

# LIFE BOOK<sup>2014</sup>

## SPRAY INK LOVE

AN INTRODUCTION TO SPRAY INKS  
COMPOSITION AND NEGATIVE SPACE

Hello treasured Life Book Friend! :D

Oh boy am I excited to be sharing this week's lesson with you! :) If you follow me on [instagram](#) or [Facebook](#), you'll know that I've recently been experimenting with and obsessing over playing with [spray inks](#)! They are so beautifully vibrant and they allow for fabulous splatter, dripping and inking techniques! Yay! I've also been experimenting with negative space and wanted to give you guys some ideas around 'composition' too.

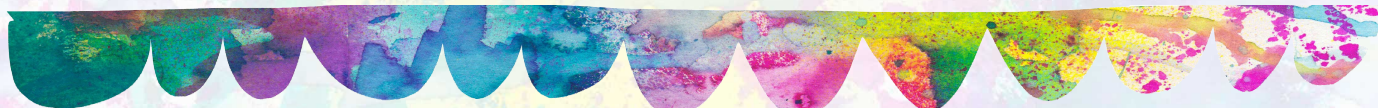


### supplies used this week

(Remember that you can substitute certain supplies with others, you don't always need to buy all the supplies listed! :))



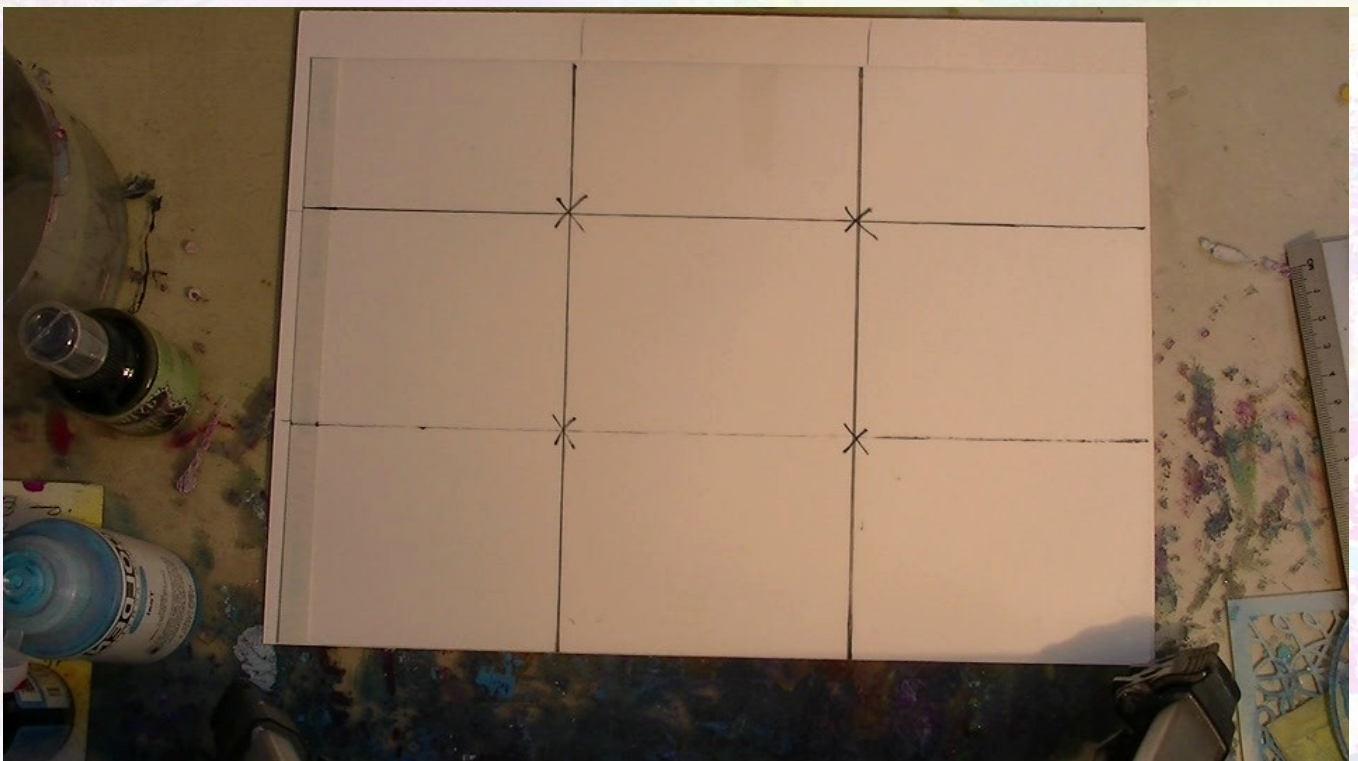
- Spray Inks (I used Dylusions by Ranger but you can make your own or buy different brands)
- Washi Tape
- Stencil (or draw elements instead)
- Rubber stamp (for main element, but you can draw this or use collage)
- Some acrylics paint (optional)
- Rubber alphabet stamps (though not needed, you could write instead or print out on printer)
- High Flow Golden Acrylics (optional)



