

# Alcohol Ink Tools & Techniques

## Denise Johnson, Artist, Guide, Magician!

[www.ArtfulEarth.com](http://www.ArtfulEarth.com)

### Bottled Ink

Presently, there are many brands and even as I write this, more are on the way. Ranger, Pinata, Zig Kurecolor, Bearly, to name a few. Pinata's Exciter Pack of 9 colors is a great starter set. The colors are vibrant and the metallics are, in my opinion, the best of any brand especially the Rich Gold and Brass. Ranger is also a good choice with a large selection of colors. – Ranger and Pinata are available as Individual bottles on Ebay and Amazon . Ranger are available in packs of 3 at Michaels, Joanns and Hobby Lobby.

It's easy to get carried away with all the pretty colors available. But honestly, you don't need a huge variety to create beautiful art.

Here's some of my favorite colors: Ranger – Teakwood, Terra Cotta, Wild Plum, Stream, Butterscotch, Pool, Lettuce, Sailboat Blue

Pinata – Rich Gold, Brass, Blanco (white), Senorita Magenta, Cazablanca Orange-but you really can't go wrong with any of them. Brass is my favorite.

Ranger Ink. This is a set. Individual bottles can also be purchased. Do a search. <https://amzn.to/4gOgFls>

Bearly Art alcohol inks <https://amzn.to/4hbazve>

Pinata Exciter Set alcohol inks <https://amzn.to/3BTmmiR>

Pinata Brass large bottle <https://amzn.to/4jzPLa>

Pinata Brass small bottle <https://amzn.to/4b1f5L3>

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### Alcohol Ink MARKERS

Surprisingly all alcohol based permanent markers are alcohol inks! Just add rubbing alcohol to get them moving. You can make your own inks using markers, but I've found it's a messy process for me. YouTube has how-to videos.

Copic and Spectrum Noir These are expensive compared to the other brands.

Bianyo <https://amzn.to/4aLqM8v>

Caliart <https://amzn.to/4hKwgmnd>

Ohuhu <https://amzn.to/40Vnfkt>

### Other Ways To Colors

Pebeo Gold Gilding Wax <https://amzn.to/3CrdQYG> I use this in my Molten Magic hot glue gun technique.

Kingart Gel Sticks <https://amzn.to/4hBBqRT>

Artistro Paint Pens <https://amzn.to/3Eq8X2z>

Prisma Color Pencils <https://amzn.to/3Ex4oU0>

## **SUBSTRATES-Just about anything! Experiment.**

Most commonly used non porous surfaces: Back side of most gloss and semi-gloss photo paper. Matte photo paper does not work.. Corian solid surface. Yupo, Ceramic tile and pretty much ceramic anything – vases, plates, cups, figurines etc. Duralar (mylar plastic). Canvas- you can make it a bit more non porous by spraying with Kilz primer. Metal washers for jewelry or wind chimes. Ceramic cups, plates. Styrofoam plates, cups, takeout boxes. Dominos (pendants, magnets). Light switch plate covers. Vellum. Nice for lamp/tea light shades. Contact paper.

Second hand stores are a treasure trove of inkable stuff. Think flower vases, candle holders, candles (yes you can ink right on a candle!) wine glasses. Keep in mind things won't be food safe even after sealing them. Also a great place to pick up perfume spray bottles-empty, wash, fill with alcohol.

Papers:

Yupo <https://amzn.to/4hk251L>

Impresa <https://amzn.to/4hlsY98>

Grafix Dura Brite <https://amzn.to/40ZrStN>

Pixiss <https://amzn.to/40Y9Ms2>

HP Everyday Photo Paper <https://amzn.to/3Q4sUhY>

## **SEALERS**

Kamar spray varnish-Amazon. I use to buy it at Walmart but now it seems to only be available on their website. Kamar is the only product I have found that will not reactivate the inks. There's probably other products out there that would work but I have a shelf full of ones that don't!

UV spray after several coats of Kamar.

