

## Turkish Marbling

By Monique Martin Georges Vanier School [www.moniqueart.com](http://www.moniqueart.com)

Article from Opus Art supplies can be viewed at  
[http://opusartsupplies.com/sites/default/files/how\\_to/Marbling\\_On\\_Paper.pdf](http://opusartsupplies.com/sites/default/files/how_to/Marbling_On_Paper.pdf)

### Turkish Marbling – Ebru

Marbling, a traditional Turkish and Islamic art dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, can be described briefly as water face painting.

The Turkish word Ebru, meaning clouds, describes the artist's own inner world.

Patterns, which take shape on water, are fixed when they are transferred to paper or other materials, which can be used for a variety of purposes.

As is akin to abstract painting and contemporary graphic art, nowadays marbling is often framed and hung.

### Materials

- Opus - Jacquard Carrageenan \$ 36.18/ EA <https://store.opusartsupplies.com>
- Tablespoon for measuring
- Blender
- Acrylic Paint, Medium Viscosity
- Forks
- Shallow cake pans (square, rectangular)
- Isopropyl Alcohol
- Small squeeze bottles with an applicator tips
- White drawing paper (thicker paper works well too!) Card Stock
- Clay needle tools, or any type of long thin metal stick
- Newsprint

## **Objectives**

- to explore colour and composition in a monotype format (monotype is )
- To use complimentary colours and split complementary colour combinations in a work of art
- Be able to recognize paper marbling
- To be able to create simple images in marbling (heart, flower, tulip)

Traditionally, marbling involves the use of oil paint, thinners and water. This method is based on the principle that oil and water do not mix. The following method uses non-toxic equivalents to achieve basically the same product. Traditional marbling materials achieve a softer more delicate finished product.

## **Mixing your Carrageenan**

(Follow the directions on the bag as each Carrageenan product is not the same) Carrageenan is the substance that the paint will float on. To prepare the Carrageenan. Fill a blender with 5 cups of warm water. Add two tablespoons of Carrageenan and the blend at high speed. The Carrageenan will become very thick. It can be poured into a sterilized container and stored in the fridge. It is suggested for better results to refrigerate your Carrageenan for 2-3 weeks before for use. The Carrageenan that is created in the blender is a concentrated form. To use it in the classroom I pour the concentrated liquid in the cake pans and slowly add water until the Carrageenan is the consistency of corn syrup. Some artists prefer to mix the Carrageenan to its thinner form from the start and then store it. I find that it takes up too much space in the fridge in its thin form.

It is important to not use the Carrageenan when it is very cold or very warm. The Carrageenan works best at room temperature.

Pre- cut your paper to a size that fits your bath and have it ready. Cut it about 1 cm smaller than the surface of the Carrageenan so that it is easier to pick the paper off the surface.

### **Preparing the paint**

The safest and simplest paint for the beginner marbler is a water-based, non-toxic acrylic. An ideal choice is a medium viscosity acrylic, which can be easily diluted to an ink-like consistency. To dilute it mix 50/50 with isopropyl. Use the 70 percent Alcohol solution. Opus does sell small squeeze jars with pointed lids which are perfect. In general, when using fresh paint, these proportions work well, needing only occasional minor adjustments to allow for the differences in the pigment characteristics, evaporation or to top up the paint.

### **Testing the Paint**

If your paint mixture sinks to the bottom of the Carrageenan bath as soon as it is dropped on the surface, the bath may be too thick or the paint too thick. As well, the paint may have been dropped too far from above the surface or with too much force. If your paint spreads with such extreme rapidity that it seems to disappear, there may be too much alcohol mixed with it. Experiment with your paint by adding more or less alcohol or more paint, until the colours spread on the surface rapidly but stays on the surface.

To change the consistency of the Carrageenan do not add powder Carrageenan to the bath.

### **Marbling on paper**

First, randomly drop a few single drops of colour from about two inches above the bath. Create patterns of coloured drops. Using 2 or 3 colours seems to work well. However, I had some amazing pieces produced with one colour. One colour pieces tend to look like falling leaves.

Using the needle tool run it through the dots. It will create heart like shapes. The shapes will change with the number of passes through the bath. I have found that it is best if the children try to keep the needle tool in the get. Bringing it in and out leads to having paint where it is not wanted.

To place the paper on the Carrageenan bend the paper into a “U” shape and place the paper in the center first and then let the edges naturally fall onto the Carrageenan. You may need to lightly touch the corners to get the paper to move down. This will prevent the trapping of air under the paper, which causes bubbles. The colour will not transfer where bubbles are present. If you have thicker paper be very careful not to trap air under the paper.

Remove the image from the bath by gently pulling it across the edge of the tray. This will remove some of the excess Carrageenan. The image will look slightly smudged when first removed do not despair. To remove the smudging take newsprint and place it on top of the image. Rub it, remove the newsprint, repeat as many times as needed until the image is gel free.

Very important. To maintain the Carrageenan gel and to keep it from becoming colour saturated too quickly excess paint must be removed. Use a newsprint sheet and lay it over the gel. Pull the paper along the edge of the tray. This can be repeated many times until the gel is fairly clean. When this is done take a small piece of paper towel and clean the edge where the piece was pulled from. Finally use a fork to force any small bits of pigment below the surface. If bubbles are created in the fork process pop them with the needle tool before beginning the next piece.



