

# Po-Cai, Ancient Chinese Painting Technique

Submitted Monday, May 15, 2006      **Courtesy of** Sharonne Fogle, USA

PO-CAI: A 500 year old Chinese painting technique that will help everyone in the community become an artist! There are no mistakes, and finished paintings can have pen & ink drawings added, be cut-up, reduced/enlarged or copied with quotations from the Writings, matted and framed, made into cards, etc.

## Materials

1. Water-based tempera paint in squirt bottles (black, red, blue, yellow, green, magenta, turquoise, metallic's, fluorescents, etc.).
2. Plexiglass, about 3 ft x 4 ft x 1/8" thick (available from Home Depot or lumber yards, or recycle plastic storm windows). Regular glass works too but not for carrying around to classes.
3. Fingerpaint paper (available at teacher stores). Large sheets, but don't cut smaller as it curls up when wet. The paint does not absorb into fingerpaint paper. You can always try other kinds of paper.
4. Brushes, wide and narrow ones, any kind, foam or bristle.
5. Framing mat board cut in half. What is meant is 2 "L" shaped pieces of white mat board, Tag board, 11x17" type paper, etc. With this you can enclose different parts of the painting to see the best composition and colors, making the mat larger or smaller. Sometimes you may want to cut just a little part out and enlarge it.....other times you may like the whole thing.
6. Newspapers, large container for water, spray bottle for water, large table, paper towels for cleaning off plexiglass.

## Technique

1. Cover the table with newspapers and set the plexiglass on it. Line up the paint colors, water, spray bottle and brushes along one side. Squirt out a little of each color paint along the edge of the plexiglass. Spray a little water on the Plexiglass. With a brush dip into the color you want and smear it around on the middle part of the plexiglass. Add more colors, but not too many. Smooth out the paint so it isn't too thick.
2. Pick up a sheet of finger-paint paper and hold it over the edge farthest from you, then slide it over the paint. Zigzag it, pat it, curve it, all the way toward you. Lay that paper aside to dry and you may be able to get one or two other prints off. You might spray a bit of water over the print/paint surface and try again with a new sheet.
3. Write your name in the corner of all your paintings so everyone will know which is which. When the paintings are dry, try to see areas that might be more exciting if enlarged, that have wonderful blends of color or feelings, or could be used as background for a quotation, or just used as is matted and framed. Enjoy!

This activity came from Walt M. in Michigan, he demonstrated it at the Art Retreat in Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA.