

SPLATTERS, DRIPS AND DROPS

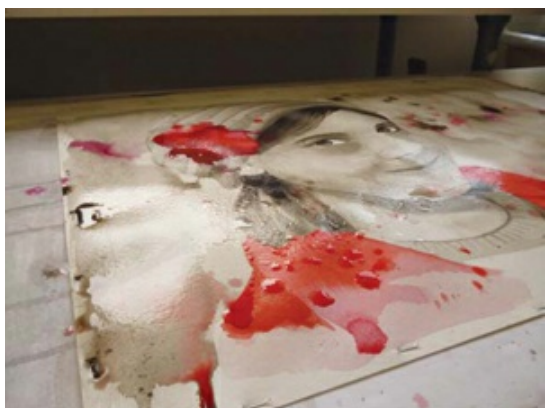
I like the imperfections of the watercolor medium and am frequently looking for ways to add more imperfections to my paintings. I guess you could say I'm a thrill junkie! I enjoy the feeling I get from possibly messing up something I created. Most of the time, though, I am pleased with the results I see as a result of splattering and adding drips and drops to my work.

Splattering Tools



Splattering with a Toothbrush

A toothbrush is a fun tool to use to splatter. It produces fine splatters and gives you control over the direction of those splatters.



Splattering with a Brush

A brush can also be used to splatter paint. The resulting drops will be larger than with a toothbrush.



Splattering with an Eyedropper

An eyedropper allows you to control exactly where you place the drops.



A LITTLE BIRDIE TOLD ME (DETAIL)

Drips have been splattered around the red bird.



FREIGHTERS

Watercolor on paper

15" × 22" (38cm × 56cm)

This watercolor painting of a freighter has been splattered with water and watercolor paint to give it a wet, textured look.

DEMONSTRATION

Make It Messy By Adding Splatters

You can add splatters directly while painting or you can try this technique on a finished painting. In this example, I first painted the foliage wet on wet, and then watercolors were layered on the trunks. Once the trees were painted, I decided to add a bit of unpredictability, texture and interest by adding drips and splatters.



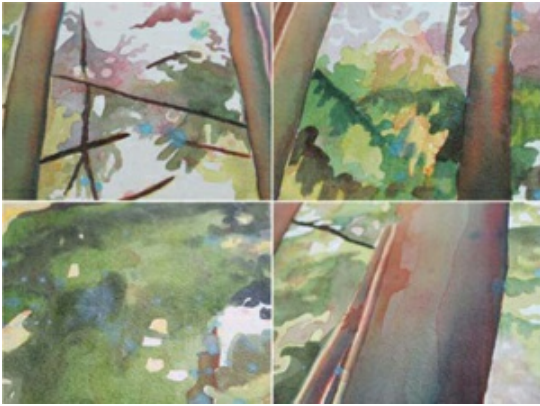
1 Mix Gouache with Water

Mix white gouache with water to make a semitransparent white mix that will show over watercolor without overpowering the rest of the painting.



2 Apply Gouache Mix

You can apply the gouache mix randomly with an eyedropper or by dipping a brush in the mix and flicking the paint onto your painting.



3 Layer Splattering

Add more splattering. Here I splattered some green watercolor after the white splatters dried.



4 Continue to Splatter

Continue to splatter gouache mixes and watercolors until you are satisfied with the look you have achieved. You don't want the splattered colors to mix. Let each layer dry before adding another.



PRINCESS PARK

Watercolor on paper mounted on board

30" x 24" (76cm x 61cm)

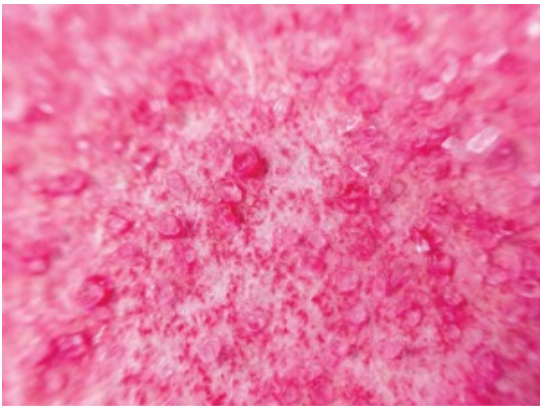
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SALT TEXTURES

Salt applied to a wet wash will produce textures by pulling the water and pigment into the salt crystals, which results in lighter areas around the salt crystals.

