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Powdered Pigment Techniques

As a stamper, you are very likely to have used pigments in some form, and probably many forms, in your creative work. If you use pigment ink, you’ve used pigments. If you have used watercolor or acrylic paints, you’ve used pigments. If you have used pastels, chalks, crayons or colored pencils, you’ve used pigments.

But all of these examples are pigments mixed with something else to create a finished art medium. Stampers also sometimes use pigments in loose powdered form. That is what we are looking at in this eArticle.
What Are Powdered Pigments?

Pigments are natural (earth, mineral or biological) or synthetic materials used for adding color. Most loose powdered pigments we stampers use are finely ground mica powders, which is what gives them their typical pearlescent sheen (something hard to see in photos but beautiful in person!) Some also include other non-mica pigments for color.

Powdered art pigments come in a wide range of colors. Some have a metallic look. Some are bright colors. Many look pearlescent. A few are duo tones where the color looks different depending on your angle of viewing and/or the paper color underneath them. Some are interference colors are off-white in the jar, but look like a different color when used on dark surfaces.

Learn More: Pigments are different than dyes. Pigments are insoluble. dyes are either liquids or soluble. For more about dye and pigment inks, see the Aug ‘03 VSN. Wikipedia has an interesting article about pigments with a lot about their history and naming.
Artist vs. Cosmetic Grades

Pigments are used for adding color to many products beyond art mediums. Cosmetic grade pigments are specifically approved by the FDA (US Food & Drug Administration) for use in cosmetics and must be purer than non-cosmetic pigments. Non-cosmetic pigments (like many of the art pigments we stampers use) should not be used cosmetically.

Cosmetic grade pigments can be used in art, but tend to be more expensive than non-cosmetic grade pigments. Some people use packaged eye shadows, blush or other powdered cosmetics in their stamp art instead of art pigments. While this can work, keep in mind that these products are designed to be used for a few hours on skin, while art pigments are intended to be used on a variety of surfaces where they need to look good for weeks, months or years.

While loose, pure cosmetic grade pigments could be used for your artwork, packaged cosmetic products may contain additives that could affect their use when mixed with art mediums or affect their long-term look and color.

Next: Powdered pigment artwork.
Cindy Connell’s Artwork

Supplies: Stamp (Monster (Stampotique, Greeting - Dylusions), Acrylic paint, Gelli Plate, Powdered Pigments (Pearl Ex Super Bronze), White school glue, Tissue box, Brush, Ink (StazOn: black), Bic markers, Ribbon, Paper adhesive.

“Cover card front with sheet created with acrylic paint and a Gelli Plate.”

“Combine Super Bronze Pearl Ex with white school glue. Brush onto tissue box and let dry completely. Then Stamp monster in black Staz On; color with Bic markers.”

“Stamp greeting on scrap from card another card; cut out. Trim tissue box and adhere to covered card front. Adhere ribbon down right side and pop dot greeting in upper right.”

Finished Size: 6 ½” x 5”.
Brands and Binding Agents

The two big names in powdered pigments in the stamping world are **Ranger’s Perfect Pearls** and **Jacquard’s Pearl-Ex**. Other brands used by stampers include **Luminarte’s Primary Elements** and **Lindy’s Stamp Gang’s Mica Powders**.

You can create beautiful artwork with any of these brands, but it is important to know the brand you are using because some include a binding agent and some do not. I will refer to these two types of powdered pigments throughout the rest of this eArticle.

**Brands Without a Binding Agent**

- **Jacquard’s Pearl Ex**
- **Luminarte’s Primary Elements**

If you mix Pearl Ex or Primary Elements with water and brush them over a surface, the pigments won’t stick once the water evaporates. It will just blow or brush off. You need an extra ingredient to make it stick. Strategies include mixing with gum arabic and water or another liquid, mixing with liquid glue, using on an adhesive surface, or mixing into an art medium that has its own binder.
Brands that Include a Water-Soluble Binding Agent

- Ranger’s Perfect Pearls
- Lindy’s Stamp Gang’s Mica Powders

Lindy’s Stamp Gang’s mica powders already include gum arabic. Ranger’s Perfect Pearls include “a built-in resin” activated by water.

Because their added binder is water-soluble, if you use these powders in a wet technique, the binder will activate and the powder should still stick after the water has evaporated. If you use the powder in a dry technique, you can lightly mist the surface with water to activate the binder.

Spray Fixatives

Regardless of which brand you use, if you are not confident that your powder will stay put on the project (especially if it will get a lot of handling), finish with a light coat of artist fixative spray. (Read product labels to find one for powders like chalk or pastels.)

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Gum Arabic

If your pigments do not include a binder (Pearl Ex or Primary Elements), you will probably want some gum arabic. While it sounds exotic, it is not that hard to find. It is sold in a dry powdered or premixed liquid versions. You may find Jacquard’s dry gum arabic in stores near Pearl Ex. USArtQuest also has a dry version. In a craft store’s art paint aisle, you are likely find the liquid version. Some stampers find the liquid version easier to mix with other liquids; I’ve found it can dry up and harden in the bottle if you don’t use it often.

