



DESIGN DECISIONS

Faux Painting Techniques: Ragging On

A faux (imitation) technique that gives walls a rich, elegant look. The textured color is achieved by applying a glaze over the base coat. The use of a crumpled rag in applying the glaze creates the unique finish.

1. APPLY BASE COAT

Use a quality flat, satin, or semi-gloss latex enamel. Two coats may be necessary on some colors. It is very important to have a thoroughly and uniformly sealed base coat - this will prevent flashing or dark spots when the glaze is applied. New sheet rock must be primed.

2. FORMULA FOR GLAZE

Use a flat satin or semi-gloss enamel for color. Thin with latex glaze. The dilution ratio is affected by heat and humidity. Start with 1 part latex paint, 3 parts latex glaze. The lighter the finished look, the more glaze is needed. The proportion may be as high as one part paint to 20 parts glaze for a very light effect. Pre-test the mixture on the surface to determine the proper proportion. Keep experimenting until you get the look you desire. If the mixture seems too thick, add a small amount of water. The finished mixture should have the consistency of waffle syrup.

3. PREPARE FOR GLAZING

Use masking tape along ceiling and baseboard. Take extra time to be certain that surfaces not to be painted are taped off and well protected. Do not leave masking tape on more than 24 hours. It is best to take tape off as soon as possible. Use a cutting blade to run along masking tape before you pull it off.

Collect old, well washed T-shirts or other cotton fabric for Ragging On the glaze. Cut the shirt apart into workable pieces. A 24" x 24" piece works well. Be sure to use the same fabric for the entire room. Changing fabric will create a different effect. 75% to 100% cotton t-shirts or fabric work best.

4. RAGGING ON

Moisten the rag with water and wring out well. Pour glaze into a disposable aluminum pie pan.

Tools Needed

- Latex satin or semi-gloss enamel for base coat (terminology may vary based on manufacturer)
- Latex paint
- Latex glaze
- Wide masking tape
- Pad painter or paint roller
- Lint free cotton rags
- Brush and roller for base coat
- Drop cloth
- Plastic Cloths

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

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Dab the crumbled rag in the glaze and work the paint into the rag. Continue working the paint into the rag until it is coated with paint. The rag should be wet, but paint should not drip from it. Bunch the rag in your hand, tucking under the ends. Rag should be held loosely in your hand.

Dab the rag on the wall using quick random strokes, turning and twisting your wrist to vary the pattern. Touch the rag lightly to the wall - don't squeeze. Fill in with as much glaze as necessary to achieve the desired look. Rearrange the rag in your hand as needed. Leave as much base coat showing through as you like, but always be consistent. When the pattern on the wall becomes lighter, it is time to add more paint to the rag. Step back and view the end result. It should look random, yet from a distance should appear even. You shouldn't be able to see individual rag marks or count the number of times the rag touched the surface.

5. ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME

It isn't necessary to complete an entire room in one afternoon. However, once a wall is started, be prepared to finish it.

6. 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. The amount of paint on the rag can create different effects. Try different techniques then choose the one you want.

7. BE CREATIVE

Use these techniques to create other decorative touches:

- Ragging On two colors over a base coat. Apply the colors in a random overall pattern.
- Ragging On two colors over a base coat. When applying the colors, separate them into areas, that touch and mingle, yet are separate. The shape of these areas need to change on the wall and not always look the same because the overall finished effect should create a random rather than a distinct pattern.
- Ragging On two colors over a base coat in a random or separated pattern: finishing with a third color sponged lightly over the entire area. This third color is usually white, the base color or a lighter tint of the base color. Hint: For an effective touch, use a semi-gloss for this third color. It will add shine to the wall.
- Use this technique on small room accessories. Try it on a picture frame or apply it to heavy paper and then use the paper as a matte board for a picture. You'll be surprised at the number of ways you can use this technique to add a special touch to a room.
- Marble Look – Ragging On one color over a base coat. Then follow with a sponge while it is still wet and sponge out the ragging (or called “smooshing”). This works best with two people. It looks like you have used three colors and gives a marble look.

Compiled by Gail Brand, Extension Educator.

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

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