
Paste Paper with Courtney Cerruti

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- Hi and welcome to paste paper. First I wanna talk a little bit about the traditional uses of paste paper. Originally paste papers were used as end papers in fine printed books. But now artists are using it for all different types of mixed media work, including collage, painting, card making, and myriad of other paper crafts. I wanted to show you a few examples in the way that I use paste paper. I love it as gift wrap, so I do that pretty often. Paste paper is great to cut up, because even the smallest piece can be a work of art in its own and this is for an envelope liner. It's great for little books. And I also like to make little paper flags with my paste paper scraps. Really, the possibilities are endless.

Chapter 2 - Making Paper

Materials

- So, to make paste paper, you're going to need a couple of things. First, you need paper. And you wanna use a text weight paper that's fairly heavy, like around 60 pounds is good. Anything like typing paper can be too thin and you're gonna have a problem running your graining comb across it when it's wet. So a heavier weight paper, but text weight is good. You can also make paste paper on card stock, but you won't be able to fold it as well afterwards, so it's better to start with the text weight paper first. So you need to mix your acrylic paint with a lubricant, and we're gonna use methylcellulose. That's our other ingredient. And methylcellulose is just a plant fiber and it comes in a powdered form like this. And you just need to mix it to the manufacturer's instructions. It's around 1/3 methylcellulose to 2/3 acrylic paint mixture. And once it's all mixed it has the consistency of hair gel. So this is mixed. It's fairly loose, but kind of like hair gel. You're also going to need your pigment and you can just use a standard craft store grade acrylic. That's for our paint. To create our pattern for our paste paper, you need mark-making tools, and we're gonna use rubber combs. So rubber combs come in a few different styles. This one is a four-sided square comb. And this is a three-sided triangular comb. You can just use whatever you can find at the craft store, or sometimes it's at the hardware store in the faux finishing section. We're also gonna do wood grain paste paper, which is my favorite, and we need a wood graining tool for that. Also you can find this at the hardware store. If you just wanna test paste paper out at home, you can use anything that will make a mark in the paste. So you can create your own combs using book board or cardboard, or even something as simple as a fork will work to make a mark in paste paper. The last thing you're gonna need is your brushes, and I just like to use two- or three-inch standard foam brushes. Those are available at your craft store or your hardware store as well. And I think that's all for materials. Of course, feel free to experiment with whatever you've got at home. You can try this on canvas or other types of paper that you might have lying around the house.

Mixing colors

[Instructor] - So to start, you need to mix your methyl cellulose with your pigment. So if you've already mixed up your methyl cellulose, it'll be like this hair gel consistency, and I have a empty cup here. I'm just gonna pour about a couple of tablespoons worth of methyl cellulose into my empty cup. And then I wanna add my acrylic paint. And remember, like I said earlier, it's about 1/3 methyl

cellulose to 2/3 pigment, but you can adjust that once you start to make the pace paper if you feel like it's too light or too dark. (squirt) (squirt) (squirt) So I need to mix this up, and just mix until they're combined. So just continue mixing all of your paint until you have all the colors that you wanna work with.