Gum arabic is soluble in hot or cold water. One part dry gum arabic to four parts water is often suggested as a ratio for general use as well as more specifically for use with powdered pigments. The liquid version is already premixed with water.

Gum arabic is insoluble in alcohol and most organic solvents. People sometimes add a bit of alcohol as a dispersant when it is used in sprays, but if the proportion of alcohol gets too high, its binding properties are lost. So don’t go overboard adding alcohol and don’t expect gum arabic to work as a binder if it is just mixed with alcohol inks.

Learn More: If you are interested, Wikipedia has an interesting article on gum arabic, its many uses and its history.
Powdered Pigment Techniques

Dry Dusting

Dry powdered pigments can be rubbed or brushed directly on paper and other surfaces. I’ve found that porous matte-coated papers, especially those with some texture like watercolor papers or suede papers, accept the powder better than slick glossy coated papers when working dry, but experiment with both.

Try pouncing the dry pigment on the surface. Also try lightly brushing the pigment across the surface. When used dry, either type of pigments will wipe off easily, so you’ll need a light touch. Lightly tap the back of the cardstock if you need to remove excess powder.

You don’t have as much control over where the powder goes when you dry dust it on a surface, so this technique tends to work best for adding subtle shimmery color to background layers.
When you like the color, you’ll need to fix the powder to the surface. If your powdered pigment includes a water soluble binder, mist it with water to activate the binding agent. Alternatively, use a fixative spray with either type of pigment.

Jacquard’s “Pearl Ex Powdered Pigments Instructions” pdf suggests sealing dry dusted Pearl Ex with spray lacquer. “Spray the lacquer out over the surface and let the mist fall onto the surface rather than spraying the lacquer at the surface. This will give you a more even coat of lacquer without spray marks, as well as preventing the spray from blowing off the Pearl Ex.” This is good advice for misting water as well. (You’ll notice in the picture that I have some drops, although they will dry up fine.)

Experiment with using different colors of powdered pigments on different colors of cardstock. Often dark colors are particularly nice for showing off the mica in the powdered pigments, especially when using interference colors.
Paint with Dry Pigments

Another approach is to use a wet tool to paint dry pigments on the surface. You could use a wet paintbrush or waterbrush and water or blending solution, a *Dove Blender, Ranger’s Perfect Pen*, a wet sponge, or even a wet brayer (as shown in last month’s “Brayer Techniques For Stampers” eArticle.)

If your pigment includes a binding agent, you can just use the wet tool to apply it to paper. If it doesn’t, mix in gum arabic first (one part gum arabic to four parts pigment) or spray seal it after.

To avoid contaminating your powder, don’t dip the wet tool right into the pigment jar; instead use a dry brush to transfer a little bit onto a craft sheet or palette. Then dip the wet tool into it. Paint it onto your project.

My waterbrush has a narrow flat brush tip that makes it easy to get into narrow and broad areas.
Ranger’s Perfect Pen sets include a brush tip pen and a bullet tip pen; they come in clear or black. The Dove Blender has a firm brush tip that can handle both small and larger areas.

Try painting an image stamped with permanent ink using pigments. If the pigment gets on the stamped lines, you can still see them through the pigment, but they look soft. Alternately, heat emboss the stamp image if you want to keep the contrast between stamped lines and pigments.

Try coloring a stamped image in with colored pencils or markers first and then painting dry pigments over them. This is a beautiful way to add shimmer to just certain areas of a stamped image.

This approach tends to work best on matte coated cardstocks rather than glossy. Finish with a spray fixative to be sure your pigments stay in place.

**Next:** Powdered pigment artwork and a page from one of our Sponsors.
Shona Erlenborn’s Artwork

Supplies: Butterfly Sticker, Cardstock (white glossy, black), Perfect Pen (Ranger: Black), Powdered Pigments (Ranger Perfect Pearls: Interference in blue, red, green, violet), Die-cut machine and die (Spellbinders: Large Labels, Grand Large Labels), Brayer (rubber), Dye ink (Ranger: Big & Juicy Herb Garden), Paper adhesive.

“Stick butterfly outline sticker onto white glossy cardstock. Color within spaces with a Black Perfect Pen and apply Interference Perfect Pearls (blue, red, green and violet.)”

“Write ‘Thanks’ with the pen and apply Interference Green. Cut and emboss with Large Labels die in die-cut machine. Layer onto black, with the next size die (Spellbinders Grand Large Labels). Make background piece using the pouncing brayer technique (shown in last month’s “Brayer Techniques for Stampers” eArticle) using Ranger Big and Juicy Herb Garden inkpad. Assemble card as shown.”

Finished Size: 5 1/2” x 4 1/4”.
Supplies: Stamp (Butterfly - Stampendous), Cardstock (very light peach, copper, black, peach), Pigment ink (black), Embossing powder (Stampendous: black), Heat tool, Powdered Pigments (Ranger Perfect Pearls), Paintbrush and Water, Paper adhesive.