## get thinking about composition

Last month we started to take a look at colour, colour schemes and colour theory. Understanding colour helps a lot when it comes to creating visually pleasing pages. Composition, like colour, can also make a big difference to how your page/ painting is perceived by the viewer. There is a LOT of information about 'composition in art & photography', just do a google search if you want to go more in depth, so for the today I just wanted to introduce you to and encourage you to think about the 'rule of thirds' which is a straight forward compositional guideline that can help you place your elements effectively around your page.

So, **the rule of thirds** is a compositional guideline which encourages the artist to divide their canvas space into 9 equal parts. The idea is that the artist places the main elements of interest in the piece of art (or photograph) along the lines drawn or right on the 'tension points' (or "hotspots" as I like to call them – see the crosses on the image below). This creates a more effective/ interesting piece of art with character and tension.



Things to remember when experimenting with this rule:

1. Don't let it confine or stifle you – it's a rule you can explore and then break
2. Play around with options: does it work if you utilise ALL the 4 hotspots? Or does that make it too cluttered?
3. Usually odd numbers of repeating elements work better than even ones, play with that. Do you agree?
4. What do YOU find pleasing to the eye? Do you 'agree' with the rule of thirds?
5. Remember that the more you try out conventional 'rules' around composition and colour, over time, you'll become more intuitive about what works best *for you* and your potential audience, it might be very different to what 'conventional rules say' (awesome no? ;)).
6. Play play play, be free about it, while still keeping the guidelines in mind.

# working with negative space

Negative space is that space in a painting that is *not* the main focus of your page. It does not always need to be white (though that's what I'm going for in the lesson today), it's that space which surrounds your main focal elements. Being aware of it and working with it can create wonderful work. Leaving white negative space in a page really helps with contrast and can bring out your colours and focal elements even more than usual. It's a handy and fun "tool" to use (though not always easy for 'colourholics' like me! ;) Hee).



In this painting I worked with both negative space and the 'rule of thirds' to make a fun, effective and happy page! :)

Other compositional ideas to include:

The line of stars leads up to a compositional hot spot to emphasise the butterfly as a focal element. Same with the circle around the butterfly.

The bits of washi tape are placed all of the page to pull it all together. Note that I chose a pleasing colour scheme (refer to [my lesson last month](#) on colour schemes) and stuck to it throughout the page.



# uses of spray inks

Spray inks are very versatile. You can use them in a variety of wonderful ways. What I like about them most is that they encourage more 'messy' / 'free' play. They can be unpredictable too, leaving the artist having to work with 'happy mistakes or happy surprises' and they have an amazing vibrancy to their colour. And! The colour tends to remain vibrant on the page too! So all-round YAY for me. I love the [Dylusions brand by Ranger](#), but I hear there are others around that you might want to try out too.

Here are some ideas on how you can use them:

Spray ink through the stencils. Possibly the most common way people tend to use spray inks. :)



Masking is when you spray ink onto a stencil (not through it) and then you 'print' the stencil onto the page effectively getting the negative image of the stencil.



Because the spray inks are water-soluble you can create great splatter and drip effect by adding water to the inks and let them drip. Use your brush and create splatters by 'shaking' your brush over the page while it's been dipped into the inks.



Create large splatters with drip fan-outs by creating a large-ish puddle of ink and water and then 'slamming' your brush into it (NB: make sure to protect your clothes, this can get messy, ha!).



