

Gamblin Dry Pigments

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Gamblin Dry Pigments are pure pigments. They do not contain fillers, extenders or adulterants, so each color retains the unique characteristics of that pigment, including absorption rate, tinting strength and texture. The pigments are all Lightfast 1 and finely ground.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Use great care when working with dry pigments. Do not breathe the dust, even if you have read that the pigment is non-toxic. While some pigments are more toxic than others (cadmium and cobalt, for example, are known carcinogens and therefore much more toxic than earth pigments like burnt sienna) the dust can still be very irritating and even a so-called "safe" pigment can contain toxic material.

Always wear gloves and a respirator or mask when handling dry pigment. Do not mix pigments and liquids near food, drink, pets or children. Do not reuse any containers pigments have been in. Once the dry pigments are mixed with water, exercise the same precautions you would with any paint or ink.

CREATING A DISPERSION

After creating your own dispersions (a mixture of dry pigment, water and a dispersing agent) you no longer have to worry about breathing the dust and the pigments are ready to use whenever you want to print.

Some pigments will mix readily with water but others require alcohol or they will just float on top of the water. We have seen instructions for using alcohol alone or a mixture of water and alcohol; either seems to work. After some experimenting, we decided that the safest way to add liquid to these pigments is to mix together 1 part water and 1 part

alcohol (pure alcohol from a pharmacy or inexpensive vodka works well), then add about 1.5oz (3 tablespoons or 44ml) of this mixture very slowly and carefully into a 4oz jar of dry pigment while wearing a mask and gloves. For the larger 1lb containers, use 6oz ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup or 176ml) of the water/alcohol mixture.

Cap the jar tightly and shake it to mix the liquid into the pigment. Because the jar is clear, you can see if all of the dry pigment has mixed in or not. Continue shaking until all the pigment is wet. Depending on the pigment, you may need to add a bit more liquid.

When you are sure all of the dry pigment has been mixed into the water/alcohol, and you are still wearing your mask and gloves, it is safe to open the jar.

To use, take a dab of pigment from the jar and add water until it is the consistency you want. You can easily mix different pigments to create any color you wish.

While it is not essential, many printmakers use a mortar and pestle to grind the pigments until they are very fine. The finer the pigment, the smoother the color will look on the paper. Experience and practice will tell you if you need or want to do this. We recommend grinding pigment that has already had liquid added to it so you do not stir up dust.

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Some pigments will mix readily with water but others require alcohol or they will just float on top of the water. We have seen instructions for using alcohol alone or a mixture of water and alcohol; either seems to work. After some experimenting, we decided that the safest way to add liquid to these pigments is to mix together 1 part water and 1 part

alcohol (pure alcohol from a pharmacy or inexpensive vodka works well), then add about 1.5oz (3 tablespoons or 44ml) of this mixture very slowly and carefully into a 4oz jar of dry pigment while wearing a mask and gloves. For the larger 1lb containers, use 6oz ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup or 176ml) of the water/alcohol mixture.

Cap the jar tightly and shake it to mix the liquid into the pigment. Because the jar is clear, you can see if all of the dry pigment has mixed in or not. Continue shaking until all the pigment is wet. Depending on the pigment, you may need to add a bit more liquid.

When you are sure all of the dry pigment has been mixed into the water/alcohol, and you are still wearing your mask and gloves, it is safe to open the jar.

To use, take a dab of pigment from the jar and add water until it is the consistency you want. You can easily mix different pigments to create any color you wish.

While it is not essential, many printmakers use a mortar and pestle to grind the pigments until they are very fine. The finer the pigment, the smoother the color will look on the paper. Experience and practice will tell you if you need or want to do this. We recommend grinding pigment that has already had liquid added to it so you do not stir up dust.

Some printers rely on the *nori* (rice paste) added during the printing process to bind the ink to the paper; others add gum arabic or *nikawa*. *Nikawa* is traditional but it will go moldy faster than gum arabic. In either case, only add binder to the ink you will be using right away. This is usually added to the pigment while it is in the mortar and then the binder and pigment are ground together with the pestle so they are thoroughly combined. We have not been able to find any set formulas for the amount of binder to add. Only experience will tell you the correct amount. Too much and the paper will stick to the block; too little and the pigment can come off as dust when the print is dry. It is a good idea to keep careful records so you can reproduce your inks again and again.



McCLAIN'S
PRINTMAKING SUPPLIES

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Gamblin Dry Pigments

Traditionally Japanese printers make their own ink from dry, powdered pigments mixed with water and sometimes alcohol, *nikawa* (animal skin glue) or gum arabic. The resulting colors are clean, bright and intense.

Gamblin Dry Pigments are pure pigments. They do not contain fillers, extenders or adulterants, so each color retains the unique characteristics of that pigment, including absorption rate, tinting strength and texture. The pigments are all Lightfast 1 and finely ground.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Use great care when working with dry pigments. Do not breathe the dust, even if you have read that the pigment is non-toxic. While some pigments are more toxic than others (cadmium and cobalt, for example, are known carcinogens and therefore much more toxic than earth pigments like burnt sienna) the dust can still be very irritating and even a so-called "safe" pigment can contain toxic material.

Always wear gloves and a respirator or mask when handling dry pigment. Do not mix pigments and liquids near food, drink, pets or children. Do not reuse any containers pigments have been in. Once the dry pigments are mixed with water, exercise the same precautions you would with any paint or ink.

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