“Stamp butterfly on very light peach cardstock in black pigment ink and emboss with black embossing powder.

“Pick up the Perfect Pearls colors with a small wet paintbrush and paint as if you were painting with watercolor.”

“Mount painted image on copper nd black cardstocks and then on peach colored card.”

Finished Size: 4 ¼" x 5 ½".
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With Watermark Ink

Stampers often use powdered pigments over ink. Tsukineko’s VersaMark ink is most often suggested, but you can also use Ranger’s Perfect Medium inks. Both inks are particularly sticky, so they tend to grab the powder especially well without smearing. You can use either type of pigment (those with or without an included binder.)

Straight Stamped Version

Stamp an image in VersaMark or Perfect Medium ink on cardstock.

Use a soft brush to dust pigments over the stamped image. The powder clings to the wet ink.

Let the ink dry completely or dry with a heat tool. Pat off any excess powder with a soft cloth, paper towel or dry Swiffer sheet (or similar product.)
If your powder includes a water-soluble binder, the moisture in the ink should bind the powder to the image, but you can lightly mist with water to be sure. Alternately, a project made with either type of powder can be lightly sprayed with a final fixative.

**Embossing Folder Variation:** If you have a die-cut machine that uses embossing folders, pat VersaMark or Perfect Medium on the flat areas inside an embossing folder and run your cardstock through the machine inside the inked embossing folder. Remove the now inked cardstock and proceed as above from second step.

**VersaMark & Perfect Mediums:** Tsukineko/ImagineCrafts’ VersaMark ink comes in a clear WaterMark version as well as shimmer versions, re-inkers and a VersaMarker Pen. Ranger’s Perfect Mediums ink comes in black and clear as inkpads, re-inkers and a pen.

**Other Inks:** You may be tempted to try this with regular embossing ink or pigment inks. While pigment will stick to these inks, the image tends to smear when you dust the pigment over the wet ink, creating a soft, less defined image.

**Next:** Powdered pigment artwork.
Supplies: Stamps (Sparkle N Sprinkle), Ink (Tsukineko: VersaMark, Memento Tuxedo Black, Bahamas Blue), Cardstock (black, purple, blue, white), Powdered pigments (Ranger Perfect Pearls: Interference Blue, Interference Red, Interference Green and Interference Violet), Soft brush, Spray Fixative, Scissors, Die-cut machine and die (Spellbinders Classic Scalloped Heart), Ribbon, Dimensional adhesive.

“Stamp small feather background in VersaMark ink randomly on black cardstock. Brush on Interference Blue, Interference Red, Interference Green and Interference Violet Perfect Pearls onto different feathers. Brush off excess powder. Repeat process with big feather stamp, brushing on a little of each color to each feather — two on black cardstock and one on purple cardstock. Spray pieces with fixative. Cut out feathers.”

“Stamp saying in black ink. Cut and emboss with scalloped heart die, sponge with blue ink, before removing die. Wrap feathery ribbon around base of feathered background and layer to blue cardstock, then again to black and then white card. Assemble using dimensional adhesive.”

Finished Size: 5 1/2” x 4 1/4”.

Shona Erlenborn’s Artwork
Supplies: Stamps (Sparkle N Sprinkle), Cardstock (purple, white), Ink (Tsukineko: VersaMark), Brush, Powdered Pigments (Ranger Perfect Pearls: Lemon Sparkle, Interference Green), Perfect Pearls Mist, Die-cut machine and Die (Spellbinders Label Nine), Spray Fixative, Ribbon, Paper adhesive.

“Stamp image on purple cardstock in VersaMark ink. Dust Lemon Sparkle Perfect Pearls onto the flower heads and Interference Green Perfect Pearls to the remaining ink.”

“Spray a piece of purple cardstock with Perfect Pearls Mist. Stamp sentiment in VersaMark ink and dust with Lemon Sparkle. Cut and emboss with Label Nine die in die-cut machine. Spray pieces with fixative.”

“Assemble card using pale green sun rays ribbon behind the saying. Layer everything to a white card base.”

Finished Size: 5 1/2" x 4 1/4".

Shona Erlenborn’s Artwork
Pigment Stamp Lifting

Alternatively, you can go the other way and cover the area around the stamp with pigment rather than the stamped image itself. To get this look, you coat a surface with ink and then pigment, and then use a stamp to lift away the pigment in the shape of the stamp image.

First, cover the entire surface of your paper with VersaMark or Perfect Medium ink. Then dust the inked surface with pigment.

The directions for this technique usually suggest that you ink a stamp with VersaMark or Perfect Medium ink and stamp onto the powdered surface. The sticky stamp removes the powder in the shape of the stamp image (next page.) I've found that an un-inked stamp can work as well. I suspect that this may have something to do with humidity. (I was working on a humid summer day.) Try it both ways and see what works for you.
Spray the finished piece lightly with a final fixative spray to be sure that the pigment stays in place.

**Limitations:** This technique is a bit finicky. If you apply the ink direct-to-paper, it can be difficult to get an even coat of ink without edge marks that show up when dusted with pigments. I find it works best on small embellishment pieces unless you want a rough look.

