The "un-mixing" apparatus consists of a large, transparent cylinder and a smaller, coaxial cylinder that can be rotated inside. The space between the two cylinders is filled with glycerine.

A visible pattern is made in the glycerine using a syringe to inject an ink made of glycerine and graphite. When the inner cylinder is rotated, the ink appears to mix with the rest of the glycerine. However, when the cylinder is rotated in the opposite direction the pattern is re-formed.