

Techniques:

Suminagashi (墨流し) or “floating ink” is the process of creating a marbled design on plain paper with water and sumi ink. It originated in Japan, possibly as a form of meditative practice, and is seen in examples from as early as the 12th century. Suminagashi continues as a popular art form to this day.

Creating suminagashi designs is a simple process requiring minimal equipment: a basin for holding water, brushes, sumi or marbling inks, and, of course, washi. Careful drops of sumi ink are placed on the surface of still water and allowed to float. The ink drops are alternated with the barest touch of oil to create a space between the rings. Repeating the process of ink to water followed by oil to water, you can create patterns that resemble anything from a bullseye to a topographical map. Once satisfied with the pattern, a sheet of smooth kozo-fibre paper is gently laid on the surface and then lifted carefully. The dry, absorbent paper soaks up the ink design.