excess paint. One of the large containers is for clean water to wet your paper and the second is for rinsing brushes. The flat brush is for "pushing" the paint a bit. You may also want a round brush for some minimal detailing.

1. With your paper lying flat, use the spray bottle to wet the paper in areas where you want paint colors to flow and mix. It should be damp (wet but no puddles). After you wet the paper, brush the water out evenly into the area that you are going to paint. Or if

paper

It is important to go with a name brand of paper because inexpensive watercolor paper will only frustrate you. On many of the cheaper papers, pigment slides right off, a very discouraging result, especially for beginners who may think they are doing something wrong. Winsor-Newton, Arches, Frabriano, and Lanaquarelle are all good brands of watercolor paper. There are three main types of watercolor paper to choose from: rough, hot press, and cold press.

rough Rough paper is what it says: rough. It is suited for dry brush and textural techniques, but challenging to work on.

hot press This paper is pressed with heat in the manufacturing process to give it a very smooth surface. But because there are no hills and valleys on hot press paper, it is easy for the pigment to just "slide off" when working very wet.

cold press This paper has some hills and valleys, but not as many nor are they as deep as rough paper. The hills and valleys will vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. These features help "grab" the pigment, giving the artist a bit more control. Cold press papers take wet-in-wet smoothly, allowing the pigment to blend softly and freely.

Watercolor paper usually comes in 90-, 140-, and 300-lb. weights. The 90-lb. paper is the lightest and is good for book pages and for making decorative papers to cover board for book covers. It does, however, have to be stretched and taped to a board for working because it buckles when wet. Suitable for anything that calls for card stock, 140-lb. paper is heavy enough for stand-alone covers of books. It is also heavy enough to take the weight of various acrylic media for mixed-media work and it will hold up to scraping, spraying, and pouring of wet media. Heavy and strong, 300-lb. paper is great for a base for collage work. It is also good for layering and tearing, a collage technique that will bring a third dimension to your paintings.

you want more control, use a large 2" wash brush to spread the water onto the paper.

2. Shake your first bottle of color to mix it and then pour on some paint. Tilt and rotate your board to get the color moving, letting the excess drip into your shallow pan.
3. Before adding another color, let the first color find its place on the paper and "rest" a bit, or you will just keep washing the first color off with the next.
4. Once your first paint has found its place and is not collecting in puddles, add a second color. Choose analogous colors (colors that are next to each other on the color wheel) such as yellow to green to blue, or alizarin to violet to blue. If you "cross over" the color wheel and use complementary colors, when the colors run together you will get a muddy brown color.

This method will give you a beautiful flowing watercolor wash. It makes a great background or abstract on its own or you can go further and use some additional techniques to give it more texture and interest.

tips

- The best types of containers to use are plastic water bottles with sport tops (tops that pull to open and squirt). These bottles give you the ability to control the direction of the

colors

Transparent watercolors can be classified in three categories: earth colors, mineral colors, and dye (or carbon) colors.

earth colors These include umbers, ochres, and oxides and are made from ground earth, such as mineral rich soils or clay. These colors tend to be heavy, grainy, and not as saturated as other colors. Some special effects, particularly the salt and alcohol techniques, usually do not work with the earth colors.

mineral colors These colors are inorganic. This classification includes all cadmiums, ultramarines, and cobalt blues. These colors are brilliant and somewhat opaque. Special effects work on these colors but not as dramatically as on the carbon colors.

carbon or dye colors These colors are organic and staining. They include alizarin crimson, phthalo blue, phthalo green, and viridian colors. These colors are very strong and actually "stain" the paper. Some can be fugitive, that is, they fade with time. But special effects used on these colors are very dramatic.

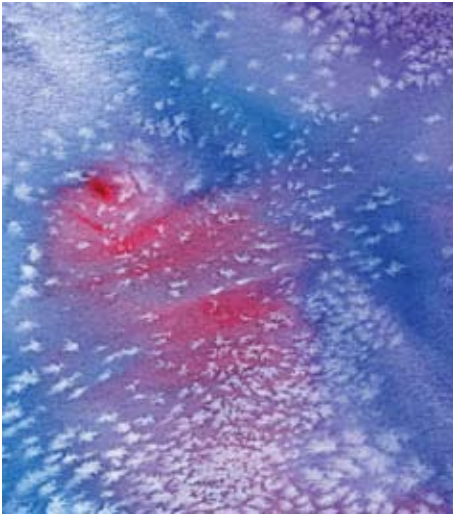


Above: Watercolor paintings cut up, woven, and layered into a new piece of art.

pigment and to "pour" on the color. Select bottles with relatively flat bottoms, rather than bottles with conical shapes on the inside bottom. Any creases and/or recessed shapes in the bottom of the bottle tend to trap the pigment.