I have recently discovered Maker's Magic by Scorch Marker. I use it as a sealer, glue, add ink to it. It's waterproof and can be used outdoors. It's also food safe. I really really like it!

Maker's Magic <https://amzn.to/4hl3qZK>

## **THE MAGIC INGREDIENT**

91% rubbing alcohol – I don't use blending solution as it can get expensive and I can't tell the difference. Available at Walmart pharmacy department. I have used 99% and have not found a difference. Walmart is priced the lowest.

## **For patterns, textures, blending, color**

Waterbrush filled with alcohol (my absolute must have tool) Q-tips, Magic Sponge (generic brands work too) Micro applicator brushes (Amazon). These small thingies make great dots and circles. Spray bottles of alcohol. Spray bottles of inks diluted with alcohol. Straws, air compressor, hair dryer, (Conair has a nice tube shaped one) your breath, Needle nose squirt bottles. I find I use my hairdryer the most. Cheap toilet paper for getting a soft blended effect. Credit card to get hard edges and unusual patterns. Saran Wrap-put some color down, cover with scrunched up wrap, let it dry. Looks like frost on a window.

One of my favorite techniques is spraying the background with inks and alcohol in a spray bottle then playing with them using my alcohol brush filled with alcohol. I add color from my palette or from the bottle when the time comes for intense color. Rich gold is awesome but sometimes becomes muddy when a lot of alcohol is used.

Catalyst wedges! I love them for moving paint around and making patterns. They come in various styles. I have them ALL! Silicone molds and fondant molds are so much fun to use with hot glue, regular glue and even joint compound!

Catalyst Wedges Love these! <https://amzn.to/3CF4Ejk>

Silicone Paint Shapers <https://amzn.to/4jPuiCy>

Needle tip squirt bottles <https://amzn.to/3PZqjG9>

Waterbrush Arteeza <https://amzn.to/3Q0gsQe>

Ranger Stamper w/felt <https://amzn.to/3Q0iGz4>

Textured paint roller <https://amzn.to/3ErTfEa>

Foam Roller stamps <https://amzn.to/3ElmLez>

Silicone molds (fondant molds) there's 100's out there! Here's one.

<https://amzn.to/4aKTp5H>

Adhesive foam sheets <https://amzn.to/4159RdQ>

Silicone applicators <https://amzn.to/3Q9cqFs>

## **Misc:**

[Avon care silicone hand cream](#) Use this first thing and cleaning your hands is much easier.

## **Tips:**

In my experience less is more, but with AI's - but, of course, not always. Inks go a long way when combined with alcohol. Don't try to control the inks at first. Let them do their thing-they do it so well! Think of it as a beautiful dance. At times let the inks take the lead and at other times you take the lead. The best of times is when you're moving effortlessly together. Enjoy the dance!

If you're not having fun, switch gears, set it aside, take a break or start another painting. I like to work on multiple paintings. The beauty of this medium is you can set a piece aside for minutes, days, weeks and even months and come back to it. There's no hurry! Exploring and having fun is your goal. Don't worry about creating a masterpiece, enjoy the journey, be playful! Watch the inks move and blend and shimmer and shine. I find that working quickly leads to a looser painting. Let it flow let it go.

**Stay safe!** People are affected in different ways with the alcohol and the inks. Work outside if possible or a well-ventilated area. Fans, open windows, respirator if need be. Gloves are optional. The inks will disappear from your hands usually in a day or so.

There's a very supportive Facebook group that I was a co-founding member. of about 3 years ago - Alcohol Ink Art Community. It has grown to over 42,000 members! It is a wonderful giving community and great learning source for everything alcohol ink related. There are many YouTube videos out there. Just a word of caution. You can overdose on watching too many videos and surfing the net. In reality, the fun is just experimenting on your own. Think outside the box! Ask "What If" and then find out! Keep it fun and playful. You'll find the inks will respond in kind! There's no pressure to create a masterpiece every time. Allow yourself to play like a 5 year old.

I'm always available to answer questions, critique your work or just chat. Email me, Denise Johnson, at

**Prints, workshops, and retreats are available on my website!**

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