This was just a 'play' / 'demonstration' page but LOOK how awesome it looks anyway!! :D

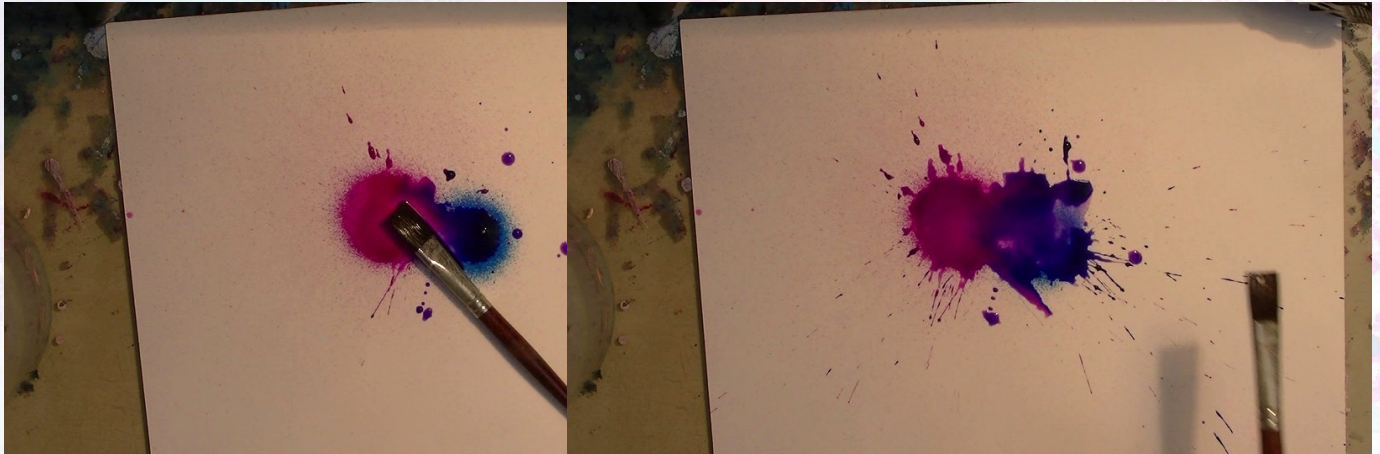


# creating your page

1. Start by choosing a colour scheme, aim for about 2 or 3 colours. Remember they'll run through each other so you'll actually be creating more than the ones you start with. Starting with 2 is totally fine as you'll create more with the mixing and happy accidents.
2. Spray once with one colour and once with your other colour in the middle of your page.



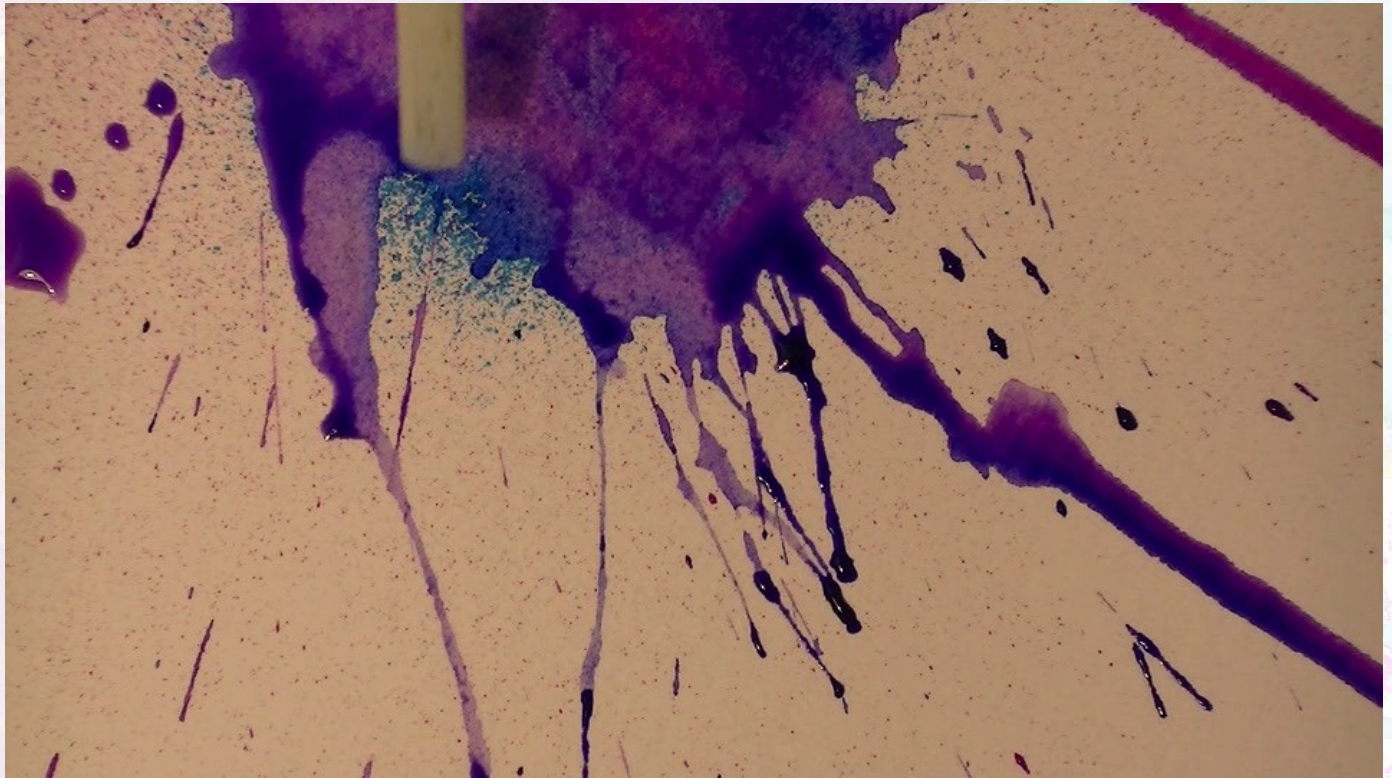
3. Wet your brush and start to add some water to your two spray blobs (highly technical term ;))
4. Do some 'splatting' or 'slamming' (lol) of your brush into the watery puddle, it will create awesome splatter effect (protect your clothes though! It's messy!)