Creating two color design

- So let's start with a two-color design. First you're gonna take your sheet of paper and you need to protect the color of the paper with a clear coat of methyl cellulose. So you should have some mixed and ready to go. And I'm gonna use a wider foam brush for this. You wanna keep the methyl cellulose brush clear of any other type of paint, so that it's always clear when it goes down. And this is gonna protect the aqua blue of this paper, just as it would whatever color paper you're gonna use. Now, you have to work fairly quickly, because the methyl will start to absorb into the fibers of the paper and you want it to still be wet when you apply your second coat of paint. And you wanna make sure that you're spreading your methyl cellulose all the way to the edge of the paper. Otherwise, you won't get a nice, clean design. So if you can see that, it's kind of glossy. I've got the methyl cellulose across the entire paper. Now I wanna add my pigment and methyl cellulose mixture that we've already created on top to create the pattern. So I'm gonna set my methyl cellulose aside, and you wanna keep your foam brush with whatever color, so this is gonna be my blue brush for my blue paint, and high-contrast color combinations work really well, so I'm using a light blue and a dark blue, and I'm just gonna do the same thing, which is spread the paint all the way across the paper. And you could do horizontal or vertical strokes, that doesn't matter so much. You just wanna make sure you get a nice, even coat, and that you're working fairly quickly so that this doesn't absorb into the fibers of the paper. So this looks pretty good. If this was really thin, I could always add more paint to my methyl cellulose and paint mixture. So we've put on our methyl cellulose and then we've covered that with our pigment layer. We've got two layers. Now we're ready to make our pattern. So I'm gonna start with just one of my rubber combs. It has four sides. This one with different types of teeth, and they're all gonna make different marks. So this is a square tooth. And if I just drag this across the surface of the paper, you can see that the comb is going to take up the painted layer and reveal the aqua blue of the paper below. This side of the comb has these little, tiny triangle teeth points, and I'm gonna show you what kind of mark that makes. So I'm just dragging this along the surface of the paper. The paper can move around on your table, so just make sure you're holding it down with two of your fingers. This is just another square, longer-toothed side of the comb. They'll make kind of different marks. And you can start to overlap them to get these really crazy sort of patterns. You don't really wanna do more than two or three passes along the paper because you'll start to work the paint into the fibers of the paper, and this is gonna dry fairly quickly. So I'm almost done. And this is just kind of free-form. Your paper will shift a bit. That's pretty good. It's a fairly traditional sort of combing technique, but we did it in overlapping strokes to get this kind of wild, wavelike structure. All right, so let's show you another one. Grab another piece of my paper. So this tends to get a little messy. You might want to put paper underneath you, and you can change it out as you need, if you feel like your piece of paper is sticking. So again, we always have to start with our clear coat of methyl cellulose, and remember, I kept my brush with the methyl cellulose, so I don't contaminate it. It's a clear coat. So I'm just spreading that on evenly, and this is protecting the aqua color of the paper. You could do this on old wallpaper, patterned paper, the methyl cellulose will just protect whatever pattern you start with. And you wanna make sure this isn't too thick. Just a nice, even coat. Because the thicker it is,

the longer it's gonna take to dry. So my methyl cellulose is down, and I'm gonna put my pigment coat on. So I'm gonna use some red. I love aqua and red together. It's an awesome color combination. And we're just gonna repeat this process. Where we're spreading our pigment across the paper on top of the methyl cellulose coat, all the way to the edges. If you pick up a little paint from the surface of your table, that's okay. Okay, all the way to the edge. And for some rubber combs, there's this wavy side, and that is a really good tool for making polka dots, so I'm gonna show you how to do that. This technique requires a little bit of practice, so don't be discouraged if you start at first, and you don't get perfect polka dots. That's okay. The technique for this is you're going to push and lift, push and lift, push and lift while dragging the comb from the top to the bottom of the paper, okay? Your paper's gonna move a little, so put a finger down to hold it in place. So I'm going to push and lift while dragging. Just gonna push and lift, push and lift. The more pushes, the smaller the dots. I'm gonna do this all the way to the edge of the paper. Ta-da! Polka dots. In aqua and red. You can vary this a little bit, depending on how quickly you push and lift while dragging the comb across the surface of the paper.

Woodgrain design

- So now we're gonna move on to the wood grain technique, which is my absolute favorite, ever. And for this I'm gonna use a red piece of paper, just to switch it up a bit. It's the same process, we have to start with our methylcellulose coat. So that's gonna go down first, you should be a pro at this by now. Just a nice even coat all the way across. Not too thick, cause it won't dry, and you don't want it to be gluppy. Alright, so my methylcellulose is down, now I'm gonna do my color on top. Again, I said high contrast works well, and I love that aqua and red combo, so we're gonna go with red paper, aqua paint. Sometimes the aqua paint can tend to be slightly pale, and you can always add more pigment if you want. Remember I'm working fairly quickly, because I don't want my pigment to absorb into the fibers of the paper. Alright, that looks pretty good. So now I'm gonna use my wood grain tool, it comes in two sides, larger and smaller. And it comes with a little stick or handle, which you can use to help you, but I actually prefer not using the handle. So, I'm just gonna place my fingers inside the hole, and just like the polka dots, we're gonna drag and rock. Now, this process, you need to practice. You might get frustrated at first, depending on how frequently you rock, that's going to determine the number of knots in your wood grain. Keep a finger at the top, so it doesn't slip. I'm just gonna drag and rock. Tada, wood grain. You wanna make sure that you wipe off your wood graining tool, paint will gather in the grooves, and when you go to do it again, it'll mess up your color. Also you don't want your paint to ever dry on any of your tools because they're rubber, and they can crack. So you can just wipe it out with a damp cloth or you can run it under the water, as long as you dry it off before you start again on your paste paper. So I'm gonna show you the wood grain technique again, but using the smaller wood graining tool. Let's go for some neon paper, which I love. Same process, I need to coat it with the methylcellulose first. And this, remember, is protecting the color below, so I can have that two color design. I wanna keep that neon. Okay, so my methylcellulose is down, and I love black with neon, and there are two paints that you do not mix with methylcellulose, in this process, black is one of them, and metallic is the other. So instead of using paint that's already been mixed with methylcellulose, we're gonna use black paint right out of the bottle. So I'm just gonna squirt some paint onto the surface of the paper, and then wipe it fully over the paper just like we did with our normal pigment. Try not to get too much paint, you'd rather add more than than have too much to start. And the reason I don't wanna mix the black paint with the methylcellulose, is because it will dilute the color, I want a really strong

contrast when I use black. I've got my coat of methylcellulose down, I've got my black paint down, and now I'm ready to go ahead and use my wood graining tool. I'm gonna show you with the smaller wood graining tool this time. And it's just dragging and rocking. Black on neon, wood grain, it's my favorite.

