

Terraskin/Yupo Paper and Alcohol Ink



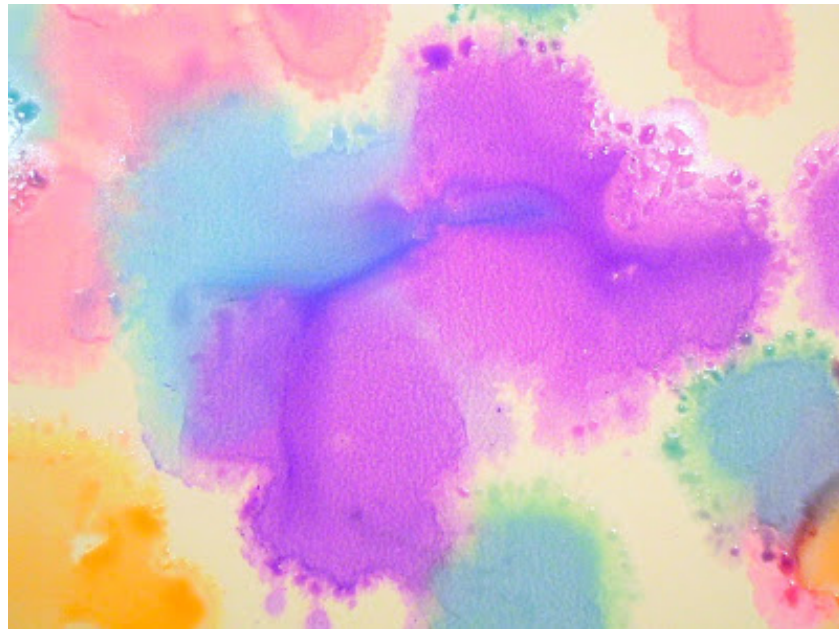
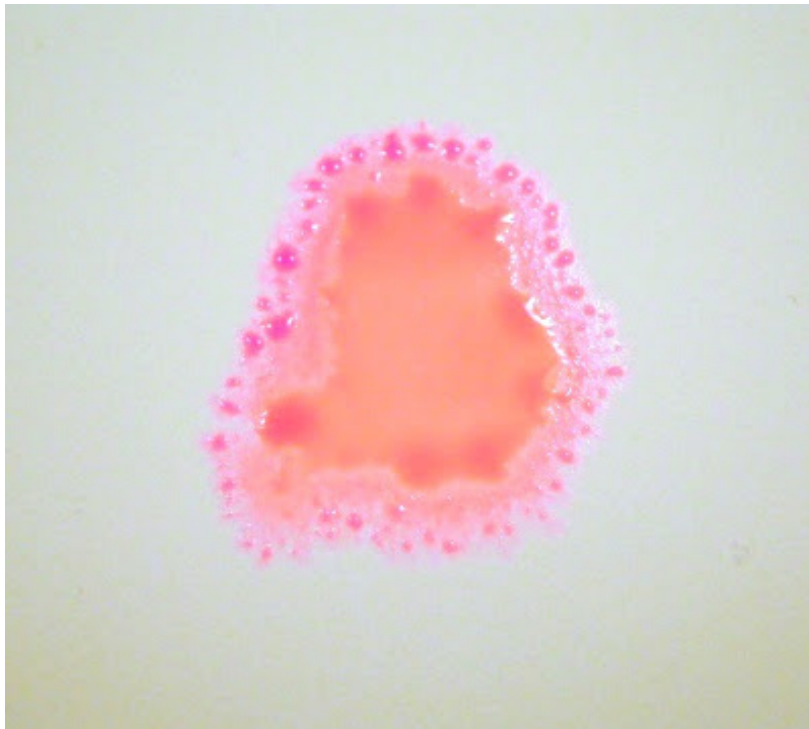
*This tutorial is an abridged version of a blog post in my *Elephant a Day 2.0* blog, originally published on September 13, 2013. If you need a bit more guidance or information, check out the original post at: elephantaday2.blogspot.ca.*

What You'll Need

- Alcohol inks—available at craft stores, or make your own
- Terraskin or Yupo paper—non-fibre paper, available at art stores and online
- Cotton swabs, microbrushes, and/or cotton wool
- Citrus-based cleaner, such as Citrasolv[®]
- Plastic sheeting to cover your work surface—alcohol ink stains everything

Method

1. Apply alcohol ink to your paper with a paintbrush or eyedropper. I used an eyedropper, because I liked the way the colours overlapped and bloomed into one another. Although the colour will eventually bond with the paper, it sits on top and remains wet for a bit, allowing you to play.



2. When you are happy with your background, leave the paper to dry. It's good to go once it is dry to the touch. I left mine two small sheets to dry for about an hour.