**Other Inks:** If you use VersaMark or Perfect Medium ink as the base coat of ink, you can use either type of pigment. I find that if you use regular embossing ink as the base coat, powders with binder included bind too quickly to the wet ink surface for the lift step to work. So when working with this type of ink you would need to use a pigment without a binder (like Pearl Ex or Primary Elements.)

**Learn More:** If you like seeing techniques via video, check out Jennifer McQuire’s "Pigment Powders" video. She shows both techniques as part of a scrapbook layout.

**Next:** Powdered pigment artwork.
Nancie Waterman’s Artwork

Supplies: Stamp (Leaf - PSX), Cardstock (white, black), Powdered Pigment (Jacquard Pearl Ex: Super Copper), Watermark ink (Tsukineko: VersaMark), Soft Brush (Ranger), Paper Adhesive (Xyron).

“Cover the entire surface of two pieces of white cardstock with VersaMark ink. Dust the inked surface with copper pigment. Ink a stamp with VersaMark ink and press into the pigment covered surface. Clean stamp and repeat.”

“Spray the finished piece lightly with a final fixative spray. Layer smaller piece onto black cardstock and then to center of other stamped panel. Then layer all onto black card.”

Finished Size: 4" x 4 5/8".
With Embossing Powder

Mixing Custom Embossing Powder

Embossing powders are made with pigments, among other things. Create custom colors by mixing either type of pigment with purchased embossing powder.

Keep in mind that a little pigment can go a long way. Use the tip of a wood craft stick or a tiny scoop to lift a little bit of powder out of the jar. Try four parts embossing powder to one part pigment. Experiment with different ratios to see what works best with various pigments.

When used over embossing ink, the pigment tends to cling to the paper too, but is easy to wipe off after you are done heat embossing.

Store custom mixes separately so your original powders remain unmixed. Keep track of custom powder recipes that you like.

Try mixing one or more pigment colors with clear or colored embossing powder. Use as you normally would.

Pearl Ex Sparkle Gold & Ranger Antiquities Rust Embossing Powder.

Oak Leaf: PSX
Embossing powders contain a balance of ingredients. If you use too much pigment, you could knock the mixture off balance and it might not work as well. Just use as much pigment as needed to get the color you want. When mixing pigments into embossing powders, you should not need to add gum arabic or use a spray sealer; the embossing powder takes care of the binding.

**Dust Onto An Embossed Image**

Alternatively, you can use pigments on an already embossed image. Clear emboss an image on paper. When cool, rub the image with powered pigments.

Use a heat tool to re-heat the image. The pigment seals into the warm embossed image. Once cool, wipe with a cloth to remove excess pigment from surrounding area.

Experiment with different colored pigments and different colors of embossing ink. Try it on surfaces coated with UTEE or Opals.

**Next:** Powdered pigment art and a Sponsor page.
Supplies: Stamps (Leaf - Rubber Stampede, Text - Verses Rubber Stamps), Cardstock (white, butterscotch, black, rust), Embossing powder & Ink (clear), Dye ink (Ranger: Archival ink Jet Black), Powdered Pigments (Ranger Perfect Pearls: Rust, Perfect Gold, Jacquard: Pearl Ex Duo Green-Yellow), Soft Brush & Heat Tool (Ranger), Sea Sponge, Acrylic paint (Claudine Hellmuth Studio Paint - Dab of Yellow), Paper adhesive (Xyron.)

“Clear emboss leaf on white cardstock. Allow to cool. Dust with rust and gold powered pigments. Use a heat tool to re-heat the image and seal pigments. Wipe. Cut out.”

“Use a sea sponge to dab yellow acrylic paint over black cardstock. While still wet, dust with yellow-green powdered pigments. Wipe off excess with dry Swiffer sheet. Allow to dry.”

“Stamp text in black on butterscotch cardstock and layer it first on the paint background and then onto rust card using Xyron adhesive. Layer leaf on top of all.”

Finished Size: 5" x 8".
Supplies: Stamps (Leaf - PSX, Dream - Posh Impressions), Cardstock (black, butterscotch, grey), Embossing ink (clear), Embossing powder (Clear, Ranger: Antiquities Rust), Dye ink (Ranger: Archival ink Jet Black), Powdered Pigments (Jacquard: Pearl Ex Sparkle Gold, Pearl Ex Duo Green-Yellow, Ranger: Perfect Pearls Rust), Soft Brush & Heat Tool (Ranger), Paper adhesive (Xyron.)

“Mix one part Pearl Ex Duo Green-Yellow with four parts clear embossing powder. Stamp leaf on black cardstock in clear pigment ink. Emboss with custom mixture. Mix one part Pearl Ex Sparkle Gold with four parts Aniquities Rust embossing powder. Stamp leaf again on black cardstock in clear ink and emboss with second custom mixture.”

“Mix Rust Perfect Pearls and water. Sponge onto black cardstock. Allow to dry completely.”