Using metallics

- So just like the black, when we use our metallic we don't want to dilute it. So I want to show you using metallics in a two-color pattern next. We're going to go with the aqua paper again, because gold looks amazing on aqua. We're going to do the same process, start with our methyl cellulose. This is preserving the color of the paper. So if I was using a patterned paper, this would preserve the pattern underneath. The methyl cellulose is down, I'm going to go ahead and put my metallic paint on next. I'm going to spread it across the surface of the paper. I can always add more, so it's better to start off with just a few drops. I think I will add a little more here and there. And I don't want to dilute the black or the metallic when I'm using it with the methyl cellulose, because then it doesn't get that nice contrast. Okay, so my methyl cellulose is down, my gold metallic paint is down, now I'm ready to create my pattern, and I'm going to use my wood-graining tool again, because I love it. Just going to drag and rock. The more rocks, the more knots. If you hated the way this look, you could go ahead and brush it out. You can't do that really more than once, because the paper starts to absorb the paint. But this is pretty good, I'm happy with this. You can also combine wood-graining technique with other rubber combs. I could go back into this and use just my regular triangle comb to create patterns within the wood grain if I like. So I'm just sort of creating this funky, combed wood-grain pattern. Using gold metallic is super easy, just like black you just want to make sure you use it straight out of the bottle so that you're not diluting the color any.

Double patterns

- If you have a paste paper pattern that you don't particularly care for, once it's dried, you can cover it with methyl cellulose and create a second pattern on top. So I'm gonna show you how to do that. So I've got a metallic on aqua or dark teal paper. So I'm gonna use this paste paper to create a double pattern on top. So just like with a regular piece of paper, to preserve this, I need to coat it with the methyl cellulose. (swiping) I'm just spreading an even coat across the surface. And I am actually gonna turn it. I like to call this wood grain plaid. So I have wood grain that's already dried going in one direction, and I'm gonna do wood grain in another or opposite direction on top. And for this I wanna use black. Just remember, black comes straight out of the bottle. Just gonna spread that on top. All the way to the edge. I'm really into the metallics and I love the high contrast of the black. I also love plaid, so this is my version of plaid. Okay, so that's good, I'm working fairly quickly. I'm using my larger wood graining tool and I'm gonna go ahead and do my double pattern. I'm just dragging and rocking that across the surface. And there I have it, a double plaid wood grain. Black wood grain on top of metallic wood grain. Love it.

Chapter 3 - Finishing

Making adjustments

- So there are a couple of things to keep in mind when you're making paste paper. Don't be discouraged. This is just like finger painting for adults so just play and have fun. Sometimes as paste paper dries, the pigment can absorb into the paper, like this guy here. The aqua paint was a little light. I can just go ahead and add more pigment into my mixture for the next time around or I can

let this dry fully, cover it with my methylcellulose and create a second pattern on top. This is not wasted entirely. You can still use this in some kind of fashion. Another thing, is maybe in general, I don't particular care for this pattern but cutting out a tiny piece and using it somewhere else can be really amazing. I recommend looking at all your paste paper at least twice. Take a look at all the little details that are created with the rubber combing. This piece of paper is not lost. The great thing about paste paper is that it's so forgiving. You can always start over. If you don't like something, go ahead and put a black coat on top and try a new pattern. It's really forgiving. It's super fun and it's just like finger painting so do whatever you want.

Examples of paper

- So we made pace paper on eight and a half by 11 sheets, but pace paper works really well on all different types of paper and even canvas. Pace paper looks great on cut pieces of paper. This is a leaf shape. You could use circles or squares. This is just a regular three cone design pattern on this cut leaf shape and you could use this as a place card or a gift topper. You can also do pace paper on long strips of paper. This could be for wrapping a present. You could do something on a smaller piece for a bookmark and you can even use a small piece of the pace paper design in any other type of mixed media art like a collage or card making. I love pace paper because it's quick and easy. You can get a little messy and really the sky's the limit.