

PEN^{WORLD}

The Journal of Writing Culture

accessories, inc.:

Franklin-Christoph's
growing oeuvre

inky passion:

**Diamine Ink,
Pelikan Pens,**
and colors that shimmer

who gets the "Penny Award?"

**2018 PW Readers'
Choice winners**

AUGUST 2018

\$6.95US \$7.95CAN



08>

"Look to the Rooster"

BY SUZANNE C. LEE

Artist Nick Stewart performs a new kind of alchemy with fountain pen ink.



New research on medieval alchemy texts posits that each drawn figure is a set of coded instructions; for example, a rooster may have been symbolic of the sun and the chemical properties that the sun, in turn, represented. The rooster above is by lettering artist Nick Stewart, who performs his own alchemy by combining fountain pen inks, water, and bleach, such as on this triptych to the right.

Nick Stewart has hacked a trail through unknown brush. The British artist experiments with chromatography (the behavioral reactions of fountain pen inks) and bleach, both in his lettering and his greater art (which Stewart might argue is one and the same).

His mission is a visually impactful illustration and lettering project that dissects inks to their base components. Exploring not only each brand of ink but each and every distinct line of inks offered by said brand, Stewart learned that every fountain pen ink has a unique reaction to other inks and to bleach. Dazzling, unexpected colors appear in strange and singular patterns.

On the page, the white space gains meaning: what is not present can be as essential to the interpretation of a particular piece as what is present. Eastern influences permeate his working theory in this way: what does “white” mean, after all? Is it a lack of something—or is it a nothing, a total absence of existence? A carefully diluted solution of bleach can mask or enlighten, depending on the artist’s vision.



Minimalism and restraint are evident in Stewart’s work. But to generate art, he advises, one must deconstruct one’s preconceptions, categorizations, definitions—indeed, the very idea of “genre.” A revolutionary artist who advocates the fusion of what we tend to perceive as discrete analog endeavors, Stewart introduces a new paradigm that integrates stationery, lettering, calligraphy, and the fine arts—among other disciplines—as a single, uniquely valuable creative field.

Stewart positions this proposed school within a broader discussion of redistributing the elitism of creativity. He says, “The future for fountain pen inks is definitely pointing towards the art market—illustrated journals, abstract art, textiles, etc. The perception of it being an obsolete stationery product is the only thing holding the new art market back.”



Top, from left—Stewart conducts performative art for students, including playing with an enormous brush. Adults also enjoy his ink-and-bleach instruction. Below—Stewart's installation project at Rochester Cathedral honored the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible.

Stewart advises a deconstruction of our familiar taxonomic approach to these two communities—the pen and stationery public on the one hand, and the art public on the other. A more extemporaneous approach can result in the eradication of boundaries, Stewart suggests at his popular workshops, and that expansion of standard cognition can eliminate the kind of self-consciousness that prevents so many from participation in artistic pursuits.

Stewart's theories trace the pages, walls, and biographies of the students who have accepted an invitation into his artistic world. An educator by nature, he has worked intimately with underserved youth and those with special needs, in addition to the battalion of typical adults and teenagers who have likewise pursued his teachings.

What Stewart provides is an escape and a means to discovering one's identity. A person may marvel at what he or she has been able to create under Stewart's tutelage, but it's the visionary way he translates the skill of critical thinking to his students that dazzles—so breezily conveyed, in fact, that one might miss the trick entirely and simply enjoy the inevitable dopamine that results from his coaxing to create.

Profundity laces his ordinary observations, and a strain of subtle, playful zen is a key feature of his process. Less is more, intent is a red herring, reinvention is key to the emergence of this, an entirely new genre, blooming like a tulip among the dry, stalwart grasses of traditional canon.

Stewart teaches, "Destroy to create, don't destroy the self. You are not going to make yourself a better person without pushing, challenging, breaking boundaries. It's about being human and not an automaton. Embrace mistakes as opportunities. Often, there's the fear of not being able to do calligraphy in the 'traditional' skill sense; don't let that hold you back. Abstract calligraphy (graffiti) is expressive, beautiful, and non-judgmental. Why not give it a go?"

