

three Painting Papers

Painting papers can be a wonderfully absorbing and relaxing occupation. For the papers featured here, diluted powdered dyes or Brusho ink are used, as these give brilliant transparent colours that can be applied with a paint brush, sponge or sponge brush.

Select a range of different types of papers. These might include commercially produced cartridge, watercolour and printer paper, a selection of handmade Asian papers, such as lokta tissue, Japanese lace and kozo papers, and even light card. When selecting your papers, spend time feeling the weight, softness, absorbency and the surface finish of the paper, as these factors will affect the painted result.

Illustration: Cotton rag paper with tea, painted with Procion dye applied with a fine brush.

glorious papers

PAINTING STRIPES

Try out the following experiments on a range of different papers, such as watercolour, Indian rag, photocopy and fine lokta, evaluating and analysing the results. When you have finished, leave the papers to dry and then review them later, adding more dye if you wish.

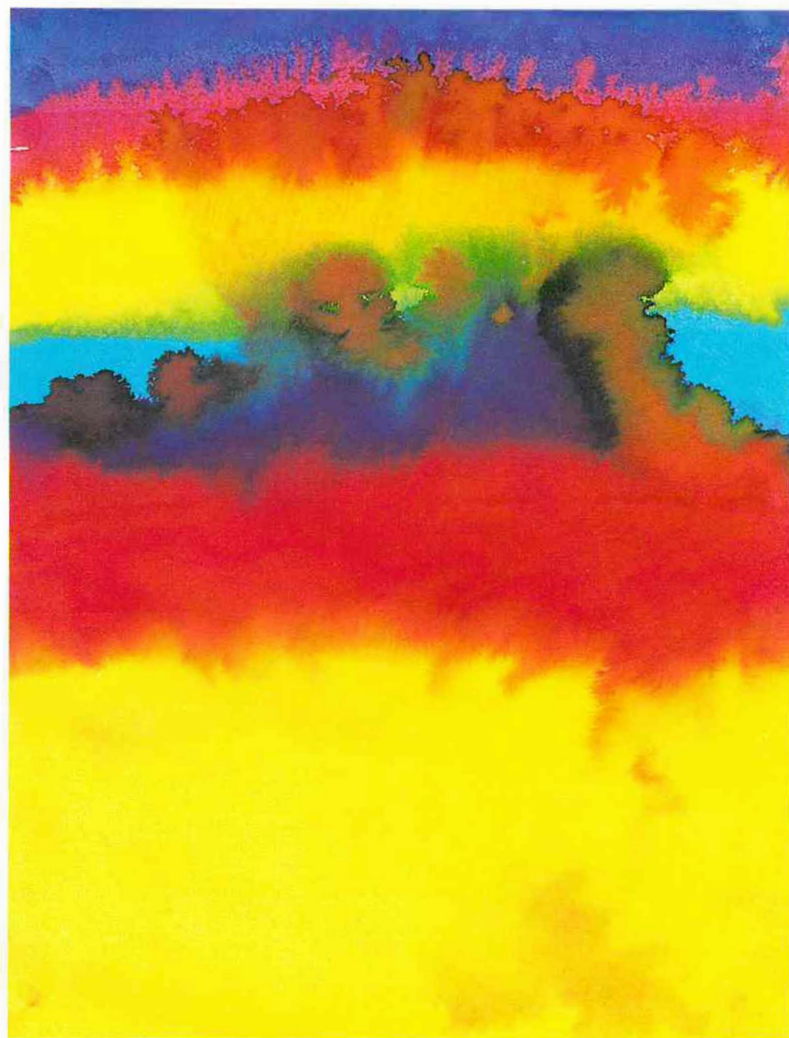
▼ Conqueror paper painted with various dyes in stripes.

► Conqueror paper as a contact print from left.

MATERIALS

- selection of different papers, cut to a manageable size, such as A4, for experimentation

- palette of dyes or Brusho inks – select a balanced range of six or seven colours as outlined in the previous chapter
- newspaper to cover your work surface
- rubber gloves (as dye can stain your hands) and an apron
- brushes, such as synthetic sable, sponges cut into 2.5 cm (1 in) pieces and sponge brushes, which will absorb liquid colour. (It is useful to have one brush for each colour; continually washing the brushes is laborious and wet brushes tend to dilute the colours.)



CRUMPLED PAPERS

Using the same materials as for painting stripes, select a range of fine absorbent papers: for example, cartridge, brown and commercial printer paper, such as Conqueror. Choose a paper that will crease when you screw it up in your hand; some thicker papers almost crack, giving them a leather-like surface.