5. Hold your page up to make some drips.



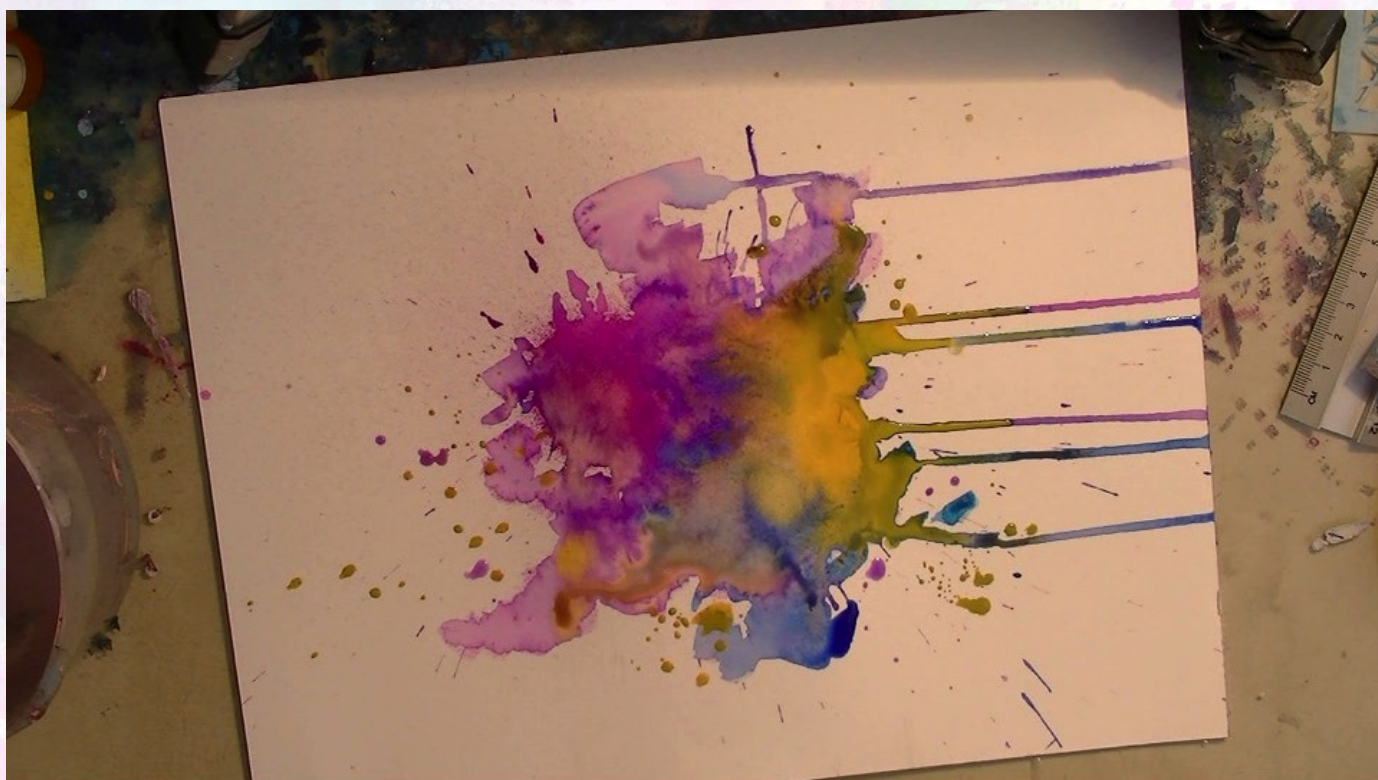
6. You can use a straw to blow into the ink and make more drips (smaller ones too).