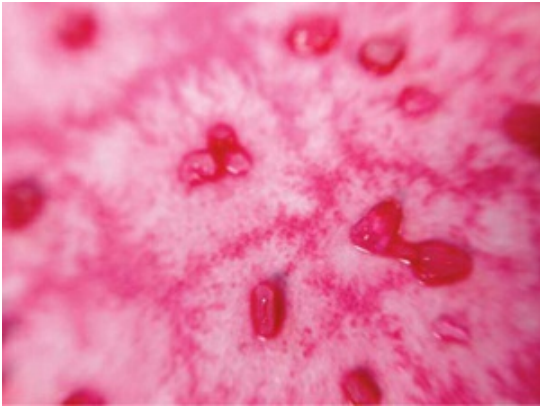
The textures will look different depending on the size of the crystals. Coarse salt will produce the most obvious texture. This is a fun and easy technique for adding interest to a painting. If you want your paper to maintain its archival properties, though, I wouldn't recommend using salt on a wet wash as it may damage the fibers of the paper in the long-term. There are no archival concerns using salt techniques with Yupo paper, since Yupo is technically a plastic.

To produce salt textures, sprinkle salt on a wet wash at the point in time when it is just beginning to lose its shine. Brush the salt away once the wash has dried thoroughly.



Fine Salt on a Wash

The texture is more subtle with fine salt.



Coarse Salt on a Wet Wash

The texture is more obvious.



Salt on Yupo Paper

Salt textures will show very well on Yupo paper.

A Word of Caution

You can easily get carried away with salt textures, so I recommend using them sparingly. The goal is to blend them in well with the rest of the painting.

When Might I Want to Use Salt Textures?

Salt texture works well when you want to represent anything grainy, like old walls, pavement, sand, rocks, dirt, granulation and abstract backgrounds. I would not use this technique for skies, as they usually have a more ethereal than granulated feel.



POPPIES 3

Mixed media on watercolor paper

4" × 6" (10cm × 15cm)

Textures are always interesting in a background that surrounds designs like Zentangles® patterns or doodles. In this example, I used a salt-textured background as a base for flowers drawn with black markers.

Rice: An Alternative to Salt



Rice can be used as a safe alternative to salt (it won't damage your paper). The texture will be bigger, of course. As with salt, just drop the rice grains on a wet watercolor wash and leave them until the paint is dry.

DEMONSTRATION

Paint a Cityscape with Salt Texture

Salt can be used to add texture in a variety of ways in your paintings. Here it is used on a rainy sidewalk in a Vancouver cityscape.



1 Paint a Simple Cityscape

After transferring an outline of your scene onto paper, paint the subjects using wet-on-wet and layering techniques. Preserve desired areas with masking fluid so they will be easier to paint around. Let the paint dry.

(Leave the sidewalk and street unpainted for now. It will be painted with a wet-on-wet wash in which the colors of the reflections under the lights of the cars will be added.)



2 Paint Sidewalk and Street and Add Salt

Sprinkle coarse salt on the wash once most of the shine is gone. (To see if the shine is gone, look at the painting at an angle to the light.)



3 Brush Off Salt Crystals

Once the wash has dried, brush off the crystals with a large clean brush. You can layer several washes with salt if you are looking for a more complicated texture.



VANCOUVER BLUES

Watercolor and watercolor crayons on paper

25" x 15" (63cm x 38cm)

This painting has been finished with watercolor crayons and splashed with water so the salt textures blend in with the overall painting.