“Stamp text in black on grey card. Layer leaf panel onto pigment panel and then butterscotch panel and finally grey card using Xyron adhesive.”

Finished Size: 6" x 5 ¼".
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With Water to Make Paint

Water can be used as a vehicle to apply powdered pigments to a surface. Just keep in mind that you need a binding agent in the mix so that the powder will remain stuck to the surface once the water evaporates.

If your powdered pigments already include a binder, simply mix with water to create watercolor paint. If not, mix four parts powdered pigments with one part gum arabic before adding water. Jacquard says, “[The] ratio of gum to pigment may vary from color to color. If mixing in a plastic well palette, this mixture can dry out and become reconstituted with water.”

You can use this mixture to color in a heat embossed stamp image or an image stamped with permanent ink. (Regular dye ink will bleed if water touches it.) Or you use it for backgrounds. If it will get a lot of handling, spray with a sealer.

Next: Powdered pigment artwork.
Nancie Waterman’s Artwork

Supplies: Stamp (Butterfly - The Stamping Bug), Cardstock (white, yellow), Watercolor paper (Canson 140 lb cold press), Embossing ink (Ranger: black), Embossing powder (shiny black), Water, Paintbrush, Powdered Pigments (Ranger: Perfect Pearls - Raspberry Sparkle, Forever Red, Perfect Gold, Forever Violet, True Blue Sparkle), Wood letters (Articus Studios), Double-faced tape (Suze Weinberg - Wonder Tape), Mini Spritzer spray bottle, Dye ink (Ranger: Holiday Vintage Sugar Plum), Paper adhesive (Xyron.)

“Stamp and emboss butterfly on watercolor paper in black. Mix various colors of Perfect Pearls with water and paint using paintbrush. Allow to dry.”

Mix one scoop of Forever Violet Perfect Pearls with a dropper full of Sugar Plum dye ink and water in a Mini Spritzer. Spray over white cardstock to make background. Allow to dry.”

“Layer butterfly panel onto sprayed panel and then yellow card. Use double-sided tape to attach letters.”

Finished Size: 5” x 5 ½”. 
With Water to Make a Spray

When powdered pigments became popular among stampers, many of us tried mixing them with water to create sprays. These days you can purchase premixed sprays, making things easy, but you can still make your own if you like.

There are many recipes for making sprays online and many include powdered pigments. The recipes vary widely on ingredient ratios, but most use a spray mist bottle, one or more powdered pigments, often a dye ink for additional color, gum arabic or a few drops of clear drying liquid white glue (if the pigment doesn’t already include a binder) and water. Sometimes a few drops of rubbing alcohol are added as a dispersant.

**GASS:** Several sites online suggest making a “Gum Arabic Sealing Solution” or “GASS” that can serve as a final fixative for artwork instead of a commercial art fixative spray. The proportions are one part liquid gum arabic, two parts 91% isopropyl rubbing alcohol or vodka and four parts distilled water mixed in a spray bottle. To turn it into a shimmer spray, recipes typically suggest adding one quarter part pigment powder.

**Learn More:** [eHow.com](http://www.ehow.com) is one site with info about making “GASS.”
Dye Ink & Perfect Pearls: Other recipe variations include dye ink for added color. For example, Tim Holtz does a version using Perfect Pearls (which includes a binder). He suggests one scoop (maybe 1/8 teaspoon) of Perfect Pearls and a drop-per full of Distress Re-inker in a mini-mister. Tim recommends Distress Ink for color because it is designed to maintain its color even when mixed with water, but you could also use other water-based dye inks. Fill the mister almost to the top with water. Shake and use.

Liquid Glue: If you are using a powdered pigment that doesn’t include a binder, add a bit of gum arabic or clear drying white glue thinned down with water. For example, Lindsay Weirich, The Frugal Crafter suggests putting one teaspoon gum arabic in a craft spray bottle, filling the bottle almost to the top with water, adding a few drops of liquid watercolor or dye re-inker and “three tiny scoops” of Pearl Ex. Shake and use.
**Hair Spray:** You may also find recipes on the internet that use hair spray. These will work, but hair spray tends to gum up the spray nozzle and because it contains additional additives, is likely to yellow your artwork over time, so is not the best choice and should be avoided.

**Alcohol Ink:** Be careful about including purchased alcohol inks in a mixture you plan to spray. Ranger cautions that their colored alcohol inks include an additive that is dangerous to breathe and so should not be sprayed.

Large amounts of alcohol in a spray mix that uses gum arabic as a binder can also reduce the binder’s effectiveness.

**Gum Arabic in Sprays:** While gum arabic is mostly considered non-toxic (and is in fact used in some foods), if you use it in spray, that means that the gum arabic is in the air and so could be breathed in. According to Jacquard’s MDSD sheet on gum arabic, “inhalation of dust may produce a respiratory allergenic response in some individuals.” So if you are using it in a spray, work in an area with good ventilation.

**Learn More:** You’ll find spray recipes all over the internet. For example, Birgit’s Daily Bytes blog has a post on “How to Make Your Own Alcohol Inks, Shimmer Mists, Mod Podge & More.”

