

Sparks are created by lighting steel wool on fire and spinning the wool in a circular motion. Using a long exposure allows you to catch the trail of the sparks.

By Marcus Gurule for Get Wet 2016

When coming up with the idea for an image to take for the “Get Wet” assignment I had a lot of ideas flowing through my head. When looking on the internet for some inspiration I came across long exposure pictures that were “painted” by the use of steel wool. With the combination of the long shutter speed and spinning the burning wool in a circular motion the trail of embers is able to be captured.

**Setup:** The materials that were used to create this photo were:

- Steel Wool
- Wisk
- Steel Wire
- 9 volt battery

When choosing a steel wool the two important factors to think about are burn time and density of embers. The finer the grade of wool you choose the shorter the burn time will be, but the more embers that will be produced. I went with a super fine 0000 grade of wool. I chose this because I knew that my exposure time was only going to be about thirteen seconds, and I felt that having a higher density of embers would produce the aesthetic that I was looking for. Once my choices were finalized and the supplies were gathered, the experiment was set up. The Wisk was used as a “cage” for the wool, when inserting the wool into the Wisk it is important to fluff up the wool to ensure the maximum amount of airflow through the wool to guarantee an even burn. After the wool was inserted I used the steel wire to extend the handle of the Wisk so I could create a larger diameter of the circles that I was going to create. After some trial and error the settings that I found to produce my final image were:

- ISO 1600
- Aperture: f/8 20mm
- Shutter Speed: 13 seconds



This was the final image that I was able to come up with after increasing the contrast in post editing using Gimp.

