

Painting on Fabric 101

We will go over in class how to transfer your design onto the fabric, so it ends up perfectly centered. If you are bringing your own design for this class, it should be approximately 8½" × 11" in size."

Photo Selection

- Choose a photo with:
 - **Strong contrast**
 - **Clear detail and sharp focus**
 - **Easy-to-outline shapes**
- For beginners, choose a **simple subject** with clear details.
- If using someone else's photo, make sure to get **written permission**.

Supplies: Photo, fine point black sharpie, clear plastic or tracing paper

Design Preparation

- Place a piece of transparent plastic over the photo, cut to match the photo's dimensions.
- Write 'Top' at the top of the plastic for reference and to prevent flipping the design.
- Using a fine-point black Sharpie, trace the main lines of the image onto the plastic.
- This traced outline will serve as your design pattern.

Enlarging the Photo

- Use a computer or copier to enlarge your photo to **8½" x 11"**.
- Always **note the enlargement percentage** on your copy (e.g., 200%).
- Mark the '**TOP**' of the image on the tracing to prevent flipping it accidentally.
 - If someone else enlarges it, remind them to preserve the top orientation.
- Example: A 4" x 5" photo enlarged by 200% will roughly become 8½" x 11".

Where to Enlarge Photos:

- Office supply stores: **Staples, Office Depot**
- Shipping stores: **UPS, FedEx, Postal Connections**
- Blueprint or printing shops.
- Be sure to tell them the enlargement does not have to be on photographic paper, which is more expensive than printing on regular paper.

Fabric Selection

- **Preferred Fabric:** White cotton that is **PDF (Prepared for Dyeing)** is ideal. Any high thread count, tightly woven **white cotton** (such as bleached muslin) can work as well.
- **Important Notes:**
 - **Do not prewash** your fabric.

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- The color of the fabric affects paint color—white or bleached fabric is best for true color results.
- Your foundation fabric should be at least **1 inch larger** on all sides than your final painted area.

Transferring the Design to Fabric

Aligning and Transferring:

1. Fold both your traced design and fabric into quarters to find the center.
2. Align centers and folds, then **pin the fabric** to the traced design.
3. Place it on a **light box or window**.
4. Trace the design onto the fabric using a **mechanical pencil** or **soft lead pencil**.
 - **Avoid dark lines**—light paint may not fully cover them.
5. **Double-check** all tracing lines.

Marking the Border:

- Draw a border **¼" to ½"** **beyond** the design perimeter to allow for:
 - Squaring the quilt top
 - Seam allowances
 - Extending your painting
- If you plan to thread paint, remember it **shrinks** the fabric slightly.
- Remember to mark signatures on a plastic overlay for future placement.

Preparing to Paint

- **Tape** all four edges of your fabric to a flat surface or foamcore board. Fabric should be smooth and taut.
- To protect your surface, place **wax paper, or plastic** underneath. (Wax paper works well on tables.)
- Use your photo as a **color reference** while painting.

Fabric paints:

- **Recommended** brands include Jacquard Textile paints and PROfab Transparent paints, which can be purchased online or at craft stores. Amazon, Dharma Trading Company, and Blick Art Materials are three online sources. Michaels and Craft Warehouse also sell Jacquard.
- You will need primary/secondary colors – red, blue, yellow, orange, green, violet, and black and white.

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- Jacquard carries a packaged 8 Color Primary/Secondary Color Set: White, Black, True Red, Yellow, Orange, Emerald Green, Violet, Sapphire Blue. Jacquard also offers an Exciter Pack that includes nine ½-oz colors.

Textile Acrylic Paint Basics

Textile Acrylic Paint is a **water-based** paint that:

- Dries quickly.
- It can be cleaned with soap and water.
- It can be thinned with water for a **watercolor effect**.

Important Note:

We are **not** using **soft body acrylics** (sold in tubes like toothpaste). Even when mixed with fabric mediums, they tend to stiffen fabric and can leave visible needle holes when quilting.

Types of Acrylic Paint

- **Opaque Paint:**
Solid color; does not allow the background to show through. Best for dark surfaces.
 - **Transparent Paint:**
Allows underlying colors or lines to be seen. Ideal for watercolor effects and realistic shading.
 - **Metallic Paint:**
Contains micro-particles that reflect light, producing a shiny or shimmering effect.
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Additives and Extenders

- **Extenders/Mediums:**
Transparent liquids that:
 - Extend drying time.
 - Help paint adhere to non-porous surfaces (fabric, glass, plastic)
Too much extender may cause streaks.
- **Water:**
 - Prevents paint from drying out.
 - Thins the paint and increases transparency.
 - Use minimal water for sharper detail
 - Non-toxic and easy to control
Always test your brush on a scrap to check water/paint balance.