**Next:** Powdered pigment artwork.
Supplies: Stamp (Hot Potatoes), Powdered Pigments (Ranger: Perfect Pearls - Forever Red, Forever Blue) Ink (Ranger: Distress re-inkers - Wild Honey, Shaded Lilac; Tsukineko Memento - Tuxedo Black, Mini-sprayer, Distilled water, Cardstock (white, black, beige), Chipboard filigree, Paper adhesive.

“Make a solution of Perfect Pearls powder and seven or eight drops of re-inker for each color desired. Place in a mini-sprayer and fill with distilled water. Shake well.”

“Lay the filigree on a piece of white cardstock and spray with the honey colored solution. Spray a piece of beige cardstock with the lilac colored solution. When the pieces are dry, spray them with clear water to set the resins in the Perfect Pearls.”

“When they're dry, stamp the music image in black ink. Layer the main piece on black cardstock as a border, then place it on the lilac background. Mount to a beige card.”

Finished Size: 7” x 5”.

Marilyn Sweeney’s Artwork
Marilyn Sweeney’s Artwork

**Supplies:** Stamps (Cherry Pie, Class Act), Powdered Pigments (Ranger Perfect Pearls: Forever Red, Forever Blue), Ink (Ranger: Distress Ink re-inkers - Wild Honey, Shaded Lilac, black), Mini Sprayers, Distilled water, Cardstock (white, black, beige), Sponge dauber, Deckle scissors, Paper adhesive.

“Mix each Perfect Pearls color in a mini sprayer with seven or eight drops of Distress re-inker and distilled water. You can vary the amount of powder and re-inker color depending on the luminosity and pigmentation that you prefer.”

“Shake the sprayer well and spray colors onto scraps of white cardstock. Lightly mist with plain water to set the resin in the Perfect Pearls.”

“When the pieces are totally dry, stamp the two images in black. Mount the art image on a piece of black cardstock and attach to a beige card. Outline the fairy with black ink on a sponge dauber after cutting it out with a deckle scissors. Place it on the card.”

*Finished Size: 7" x 5".*
With Stamp Inks

Another way to use powdered pigments is to mix it with a dye-based stamp re-inker to make paint. If you mix mica powders into a colored pigment re-inker, the mica gets buried by the ink's pigment and you lose the shimmer, so stick to dye inks. The ink/pigment mixture you create can be used to paint a stamped image or a background.

Use a powdered pigment that already includes a binder or add one part gum arabic to four parts pigment before you mix it into the dye ink.

Experiment with quantity ratios to see what you like. Start with just a little pigment and work up until you get a mixture that pleases. Keep track of your recipe so you can recreate it another time.

Next: Powdered pigment art and page from one of our Sponsors.
Supplies: Stamps (Butterfly - Toybox Rubber Stamps, Rubber Stampede), Cardstock (white, black, orange), Embossing ink (black, clear), Embossing powder (clear), Dye ink (Ranger: Holiday Vintage Pumpkin Pie), Powdered Pigments (Ranger: Perfect Pearls Sparkle Gold, True Blue Sparkle, Rust, Jacquard: Duo Yellow-Gold), Soft brush (Ranger), Small paintbrush, Stipple brush, White glue (Perfect Paper Adhesive), Paper adhesive (Xyron).

"Stamp and emboss butterfly in black on white cardstock. Mix gold Perfect Pearls with orange dye ink. Use pigment mixture to paint inside of stamped butterfly. Allow to dry and then cut out, leaving a border of white all around."

"Stamp text on black cardstock in any color pigment ink and emboss in clear. Dust with rust Perfect Pearls. Heat again to seal pigments to embossed image. Once cool, wipe off excess powder. Layer onto white cardstock."

"Use stipple brush to stipple white glue over black cardstock. Dust on various colors pigments and blend with brush. Heat. Layer onto orange card and layer butterfly and text on top."

Finished Size: 6 1/2" x 5".
RubberHedgehog Rubber Stamps
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Where liberty dwells, there is my country.
~Benjamin Franklin

http://RubberHedgehog.Com
With Art Mediums

Pigments are used to make all kinds of paints that we buy, so you might be tempted mix powdered pigments into purchased acrylic or watercolor paint to create your own custom colors. The results are likely to be disappointing though. The mica in the powdered pigments that we stampers use tends to get buried under the paint’s pigment and you lose the shimmer.

**Mix:** Instead, mix them with acrylic or watercolor specialty art mediums. Next time you are in the art and craft supply store, wander down the artist paint aisle. You’ll find a bunch of different mediums and additives for acrylic and watercolor paints. These include gel mediums and pastes in gloss and matte forms. Some of these are special effects mediums that can be really cool. Most are white or clear. The white mediums tend to bury the mica shimmer, so lean toward clear mediums.
Jacquard sells Pearl Ex Varnish, described as, “Water-based varnish that can be used as a medium or top coat with Pearl Ex Powdered Pigments. Works great on paper, clay, metal, wood or plastic and cleans up easily with water. This varnish enables Pearl Ex users to create their own lustrous metallic paints, glazes and durable finishes on every surface.”

