

Wet Media on Washi

Japanese papers are so marvelously receptive to wet media that just about any of them can be used for painting. The varying results achieved with using different paper and media can make it difficult to choose: what follows here are notes on some of washi's characteristics and how you can use them to good effect.

TIPS & THINGS TO CONSIDER

- transparent media such as watercolour, artist inks, fabric dyes, natural dyes etc. allow the lively surface of the paper to show through the colour
- opaque media such as acrylics, gouache & other tempera paints, sumi ink, India ink etc. are best suited for styles of painting that don't obscure the entire surface
- most washi is unsized: colour is easily absorbed into the fibres of the paper
- if paper bleeds through to the work surface think about using a second layer of washi to pick up a "ghost" of your marks to use for other compositions
- on *thinner* papers as well as unsized ones colour usually goes right through to the back of the sheet: consider turning your sheet over and working on the back for different effects.
- to *halt bleeding* or soak up excess colour blot with another piece of washi – the offset can be lovely: this works especially well with fabric paints, and using an iron on top of the blotter can hasten absorption
- some sized papers exist which will not bleed or soak through the back (see *paper suggestions* below)
- on *thicker* papers the colour soaking into the surface has a different kind of depth as you see the colour through layers of fibre.
- if the surface of your chosen paper bleeds too much consider sizing the surface yourself with gelatin, animal skin glue, konnyaku or even gesso
- gampi papers will shrink where they have been wet: annoying puckering or exciting textural effect (thinner = more shrinkage)

PAPER SUGGESTIONS

- all washi will take wet media, what vary are the results you get; to arrive at one that works for you try your favourite medium with different papers. Alternatively try different media with the same paper
- sized papers such as *Kizuki Kozo* (handmade) and *Kozuke* (machine made) won't bleed so much and colour will sit more on the surface
- cost effective more absorbent papers are *Kiraku Kozo* or *Usu Kuchi*; they soak up colour with a soft effect
- high quality *Seichosen Kozo* and *Kurotani #3 & #4* have excellent working properties and are consistent favourites with all who try them
- cost effective *Gampi Silk Tissue* has a strong grain & so shrinks much more in one direction than the other

ARTISTS USING WET MEDIA ON WASHI

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