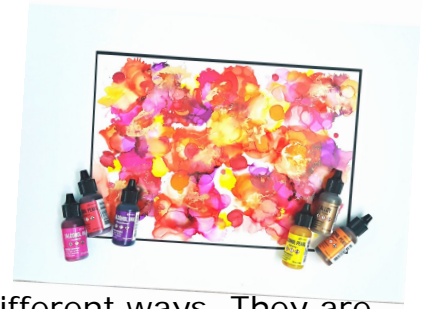


A Guide to alcohol inks & substrates

What are alcohol inks?

Alcohol inks are a dye-based ink that be used in many different ways. They are fast-drying, waterproof and highly pigmented. They are designed to work on non-porous surfaces.

Once dry, alcohol inks can be reactivated using more alcohol ink, blending solution or isopropyl alcohol. Similar to how water colours can be reactivated with more water or paint.



What are Mixatives?

Mixative is a metallic acid-free pigment ink, specially formulated to create luminous highlights when combined with alcohol ink and blending solution on non-porous surfaces.

As they are designed to “mix”, very little is needed otherwise the mixative will “take over.”

What are Alloys?

They are reflective, metallic, acid free inks specially formulated with unique metal powders to create intense metallic highlights when combined with Alcohol Inks and Alcohol Blending Solution on non-porous surfaces.

What are Alcohol Pearls?

Alcohol Pearls are similar to alcohol inks, but they consist of pigments/mica and dyes which then give a pearl sheen. They dry permanently. Unlike alcohol ink, alcohol pearls cannot be reactivated or lifted once dry.

What is Blending Solution?

Blending solution is alcohol ink without colour but has resin added. The combination of the two helps bind & stick inks to a surface. It is used to help the alcohol inks “move freely” and be reactivated when dry. Also keeps inks colour vibrancy. It does help slow down the alcohol inks drying time.

If you use too much blending solution, can make your work sticky.



What surfaces can you use alcohol inks on?

Although alcohol inks can be used on any surface, the best effects are achieved on non-porous surfaces which help the inks to flow. Some of the best surfaces for alcohol ink art include:

- **Yupo paper:** A synthetic paper that is waterproof and non-porous. Quality Yupo papers are recyclable too! The ink remains on the surface & is not absorbed which keeps the colour intensity. Yupo is available in different weights & also a translucent version too.
- **Dura-Lar / Dura-Bright:** polyester film which is a mix between mylar & acetate. It is heat resistant, will not tear, does not absorb colour, acid free & archival.
- **Hard Core Art Panels:** double sided vinyl panels with a MDF centre. Has a light textured surface. The ink remains on the surface & is not absorbed which keeps the colour intensity.
- **Ceramic** (tiles/pots/plates): A smooth, hard surface that allows the inks to flow and blend easily. Alcohol ink is not food safe, so finished piece will need to be sealed afterwards.
- **Glass:** A transparent surface that can create a stunning effect with alcohol inks. Alcohol ink is not food safe, so finished piece will need to be sealed afterwards.
- **Metal or foil sheets/tape:** durable, slick metal surfaces which the alcohol ink works beautifully upon.
- **Mirrors/mirror tiles:** as alcohol ink are dye based, can give a semi-transparent look to the mirror. If using mixatives or alloys, will give a more opaque finish.
- **Acrylic sheets:** A lightweight, synthetic surface that is perfect for alcohol ink art too.
- **Acetate sheets:** A budget-friendly option for alcohol ink art. Heat resistant acetate gives more creating options.

Basically, most non-porous surfaces! Depending on whether you use inks by themselves or add in Mixatives or Alloys, can create some really cool effects.

Did you know ...?

Yupo, Dura-Lar/Dura_Bright & Foil - depending on thickness - can be stamped on, die cut and used with embossing folders!

Other surfaces to try with alcohol inks

There are different ways to make surfaces non-porous and “slick” to work with your alcohol inks. Please note that the alcohol inks may not flow or blend as freely but can create cool effects.

- **Primed canvas:** to get the alcohol inks to flow, cover with gesso. A good 2/3 layers gives the best effect. Working in small spaces works best and gives greater control of the alcohol ink. If working with a black gesso, adding a Mixative in with the alcohol inks, will make them stand out even more.
- **Acrylic paint:** working in smaller areas works best and you will need to use a blending solution or isopropyl alcohol to create flowing ink blends.
- **Gel mediums:** coat your surface with gel medium and then add alcohol ink. Use gel medium through a stencil and trap alcohol inks within the shape to make cool colour blends.
- **Texture pastes:** alcohol ink will sink into the pastes but can give really cool effects. To make them move you will need to use blending solution or isopropyl alcohol. Movement, however, will not be free flowing due to nature of the pastes.
- **Gesso:** inks move but need blending solution or isopropyl. Work in smaller areas to get better results.
- **Speciality card** eg: mirri, glitter, metallic coated: use with blending solution or isopropyl alcohol to create great effects. Even though coated card will not move as quickly/freely as Yupo for example.
- **Parchment paper:** wonderful translucent effects can be made using alcohol inks. Try not to over soak the parchment to get the best results. Parchment will curl a bit but will dry flat.

The effects that you get and how the inks work will vary depending on the surface that you use. For example, Yupo paper is a good choice for creating smooth, even washes of colour, ceramic tiles can be used to create more textured and dimensional effects, metal foil sheets look fabulous covered in ink and then embossed. Experiment with different surfaces to find the one that you like best.

