

# How to make Paste Papers



## **First the paste:**

Make paste according to recipe and add colorant using clays.

You can also use an oxidized mineral pigment, paints (tempera, watercolor or acrylic) chemically produced colorants/pigmentation.

## **Next the range of tools for mark making:**

Make tools to produce marks in the paste including using recycled plastics, wooden sticks or boards, spoons, forks, stiff or floppy papers, cut into the materials, wrinkle them up or scrunch them or roll them into balls, cylinders cones, or other shapes and drag these across the surfaces of the paints. Using fingers, knuckles, hands splayed out or in fists or fingers spread out or held together works! Pencils, brushes, sponges of various types and shapes, combs, balls, string, cloth rags, plastic bags wadded up, pine cones, broom corn, grasses, weeds, rolling pins, stamps or other implements! Basically anything that has a texture can be used!

## **Additional tools needed for paper wetting and treatment:**

Flat, wide sponges, wide china bristle brushes, or spray bottles with a fine nozzle work well to quickly spread clear water on the surface of the paper.

Tray for clean water to charge (wet) the tools to spread the water onto the paper.

Tray of water to rinse the tools for mark making. I like to have a bucket of clear water to change out the rinse water to keep it from getting too charged with colors.

Sponge or rags to clean hands, mark making tools or drips where you don't need them!

If someone needs rubber gloves to keep from direct paint contact you may use these, but it is more fun to get into it!

Smocks to keep clothing sort of neat and tidy!

Drop cloth on table to keep table clean and drop cloth on floor to keep from tracking paints on the floor as well!



### **Process:**

Choose paper that will be sturdy enough for the project you need it for, and make sure it is not so weak or thin of a paper so that cannot withstand a wetting.

Thoroughly wet the paper to work it can be just damp enough or very sloppy wet. Both methods and the variants between them work with varying results. Experiment! This dampening of the paper allows paste paint to have more 'open' time to be manipulated before it hardens up or gets too sticky to easily move across or onto the paper.

With a brush, sponge or hands, spread the paste paint onto the damp paper.

You can cover all of the paper or selected parts of it. You can also stamp paste papers with stamps dipped into the paste paints. Or you can use stamps after spreading the paste paints over the entire surface.

Use whatever tools you want to decorate with a random repeating design or a variety of markings.

You can also place another prepared sheet on top of the paper so that both paste painted surfaces touch each other and pulling them apart produces a pulled paste paper. (This was a popular pattern in the 18th century.). You can also make a book matched pattern by folding the paper in half onto itself and pulling apart after pressing it together. If you use a smooth flowing motion you get a different effect than when you interrupt the pulling with jerking motions creating a linear affect. Pulling from one corner also slants the pattern, as well. The way you press the papers together also affects the pattern - fingertips or other tools can create pressure points in which the paints lighten up where more pressure was applied and darker areas surrounding those pressure points. Again, experiment to see what is possible! Each variant of wetness, and layer of thickness of the paste creates variants with the finished result.

When you are finished with the decorating, transfer the paper to a place where it can dry overnight.

I will often spray lacquer the surface of the paste paper when I make a book binding or when I want to use it - this gives a little more weather proof protection! If you want to stick to a more historical method of preservation yo can rub beeswax or paraffin wax evenly over the surface. The waxing method may knock off some higher bits of paste though, if the paste paper is very textured.