Stewart is the creative director and co-owner of Stewart 2 Limited (stewart2.com), a branding and communications agency, based in Rochester, Kent, England. Also, he is a full member of Letter Exchange—(nickstewartlettering.co.uk), an internationally recognized group of skilled lettering professionals.





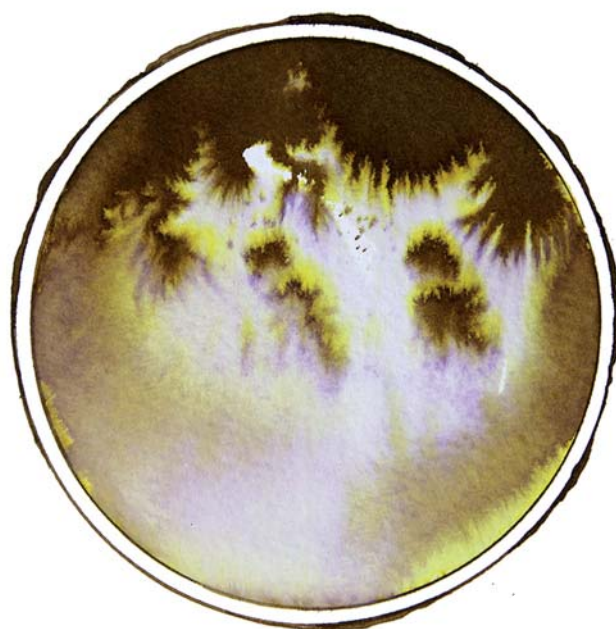
Stewart's blue-black Randall ink honors an oceanic explorer and is designed for experiments in chromatography. Below—combining Noodler's Rome Burning fountain pen ink with water reveals the colors hidden deep within.

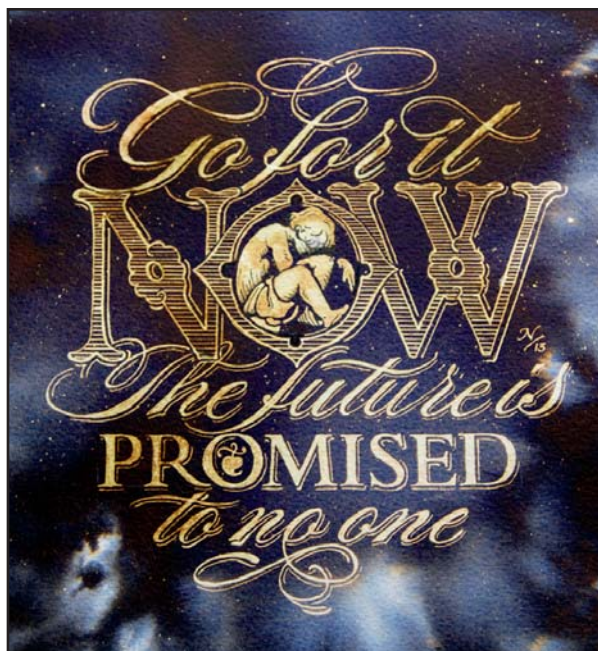
Additionally, Stewart offers his own ink, a defiant blue-black that resists composition in chromatography, with hints of turquoise and pink. The deep, oceanic shade conjures a dark tide or plums at midnight. Named “Randall,” the ink honors Randall Reeves, a California-based adventurer attempting to circumnavigate both the American and Antarctic continents in a single season—a feat never accomplished, nor even attempted, heretofore (you can track Reeves’ progress at figure8voyage.com). The 50 ml bottle features a prominent logo of Reeves’ ship, the MOLI, in a woodcut-inspired emblem that was composed with the ink. The ink has an extensive tonal range for creative purposes. The initial batch of 50 bottles sold out within the first 24 hours of its launch.