Mix one or more pigments with the art medium you’ve chosen to create your own custom color. Mixing the same color pigment with different mediums can result in color variations. Experiment and keep track of your successful recipes so you can recreate them later.

You shouldn’t need to add a binding agent as the medium usually already includes it. (Just don’t add so much pigment that its binding agent is overwhelmed.) You probably won’t need to fix the finished project with a spray fixative to hold the pigments in place.
**Dust Over Wet Paint:** Alternatively, you could paint a surface with paint (or spray a surface with spray webbing or another specialty paint product) and then dust the still wet paint with powdered pigments.

**Learn More:** The Art Alchemist blog posts on “The Great Pearl Ex + Mediums Experiment of Ought-Nine - Part One” and “Part Two” are interesting. Kristina used the same powdered pigment color and mixed it seventeen different ways to see how various mediums and additives affect the result. She found that clear drying gloss mediums tended to keep the shine of the mica powder while matte and/or opaque mediums negated the shimmer.

**Next:** Powdered pigment art and page from one of our Sponsors.
Supplies: Stamps (Butterfly - Toybox Rubber Stamps, Good Morning - CT & Nee), Cardstock (white, black, butterscotch, raspberry), Permanent ink (Tsukineko: StazOn Jet Black), Embossing ink (clear), Embossing powder (Ranger: Embossing Pearl Silver), Powdered Pigments (Ranger: Perfect Pearls Rust, Sparkle Gold, Jacquard: Pearl Ex Duo Green-Yellow), Acrylic paint (Claudine Hellmuth Studio Paint Dab Of Yellow), Sea Sponge, Soft brush & Heat tool (Ranger), Liquitex Clear Gesso, Pitt Artist Pen, Scissors, Paper adhesive (Xyron.)

"Emboss butterfly in silver on white cardstock. Mix silver Pearl Ex with clear medium. Paint inside stamped image. Allow to dry. Dust image with rust powered pigment. Use a heat tool to re-heat the image and seal the pigments. Use black Pitt Artist pen to outline butterfly details. Cut out."

"Use a sea sponge to dab yellow acrylic paint over black cardstock. Dust with yellow-green powdered pigments. Wipe off excess with dry Swiffer sheet. Allow to dry."

"Mix gold pigment with clear embossing ink. Paint onto white cardstock. Emboss with clear powder. When cool, stamp text onto panel in black permanent ink. Layer butterfly onto black, gold, sponged panel, raspberry and then butterscotch card." Finished Size: 5 ¼" x 8 ¼".
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With Adhesives

**Mix With Liquid Glue to Make Paint**

While gum arabic is often used as a binder, you can also mix pigments with commercial glues.

One popular option is to purchase an inexpensive plastic palette (the kind with many wells.) Mix one or more pigments with Perfect Paper Adhesive or another clear drying glue in each well.

Use a wet brush to paint with the mixture. Let the mixtures dry out when you are done and then use them another time with a wet brush.

**Dimensional Glues:** While clear drying adhesives are often used just as a binder, you can also use them for dimension. Try mixing powdered pigments into dimensional clear drying glues like Ranger’s Glossy Accents, JudiKin’s Diamond Glaze, Stampin’ Up’s Crystal Effects or Mod Podge’s Dimensional Magic.

**Next:** Powdered pigment artwork.
Supplies: Stamps (Sphinx - Viva Las Vegas Stamps, rest - Stampin' Up), Powdered pigments (Jacquard Pearl Ex: Brilliant Gold, Super Bronze and Silver), White school glue, Container or palette, Paintbrush, Cardstock (purple, black glossy, kraft), Ink (Tsukineko: StazOn Jet Black, pigment ink), Embossing powder (gold), Scissors, Pop dots, Paper adhesive.

“Combine Brilliant Gold, Super Bronze and Silver Pearl Ex with white school glue in three different containers. Brush onto two purple cardstocks, alternately; let dry completely.”

“Stamp Egyptian background with StazOn black ink. Stamp other images onto the other Pearl Ex-ed piece; fussy cut out images. Pop dot image collage onto stamped background.”

“Stamp eye onto black glossy cardstock and emboss with gold embossing powder. Cut out and adhere to top right stamped image. Mat image onto black glossy cardstock, then to a Kraft card front.”

Finished Size: 6” x 5”
**Marilyn Sweeney’s Artwork**

*Supplies:* Stamps (Magenta, A Stamp in the Hand), Inks (Tsukineko: Brilliance - Moonlight White) Powdered Pigments (Jacquard: Pearl Ex - Duo Blue-Green, Copper, Misty Lavender), Cardstock (black glossy, white), Perfect Paper Adhesive, Paintbrush (optional), Non-stick craft sheet.

“Lay down several large drops of Perfect Paper Adhesive on black glossy cardstock. Smear it around with a paintbrush or your fingers. It’s best to work on a non-stick sheet. Drop Pearl Ex colors onto various areas of the card and blend; I used my fingers for this process.”