- Use distilled water for mixing. This keeps the paint from forming mold; pre-mixed paints are then usable from one painting session to the next.
- If you are working larger than 11" x 15" you will want to stretch your watercolor paper onto a board. I use a piece of ¼" finished Masonite for this. As some Masonite will bleed and stain when wet, seal the board first with an acrylic medium and allow to dry. Then tape your paper down solidly with masking tape on all four edges, pulling it tight. This way you can tip and turn the board and paper to get the paint to flow where you want it.

mixed-media techniques



salt

Adding salt to the painting makes star-like white shapes in the paint as the salt pushes away the paint colors, creating light spots in the wash. You can use different types of salt (table salt, kosher salt, etc.) to get different size “stars.” Salt works better on dye or carbon colors; it has very little effect on the earth colors, and the effect is less dramatic on the mineral colors.

Sprinkle the salt on the paper when you see the wash just begin to lose its shine. You only need a few grains. Don’t overdo it or your painting will look like it has the measles. The different types of papers will also change the look of the salt effect. If you tilt your paper so that wet pigment flows through the salt, you will get white streaks that resemble miniature comets in your colored wash.



sand

Sand has the opposite effect of salt in that it makes a dark texture in the wash. Try different textures of sand for different looks; you will be amazed at the number of textures there are in various “sands.” In my studio there are containers marked East Coast sand, West Coast sand, play sand, and even aquarium gravel.

For an even more interesting effect, mix the sand and salt together. Stretch your imagination further and see what tiny glass beads or sawdust will do. And how many textures of sawdust are there? This is the fun of experimentation!



charcoal

For a dark, moody look in your watercolor wash, try some powdered charcoal, which is available in most art supply stores. Powdered pastels can also be used in this manner to lighten up areas that have gotten too dark or muddy in the original wash. Pastels give the wash a powdery, airbrushed look.

1. Apply the powdered charcoal to your paper and then spray it with water from your spray bottle to spread it.
2. Let this dry for a few minutes and then do your wash over the top of the charcoal. All of your colors will mix with the charcoal and darken, making your painting very moody. The tonal quality of the original charcoal wash will show through the subsequent colors.
3. When completely dried, lightly spray the matte fixative over entire piece.

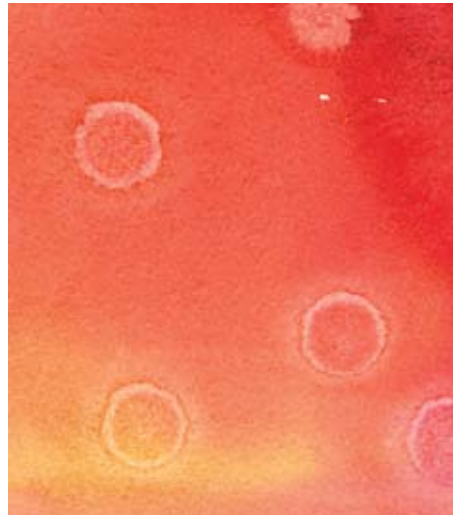


Metallics

metallics

Powdered metallics add drama to the charcoal and pastel techniques. I like to use the Daniel Smith metallic watercolors because they already have gum arabic in them, which helps powdered pigments adhere to the wash. Other metallics can be used as well, including Pearl-Ex.

1. Shake the powdered pigment lightly onto a wet wash. Some will dissolve and some will stay in powder form. If you put them over the dark charcoal powder or over a brilliant pastel color, the effect is quite dramatic and beautiful. Excess metallic powder can be brushed off once the painting has dried.
2. For added drama, alcohol can be used on the metallic powders and the crater shapes created by the alcohol will be outlined in gold, silver, or copper.
3. When completely dried, lightly spray the fixative over entire piece.