3. Once your backgrounds are dry, you are ready to "draw" by removing the ink with cotton swabs and citrus-based cleaner. Note that citrus cleaner is pretty much the only solvent that works effectively. Alcohol, for example, does not remove dried alcohol ink.

In addition to cotton swabs, which I find a bit clunky, I used "microbrushes" which are essentially teeny cotton swabs. Although not always available at art stores, hardware stores sometimes carry them. Paintbrushes won't work for the ink-removal part of this activity, because you need to apply a fair amount of pressure.

4. Dip your chosen tool in citrus cleaner and begin drawing. I started by creating an outline with the microbrush. Hard lines will require a surprising amount of pressure, and perhaps even a second pass with an equal amount of pressure if you want a bright white line. In my case, I didn't want a white line, so this faint delineation was fine with me.

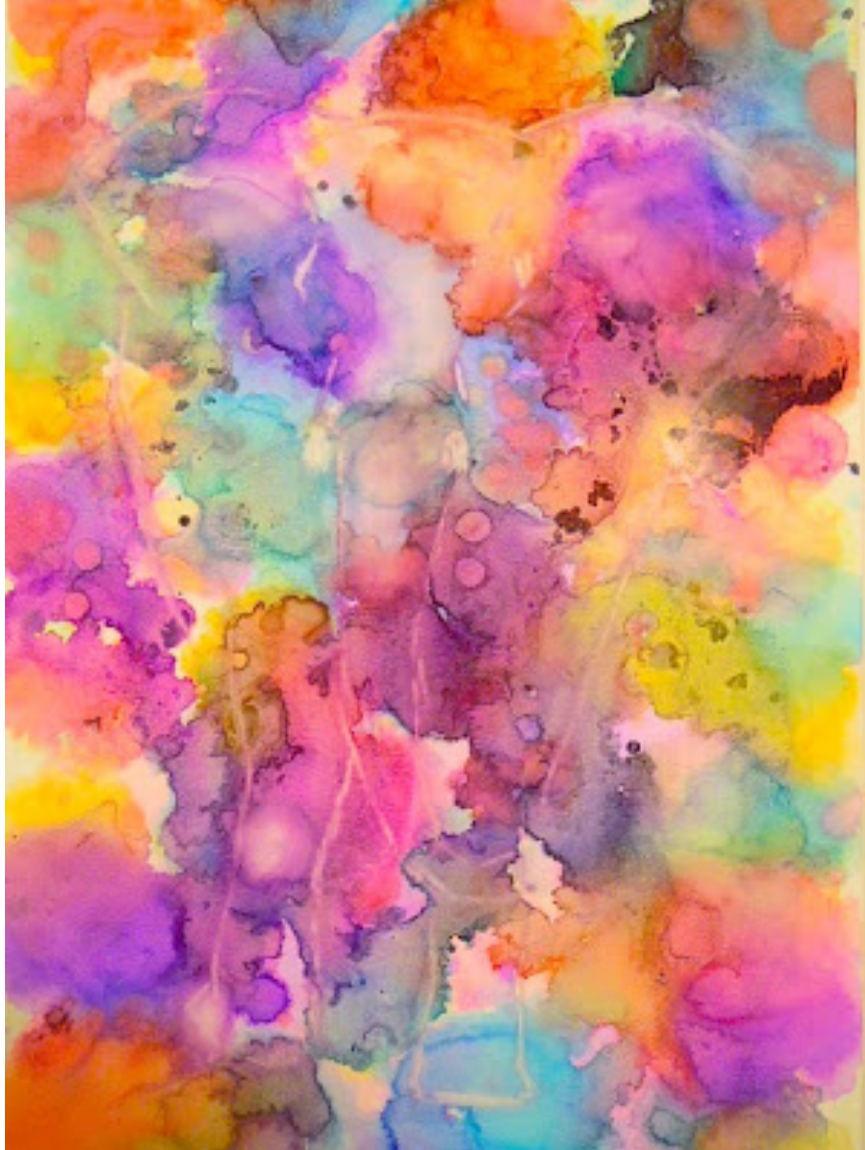


5. Once the outline was in place, I began shading with cotton swabs. I found that the cotton swabs were good for mid-sized swathes of ink, but that a bit of wadded up cotton ball was better for large areas and softer edges.





6. I used the same technique for my second elephant, discovering in the process that I could make interesting lines if I rubbed really hard with the microbrush. As you play with the technique, you'll discover various ways of playing with your ink-removal tools.



As you can see, it's very easy—if a bit messy while you're playing with the ink. As my first attempts with this technique, I was pretty happy with these. The ink blooms often created serendipitous areas of colour that helped with the design, and the whole effect is dreamlike and surreal.

You'll need a bit of elbow grease to remove the ink, and you might not always remove it as precisely as you'd like, but it's definitely worth the effort.



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