**MOUTH ATOMIZER**

Using a mouth atomizer is a wonderful way to create pattern and could be called the poor artist’s airbrush. It requires no set up, no compressor, is quickly cleaned and can be placed right in your original bottles of paint if they are the right consistency.

Additionally, I like the less polished results of the atomizer over the airbrush. The fine spatter that you obtain from the mouth atomizer, creates a lovely texture whether used with a stencil or on its own. Any paint that you can use with an airbrush can be used with the mouth atomizer and there are many brands of airbrush paint available. Almost any ink, diluted watercolor, diluted fluid acrylic and all the High Flow Acrylics can be sprayed through an atomizer. Never try to spray fluid acrylic right from the bottle. It must be diluted to a watery consistency, and it will spray beautifully once thinned. The advantage of the High Flow Acrylic is that it’s formulated to be used in airbrushes so you can spray them directly from the original bottles.

If you haven’t used a mouth atomizer you want to be aware of a few things. First of all, when you spray, assume that droplets of the spray will travel well beyond the area where you intend the paint to land. Be sure to blow out. Lower viscosity paint will take very little force while white paint takes the most effort.

The mouth atomizer has two tubes. Place the bottom, smaller diameter tube into your paint. Take a deep breath (like you are getting ready to blow out candles on a birthday cake), place your lips securely around the free end of the top (larger diameter tube) and blow a steady stream of air. This creates a vacuum and sucks the paint up from the bottle, which is then sprayed onto your surface. Be sure to blow out. Lower viscosity paint will take very little force while white paint takes the most effort.

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**USE PAINT THAT IS THE RIGHT VISCOSITY**

You can spray any paint that is the right viscosity. All inks can be sprayed right from the bottle. Dilute your watercolor or acrylic to a watery consistency, and spray it from any small container. I like to keep my diluted acrylic or watercolor in air tight containers so it’s available when needed for pouring or spraying.

**Spray White High Flow Acrylic**

The White High Flow Acrylic contains solids that render it opaque, and therefore it is thicker and harder to spray. When spraying white, I suggest that you spray from a 4 oz. (113 gm) bottle. When you place the atomizer into this size bottle, it will almost fill the bottom tube, and the vacuum needed to draw up the paint will be much less.

**Remove the Stencil**

If you are spraying on an absorbent surface you can remove your stencil almost immediately after spraying. Allow the paint to dry before layering additional paint. One of the advantages of spraying white is that now, by glazing, you can transform it into any color you want. This is especially advantageous on black. Spraying onto black is difficult because transparent color is not visible on the black surface.

**Practice**

When you first try your atomizer, spray plain water through it before trying to spray paint. This will give you an idea of how much effort you will need when you start to spray paint or ink.

**Other Options**

If you do not have a mouth atomizer nor wish to purchase one, you can still do the projects in the book that call for an atomizer by using a make-up sponge. I demonstrate this in the stencil section. However, if you are interested in purchasing an atomizer check out the Resources section in the back of this book.

Be aware that the inexpensive folding atomizer, while able to spray ink and diluted paint, will not be able to spray the white paint. The atomizers mentioned in the Resource section in the back of the book will spray the heavier white High Flow Acrylic as well as the thinner paints.

**Practice**

When you first try your atomizer, spray plain water through it before trying to spray paint. This will give you an idea of how much effort you will need when you start to spray paint or ink.
Create Masks
Cut any shape out of heavy weight paper or plastic to use as a mask to prevent spray from covering areas you wish to remain untouched. Before spraying, place the mask on top of your paper and then place the stencil on top of that. You may need to tape the mask and stencil down to keep them from moving when you begin to spray.

Remove the Mask and Stencil
The advantage of using a mask is that you control where the spray is allowed to go. Once you remove the stencil and mask you will have a sprayed area that is the shape of the mask and filled with the pattern of the stencil.

Spray Onto an Old Painting
Transform a less than successful painting by spraying white over portions of the painting and then glazing over the white with a color already in the painting. Choose a painting that has some solid areas of color where the stencil design will show up when sprayed.

Spray White Through a Stencil
Choose a stencil that you feel will integrate well into the design of the painting. Spray white through the stencil and allow it to dry.

Glaze a Color Over the White
To integrate the white into the painting, choose a color that is already in the painting and use it to glaze over the sprayed white areas. The luminosity of the glaze over the sprayed white paint can infuse a dull and lifeless painting with excitement. Use restraint when adding sprayed areas to a painting. If you spray too much of the painting you will lose the contrast you are creating between the sprayed and unsprayed areas.

Start a Painting by Spraying Through Stencils
A great way to start a painting is to lay various stencils down across the surface of your paper. Keep in mind that you want some repetition and variation in the pattern. To retain some of the white of the paper it is important to lay down all of your stencils before you start to spray. If you lay one stencil down at a time and spray in succession, each time you spray you will cover more of the unprotected white paper with color. By the time you spray your last stencil very little of the white paper will remain to show through the pattern.

Spray One or Several Colors
Depending on your purposes, spray one or several colors through the stencils. You must thoroughly clean the atomizer before each color change. If you do not clean out the paint between color changes you will contaminate your bottles of paint with residual paint left in the atomizer.

Remove the Stencils
Remove the stencils to reveal the pattern created by the sprayed paint. Use this as the start of a new painting. You can leave or cover up as much of the sprayed pattern as you desire.

Clean the Atomizer
Between color changes and after you are done spraying, be sure to clean the atomizer. Do not leave the atomizer sitting in your paint or on the table after spraying. You want to clean the paint out of the tube before it has a chance to dry. Completely immerse the intake tube into water and swish it around until most of the paint has been removed from the atomizer. Then place the intake tube in clear water and spray onto a paper towel until the spray is clear. Remove the atomizer from the water and spray air through the atomizer to remove most of the water from the tube. If you are going to spray another color you will need to shake or tap more of the water out of the tube so you don’t dilute your paint. I often use two atomizers when spraying so that I don’t have to clean in between color changes.