Viewing his analog instruments as tools not just for the hands but the heart, Stewart has experienced firsthand the marvel and magic of creative vision as a therapeutic tool by working with underprivileged youngsters (some of whom have never had something so completely their own—a page or book that is wholly and forever theirs.) At Stewart’s workshops this dynamic is clear: students are delighted at what Stewart helps them to realize by subtly shifting their presumptions of creative reality.

“It’s the unique combination of dyes and bleach that makes what I’m investigating different,” says Stewart. “It would appear to be a niche genre—immediate, different, and visually impactful—but more than anything, it works due to its inherent serendipity.”

Is this not a form of alchemy, an agent of transformative enrichment? What was alchemy, after all, but the precursor to our present study of chemistry? “Magic” can be a catalyst for truth. A *Washington Post* article suggests scholars may have uncovered a way to “read” certain alchemical ciphers—seeming pictorial depictions that are actually representations of ingredients and instruction. For instance, a 400-year-old formula features an enormous dragon, the ostensible object of focus; in the background are animals on the offense: one rooster attacks the fox, who is devouring another rooster. These creatures are directions, in fact, and reveal the necessary components for chemical innovation.





'From left—seascape composition using Herbin Gris Nuage, Diablo Menthe, and Perle Noir; applying bleach onto Parker Quink Black creates a gold lettering effect; by applying bleach to Robert Oster Graphite, Stewart creates images by utilizing white space, like this vintage portrait of a 1920s "flapper."

At the Sakura Fountain Pen Gallery in Diest, Belgium, he guided pupils through the dramatic reactions and results of his water-based techniques—adding fountain pen inks to wet, heavy paper to view the synergistic behaviors between and among colored inks. Later, Stewart assisted them in employing bleach to create gold lettering and patterning effects on the colored backgrounds. Together, they broke down to its base colors Noodler's Rome Burning ink. The details and tricks Stewart offers his students open a universe—one of shapeshifting color and unimaginable possibilities.

Stewart says, "On a fundamental level, this process is a perfect bridge to link science, art, and literature together in a visually impactful bond. This is where chemistry and chromatography could become an artistic form and a genre of its own."

Rochester Cathedral has been the site of multiple workshops by Stewart—epic challenges, innovative techniques, and performative celebrations. In one collaboration, 10 elite high school students from across North Kent working under Stewart's tutelage contributed to the exhibition, a dedication for the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. Banners measuring 2,000 mm by 850 mm were the canvas for a limited color palette of Parker Quink black fountain pen ink and bleach. The text was taken from the Book of Psalms.

The artwork was strung from scaffold prism frames to breathtaking effect—ask any of the 20,000 visitors who, in record-breaking force, flocked to view the staggering show during its two-week run at the Cathedral Crypt; or the

2,000 guests who were moved to submit their own illuminated letters or graffiti due to the sheer intrigue and fascination with the art. Nothing speaks more highly of an artist than generating action—creative participatory impulses. That is pure magic—turning lead into gold.

A sorcerer with his own philosophy, a visionary with voice, a hermetic chemist, Stewart is forever barreling straight through the arbitrary boundaries we assign, both to art and to the world, revealing the barren nudity of our self-conceived limitations. Alchemy is the dream of transmuting ordinary metals and materials—from the grayest stones and the most rebellious elements—to a strange, glittering flax that is more than a little seductive and worth many times its weight. Stewart has never ceased to search for the perfect formula for gold—even though, one could argue, he has already discovered it.

Follow Stewart's blog at quinkandbleach.wordpress.com.

Follow him on Instagram (@quinkandbleach) and

Facebook (facebook.com/quinkandbleach/).

For youtube.com videos, search "Nick Stewart ink artist."

For instructions on how to create your own landscapes using fountain pen ink and water, turn to p. 64.

Visit washingtonpost.com to read the cited article, "This chemist is unlocking the secrets of alchemy," by Ben Guarino.

The revered U.K. ink company is experiencing a global revival and is shimmering with pride.

