

Paper Marbling with Shaving Cream

Ages: 5 and up

This is a fun spin on Suminagashi – the Japanese art of paper marbling. The way it works is the same – ink (in this case food coloring) is suspended in shaving cream (instead of water), allowing the artist to capture a brief moment on paper. Because it doesn't require any special paper that can hold up in water, or a place to allow marbled papers to dry, this is an easy to set up and quick way to let loose and make art by improvisation!

Materials:

Shaving cream (not gel!)

A tray that is larger than your paper (baking sheets work great)

Several sheets of paper – even printer paper works well

Food coloring

A chopstick or skewer or toothpick

Newspaper or old magazines

A scraper – can be a plastic putty knife or a scrap of cardboard, it needs at least one flat edge.

Step 1:

Lay down enough newspaper on a table so that you have double the space your tray takes up. This will make clean up really easy!

Step 2:

Spray the shaving cream into the tray. You don't have to fill the tray; you just need enough for the size of your paper. For the examples, I used about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the can and it was still plenty.



Step 3:

Using your scraper, smooth out the foam until it is reasonably level and covers the size of your paper.



Step 4:

Add a few drops of food coloring and start moving around with the chopstick or stick until you like the design. The great thing about this is the food coloring stays in the same place and can be printed multiple times, so you can “build” an image over the course of a few prints!



Step 5:

When you are ready to print, take a piece of paper and press it into the shaving cream. Gently press the back of the paper into the foam so that all of the paper touches the foam EXCEPT for just enough at the top so you can pull the paper off without getting shaving cream on your fingers (unless that's what you want to do 😊)

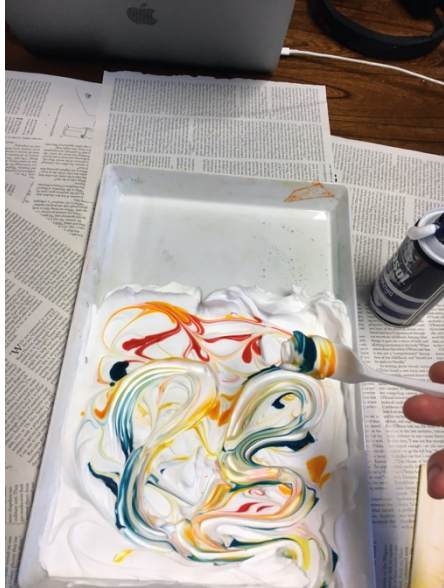


Step 6:

Lay the paper image side up on the newspaper and scrape off the shaving cream that got stuck to the paper. Don't worry, you won't smear your print -- the food coloring is already dry on the paper thanks to the shaving cream!



You can keep printing the same image with another piece of paper, or you can work back into the shaving cream with your chopstick, add more food coloring, or even start over with the same shaving cream – just take your scraper and rework it! When you are done, clean-up is very easy.



Another fun thing to do with your prints is to cut them up or decoupage them!