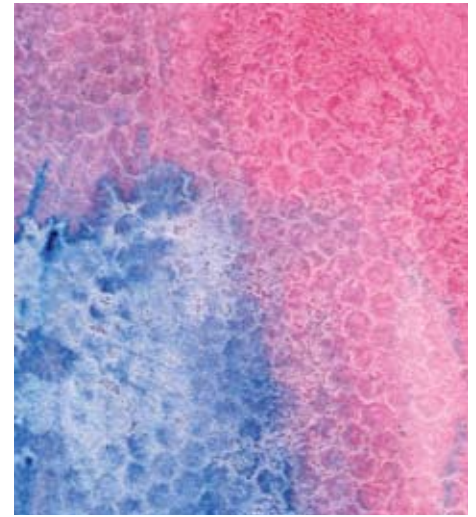


Alcohol

alcohol

Another really interesting technique to add to your bag of tricks is to use alcohol. Alcohol also pushes away the pigment and leaves the white of the paper to show through. Try dropping the alcohol onto a glaze of two colors. The first color should be dry and the second one damp. It will show through the next color layer when the alcohol is dropped onto the damp second color. For the most dramatic effect, it is best to use denatured alcohol. Available at most hardware stores; it is often labeled as “shellac thinner.”

Alcohol can be applied in a few different ways. You can mist it on from a spray bottle, which gives an effect similar to the salt technique but without the star-like quality. Again, timing is important. You need to work on the wash after it starts to dry but while it is still shiny and damp. If you put the alcohol on while the paint is too wet, it will be diluted and have no effect. If you put it on when the paint is too dry, it can’t “move” the pigment to form a mark. Another option is to apply the alcohol using an eyedropper or pipette. This gives you a “crater” effect. Several drops in one area form an interesting, dramatic texture.



Absorbent ground

absorbent ground

Another way to get texture in transparent color is with Absorbent Ground from Golden Artist Colors. It is similar to gesso but with a less plastic finish. The absorbent finish allows the transparent wash to adhere to it. This technique is great as part of an abstract painting, a page in an altered book, or for textured collage pieces. It can be used on wood, cardboard, and canvas. Take a plastic produce bag that has small air holes in it. Lay it on the paper and paint the Absorbent Ground through the openings of the produce bag. (You can also use stencils to achieve certain shapes.)

1. Remove the produce bag (or stencil) carefully so that you preserve the texture that you made.
2. Allow the Absorbent Ground to dry and then paint over it. I usually use the paint on a brush for this technique because the surface is still a bit slippery. Too much water and the paint will just slide off the surface. The paint will gather in the creases of the texture and darken, while paint on the top will be lighter.

plastic wrap

For a texture that is more geometric, plastic wrap works well. Lay down a wash in a strong color or combination of colors. Next, lay a crumpled piece of plastic wrap on top of your painting, making sure that it is in contact with the wet pigment. Let the painting dry with the plastic wrap in place; this may take 24 hours or more. When you remove the plastic wrap, there will be lines in the wash left by wrinkles in the wrap. These lines can be enhanced with metallic colors or white ink to form more pronounced and decorative abstract shapes. This is a good technique for book covers, collage backgrounds, and cards. For softer lines, remove the plastic wrap before the painting is completely dry. This technique works well as an underpainting. The transparent color that goes over the original texture will allow the texture to show through.

tips:

- To get softer, hazier lines use waxed paper.
- For an ancient textured look, try a combination of burnt sienna, burnt umber, and ultramarine blue with these techniques. It's beautiful.
- For a further stretch, spritz on some walnut ink.
- To expand your repertoire, try folding aluminum foil or waxed paper and pressing it into your painting. Other options include corrugated paper or bubble wrap, big and small.
- Try laying string, burlap, and nylon screening on your background wash.

rit dye

Another powder technique to experiment with uses Rit powdered dye.

1. Sprinkle the dye onto dry paper and then spray it with water to help it to stick and dissolve.
2. Pour clear water or light-colored paint over it to help it spread.
3. Let the original wash dry slightly, allowing the powder to settle in a bit. Then add more colors over it.
4. After it is completely dry, brush off the excess powder. This will give you a very textured, almost lumpy, effect—terrific for collage.
5. Spray a fixative over the finished piece.

working with powders:

- It is very important to remember to wear a dust mask to protect your lungs.
- Putting the powdered substance in to a shaker with large holes (like a pepper shaker) makes application more manageable. Always check to be sure the covers are on securely to avoid a mess.
- Use a spray matte fixative to set your powdery application once your painting has dried. Be sure to use the fixative in a well-ventilated area.

collage

Collaging with oriental papers over your watercolor wash is another way to add texture and cover areas. I especially like to use papers with large fibers. When collaged onto the painted surface, the paper becomes translucent and the fibers stay opaque, which makes an interesting texture and pattern.