“When the piece is completely dry, stamp the images. Layer the main piece on white cardstock, then on black cardstock. Affix the panel to a white card.”

*Finished Size:* 5 ½” x 4 ¼”.
Cindy Connell’s Artwork

**Supplies:** Stamps (Magenta), Powdered Pigments (Pearl Ex: Macro, Duo Red Blue), White school glue, Tissue box, Pigment ink (white, green), Embossing powder (white), Paper (white shimmer, blue shimmer), Mesh (blue), Cardstock (white), Paper adhesive.

“Combine Macro Pearl Pearl Ex with white school glue. Brush onto a tissue box and let dry completely.”

“Stamp fish in pigment ink and emboss with white embossing powder in the center of panel. Stamp leaves in green pigment ink; brush on Duo Red Blue Pearl Ex.”

“Trim panel, layer onto white shimmer, then blue shimmer paper. Place blue mesh pieces on three sides of white card front. Adhere the stamped panel.”

*Finished Size: 6 ½” x 5”.*
**Heated Pearls**

“Heated Pearls” uses heated glue and pigments to create a unique background. Stipple a coat of tacky white glue over glossy black cardstock using a stipple brush. Sprinkle a couple colors of powdered pigments over the tacky glue. Blend with the brush. Heat it with a heat tool to create a bumpy textured background.

**Adhesive Surfaces**

But you don’t have to mix the adhesive into the powder itself. You could alternatively use pigments on an adhesive-covered surface like the back of sticker paper or over double-sided tape. Or die-cut a shape and run it through a Xyron machine so that the front (rather than the back) is coated with adhesive. Brush one or more colors of dry powdered pigments over the adhesive surface. Try this to create shimmery “snow”.

**Next:** Powdered pigment artwork.
Nancie Waterman’s Artwork

Supplies: Stamp (Poppy - Embossing Arts), Cardstock (white, black, rust), Embossing powder (clear), Embossing ink (Ranger: black), Powdered Pigments (Ranger: Perfect Pearls Sparkle Gold, Lemon Sparkle, True Blue Sparkle, Rust, Jacquard: Duo Yellow-Gold), Soft brush (Ranger), Small paintbrush, Stipple brush, White glue (Perfect Paper Adhesive), Paper adhesive (Xyron).

“Stamp and emboss poppy in black on white cardstock. Mix various colors of Perfect Pearls with water. Use pigment mixture to paint inside of stamped image. Allow to dry and then cut out, leaving a border of white all around.”

“Use stipple brush to stipple a thick layer of white glue over black cardstock. Dust on various colors pigments and blend with brush. Heat. Layer onto black cardstock and then rust card and layer poppy on top.”

Finished Size: 6 ½” x 5 ¼”
Other Uses

- **Shrink plastic:** Coat with VersaMark, brush with Pearl Ex. Shrink. Alternatively Jacquard suggests, “Dust Pearl Ex Powders onto shrink plastic before shrinking. The powder will become embedded in the surface when the plastic shrinks.”

- **Wax:** Rub onto candles or mix into the wax used to make candles or add to encaustic wax projects.

- **Paper:** Mix into pulp when making paper.

- **Air Brush:** Mix with a medium for airbrushing.

- **Polymer Clay:** Mix into polymer clay or mix with varnish to coat polymer clay.

- **Fabric Painting:** Jacquard suggests mixing it with their Textile Colorless Extender to use on fabrics.

- **Wood:** Jacquard says, “Mix Pearl Ex with any clear medium to use over any surface. For example, you can mix Pearl Ex with a varnish, acrylic or solvent-based, as a coating over clay, wood or paper.”

- **Other Uses Include:** Painting automobiles, models and faux finishes on walls.

**Next:** Powdered pigment artwork.
Marilyn Sweeney’s Artwork

Supplies: Stamp (Magenta), Powdered pigments (Jacquard: Pearl Ex Spring Green & Copper), Ink (Tsukineko: Memento Nautical Blue), Die-cut machine and Embossing folder (Cuttlebug), Cardstock (black glossy, white), Perfect Paper Adhesive, Gelly Roll pen (Copper).

“Place a dollop of Perfect Paper Adhesive on black glossy cardstock. Sprinkle on Pearl Ex powders. Blend with a paintbrush or use fingers.”

“Stamp the images when the piece is completely dry. Cut out strips of the prepared cardstock and dry emboss them. Highlight the dots with the copper pen.”

“Affix the three elements to a white panel and then to a black glossy card.”

Finished Size: 4 1/8” x 5 5/8”. 
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"Dye, Pigment & Paper" is the stamping blog of Nancie Waterman, editor of Vamp Stamp News (VSN). The blog’s focus is on using inks and paint on paper (mostly.) Please come hang out with me!

“Birdseed & Binoculars” is a second blog from Nancie Waterman, editor of Vamp Stamp News (VSN). This blog’s focus is backyard bird watching. Please check it out if you like watching birds as well as stamping. Or share the link with a friend who likes watching birds.
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*Many thanks*, Nancie, VSN

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