Alternative Marbling: The Basics
Supply List

scissors – paper and fabric
1 permanent black marker, such as “Sharpie” or “Rub-A-Dub” for name marking
soft pencil
roll of paper towels
plastic cafeteria type tray or cookie sheet, etc. to transport paints
one or more 1-2 gallon buckets (as a rinse bucket)
one 5-gallon bucket with lid (to make marbling size – and take home extra size)
one roll of masking tape (partial roll is fine, any diameter)
1-2” stack of newspapers
Freezer paper and/or Press & Seal (partial roll is fine)
Pair of rubber gloves
A few disposable gloves if you like protecting your hands
wear old work clothes, smock or apron and even old shoes

Tray
cardboard box or plastic tray – an empty liquor box measuring approximately 10”x15” is a good size and cut down to about 3” in height.
A box of plastic trash bags, large enough so the cardboard box/plastic tray fits easily inside, and/or roll of light weight plastic to make a tray.

Fabric and other stuff to marble
Bring about 10 yards of fabric, cut up into about 1+ yard pieces. Bring a selection of hand-dyed or commercially dyed pastel, dark, or even white, cotton, silk, bamboo, linen, polyester, nylon, or any blend of fabric to marble (stay away from wool, it’s difficult at best to marble). Base how much fabric you bring (more or less) on your speed, need for variety, and ability to transport. Large amounts of any one fabric are not necessary. You may want to try different types of fabric, some good choices include: pima, sheeting, twill, broadcloth, sateen, gauze, voile, and duck. If you want to marble silk, look for crepe de chine, shantung, pongee, dupionni, chiffon, organza, gazar, taffeta and china or habutae silk. Other options include canvas or leather sneakers, gloves, baseball caps, wood and paper. Remember, you can marble almost anything. If it is absorbent it can be marbled!

Paper
If you wish to marble paper bring wire clothes hangers and clothpins to hang paper to dry, and a cookie sheet size tray. The tray is used to transport and rinse the paper. Some good papers to marble are: Canson MiTeintes, Rising Stonehenge (any weight, but I like around 80 lb.), and some Japanese papers: Kitakata, Hosho, Okawara, Unryu, and Harukaze, however, any paper usually works well.

Fabric prep
Your fabric MUST be properly washed for long lasting results. Wash your fabric (yes, even PFD or PFP fabric) in the machine, or by hand, with hot water and a heavy-duty laundry detergent or Synthrapol. Hang to air dry or dry in the clothes drier. DO NOT use any fabric softener in the washer OR drier sheets in the clothes drier.

Test fabric for absorption by dropping one drop of water on your washed and dried fabric. If it is absorbed immediately and without hesitation, then go ahead and soak in the alum soak. If the water hesitates being absorbed or beads up then wash again in hot water with a heavy-duty laundry detergent or Synthrapol. You want to make sure all starch finishes are off the cloth. If you are asking the question, “I’m not sure, is there any hesitation?” Wash it again.

Alum soak will be mixed up and ready to use for the entire week of class, so you will have an opportunity to soak and prepare fabric during class time. However, you may wish to have it ready to go for the first day of class. Do not store Alum Soaked cotton fabric for longer than 2 to 3 weeks before marbling.

ALUM SOAK: Purchase alum from any dye supplier that has alum for marbling – please give me a call if you have any questions. Follow the directions that come with the alum for the proper proportions for soaking.

Procedure: While wearing rubber gloves, add the washed and dried fabric to the alum soak. Stir the fabric intermittently for 10 to 15 minutes. Make sure the fabric is completely submerged and can move freely. Don't cram it. If you have lots of fabric to soak, do it in batches, making sure all the fabric in each batch can "swim freely".

While wearing rubber gloves, remove the fabric and **lightly** wring out excess alum soak solution, allowing alum soak to run back into the container for future use. DO NOT RINSE! Hang the fabric so it is completely flat on a clothes-line to dry and make sure it is not folded back on itself or folded in half on the clothesline. DO NOT use a clothes dryer to dry alum soaked fabric.

Press with a cool-ish iron to remove any creases. The temperature of your iron does need to be hot enough to remove the creases, but DO NOT press with a very hot iron. I like to roll my pressed cloth on tubes to keep it flat. This way I don't have to iron it again before marbling.

Discard Alum Soak after 2 to 3 months or if Alum has crystallized around the edges of the soaking bucket. Do not store Alum Soaked cotton fabric for longer than 2 to 3 weeks before marbling, because the alum disintegrates cotton fibers.

Handy List (only if you have it, have room, and/or driving, then bring it)
Rotary mat, cutter, and ruler
Four or more small (1 oz.) bottles with small nozzle for surfactants
Extra buckets, plastic tub or something similar
Rubber and/or disposable gloves if you like protecting your hands

Paints
Any textile paints and airbrush colors you have that you'd like to experiment with the marbling techniques we'll cover in class. The supply fee covers marbling colors from PRO Chem and a small selection of Golden Fluid Acrylic and Createx Airbrush colors. Other paints you may wish to experiment with are: Neopaque, Lumiere, Tsukineko All Purpose Ink, Jacquard Marbling Colors, Dye-na-flow, and Dr. Ph. Martin's Spectralite Colors. If you have other paints you wish to try, bring them along.

Inspiration
Sort through your written and visual collection, selecting topics, colors, or patterns that excite you. Bring a selection of things: something from a collection you have that inspires you, a poem, journal writing, a book you are reading, an issue or topic (political or personal), photograph, and/or picture books. Marbling is temperamental and you may need to change direction based on what is happening in the tray.

Supply fee: TBD approximately $50 for the following: methyl cellulose, variety of paints, paint applicators and auxiliary chemicals.