
Marbled Gift Wrappings with Mercedes Rex

Chapter 1 - Marbled Gift Wrappings

Overview

(upbeat music) - There's nothing quite like engaging with water marbling for the first time. In order to relive that experience, I now share the art with others, teaching workshops all across the country. If you've taken my Creativity Through Marbling course, chances are you've amassed your own collection of pretty papers. In this workshop, I'll show you creative ways to repurpose your marble designs. (upbeat music continues) As an avid maker, I've been giving handmade gifts for as long as I can remember. Since discovering the magic of marbling, I've really leveled up my gift giving game. I'll show you how to pre-treat and print specialty items such as wooden ornaments and ribbon. After this class, you'll never give a gift that isn't marbled, just try. (upbeat music continues)

Materials

- Here's what we'll need for this class. To begin, we'll be preparing a few of our items. I have one tablespoon of alum dissolved in this quart of warm water. For our marbling solution, we'll well blend two tablespoons of carrageenan in a gallon of warm water. You'll need a full gallon to work with a larger sized tray. I'm using an 18 by 24 frame here, which is a great size for working with larger sheets of paper. I've got an 18 by 24 sheet of newsprint which fits snugly in here, perfect for wrappings. As always, be sure to have newspaper strips on hand to clear any excess paint from your surface and then a variety of tools. I've gathered my broom straws. I have a rake. This one's totally optional but feel free to grab any combs you may have on hand. A rake's kind of nice to have. You'll want your bamboo stylus. For paint, I've selected jewel tones, but use any colors you like. I've got a palette here. I'll need this for applying my paint with the broom straws. Have a rag nearby for clearing any clogs on your paint nozzles and for dabbing paint from fingertips and another optional tool, a straw, which can create some really interesting patterns. Safety pin is another device I use for clearing any clogged nozzles. I'll be showing you how to marble a few different types of ribbon. I have a cotton muslin and then a silk ribbon. This stapler will help hold the ribbon to the cardboard for dipping. I'll demonstrate how to marble papered gift tags and I've also got some balsa wood ornaments. Both the ribbon and the balsa wood need to be soaked in alum for 20 minutes and then allowed to completely dry before printing. I've also gathered marbled papers from previous sessions and I'll show you how to make beautiful marbled liners for pre-made envelopes. Be sure to have scissors, a pencil for tracing our template and a glue stick for affixing the papers to our envelope.

Marbled wrapping paper

- In developing new designs for my silk bandana line, I use 18-by-24 newsprint. These papers are perfect for gift wrapping. I've chosen jewel tones for this class, and you can choose whatever colors match your occasion. Load up your palette with the paints that you want to use, being sure each paint is well shaken before you put your paint in the tray. Before I begin and at the start of every marbling session, you'll want to be sure to clear your surface using your newspaper strips. (paper rubbing) This removes any dust that may have settled on the surface and also breaks up the surface tension. Now I'm ready to start my stone pattern. I'll grab a brush and dip the bristly end in the well of my paint palette. (paintbrush tapping) Holding my brush between my thumb and my pointer finger, I'll tap down near the bristly end. (finger tapping) Distribute the paint onto the surface. Start