Testing Transparency

To test if paint is transparent or opaque:

1. Draw a dry black line.
 2. Paint over it.
 3. If the line shows through, the paint is transparent.
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Understanding Color

- **Primary Colors:** Red, Blue, Yellow
(Cannot be created by mixing other colors)
- **Secondary Colors:**
 - Red + Yellow = Orange
 - Blue + Yellow = Green
 - Red + Blue = Violet
- **Tertiary Colors:**
Red-Orange, Red-Violet, Yellow-Orange, Yellow-Green, Blue-Green, Blue-Violet
- **Browns:**
Start with orange (red + yellow) and mix in small amounts of other colors.
- **Neutrals/Greys:**
Mix a color with its **complement** (the color directly across on the color wheel).
- **Warm Colors:** Red, Yellow, Orange – appear to advance.
- **Cool Colors:** Blue, Green, Violet – appear to recede.
- **Values:**
 - Lightness/darkness of a color
 - White fabric is usually the lightest value.
 - Shadows in a painting can be many different colors (blues, violets, etc.) not just black.
- **Shades and Tints:**
 - **Shade** = adding black or darkening a color
 - **Tint** = add white to lighten (e.g., pink is a tint of red)
- **Black:**
Technically a mix of all colors but may have a color bias or undertone.
- **Color Wheel:** a useful tool for information on mixing colors.

Mixing Tip:

Always add small amounts of dark to light colors—never the other way around.

Brushes and Brush Care

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- **Brush Type:**
Use short, stiff brushes made for acrylics.
- **Before Painting:**
 - Wet the brush and wipe it dry.
 - Never store brushes bristle-side down in water
- **Cleaning:**
 - Wash with soap and water.
 - Reshape bristles with your fingers.
 - Lay flat to dry.

Brush Stroke Techniques

1. **Wet into Wet:** Damp fabric, soft blurry effects – skies, water, fields.
2. **Wet on Dry:** Dry fabric, more control – crisp lines and shapes.
3. **Wet Shape Only:** Wet specific areas to blend without bleeding.
4. **Side-Loading Brush:** Load brush with paint, add a touch of another color on the side of the brush and proceed with the brush stroke.
5. **Dots:** Add texture or fine detail – wipe and load each time for same size dots.
6. **Sponges:** Great for texture and backgrounds
7. **Spatter Paint** – toothbrush, stenciling brushes. round paint brush
8. **Dry Brushing:** Minimal paint, rough strokes for texture
9. **Base Coat** – foundation color – laying down a color to start with
10. **Blending:** Smooth transitions between colors
11. **Highlight** – making an area appear lighter/brighter than the surrounding area

Direction Matters:

Follow the natural line of fur, leaves, boards, etc.—think about your quilting pattern as you paint.

Painting Tips

- Acrylics dry fast - work quickly and in layers.
- Thin layers are better than thick ones.
- Start with lighter colors; **it is easier to darken an area than lighten it.**
- Brushing over wet paint can sometimes move the colors, especially dark colors. Let paint dry if adding highlights or shades.
- Water control is key:
 - Too much = bleeding
 - Too little = stiff, unworkable paint

Pro Tip:

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- Keep a **scrap fabric piece** beside your palette for testing.
- Keep a **paper towel or rag** in hand to check brush moisture or clean bristles.

Color Changes:

Always rinse your brush when switching colors, especially when switching from a **dark to a lighter** color to avoid muddying the lighter color.

Acrylic Painting Tips

- Once the acrylic paint is dry, it can be painted over without lifting the previous layer.
- To speed up drying, use a hair dryer or a warm iron.
- Clean your palette when it becomes full or the colors start to look muddy. wipe with rag or used paper towels – do not put acrylic paint down the drain. Clean water dish with rags and throw away.
- Change the rinse water often.
- **Never** dip a dirty brush directly into your paint bottles, you will contaminate your paint –use a palette knife or another tool to transfer paint.
- Squinting at your painting can help you better evaluate values (lights and darks).
- If you make a mistake, let the paint dry before attempting to fix it, painting over wet paint can result in muddy colors and may lift the bottom layer of paint.
- To keep paints fresh while working, spritz them with water periodically.
- Step back occasionally and view your painting from a distance to better assess composition and balance (great for a design board setup).
- To preserve leftover paint on your palette, spray lightly with water or add a drop of extender to each color, then cover with a lid or plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator.
- Keep a record of color mixtures and techniques you like for reference.

HAVE FUN –TAKE YOUR TIME– CHALLENGE YOURSELF!

Setting Acrylic Paint (for fabric or other surfaces):

- To heat set, press for 30 seconds on medium heat using a pressing cloth, or tumble dry on high heat for 10 minutes.