1. Adhere the paper with fluid matte medium. The matte medium is almost invisible and if used thinly enough can be painted over with other transparent colors.



2. On the thinner papers, you can put the medium on top of the paper. The medium will soak through, adhering the thin paper to the base watercolor paper. This technique also works with tissue paper.

As you can see, the possibilities for using transparent watercolors in an experimental manner are practically limitless. Many times the papers created are paintings in themselves. Or perhaps you can put them in a collage box to be cut up later and made into new pieces of art. Make notes in your journal as you move ahead so that you can come back to some of this fun! Play, experiment, and be sure to enjoy the process as well as the product. our imagination—and your scraps! ●

To see more of Jackie's work, visit blog.jacquelinesullivan.com, or www.jacquelinesullivan.com

RESOURCES

Cheap Joe's Art Supplies
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Adapted from
CLOTH PAPER SCISSORS®
Summer 2006

Left: "Tuesday's Marvel" • 9" x 12"

textured backgrounds for collage

My favorite bookstore once had the most beautiful doors—large wooden panels with copper bottoms and glass windows. The seasons had treated them harshly, or divinely, in my opinion, weathering the wood to achieve a stunning natural layer of patina. Then that dreadful day came when I visited the bookstore and the doors were gone, replaced by new unseasoned, uninspiring doors. I still sulk every time I go through those doors. I put a lot of thought into why this change bothered me so much and realized I have a deep passion for texture and color. As a result, my latest focus has been to create more weathered textures in my backgrounds. For me, creating textures is not about following a process or working within boundaries, it is about seeking out new styles and techniques in a spontaneous manner. My goal is to create a piece of art that can stand alone by creating as much depth as possible in the background before working on the foreground. Lately, my favorite techniques lately have been stamping with random items from my studio (such as marker caps, buttons, painted lace, and the rims of jars), transferring paint with paper, using gel medium to transfer images, and adding dimension with mesh.

MATERIALS

- White gesso
- Fabriano Artistico cold-press watercolor paper
- Golden Heavy Body acrylic paints
- Golden Soft Gel Medium
- Glue (permanent glue sticks, gel medium, YES glue)
- Favorite rubber stamps and other items to use as stamps
- Variety of mesh, stencils, lace
- Nev-Dull® polish
- Caran d'Ache Neocolor II Crayons
- Paint brushes
- Ink pads
- An old credit card (used to smooth paint and push out air bubbles)
- Old books
- Damp towels or wet wipes
- Ephemera
- Collage images
- Embellishments
- All-Stabilo marking pencils
- Sandpaper
- optional
- Cardboard
- Wire
- Pearl Ex Powdered Pigments
- Wood blocks
- Gel pens for journaling
- Gold leaf paint
- Matte fixative
- Micro beads
- Sewing machine
- Threads

BY Misty Mawn

creating background images

1. Start by applying gesso to both sides of a piece of watercolor paper. Allow to dry.
2. Using 1 or 2 colors of acrylic paint, paint the entire surface of the paper, being sure that it is not applied too thick. I like to use a base color like Golden's Titanium white or buff with a small amount of a vibrant color for the first coat (such as Golden's Azurite Hue), mix it with the first color, then apply the paint.
3. Allow this to dry for a few minutes, but not completely. Take another color (the one that was added to the base, if you used 2 to start) and paint random strokes onto a piece of scrap paper.
4. Make a few designs into the paint with your fingers or a stamp and then place the scrap paper, painted-side down, onto the watercolor paper to transfer the paint.
5. Lift the paper off and do this repeatedly until there is no paint left to transfer. Some of the base paint may come off of the watercolor paper onto the scrap paper giving even more variation.
6. Take the same scrap of paper and paint on a new color. Sometimes a softer color like Titanium buff is nice to neutralize the other colors. Again, draw designs into the paint. Try taking a dried-out marker or inkless nib and write in the paint to create a design or add dots with another color. Transfer the paint again until

there is no longer any paint or until you are satisfied with the colors. One of my favorite things to do now is to take a piece of mesh, metal or plastic, and place it onto the wet paint. With the mesh in place, take a rag and gently wipe the mesh. This pulls the paint up through the mesh and adds texture. This effect can also be achieved with stencils and certain laces.

