Chalk Prints | “Marbleized” Paper

Project
Artists create art in many ways. One way of making art involves transferring a design from one surface onto another surface. This is called printmaking. There are many, many different ways to make prints. If you have ever used a rubber stamp, you’ve made a print—you put ink onto a stamp to then transfer it to your paper. In another Pop-Up Studio project, we made prints by putting paint onto bubble wrap and then transferred the paint to paper. In this project, you’ll put chalk onto the surface of water and transfer it to paper to create art.

Samples

Samples with regular sidewalk chalk | Sample with Prang chalk | Sample with Prang chalk

Inspiration

To explore the range of prints in Reynolda House’s collection, visit www.reynoldahouse.org and navigate to “Browse the Collection” under the Collections tab. In the search bars on the left, choose “American Art” for the Collection and choose “Prints” for the Classification. Click the green “Submit” button. See the image on the next page.

Then, you can see the prints in the collection. Click on any that interest you to be able to zoom in and learn more about the print and the artist.

For another example of printing, visit the page for Reynolda’s painting Job Lot Cheap (https://www.reynoldahouse.org/collections/object/job-lot-cheap) by William Harnett and see if you can find a decoration that looks like marble on the edge of one of the books. Bookmakers used marbleized paper for pages inside books, but they also would sometimes decorate the outside edge of the pages with marbleizing techniques!
Vocabulary

**Monoprint** or **monotype print**: a type of printing where the exact image can only be made once. A print like this is a monoprint.

**Marbleized paper**: Paper created by floating ink or paint onto the surface of water, which is then transferred to absorbent paper. Marbleized paper has been used as decorative endpapers in books and for stationary, as well as other uses. This chalk printing is a modified way to make a decorative paper with water.

Materials

- Baking dish, shallow bin, or deep tray that will hold your paper and at least one inch of water, with room to spare.
- Water
- Sidewalk chalk
  - For vibrant colors, use Prang Freart Drawing Chalk, available through Amazon or Blick Art Materials, [https://www.dickblick.com/items/20019-1409/](https://www.dickblick.com/items/20019-1409/)
- Paper for printing; use lightweight cardstock if you have it. Regular copy paper also works well, though will need to be removed from the water quickly.
- Butter knife (plastic or metal) or blunt-tipped scissors
- Workspace that is OK to get wet and chalky
- Flat surface for drying paper
- **Optional**: a skewer or toothpick to lift paper
- **Optional**: hairspray or fixative (like this one from Blick, [https://www.dickblick.com/products/blick-matte-fixative/](https://www.dickblick.com/products/blick-matte-fixative/)) or something like Krylon clear acrylic spray from any hardware store.
Process

For video instructions, find this episode on youtube.com/Reynolda.

1. Place your dish on a flat work surface.
2. Pour about one inch of water into your dish.
3. Select 3-4 chalk colors. (You can use more or fewer for different results. Experiment).
4. Hold one piece of chalk in one hand, about six inches above the surface of the water, and the butter knife in the other. Scrape along the side of the chalk with the back edge of the butter knife. Move your hand around over the tray to distribute the chalk over the surface of the water. Scrape a few times then change colors.
5. Note: The chalk will float just on top of the surface of the water—you need this to be able to make the print. If you have too much chalk or it breaks off in chunks, it will sink and not be useful. Use as light a touch as you can to still scrape off chalk. Additionally: some colors will be easier to see on the surface of the water than others.
6. Keep sprinkling your selected colors over the surface until it is just covered, but don’t cover it too much. Any areas of the water that do not have chalk will be the color of your paper.
7. When you have a thin layer of chalk over the water, hold your paper by two opposite corners. Slowly lower the paper onto the surface of the water. Let go of the corners.
8. As soon as the corners have dropped and the paper is flat on the surface of the water, you can remove it to keep it from soaking through. Take a skewer or toothpick to gently lift up one corner of the paper, pick it up by the edges, and flip it to see your design.
9. Lay flat to dry.
10. **Optional:** Spray your dry prints with hairspray, fixative, or clear acrylic spray. Do this outside and get an adult to help if needed.

Continue this activity: How can you use your prints?

- **Display:** Glue your print on top of a larger, solid piece of paper to make a frame
- **Collage:** Cut shapes from different prints, arrange them on another piece of paper, and glue them down to create a new design. For inspiration, look at the art of children’s book illustrator Eric Carle.
- **Bookmarks:** Cut bookmark-size rectangles from your print. If you want to make the bookmark stronger or better protect it from water, cut two lengths of clear packing tape and place one on each side of the book mark, trimming the ends as needed.
- **What else can you create?**

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