

# Marbling on Paper Information Handout

## Supplies:

- Paper (Various colors and textures, size ~ 1 inch smaller each dimension than marbling tray)
- Airbrush Paints, or other marbling pigmented paints. They should be the thickness of milk. Add 1-2 drops of water if they seem too thick.
- Oxgall (May need to order from art supplier): depending on which paints you are using, use ~1 drop of oxgall in ~30ml (one ounce) of paint. Add second drop if the paint does not float well on the marbling solution.
- Oxgall Solution (one drop per 1/3 cup distilled water) = used to create 'clear' areas in your marbling design
- Containers for paint/oxgall mix—DO NOT add the oxgall to the entire bottle of pigment paint as the oxgall mixture has a limited shelf life. Pour a small amount (15-30ml, or 1/2 to 1 ounce) of pigment paint into a separate container and add the oxgall to that container.
- Marbling Combs, hand made and other, with teeth 1/2" to 1" to 3" apart, depending on size of marbling tray
- Other manipulation objects such as straws or resists
- Toothpicks, or pins, for creating unique designs
- Paper Towels—for quick cleaning and to put wet marbled papers on
- Rags/towels: also consider paint shirt or smock, as can get messy.
- Water Jug, for transferring water from sink to trays if you are marbling at a location away from a sink
- Tray, for Alum Solution—any small tray will do, this is to put Alum solution in for dipping a sponge and wetting the paper before marbling. The paper needs to be dry to touch before it can be used.
- Alum Solution (2 TBSP Alum per 2 cups distilled water)  
For small project, probably only need one cup of solution
- Sponge, for spreading Alum Solution on paper
- Trays, for marbling solution:
  - Should be only slightly larger than size of paper to be marbled
  - Need to be deep enough for marbling solution to be ~2 inches deep
- Carageenan Solution=marbling solution=size. **IMPORTANT: Mix at least 24 hours ahead**  
Measure amount of size needed by pouring water in your marbling tray to depth of ~2 inches, then pour the water into a measuring bowl. This will be the amount of solution to make. Recipe = 2 TBSP of carrageenan in one gallon of water, but re-calculate to amount of marbling solution needed for your tray. Refrigerate overnight, but warm to room temperature before using. Will last 3-4 days, and can be re-used until no longer able to float pigments.
- Plexiglass cover for marbling solution (to keep dust off of surface, and can also use for rinsing tray)
- Tray, for rinsing. Fill with plain water
- Rinsing cup (small yogurt containers) to pour water on marbled paper for cleansing
- Paint trays (small watercolor trays)
- Scissors
- Newspaper (to clean trays): needs to be cut in 1 1/2 inch strips x wider than marbling tray
- Plastic garbage bags
- Gloves/Barrier Cream: I do not recommend either, but use if concerned

about pigment colors. The barrier cream might come off your hands and get on the paper or in the marbling solution and affect how the pigments float.

Cover Shirts/Aprons

## Set Up:

Cover Individual Tables

Set out 3 trays with 1. Alum Solution and sponge, 2. Marbling Tray with plexiglass cover, and 3. rinsing tray with plain water.

Small yogurt container to assist with rinsing papers once marbled

Marbling tools and toothpicks, etc.

Papers to be marbled

Pigment paint-oxgall mixtures

Blotting paper or paper towels

Towels, rags, paper towels for quick clean up if necessary

Garbage Bag

## Marbling Basics:

Marbling on Paper. Using water based pigments, not inks.

Ink=colorant that is fully dissolved and suspended in liquid, attaches to fibers or imbeds into fiber mesh

Pigments=very fine powder of solid colorant particles

suspended in a liquid carrier, more on the surface

Marbling=floating pigments on thickened water. Will be using

carrageenan (thickener used in cooking, especially ice cream)

Method=manipulate floating pigments using combs, toothpicks, etc

Consider SHIRT/APRON—CAN BE MESSY!!!

## STEPS to MARBLING:

**Wet paper with Alum Solution.** Try not to get hands wet as the Alum Solution can be harsh on hands.

Only one side of the paper needs to be dampened with the Alum Solution, however, if the paper curls, it is best to wet both sides. The paper should be dry to the touch before marbling.

**Drop pigments carefully onto the marbling thickened water**

Use toothpick or dropper close to the surface or gently tap the pigment paint off the end

Use toothpick, combs, straw to manipulate

Consider using a resist

**Place paper onto the surface:** using a slight bend in the middle of the paper, put the middle section down first and then gently lay down the sides.

**Rinse the paper:** place on the plexiglass at angle and pour water over to remove excess pigment and carrageenan. If the paper is strong enough, it can also be gently submerged in the water tray.

**Place marbled paper on blotter or paper towels to dry.** Can also be hung on a string or clothes line.

**Clean up:**

Throw out used skimming newspaper and loose toothpicks

Wipe ends of combs and mixing sticks with moist paper towel for re-use.