7. Slowly remove the mesh and let the paint dry.

note: Mesh comes in a variety of types and sizes. Try drywall mesh, Magic Mesh, or even a smaller mesh like cheesecloth for interesting results.

stamping with acrylics

1. Choose a stamp for the background. One of my favorite stamps is Hero Arts' "Old French Writing" stamp. Use any stamp without a lot of detail or you can use the cap of a marker, a button glued onto a cork, or any other object that can be used as a stamp.
2. Apply paint to your "stamp" and stamp onto the background as much as you like. I like to use more than one stamp with acrylic paints. Once the paint is dry you can stamp with ink as well.

adding text and transfers

1. Now you are ready to add pieces of ephemera and gel transfers. Take an old reference book or novel and tear the pages into strips. Glue these onto the background piece.
2. Add a little paint to blend these strips into the background and then scrape the paint off with an old credit card.



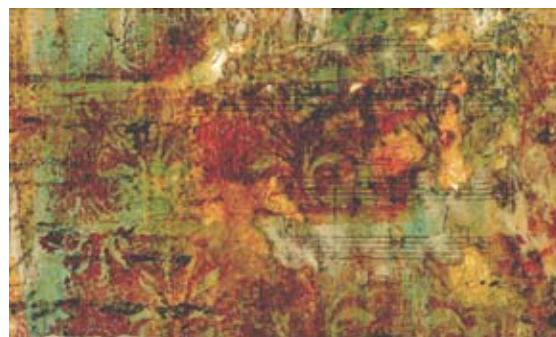
Once the gesso was dry, a wash of color was applied to the entire surface (Step 2, previous page).



Bottom: A second color was transferred to the watercolor paper using a scrap piece of paper (Step 3, previous page).



The background was stamped with acrylic paint and a text stamp, but any object that can be used as a stamp may be used.



Strips of text and transfers were added and then additional paint to blend them into the background.

3. If you have not tried gel transfers before, now is the time. Take an image you would like to transfer and paint a layer of gel medium onto the image. (I usually transfer old script, sheet music, nature prints, or architectural prints.)

making transfers

note: If you are using an old book make sure the pages are not too dried out. They will not peel off if they are too old.

1. Place the image gel-side down onto your background. Using the credit card, scrape the back side of the image until it is complexly fixed to the background without air pockets.
2. After a few minutes, slowly and gently lift or roll the image off, being careful not to tear the paper too much. The print or image will remain, giving the piece more depth; it does not have to be perfect. In fact, it's okay if only half or part of the image transfers. If you are not happy with the transfer, you can always wipe it off with a wet towel and try again.
3. Gently rub the remains of the paper off until the image shines through. At this point you may want to add more paint or stamp a pattern on with ink. I like to take a white artist crayon like Caran d'Ache Neocolor II and rub it into the grooves of textured paint. Scrape the top layer of crayon off with a credit card leaving some crayon in the grooves.
4. Allow this to dry completely. (Sometimes I just have to stop myself or I could add layer after layer of paint and transfers.)

adding collage images



Collage images are added (above) and then further embellished to add detail (below).

Now that the background is finished you are ready to add a layer of collage. I usually start with the face of a person that I am going to create.

1. Find a copyright-free face that you like and cut it out. Or, if you have the ability to draw or paint you can create your own image.
2. Position the face onto the background as desired and start adding pieces to create a body. You can add large pieces to create a long dress or small pieces put together.
3. Add wings, legs, arms, and a hat or crown. Continue placing images until you're satisfied with your piece and then glue them in place.



4. You can add more images to create a story: birds, windows, trees, tunnels, old ticket stubs, or anything you feel adds character to the piece.

To complete this piece of art you can journal over the image with gel pens, you can add embellishments such as micro beads and buttons, or sew details onto the work. When I'm satisfied with the results and the piece is dry, I spray it with a matte finish in order to keep the crayons and inks from smudging. ●

To see more of Misty's work, visit www.mistymawn.typepad.com



"Shallow Wings" • 7" x 12".