Lucy in the Sky with Diamine

BY NICKY PESSAROFF



Diamine Ink is headed by (from left) Phil and Sue Davies and Christine and Ron Joynson. The Diamine logo dates back to the company's founding in 1864, and the company is still headquartered in Liverpool, England.

“Picture yourself in a boat on a river,” Beatles co-front man John Lennon commands us in the 1968 classic “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” from the deliciously psychedelic *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*. While it’s widely accepted that the song documented the band’s experiments with LSD, the colors Lennon sings of sound like a shimmering landscape of current fountain pen ink: tangerine trees and marmalade skies, cellophane flowers of yellow and green, a girl with kaleidoscope eyes.

Perhaps Lennon penned his lyrics with a fountain pen and colorful supplies of Diamine ink. Both the Beatles and Diamine are from Liverpool, England, and while the Beatles were barnstorming the world with their blues-inspired rock, Diamine was wowing the populace with fountain pen inks.

Diamine was founded in 1864 as T.W. Webster & Co., Ltd., and the traditional Diamine trademark was registered shortly thereafter. The family-owned business was headquartered at a factory on Henry Street, near the Liverpool docks, and it also had offices in London. The company



provided the shoe industry with waxes, waxed threads, leather stains, and suede and satin shoes. Diamine shoe stains were much lauded. The company also supplied pen inks to schools and banks, and through overseas religious bookshops in West Africa, it sold blackboard renovators, paint, adhesive gums, and ink powder.

In 1925, Diamine built a larger factory in Liverpool. Current Diamine owner Christine Joynson notes, “In the 20th century, industries in Liverpool included engineering, cement manufacture, sugar refining, and flour milling. The Diamine factory was built strategically within one mile of the docks to facilitate speedy dispatch.”



Top—Diamine standard ink line of 80 ml and 30 ml bottles, and the wedge-shaped 40 ml bottles of Diamine 150th Anniversary inks. Below—the complete line of Diamine Shimmer inks. Photos courtesy Agnes Galla.

Diamine inks and stamps pads enjoyed great popularity in the United Kingdom, but like so many companies involved in the stationery business, Diamine struggled in the face of the ballpoint pen phenomenon. In the 1950s and '60s, around the time the Beatles came along, Diamine enjoyed a brief renaissance. By 1971, the Beatles disbanded, and that decade proved to be a general struggle—all of Liverpool suffered under a crippling recession.

Even though Diamine adapted to the times—the company introduced stamp pads, drawing inks, and new bottle sizes for fountain pen inks—by 1980, the family-owned business was sold to a major conglomerate, the Pneumatic Rubber Stamp group. At the time, Diamine produced over half-a-million stamp pads a year for Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

By the 1980s, John Lennon was shot, Paul McCartney was filling arenas on his own, George Harrison was involved in a new super group, the Traveling Willburys, and Ringo Starr was still Ringo Starr. Liverpool was changing from a manufacturing town to a tourist destination. Meantime, Diamine was passed from company to company like a rugby football.

As the clubs in which the Beatles played became tourist attractions in the late 1980s and '90s, the writing instrument community experienced a revival. At around the same time, after working for many years with Diamine, Christine Joynson branched out with her own company, Speciality

Inks International Ltd. After the folding of Diamine, Joynson was able purchase the Diamine trademark, making it a family-run business once again. When Joynson's nephew, Philip Davies, joined the company, he added a wealth of ink-making knowledge and helped relaunch the Diamine fountain pen ink brand.

Joynson notes, "The late 1990s saw a renewed interest in fountain pen ink products, which resulted in the relaunch of the Diamine fountain pen ink brand with the sole purpose of introducing a more exciting range of colors than had been available previously."

In 2018, the Diamine line of inks includes 131 distinct colors, including the company's lauded collection of 16 150th Anniversary inks, which come in pie-shaped 40 ml bottles or packs of 20 cartridges and in colors that include Golden Honey, Terracotta Blue, and Silver Fox. The company's standard line of inks comprises 106 distinct colors available in 80 and 30 ml bottles. Cartridge packs of six or 18 are also available for 35 of Diamine's standard range.