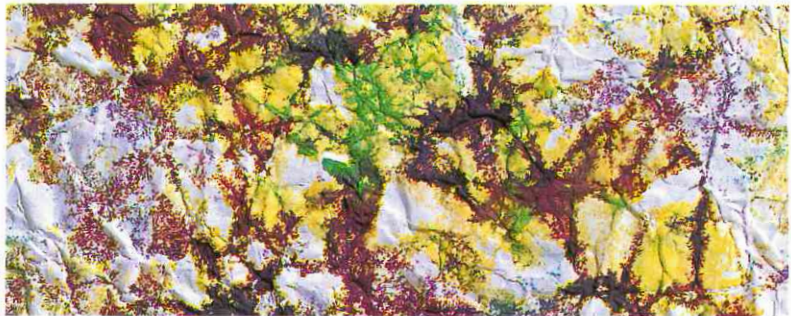
◀ Conqueror paper, crumpled, repeatedly inked with red, yellow and turquoise dyes.

METHOD

- 1 Moisten your brush with the chosen dye colour. Make sure that the brush is not saturated, as it only needs to be damp.
- 2 Lightly move the brush across the crumpled surface of the paper, leaving some areas undyed.
- 3 Allow the paper to dry before applying another colour.
- 4 Repeat the applications of dye, maybe screwing the paper again so that other areas are coloured.
- 5 If the paper starts to tear, allow the dye to dry thoroughly before further applications of colour.
- 6 On some papers, the dye will penetrate through the paper, creating attractive effects on the reverse side.
- 7 By placing a clean sheet of paper on the wet surface of the crumpled paper, a contact print of the ridge patterns can be obtained.

Try the above on a number of different papers and compare the results. If the entire surface of a paper is coloured, you are either applying the colour too heavily or the brush is too wet with dye.

▼ The reverse side of inked and crumpled paper after repeated applications of dye.



METHOD

- 1 Take a medium-weight piece of cartridge paper; dip your brush into the lightest colour, and apply it gently and evenly across the paper.
- 2 Watch how the dye absorbs into the paper. Some papers will drink up the dye, leaving a matt surface on which brush marks can be seen. On finer finished papers the dye may lie on the surface for longer, sometimes creating a puddle.
- 3 Be aware of what is happening on your paper and use that to your advantage. If the colour is not absorbing into the paper quickly, use less dye or even blot the colour with another piece of paper.
- 4 Wet colour can be used to great effect if you lay one line of wet colour carefully alongside another; allowing them to bleed gently into each other.
- 5 Sometimes a colour will run across a number of other colours, creating a very dramatic effect.
- 6 Continue laying rows of colour adjacent to each other, until you have a beautiful rainbow paper.
- 7 If the surface of the paper is very damp, but not awash with dye, carefully place a clean sheet of paper over it. Gently press the two together and immediately peel them apart. The result is often a beautiful paper, which has taken up the excess dye, giving it a delicate dotted surface, sometimes representing clouds or skies.

glorious papers

SPRAYED PAPERS

(Preceding page)
Lightweight card
sprayed with a range
of Procion dyes.

Either a pump spray or diffuser may be used to spray the dye on paper. By using a fine spray, you can gradually build up the colour to create very subtle and blended changes. It saves time to have a spray bottle or diffuser for each colour and enables you to mix colours quickly and create the effect you want.

MATERIALS

- palette of dyes or Brusho inks – select a balanced range of six or seven colours as outlined in the previous chapter
- newspaper to cover your work surface
- rubber gloves
- selection of thick or absorbent papers
- pump sprays or diffusers

METHOD

- 1 The chosen paper should be thick or absorbent, as it will become very damp during spraying.
- 2 Care needs to be taken not to get the surface too saturated as this results in pools of colour, which can be unattractive.
- 3 It is possible to spray on a horizontal surface, but take care to cover the surrounding area with newspaper.
- 4 Spray the surface of the paper with a selection of colours, taking care not to saturate any particular area.
- 5 To retain the definition of the colours and to prevent them becoming muddy, allow the paper to dry between different applications.
- 6 It is possible to place a temporary mask, such as torn paper, on the surface of the paper during spraying. In this way, the colours can be layered up, creating lines of colour.

▶ Cotton rag paper
with straw, painted with
Procion dye, the side
tip of a sponge brush
being used to create
triangular shapes.

▶▶ Lokta wood dust
paper painted with
various Procion dye
colours.





GLORIOUS PAPERS

TECHNIQUES FOR APPLYING
COLOUR TO PAPER



R U T H I S S E T T

