

- Artist Statement -

by: Mike Felber

Thesis: To study the process of pigment/sediment drying in liquid via the properties of surface tension, and the patterns that can be created by doing so.

Intro-

The process of sediment drying in liquid can lead to unparalleled results. Pigment suspended in the liquid is pulled to the edges, via the properties of surface tension, leaving varied amounts of color in different areas within the same puddle.

Surface tension is an effect within liquid which causes the surface to behave like an elastic sheet. This effect allows insects such as the water strider to walk on water, as well as other small objects to float on the surface. When this surface tension is disrupted, the liquid will reform its elastic surface around the perimeter of the new object, reforming the tension that initially existed. When sediment (or pigment in this case) is present, it attracts itself towards the edge of the liquid being carried by this tension, thus forming a high concentration of sediment around the perimeter of any object in the liquid. When dry, any nooks or crannies in the edge design will be mimicked by the dried liquid.

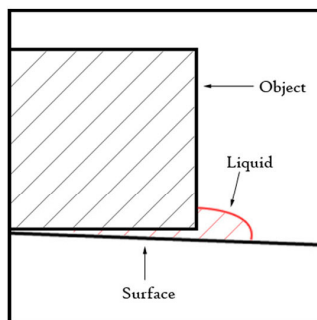


Diagram 1

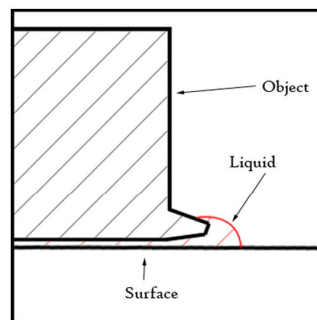


Diagram 2

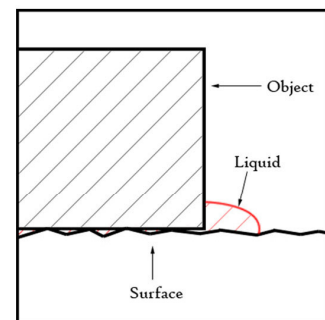


Diagram 3

Detail-

My paintings reveal extreme complexity when looked at very closely. Many factors come into play when corralling the sediment- topographical textures in the woods surface or the edge complexity of the object in the liquid, as well as the depth of the objects edge in the liquid will play a big role in how things will dry. In a sense, the drying water does a lot of the work for me.

In diagram 1 the surface and the object are sitting uneven with each other, this causing the pigment in the liquid to collect nearest to where the two objects are closest (in this case, the left of the diagram). This will create an uneven placement of pigment causing different concentrations of color.

In diagram 2, the edge of the object has a different shape than the rest of the object; this again will cause an uneven arrangement of pigment. Objects such as gears and sprockets provide a varied edge for the pigment to collect around.

The surface used in this experiment is wood, which is not always flat. Diagram 3 displays a largely uneven surface. Patterns of wood grain, marks in the surface and other topographical anomalies will cause the liquid to behave accordingly. Also, the porousness of wood comes into play here as it is not always uniform.

Artistic Meaning-

I push my art to be as abstract as possible, and as far away from what people are used to, leaving no recognizable objects or story lines, the only story told is expressed through color and line. They are meant to be curious, to be stared at in awe and puzzlement.

My art does not conform to traditional canvas or is satisfied with the four lines of a rectangular frame. Everything I paint on is found, boards found curbside from dresser drawers and such make up my painting surface. My brushes are bicycle sprockets and hubcaps and surface tension is how I paint.