The Diamine Music collection comprises 10 fountain pen inks in 30 ml bottles that are inspired by classical composers—inks include the teal blue Schubert and the green-yellow Wagner. The Flowers collection of 30 ml ink bottles contains 10 colors like the orange Tulip and the yellow Marigold.





The ink swatch above and art at right were made by lettering artist Nick Stewart using Diamine 150th Anniversary inks. Below—Diamine “Music” and “Flowers” gift sets.



Joynson says that Diamine consciously chose to offer its widest range of colors beginning in the 2000s, called the New Century Range: “In retrospect, we felt this really kick-started the resurgence in writing and attracted a younger generation who loved vibrant colors. This was our footprint for the future.”

But it was in 2015, with the debut of Diamine’s line of shimmer inks, that the company hit its stride. Davies notes it took three years of development to get the shimmer inks right: “Diamine Shimmer ink incorporates some of the highest quality raw materials available on the market today. Each bottle produced has an identical level of pearlescent [luster], which is vitally important for this ink to perform well. We pride ourselves on the consistency of our inks.”

Diamine Shimmer inks come in 50 ml round bottles, the packaging of which was designed by artist Sarah Coleman (inkymole.com). “We feel [Sarah] really expressed what Diamine was all about and has themed all our products together perfectly, showing a mix of contemporary and traditional,” Joynson says.

Each Diamine Shimmer ink includes a base color highlighted by gold or silver flakes, creating an iridescent, multi-color look. Shimmering Seas is shades of deep blue and purple with hints of gold, while Electric Pink is a vibrant shade with silver highlights. Diamine has released a total of 32 Shimmer inks in the past three years.

Nick Stewart is an artist based out of England who uses Diamine inks in his compositions. He has a close working relationship with Diamine, regularly testing their new inks and creating unique works of art with them.

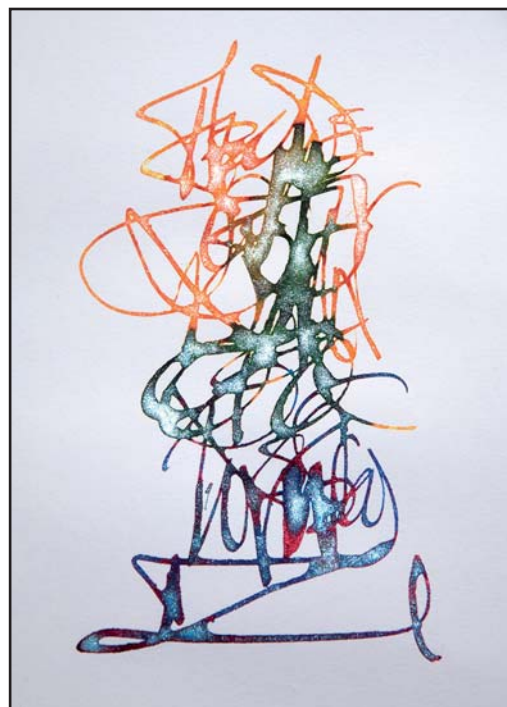
Davies says of Stewart, “We work closely with Nick Stewart, who does fantastic work with our Shimmer inks. He also reviews them on social media, which highlights just what can be done with the inks other than writing.”

That work includes using the base ink dye in an application that resembles watercolor painting and ink swatches that combine fountain pen ink, water, and bleach (see p. 49). Davies says, “Our fountain pen inks are widely used by artists. By intermixing and blending the inks, a multiplicity of colors can be achieved.”





Top, from left—Diamine Shimmer ink swatches and lettering art by Nick Stewart. He used an array of Diamine inks to create this portrait of Jimi Hendrix.



Stewart notes that Diamine ink dyes are exceptionally reliable. “There’s an enormous range of colors,” Stewart says, as well as great consistency in application along the range of house colors. “Diamine inks are very translucent. The inks are great for graphic use. There’s almost an ethereal, mystical quality to them.”

