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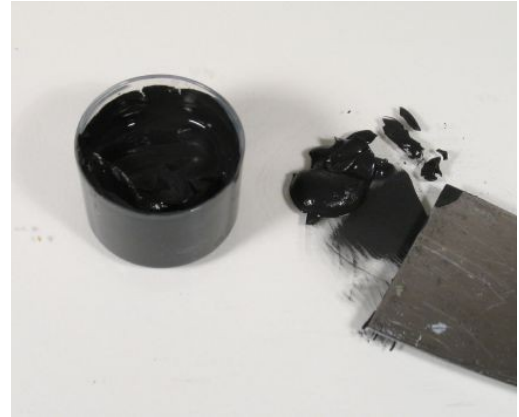
## Studio Craft: Graphite Wash Technique



Most of the time, graphite is considered a dry medium, but this familiar lustrous black pigment can also be applied as a wash on paper.



Powdered graphite is a dense, fine pigment that can be dispersed in paints and inks. By adding a solvent, this pigment can be applied to paper with a technique similar to watercolor or ink.



To control free particles and dust, mix graphite powder with denatured alcohol to form a paste. This makes the material easy to handle and dispense on a palette. Since alcohol has no binding power, it's important to understand that the paste is not a true paint. Just like dry graphite, it's still necessary to apply the medium to a support like paper that is permeable enough to retain the particles.



Denatured alcohol is a good choice for this approach. 70% isopropyl alcohol from the pharmacy will do, but a small amount of water in the mixture slows evaporation slightly. Denatured ethyl alcohol sold as shellac thinner evaporates more quickly but requires greater care for safe indoor use.



Ordinary watercolor brushes give a full range of mark-making that can be used alone or in combination with dry pencil drawing. A fine-tipped round can be used to add deep, velvety dark strokes without the characteristic, shiny embossment that results from pencil application.



A watercolor brush or even a toothbrush can be used to produce a field of spattered dots.



Once dry, a kneaded eraser can be used to lift and erase the painted marks.



Selectively lighten and edit spatters using an eraser.

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