

MARBLING WITH GOLDEN FLUID ACRYLICS

Marbling (or marbleizing) is an intricate art form with numerous variables and techniques, especially when it comes to manipulating the paint on the size. This instruction sheet is just a starting point, with information about the materials and set-up. For a deeper understanding, consult books and other sources. And, most of all, spend some time playing with it.

GOLDEN Fluid Acrylics can be used for marbling paper, fabric and objects. They can be used on most marbling sizes, including methyl-cellulose and carrageenan.

THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS: PIGMENTS & SIZE

(Many kinds of paints can be used. This set of instructions refers specifically to the Golden Acrylics and their additives.)

PAINT AND ADDITIVES

GOLDEN Fluid Acrylics come in a large assortment of colors. They need to be thinned to work properly for marbling. Water works, or Airbrush Medium or GAC 900 for more permanence with use on fabric.

GOLDEN Airbrush Medium is a 100% acrylic binder system designed for modifying the GOLDEN Fluid Acrylics for airbrush/spray application. It can be used to dilute the Fluid Acrylics for marbling, but it is not necessary. It slightly changes how the colors move on the size.

GOLDEN GAC 900 is an acrylic medium that increases the wash fastness of marbled fabric. Note: The heat-setting process will release low levels of formaldehyde; therefore it is imperative that adequate ventilation be provided. Using a dryer, vented to the outdoors, is recommended.

TO PREPARE ONE GALLON OF SIZE

Into one gallon of water sprinkle one ounce of Methyl-cel (about 4 tablespoons)—stir in well. (Optional: add 1 teaspoon fabric softener, like Downy®.) Add 2 teaspoons of clear ammonia—stir thoroughly. Let stand until size thickens (about an hour). Neutralize now with 2 teaspoons of white vinegar. About an hour before you plan to start marbling, pour the size gently into your tray or pan, and let it stand until bubbles are gone (You can help them leave by scraping the surface carefully with strips of paper).

YOU WILL ALSO NEED:

Paper or cloth To marble on. Things like sneakers are possible, but not the best thing to start with. Flat surface are easier to handle.

A tray to work in A shallow, flat tray or pan that is at least 1" deep. A cardboard tray with a plastic bag liner maybe used for trials and children's use. Choose a tray big enough for the sheet of paper or cloth, with at least 1" clearance all around.

Stylus, toothpicks, sticks, nails, combs Or other objects that can be used to manipulate the floating paints. These can also be taped or glued (evenly spaced) to long, rectangular pieces of cardboard to make a comb or rake to develop intricate patterns.

Aluminum Sulfate Commonly called "alum".

Color applicators/dispensers Whisks made of broom straw, squeeze bottles, eye droppers, pipettes.

Water Needed for mixing, washing and cleaning. Be sure water is relatively neutral, perhaps using distilled water for color mixing and size mixtures.

Newspapers and/or Paper Towels, for cleaning up, during and after. **Clothespins**, for hanging fabric up.

BEFORE MARBLING

Pre-treat paper or fabric with alum.

This allows the paint to make a more permanent bond. Using a mixture of 1¼ cup alum to a gallon of water, mix well until all alum has dissolved.

Soak cloth well in alum-water. For paper, it may be better to pour the alum mixture into a spray bottle and spritz it on evenly. You can use a sponge to remove excess. Pat dry or hang on a line until dry. Some marblers press the cloth or paper to dry it and to remove wrinkles. The material must be fully dry in order to get a good transfer of pattern. Plan on doing this the day before marbling to allow the material to fully dry.

Prepare the size/medium.

See at left. Keep the mixture in a cool area, refrigerated is better. The cooler the mixture is when actually marbling, the better the performance. Once made, you should treat the mixture like a food product, as methyl-cel can spoil. If using a refrigerator containing food, keep separate.

MIXING THE PAINT

Colors: Colors mix. The Golden Fluid Acrylic colors mix especially well. Please experiment.

For paper: Dilute about half-and-half with water (or, if you prefer, Airbrush Medium). Start with a little less water, so you can adjust without wasting paint.

For fabric: For applications onto fabric, GAC 900 can be used instead of water, to make the end product more wash-fast. Be sure heat-set according to directions (see cautions at left).

TEST SIZE & PAINT

Pour size into tray at least an inch deep. Give bubbles time to go off, or pop them carefully. Drag a piece of newspaper across the surface of the Size. This helps to set up the surface tension and remove bubbles. Pick up a drop of paint on the tip of a small stick (or bamboo skewer, tiny dowel, broom straw, pipette). Put the paint on the size and watch how it spreads. If it just sits, or gets smaller, or sinks down, or spreads without bound — conditions are not right. The size is too thick or too thin, or the paint is, or the humidity is too high or too low. If you can spot and repair the problem, do it. Ideally, the paint should spread easily out to a 3-4 inch diameter circle. Test all the colors you intend to use, because different pigments will travel differently. Note which are the fastest and which are the slowest.

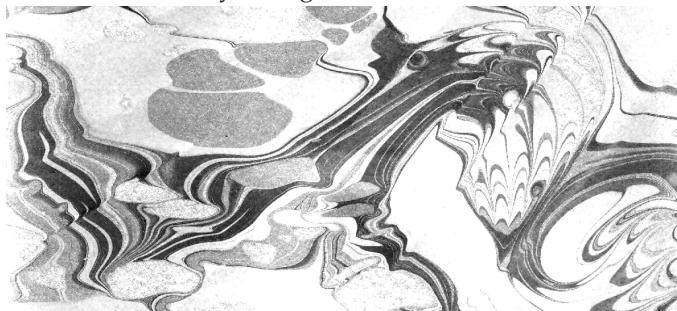
Clean up your test by placing a piece of newspaper on the size; leave it for a few seconds to absorb the paint. Pick up two adjacent corners and drag the paper across the edge of the pan, scraping as much size as possible back into the pan. This is a good time to think about where you will put your marbled cloth (hanging) or fabric (hanging or flat) to dry.

BEGIN MARBLING

There are really no rules from here out, either for applying or manipulating the colors. It's up to you to find methods that give pleasing results. But there are some common practices that will get you started. Using the slowest moving of your colors, apply a pattern of dots around the size, anywhere from four to twelve dots—each spreads out into a circle, then squares up as it bumps into its mates. Then, into the center of each squarish circle, apply a drop of a second color. And again with third and fourth colors, building bulls-eyes.

If you like the effect you have now got, you can take a print. The colors, by the way, will print darker than they appear on the size.

Or you can manipulate the colors. Use a pointed stick or a fork or a wide-toothed comb and push the colors around on the surface of the Size. Don't go deep, drag just deeply enough to move the paint. Use slow long sweeps, or slow sharp zig-zags, swirl through complete circles, or back up, or go side-wards. It's your design. When you have got it where you want it, take a print. Don't be too long making the pattern—the color separation eventually breaks down and you begin to lose fine detail.



PRINTING

Lay the paper or cloth as smoothly as possible onto the size. Begin at one end and let it roll down. Or begin in the center and roll out. Hesitations will show as lines across the design. Avoid air bubbles between the sheet and the size, they'll leave gaps in the print and paint will be left on the size. A large piece of cloth may go down more easily with two people. Or pin the edges to dowels the length of your pan—hold up by the dowels and let the middle droop down until it hits the middle of the Size, then lower the dowels down and out until the cloth lays evenly on the Size. Leave it for several seconds, to give the paint time to penetrate. Some paper needs longer for full color.

Pick up two adjacent corners and lift the sheet up off the Size. Either lift straight up and allow the excess size to drip back into the pan; or pull across the edge and scrape the size back in. Scraping saves more size, but can smear the colors. The less size you waste, the longer you can go on marbling, so keep as much in the pan as possible.

RINSING & DRYING

For fabric, remove some of the size right away. Be very gentle or the colors will blur. Floating the piece in warm water is preferable to holding it under a faucet. For paper, it's better to let it start to dry before rinsing.

Hang cloth to dry, lay paper flat or hang like cloth. After half an hour, carefully rinse the excess Size off your paper, and leave to dry completely (rinsing speeds drying and reduces sticking).

CONTINUE

You may need to clean the surface of the size with newspaper before starting your next design, if not every time, every few times.

Eventually you'll run out of size, but you can get dozens to hundreds of prints from a gallon. Try working with a whole rainbow of colors, or with just one, or with a couple. Try lots of manipulating for very detailed fussy designs. Try minimal manipulating for simpler patterns. Try whatever you can think of.

FINISH

If you have been working with cloth, you'll need to heat-set the dyes. It's not necessary with paper (although ironing can help to get the paper flat). Place the fabric or paper between two pieces of white paper and press with a heat setting appropriate to the fabric (warm for paper). One minute at hot, two at medium, four at low. Now wash, using any household detergent and dry, just as you would a garment from the same fiber.

If you are using GOLDEN GAC 900: The heat-setting process will release low levels of formaldehyde; therefore it is imperative that adequate ventilation be provided. Using a dryer, vented to the outdoors, is recommended.