

A watercolor illustration of various flowers and foliage. A large red flower is prominent in the upper left, with a smaller pink one below it. There are also yellow and blue flowers scattered throughout. Green leaves and stems are interspersed among the blooms. The overall style is soft and painterly.

COLOR WAVE

*Just add water
to give dyes and
paints a mellow,
dreamy twist.*

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THIS PHOTO This ombre wall finish requires just two paint colors. You achieve a graduated effect by adding water to the paint as you work your way up the wall. Start by pouring two colors of paint in separate foil baking pans, *above*. (We used Annie Sloan Chalk Paint in Aubusson Blue and Provence, but latex paint yields beautiful results, too.) Mix a small amount of water with the darker shade and start painting at the bottom of the wall in wide, arcing motions using a brush. Continue thinning the paint as you work your way up the wall and apply thinned lighter paint as desired.

ARTISTIC TOUCH

SPRAY A COTTON PILLOW COVER UNTIL DAMP, THEN PAINT FLOWERS AND LEAVES WITH WATERCOLORS, LETTING THE PIGMENTS BLEED INTO THE FABRIC AND SOFTEN NATURALLY. LET DRY AND SPRAY WITH A COLOR FIXATIVE.

PAINT PICKS

FABRIC PAINT IS PERMANENT, EVEN WHEN WASHED, MAKING IT AN EXCELLENT CHOICE FOR OUR PROJECTS. IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE CONVENTIONAL WATERCOLOR PAINT, TREAT IT WITH A COLOR FIXATIVE TO PREVENT BLEEDING WHEN WASHED.





OPPOSITE Pretty fabric paints blend to turn plain-white table linens into a soft setting for your next gathering. Wash a cotton tablecloth and hang it while damp on a clothesline or in a large work space using clothespins. Dilute pink and purple fabric paint with water to various intensities in separate buckets. Keep one bucket of water close by for rinsing the brush. Dip a large paintbrush in a small amount of diluted paint, then brush color in a large sweeping motion onto the damp tablecloth. Work with small amounts of each color, blending them as you work. Rinse brush as needed. THIS PHOTO Add stripes to white cotton napkins. Spritz the napkins with water first, then lay them flat on your work surface. Use an artists paintbrush to paint thin lines of watered-down fabric paint onto the surface. Don't worry if your lines are imperfect—it adds to the watercolor effect.





PLACE CARDS
THE NAIL-POLISH
TECHNIQUE USED ON
THE DISHES WORKS FOR
PLACE CARDS, TOO. DIP
THE EDGE OF A 2½x4-
INCH CARDSTOCK STRIP
INTO POLISH DRIZZLED IN
WATER. LET DRY.





**BUDGET
BREAKDOWN**

NAIL POLISH \$2
FLEA MARKET
DISHES \$10
PLASTIC CONTAINER \$2
TOTAL // \$14

THIS PHOTO Imperfect splashes of color on inexpensive dishes bring a lively touch to a table. To get the look, we drizzled nail polish into water in a plastic container (A). TIP: We got the best results by drizzling the polish in a zigzag motion. Immediately dip a portion of a plate, saucer, or bowl through the polish in the water, and pull it out (B). Work quickly before the polish hardens in the water. Note: Color only the areas where food will not touch or top with clear glass plates. Hand-wash only.





OPPOSITE Layer watercolor-inspired projects to fashion a relaxing bedroom. The geometric headboard is constructed from maple-veneer medium-density fiberboard (MDF) triangles that are dipped in diluted chalk paint. To give a discolored lampshade a new lease on life, we rolled it in various colors of Rit dye, much like dyeing an egg. We gave mottled color to a white curtain by using sponge pouncers to apply watercolor spots to the curtain. We clustered dots at the top of the panel, lessening them as we moved toward the bottom. BELOW To make the headboard triangles, cut 4×8-foot sheets of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch maple-veneer MDF into 14×16-inch pieces. Mark a 16-inch equilateral triangle in the center of one MDF piece. To build a jig (A), place the marked piece on a 16×24-inch base of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch MDF, aligning one marked triangle edge with long base edge; trace. Nail 2-inch-wide MDF scraps on marked lines. Lay MDF rectangle inside jig (B). Cut across bottom with a table saw. Flip MDF over and place back in jig (C). Cut across bottom (D). Cut all MDF rectangles into triangles (we cut 28 for a queen-size headboard). Mix 1 teaspoon of water per cup of chalk paint in wide container (E). Dip each triangle edge in paint (F) and let dry. Attach triangles to wall with pin nails.



WHY MAKE A JIG?
 WHEN YOU NEED TO MAKE MANY IDENTICAL CUTS, CONSTRUCT A JIG. THIS TEMPLATE HELPS YOU CUT QUICKLY AND CONSISTENTLY, WITHOUT HAVING TO MEASURE AND MARK EACH PIECE.

BELOW RIGHT The shams look like they were treated to a resist effect, but watered-down dye applied over a stencil produced the look. Insert a piece of cardboard between the layers of a white cotton pillow sham to prevent dye from bleeding through to the back. Use spray adhesive to adhere the stencil to fabric, and spritz fabric with water before brushing on color. BELOW LEFT Dip the edges of a white throw in Rit powder dye and embroider a smattering of cross-stitches around the dyed areas. BELOW LEFT, MIDDLE To make a monogram pillow, lay a chipboard letter on top of a white pillowcase and spritz fabric with water. Trace the outline with watercolor paint using an artists paintbrush, blending the paint outward.





ABOVE Channel your inner Monet to postmark artwork and a painterly letter banner. Turn an inexpensive flea market frame into gallery-worthy art by painting the frame and backing white, then brush blue and teal acrylic paint in large sweeping motions onto the backing, leaving the upper left-hand corner mostly white. Add splashes of hot pink, then spray the wet paint with water for a drippy effect. Use a stencil to add the postmark. TOP RIGHT When dry, apply cursive lettering with a gold paint pen. ABOVE RIGHT, MIDDLE To make the pennant-style banner, place vinyl stickers on cotton canvas panels cut to shape. Fill spray bottles with purple, teal, and royal blue Rit powder dye, following the mixing instructions on the box. Spritz each piece of fabric with the dye mixtures. When dry, peel off the letters, punch holes in each panel, and string the pieces onto cordage.

FOR RESOURCES SEE PAGE 108.