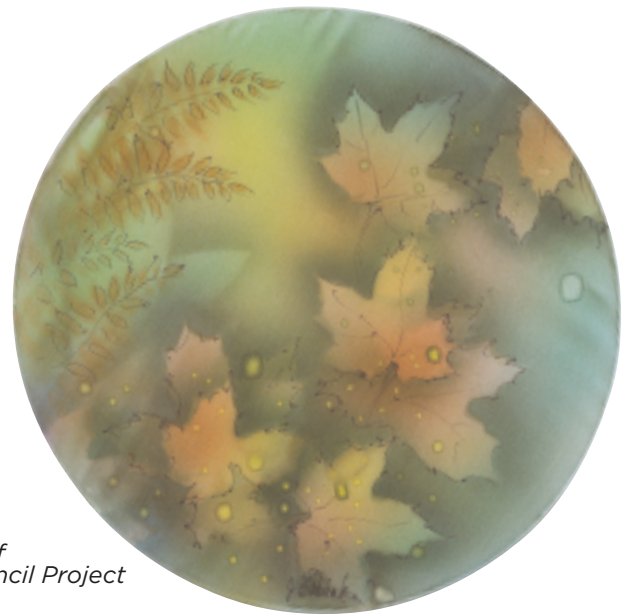# Airbrushing on Silk

By Judy Schieck, Art Consultant,
Badger Airbrush Co.

Airbrushing on silk is exciting and really fun! It produces a different look than regular brush painting does. Because the paint is aspirated, it goes on evenly and dries before it can bleed, reducing the need to apply a resist medium. This is a simple beginners' project using 5 colors of paint and 2 types of stencils: positive and negative.

Grade Levels 9-12

Process for Leaf Stencil Project:

1. Gather leaves and flowers from nature. Because the leaf will be held in place by hand, look for large samples with interesting edges for a stencil. Rinse with water to remove any dirt and pat dry with paper towels.

2. Follow instructions included with the airbrush and compressor to set up airbrush station. Have scrap cardboard available to catch overspray. Practice making airbrush strokes with paint on scrap paper before applying it to the hoop. Fill jars with silk paint.

3. Attach the jar with black silk paint to the airbrush. Place the leaf on the silk hoop, hold in place and spray lightly around the edges of the leaf. Move the leaf and repeat. For interesting designs, overlap some of the leaves and use a variety of shapes and sizes. The leaf is a positive shape which creates a negative design.

4. Spray remaining black paint from airbrush onto scrap paper. Change to yellow color jar and spray randomly over leaves and background.

5. Change the color to red and spray lightly over some of the yellow areas to create an orange color.

6. Change the color to blue and spray some of the remaining unsprayed areas. This will create green on the areas sprayed yellow. Leave some areas yellow.

7. Change the color to yellow again. Hold the airbrush close to the silk — 1/4" away — and spray various sized dots randomly over the leaves and background area, similar to spattering. When spraying close to the fabric, the pressure from the airbrush increases, displacing the color already in place. This happens with lines and dots or any close free-hand technique.

8. Use the Ultra-Fine Sharpie to outline and add detail to the leaves and ferns.

Options

   - Instead of leaves from nature, use an existing stencil or cut your own out of paper.

Leaf Stencil Project

Materials

Jacquard® Silk Hoops Class Kit (01240-1029), contains pre-stretched silk, silk paint, water-based resist, applicator bottles and brushes for 30 projects

Badger® Model 150 "Anthem" Double Action Airbrush Set (25022-1009), contains airbrush, color cup, two jars, and braided air hose

Spare Color Jars (25035-1002) and Adaptors (25035-0000), need two each
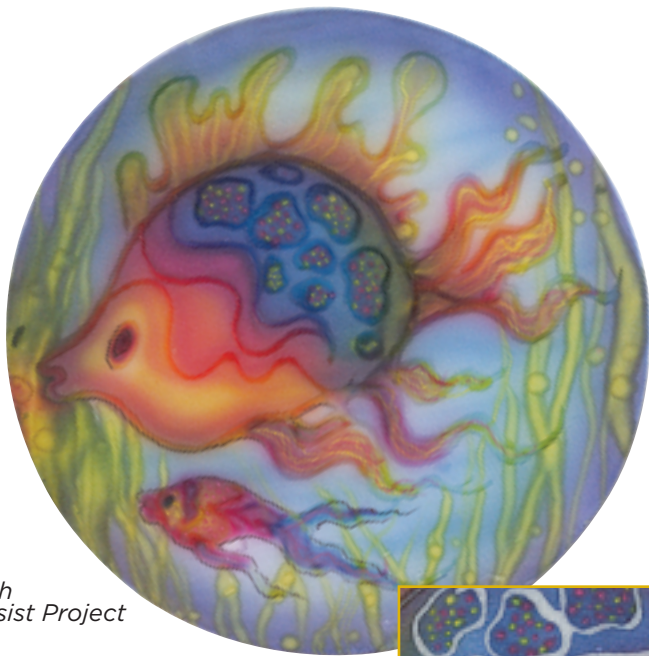
Badger® "Cyclone" Oil-Less Air Compressor (25130-1012)

