



DESIGN DECISIONS

Faux Painting Techniques: Combing

A specialty paint finish accomplished by applying a glaze over a base coat and then removing some of the wet glaze with a graining comb creating bold patterns of stripes, squiggles, swirls or designs of your own.

1. APPLY BASE COAT

Use a quality latex eggshell enamel. Two coats may be necessary on some colors.

2. FORMULA FOR A GLAZE

Use a quality glaze enamel. Thin as described below. The dilution ratio is affected by heat and humidity. Experiment to find what works best for you. Start with: 1 part latex paint, 1 part Blend and Glaze latex, 1 part water (use more or less if desired)

NOTE: Depending on the dilution ratio, a quart of latex paint thinned to these directions should make enough glaze for a 10' x 12' room.

Tools Needed

Graining tools may be purchased at paint or hardware stores or you may make your own. Use cardboard, plastic or any rigid material that can be cut into a comb shape. The size and spacing of the teeth determine the pattern.

- Latex flat or satin enamel for base coat
- Latex enamel for glaze
- Blend and Glaze latex
- Wide masking tape
- Paint roller
- Notched squeegee*
- Brush, roller and tray for base coat
- Sponge
- Rags
- Drop cloth
- Plastic gloves

*Create your own combing tool by cutting notches into the edge of a rubber or plastic squeegee. Distance between notches can vary - the smaller the better. To begin, cut 6-8 notches per inch for fine lines. For bolder lines cut 4-6 notches per inch. Cut a second squeegee into shorter lengths for use in corners and small areas.

3. PREPARE FOR GLAZING

Use masking tape along ceiling and baseboards. Glazes are runny and a bit messy. Take extra time to be certain that surfaces not to be painted are taped off and well protected. Do not leave masking tape on 24 hours. It is best to take it off as soon as possible. Run a cutting blade along the masking tape before you take it off. Cover all heat registers to prevent the glaze from drying too quickly.

Find more at <http://4h.unl.edu/designdecisions>

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4. APPLY THE GLAZE

Latex glazes dry quickly so working with two people is advised, one to apply the glaze and one to do the combing. While one applies a uniform coat of glaze 18" - 24" wide from ceiling to floor using a paint roller, the other follows behind doing the combing. Never apply more glaze than can be combed within the working "wet time" of the glaze.

5. COMBING WALLS

The teeth of the comb remove the wet glaze allowing some of the base coat to show. The spaces between the teeth leave behind undisturbed glaze. Starting at the ceiling, draw the comb through the wet glaze. Don't worry if the lines wiggle here or wobble there - variety makes this technique fun. Wipe the comb free of glaze after each stroke. Continue applying glaze and combing until the entire wall is completed. If the glaze loses its wet edge before the next strip of glaze is applied, blot it with a wet sponge or roll back over dry area with glaze to wet.

Hints for success:

- Comb twice
- Overlap as you comb. As you comb the second time overlap 1 " of the previous combing. This helps to keep the pattern more even.

Using a comb made out of squeegee, cardboard, plastic, or other rigid material of your choice (experiment for desired effect), comb through the wet glaze beginning at the ceiling, drawing continuously with even pressure all the way to the floor. Wipe the comb on a dry rag after each drag. Practice this combing motion first with a dry brush on a dry wall, especially if 1 ceiling height necessitates trips up and down a step ladder. Never mind if you're unhappy with your first few drags. Brush or roll out the glaze and drag again.

6. ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME

It isn't necessary to complete an entire room in one day. However, once you start on a wall, be prepared to finish that wall.

7. PRACTICE FIRST

Experiment on sample boards, cardboard or paper to find the technique you want to use. Then practice applying it until you are comfortable using it.

8. BE CREATIVE

Try using your combing skills in other areas of your room. Add it to floors and furniture for a sense of drama and fun.

Variation: Use a sponge to dab several complimentary colors over a base coat before combing.

Compiled by Gail Brand, Extension Educator.

Ragging On is a supplement to *Design Decisions*, a Nebraska 4-H Publication.

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