kinda light here, (finger tapping) keeping in mind that our tray is a larger size, so you'll likely need more paint to cover the full surface. (paintbrush tapping) (finger tapping) (paintbrush tapping) (finger tapping) Next, I add my plum. My color choice is always just kind of off the cuff, done in the moment. In general, I'm thinking about colors that'll have good contrast from one another. (paintbrush tapping) (finger tapping) And then other times, I'm doing something more monochrome. So it's always changing. Let's do this kinda golden ochre color next. (paintbrush tapping) (finger tapping) The order that you lay your paint down on the tray will affect its saturation. (finger tapping) With that in mind, I think I'll go from here to this kind of lighter sagey green. Not officially a jewel tone, but I think it's gonna look nice in here. (paintbrush tapping) (finger tapping) (paintbrush tapping) Gonna follow that with a kind of teal color. (finger tapping) (paintbrush tapping) (finger tapping) (paintbrush tapping) (finger tapping) (paintbrush tapping) And for my last color, (paintbrush tapping) we've got this navy blue. (finger tapping) (paintbrush tapping) (finger tapping) (paintbrush tapping) (finger tapping) And on the surface, you can see that the first color that I laid down, that indigo color, is the most saturated, right? And they sort of have a descending saturation point the later the color is introduced into the tray. On the surface, I'm not picking up a huge differentiation in my green, that kinda teal color and my navy. But I think once I get it on the paper, backed by the opacity of the paper, we'll see that color come through. Okay, now you could stop here. The stone pattern's lovely. You could also introduce your bamboo stylus. But I'm gonna pull my rake through on this design. So starting at the top, I'll rake this rake through. And there's so many options. I could double back, but I kinda like this casual marbled look. And I'm finished. So I will drop my sheet of newsprint onto the surface. Grabbing opposite corners here. This paper is the same size as my tray, so it's a real tight fit. I want to guide one corner down, let the diagonal corner hit, and follow down with my hands to release. I'll use my bamboo stylus to assist me in removing the paper from the surface, and I'm gonna drag along the edge of my tray to help remove any excess marbling liquid, the size, which will speed up the drying process. All right. I'm happy with this. As I mentioned, the green and the blue were sort of hard to decipher on the surface of the liquid. But now backed by the opacity of the paper, we definitely can see how those two colors are distinct. Once your paper is completely dry, it's ready for wrapping. If your paper has any crinkles to it, you can use an iron on the back side. Give it a little steam, use a low setting, and run the iron smoothly along the back side to even those out.

Marbled ribbon, gift tags and ornaments

- Let's move on to some specialty items. I'm working with two types of ribbon. The first is a cotton muslin, and I also have a silk. As a reminder, both of these have been pretreated as well as my wood with alum and are completely dry. I'm gonna attach my ribbon to this cardboard sheet (stapler clicks) and wind it around, being mindful not to overlap. This is kind of a cool hack that will allow you to marble a nice length of ribbon, should cover a larger present or perhaps you'll get two goes from one ribbon. Okay. (stapler clicks) I'm fixing my tail there, and now, I'll attach my silk. (stapler clicks) Same thing. Wind it on both sides, being mindful not to overlap. Perfecto. (stapler clicks) Great. My staples are kind of poking out there. I wanna tuck those under. And now this piece is ready. Let's get some paint in this tray. Begin by clearing your surface with a newspaper strip. I did see a little dust had settled on the tray. Getting that out of the way is important. Otherwise it'll impact your design. And I'm working with this same color set. Take a moment here to load more paint into each of my paint wells. I'm gonna begin with a stone pattern again, maybe switching up my color order this time. What happens when we bring that navy blue in first? I want a nice, even