Blick All-Use Masking Tape, 1/2" (23006-1560)

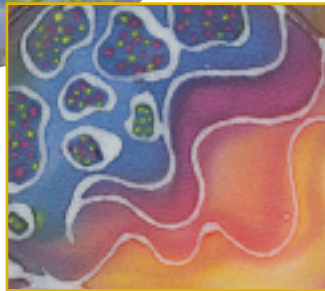Sharpie® Ultra-Fine Point Marker, Black (21315-2003)

Blick Economy Manila Paper (10203-1107),

5. Black outlines and details may be added with the Ultra-Fine Point Sharpie.

    NOTE: Ideally, the resist whould be washed out, leaving white lines in its place. However, the water may cause the silk may to become unglued from the metal hoop. Leave the resist in place for this project - it will actually add some lovely sparkle!

*Fish
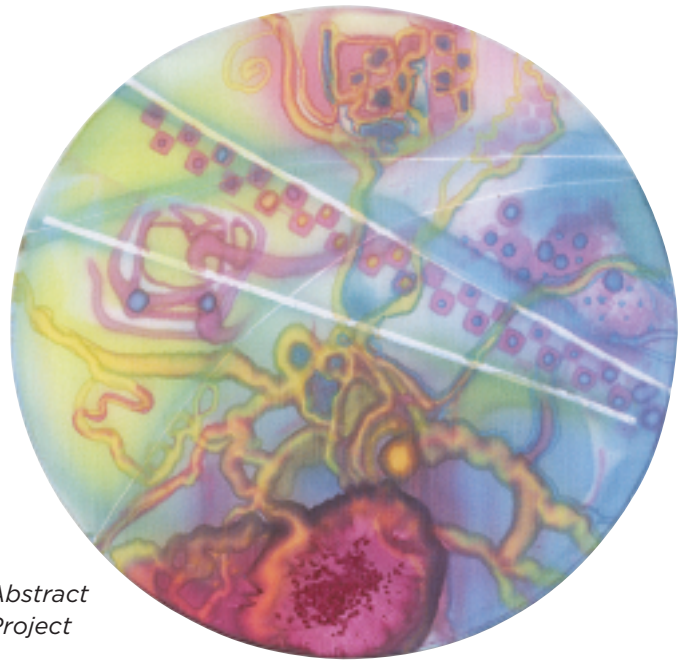Resist Project*

Process for
Fish Resist Project:

1. This method uses the clear, water-based resist medium and applicator bottles included in the Silk Hoops Class Kit. Pour some of the resist medium into one of the small applicator bottles and attach a fine line tip. Draw the fish design with the resist directly onto the silk hoop. You can place a pattern or photo underneath the silk hoop and trace it, if you would like. Rinse the resist from the applicator tip and allow the silk hoop to dry. The resist creates boundaries to contain most of the sprayed color.

Detail of Resist

2. Spray the background with blue. Then spray the fish with yellow, red and blue. It's best to start with the lightest color, in this case, yellow. Airbrush painting allows the artist to mix colors right on the ground by spraying one color over another. From these 3 colors, the additional colors of orange, green and purple are created, in addition to various neutrals. Some of the overspray may go beyond the area intended, but that is not a problem.

3. Make accent lines on the fins and tails and make small dots inside the larger dots by holding the airbrush very close to the silk.

4. Add the seaweed by spraying yellow on the blue background in various line widths and dots.

*Abstract
Project*

Process for Abstract Project:

Anything goes!

1. Use masking tape and various pieces of paper, cardboard and stencils to create hard edges and lines.

2. Spray free-hand lines and shapes on top of the background colors. Experiment by respraying areas with different colors. The underlying color will change completely and produce lines with a darker edge because the color underneath is pushed aside by the new color.

3. Add salt (included in kit) to a very wet area to absorb paint and create texture.

Hints for Using an Airbrush

- Spray each layer of paint lightly. Too much paint sprayed at one time will cause bleeding.

- Use the air in your airbrush to dry each coat of paint between color changes.

- Dark colors require more coverage. Several thin layers work better than a single heavy application.

- Remember, with a double action airbrush, always start your air first, move your arm, then pull back slightly on the trigger. This sequence allows you to have control over the amount of paint exiting the airbrush and creates a sharp edge.

- Sew a thread through the top and hang as a suncatcher.

National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

9-12 Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

9-12 Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems