

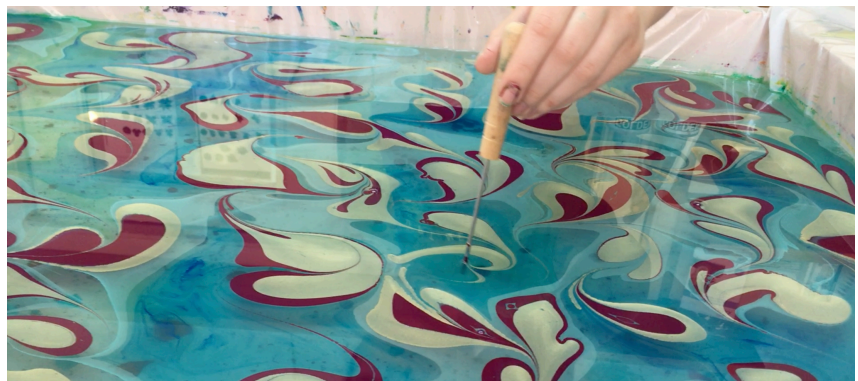
Marbling Mystic by Trudy Thomson



Marbling is an ever-changing chase after colors and patterns that sway this way and that in shapes. I use a variety of marbling techniques to create large two-dimensional works on silk using traditional Turkish acrylic marbling techniques that I sometimes double dip so one pattern is viewed beneath another. I also work with paper to make

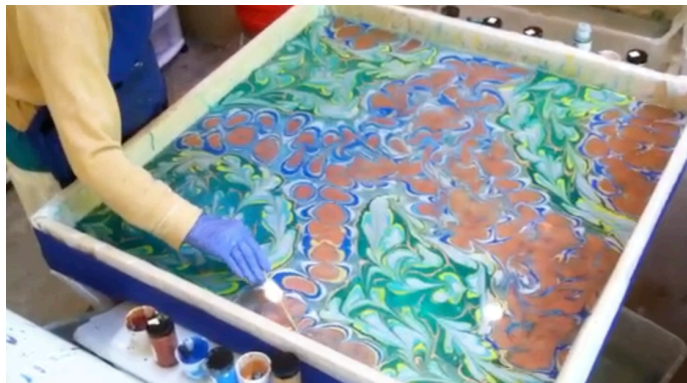
smaller works using a Czech paint referred to as Ebru. There is a difference between how the two behave and present patterns to the viewer. The silk results in a smoother appearance while the paper has a more tactile appeal. When my works are complete my husband creates marvelous hand-crafted frames that include inlays of different types of wood. It's also a pleasure to view the final product.

There are many different types of marbling supplies on the market, but the most professional work involves carefully preparing a bath, mixed the day before that must rest for 24 hours before one begins the actually process. I use



carrageenan for most paper products because it sets up easily. For my more sophisticated silks I prefer methelcellose because it creates more interesting striations, although it is much more temperamental to use. No matter how carefully I mix the various chemicals in exact amounts it never works the same. Some times it is too thin or too thick and the acrylic paints dropped onto the surface will not float and spread. Instead the paints I selected to create a certain color scheme drop down into the water of the bin I work in.

When the consistency of the bath behaves there are a number of ways to design patterns that nicely spread and rest on top of the viscous solution. One can drop one color after another inside each



other so you see circles, which is referenced as “stone” because the paint that rests on the marbling bath looks like pebbles. After this sequence is followed to cover the length and width of the bath one is

working with one can apply other techniques. Usually one performs what is referenced as a “Git-Gel” pattern, which means moving a stick of some kind back and forth through the stones. So many different ideas can be pursued by swirling in a circular pattern, pulling tiny lines out through the middle of each circle of paint, or into the center. You can swirl the paint around to create patterns such as “A French Comb” or “Snail”.

In addition to wall pieces I marble long silk scarves. When I have completed a design I need someone to help me



carefully position the silk into the tray and let it rest there for about eight seconds. Then together we lift the fabric gently off of the bath from two opposite outside edges. When it works successfully I hang the silk from clothes lines spread across the back of the shop where I work, and let them rest for 24 hours, before ironing. And very often I decide to do a second dip which results in even more detailed wildly patterned fabric. I regularly sell both wall work and my scarves at various galleries in the area as well as at my Ferns and Fancy gallery where I live in Chapel Hill.

You can find out more about my works at <https://fernsandfancy.gallery>