7. Use a watery brush and dip it into the ink and start 'painting' some random blobs around your main splatter, let this happen with diluted ink so that the colour is more faded.



8. Continue this process adding in colour, splatter, drips until you're happy with a background beginning. Try NOT to go too over board, remember leaving a big chunk of your page white, so that we have negative space to work with.



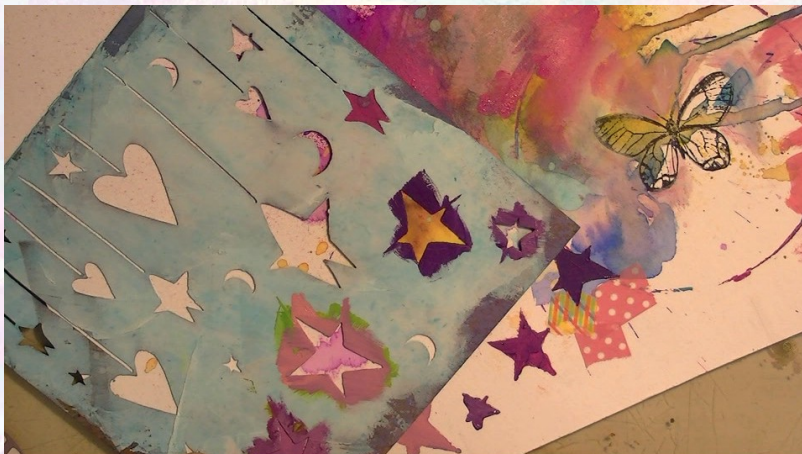


9. Once you have a background 'splatter' your like, let it dry fully. Now remember the rule of thirds, if you made a transparent grid, lay it over your current page to get a feel for where focal elements could potentially be placed. Choose a stamp or collage image for a focal element. I chose a butterfly (what a surprise! ;))



10. Decide upon the placement of your stamp/ collage focal element and apply it.

11. Help emphasise your focal point by creating movement in elements *towards* your focal element (eg: stars in a string leading up to the butterfly and a circular shape around the butterfly create fabulous emphasis).

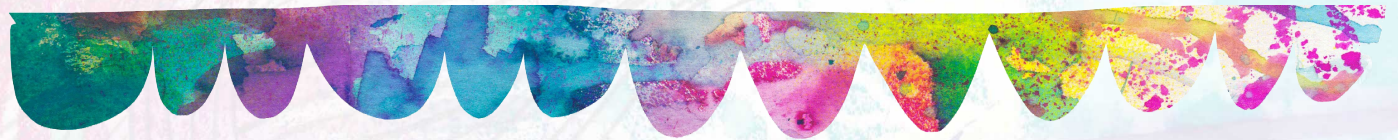


Extra elements I placed around the page was in the form of small bits of washi tape within my chosen colour scheme. Key here is that I placed them in several areas of the page, though they were not focal, having them scattered about pulled the entire page together. Note that I kept the top left hand corner untouched by anything though, that was my big chunk of white space that would really help with contrast and balance – if I'd added more elements in that corner the entire page could've felt too cluttered (though YOU NEVER KNOW, TRY IT OUT, IT'S COOL TO MESS UP!!! :D).



Final touches: I added a little more colour here and there with acrylics, some white gesso around the butterfly to make her stand out more. Then I added my 'word of the year' to the inside of the circle with rubber stamps (though you could write or print out your word).





For fun and learning, have another look at your final piece with your transparent grid over it (if you have one) and make note of what worked well and what didn't.



And finished! :)





I hope you enjoyed this exercise! Things to think about:

- How can negative space help you create fabulous art?
- How can you use the 'rule of thirds' to help you when you create art?
- Where did you notice resistance, why?
- Can you be with happy mistakes and surprises and let them be or work with them in a fun way?

lots of love! <3

thank you for  
being here with  
me today.

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