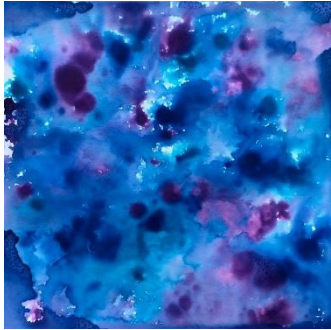


# Action Painting



## Introduction

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, artist Jackson Pollock became renowned for abstract expressionist artwork that was dubbed “action painting” because the motion he used while creating them. He did not use a traditional brush or even touch the canvas, instead applying liquid paint by plashing, dripping and pouring.

Action painting is a fun way to make abstract art and explore *space* while artmaking. The technique creates relational space between the layers of drips and splashes, as well as positive and negative spaces between the paper and the paint. You can further define these spaces with ink lines to bring out each shape and detail. There is really no wrong way to approach this activity.

## Mindful Reflection

As you move through this artmaking process, see if you can pause and take a few deeper breaths every 5 minutes or so and simply notice the felt sense of your body breathing. Then before you continue with your painting again, shift your attention to simply noticing and appreciating your creation with its emerging shapes, colors and patterns. As you observe your art through the visual field, see if you can let go of any judging or planning that may arise and instead, as you proceed, try to stay present with a sense of joy and curiosity about the nature of the creative process unfolding.

## Materials

watercolor paper  
liquid watercolors, assorted colors  
small cups or dropper bottles for application  
small spray bottle of water  
illustrator or opaque gel pen to create highlights  
\*optional small spray bottle with rubbing alcohol  
\*optional mounting board

## Directions

When working with liquid watercolors, there are several techniques that one can incorporate to create interesting effects. Here is a great one to try for this project;

- *Alcohol-* Watercolor paint and rubbing alcohol are akin to oil and water. Once you pour your desired amount of liquid watercolor on paper, spritz with rubbing alcohol in a spray bottle to keep things loose and free. It will create an alluring effect that’s reminiscent of tie-dye.



1. Preparing your workspace is critical for this activity, as it tends to get rather messy. We recommend placing your watercolor paper on a piece of scrap cardboard to protect your work surface from any paint that may spill over.
2. Using dropper bottles or paint poured from a small cup, drip paint across the paper.



3. Spritz the paint with water so that it runs and spreads to fill the paper. Repeat the process with at least one more color. Aim for a variety of textures, from wet areas that spread to drops of color that remain dimensional. Allow the paint to dry completely.
4. With an illustrator or gel pen of your desired color, trace the outline of shapes formed by the dripped paint. Edges are formed by color and value changes. Some shapes may overlap and some may be very small. Some shapes may appear to represent recognizable objects, such as leaves, flowers or faces. Add details to develop these, if desired.
5. Glue the paper to a mounting board for a finished look.