distribution of color. These items are in the danger zone. I'll bring in the teal. I got a little heavy-handed up here in my top right hand corner, so I'm gonna break that up. A lot of times with a stone pattern, I'm just looking for even distribution of color, trying to avoid solid blocks of one color. I'm gonna bring in this sage color next, and I'm doing that because I wanna give this color a chance to gain in saturation. Upon first applying it to the surface, it really almost comes through as white. Now, I think we'll see the color picked up on the objects that I'm marbling here, but I wanna give it a chance to gain in its color saturation. Great, and then for my final color, this indigo, and I almost went in the opposite order exactly, I think, from that initial print that I did. Be fun to compare how the colors register differently based on the order that they're applied in. But this is feeling great. Yeah, it looks like a very different print. Okay, now the fun part. Let's start with our ribbon, and I was mindful to make sure that the cardboard that I'm wrapping around was small enough to give me the opportunity to kind of flip on my dips here. So I'm gonna begin with this. I'm pressing down slightly just to make sure that my fabric is fully submerged on the back side. And then you wanna be careful as you lift this because this side needs to stay completely dry, so wet fingertips are a consideration. Oh. I've breached the surface a little bit. It's okay. It'll give us a chance to see how that impacts the design. Interesting. Okay. It's like the silk really took it quite well, and then sort of a mixed bag here on muslin. And while this is sitting in the solution I'm actually gonna pop a few of my gift tags in. Those sit on the surface. Okay. Let me get this ribbon outta here. Okay, very cool. Huh. I'm gonna put that off to the side. Let's take a look at that in a moment, and I'll finish because I've still got some paint in my tray. I also have wet fingers, so I wanna be careful to clean off any wet paint. Oh, these are great. Put these off to the side. Okay, let's do a star. And these are two-sided. So again, I got a little bit of liquid on the back side of my star. Oh, I also got a few air bubbles, but you know what? With that stone pattern, it doesn't even matter. And my paint is getting kind of faint at this point. Let me try one more. But my pattern has stretched quite a bit, and so the saturation of my paint isn't really high. It may be time to reload my tray with more paint. Wow. Big air bubble there. I'm gonna try coming at it with a little bit of an angle and see if that helps in relieving the air bubbles. Both the balsa wood ornaments and the ribbon now need to be rinsed in fresh water. Let's take a closer look. I've rinsed my ornaments and the ribbon, and let's just kind of see what happened here. You can see between the two ribbons, the silk definitely took the process more readily. Even on this one piece of cotton muslin, the results kind of varied. We have this large area where the paint didn't really absorb a couple of things. All fabrics vary in how well they absorb the paint. So this might have been treated with something, might have had a sizing that resisted it, but because I did have, you know, some more even absorption of my paint, I'm inclined to think that what helped me absorb the paint better here was that on the second side, that second dip, I let my fabric stay in contact with the surface for a little longer, and I think that may have impacted how well the paints were able to absorb into the fibers. I always recommend that you're working with natural fibers. Looking at the balsa wood, you know it's light enough in color that it was able to pick up the paint even though my pattern had stretched out quite a bit. I don't have the saturation that I would've had had I been working on a tray that was newly covered with pigment because some of it had already been absorbed by the ribbon. But I did end up with a few air bubbles here, and that's just something that can happen when you're working with surfaces that have no give. So, you know, fabrics and paper, we're more able to bow them as they come into contact with the surface of your marbling size. Completely rigid, flat surfaces can be problematic. If I were to do this again, I may try to come at the surface on an angle, play around with that, but I'm really, really pleased with how the gift tags turned out. The colors are bright. I love the patterning. I've got one more example of silk

ribbon I had done in a previous session that I wanna share with you. On this one I did a gelget pattern. For more information on that or examples of what that pattern looks like, check out my Creativity Through Marbling Course. Silk is fantastic to work with, really easy, does a great job of absorbing the paint. For me, experimenting with marbling on different surfaces has opened a world of possibilities. I know once you begin playing around with this process, you'll wanna keep going to see just how far you can take it.

Marbled envelope liners

- Once you've amassed a collection of marbled papers you may have more pretty pages than you know what to do with. Making envelope liners is one of my favorite ways to repurpose these papers. This project is so easy and you don't need to start from scratch. I'll be using these pre-made envelopes and this works with any envelope you have. Flipping my paper over, I'll lay down the envelope I'm gonna use and just trace. Just drawing all the way around the outside of your envelope. And then you'll just need to cut inside the line that you made. And I'm cutting about an eighth of an inch inside the line that I've drawn. (scissors cutting paper) And for the bottom of our envelope we don't need the full size of the envelope. So I'm gonna cut maybe about an inch and a half. Even two inches could go from the bottom. (scissors cutting paper) So this piece is gonna work perfectly in here. I will open my envelope and insert my marbled piece. Kinda position it where you think you might like it being mindful to leave this little lip of adhesive. And then I'll make a crease and I'll only need to apply the glue to the top portion of my design to affix it. (glue stick tapping) Smooth your paper down, and then recrease the fold. That's it. It's just that easy. I would let this envelope dry, maybe even under a weight. I love using these for the letters that I send. And a collection of six or a dozen make a wonderful gift. Speaking of gifts, look at how beautiful this looks with all the elements together. The marbled paper I've added my silk ribbon and the gift tag. Personalized, special, unique. These marbled gift wrappings are as fun to make as they are to receive.