

Sharpie and Alcohol Dyeing

Surface Technique of the month- March 2015

Materials:

Sharpie pens. Large chisel point pens will give good results.

Alcohol

Applicators--spray bottle, needle-point plastic bottle, sponge stencil daubers, Q-tips, etc.

Fabric--cotton washed and dried without fabric softener or PFD fabric. White-on-white fabric is fun to use with this technique.

Protect your work area. Fabric can be laid onto protective paper or ironed to freezer paper to stabilize it. Use Sharpie pens to draw on the fabric. Drip, spray, drizzle, or pour alcohol directly on the drawn lines. The alcohol will flow out, spreading the colors of the ink. It will diffuse the colors and sometimes separate the pigments. The more alcohol you apply, the farther the pigments will spread and lighten. A sponge stencil dauber can be used to dip into the alcohol and dab onto the marks. Scrubbing with the dauber will spread the pigments and make the drawn lines less obvious. The alcohol will evaporate quickly. You can reapply alcohol after the piece is dry to change the pattern.

Use this technique to color canvas shoes, T-shirts, plain canvas tote bags, and scarf blanks. If you want a hand-dyed effect for applique, you can Sharpie-dye fat quarters with one color, shooting for variations in intensity. Red will make beautiful dark-to-light pinks and corals for flower petals. Several greens on one piece would be good for leaves. The edges of the spread of the ink always have interesting concentrations of color and would make great petals or stems.

Pigma pens are not affected by the alcohol, so a freehand drawing or copyright-free design can be traced and the Sharpie color applied last. Drip on the alcohol carefully to control the flow within the designs.

The ink applied this way is colorfast, so no heat setting or washing is required.

This would be a fun craft project for kids.