Part of that ethereal quality derives from Diamine’s rich history. Monaco Red was a color specially formulated for His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of Monaco; W.E.S. Imperial Blue and Kensington Blue are special-edition colors mixed for the legendary London Writing Equipment Society; Diamine Royal Blue was used in 2010 by U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to sign the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. In another unique partnership, two 15 year olds created the inks Autumn Oak and Tyrian Purple as part of an educational workforce experience project in 2014.

Diamine isn’t just a business, it’s a passion for Joynson and the Diamine team, who find great satisfaction in the ways contemporary artists challenge the definitions of what fountain pen ink can accomplish. Diamine keeps its prices affordable and prides itself on the versatile range of inks it provides—in addition to fountain pen inks, you will find India inks, calligraphy inks, document inks, office stamp pads, adhesives, and more.

Joynson says, “Our aim is to give 100-percent customer satisfaction. Our color range will extend over time, and new and exciting things will happen—sometimes intentionally and sometimes organically. Our aim is to encourage creativity.”

Liverpool has changed drastically since 1864. In 2008, the city won the European Capital of Culture award. The Royal Albert Dock is a shopping and eating district. Art galleries, museums, and modern industry call the city home. The days of live Beatles concerts are long gone, but a Beatles Museum has taken its place. And a classic ink company named Diamine is experiencing a global revival.

In 2018, the Union Jack looks vibrant in hues of Diamine red and blue.

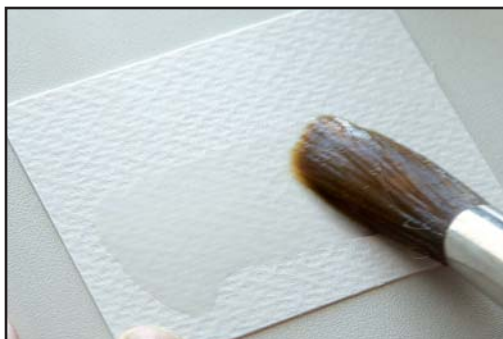
Visit diamineinks.co.uk.



how to

...create simple landscapes using fountain pen ink and water.

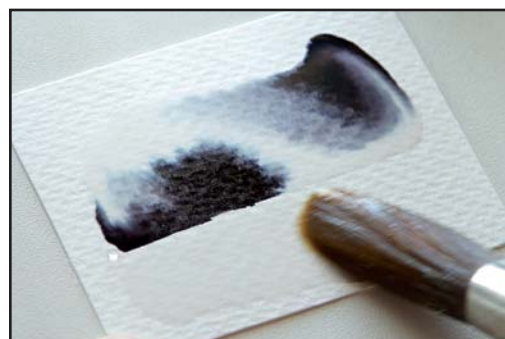
BY NICK STEWART



Paper: Bockingford watercolor paper 200 lb rough

Equipment: Two glasses of water, bottled Diamine Earl Grey fountain pen ink, size 24 watercolor brush, size 5 watercolor brush, Noodlers Nib Creeper fountain pen.

Instructions: Take swatch card measuring 70 mm x 95 mm and place in a landscape format. Wet 3/5 of surface with large brush. With small brush, add fountain pen ink.



The applied water will cause the ink to release some of the dyes that make up its composition. Turn card upside down and wet surface two to three millimeters below the wetted area above.



Dip fountain pen into ink and draw a line through the newly wetted area. Repeat this step to your liking to add depth to your composition.



With pen, add a couple of ink marks to the top area. As it is now semi-wet, the spread will be smaller and the ink more intense. Allow the chromatography to occur and enjoy watching the grays, purples, reds, and turquoises appear. The finished landscape is created with serendipity—totally non-contrived and utterly beautiful. This process works with most inks that display chromatic behavior.

For further information, visit Stewart's blog at quinkandbleach.wordpress.com. Share your experiments with us on Instagram (@penworldmagazine).