



Painted Fabrics,

Fabulous Backgrounds

by Cecile Whatman



“Lupins” • 20" × 20"

Every artist finds a source for their raw materials and supplies. Some art quilters prefer to work primarily in commercial prints, and others might hand dye or overdye their fabrics. However, if you work exclusively with commercial fabrics, you might find their range and scope limited to the trends of the day. I prefer the freedom to create my own fabric through paint and other surface embellishments. Making custom fabric allows me to extend my creativity, build meaning into the media, and tell my story better. These fabrics become the backgrounds of my art quilts.

MATERIALS

- PFD (prepared for dyeing) fabric
- Transparent or semi-transparent fabric paints, 2–3 colors (I used Jacquard® Dye-na-Flow®.)
- Opaque fabric paints, 2–3 colors (I used Jacquard Lumiere®.)
- Foam brushes
- Spray bottle of water
- Small plastic plate or paint palette
- Stencils
- Metallic foils
- Pressing sheet or parchment paper
- Fusible web (I used Mistyfuse®.)
- Bonding powder (I used Bo-Nash Fuse It™ Powder.)

notes about paint

- The more liquid a paint, the more it will blend and move on the fabric surface.
- Transparent paints are often more liquid than opaque paints. Choose a paint that gives you the effect on the surface you want.
- Transparent paints are fantastic for blended, wash effects; opaque paints are great for focal points, features, or to cover something up.
- All paints will move more if water is added to the fabric before or during the painting session.



Figure 1

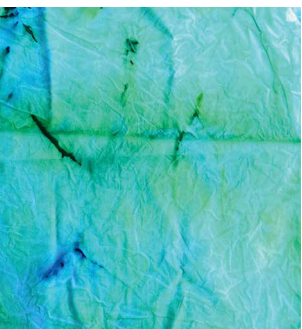


Figure 2

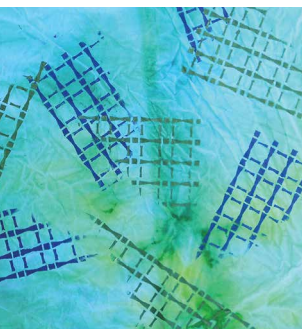


Figure 3

DIRECTIONS

Create the background

1. Place the fabric to be painted onto a plastic-covered work surface or in the tray. The more you fold or scrunch the fabric, the more active the painted surface will be. If it is completely flat, the paint will blend evenly with a smooth finish. Wet the fabric with the water spray bottle. The wetter the fabric, the more the paint will blend. To get the effect in my sample, I scrunched the wet fabric in a plastic bowl.
2. Pour a small amount of transparent paint onto a plastic plate or paint palette. Using a damp foam brush, apply the paint to the fabric. (Figure 1) Add more colors, allowing them to blend. Alternatively, you can place paint on the bottom of a bowl, place the wet fabric into the bowl, and add a second color over the top. Leave the fabric to dry. Press, if needed. (Figure 2)
3. Choose a stencil and place it on the background fabric. Pour a small amount of opaque paint onto a plastic plate or palette. Dip a clean foam brush into the paint and drag it across the surface of the stencil. Use small amounts of the stencil, randomly applied across the fabric. Alternate with a second color and stencil to build in some contrast. (Figure 3)
4. Choose a glue or bonding agent. Each has a different finish and will attract different amounts of foil so use that as part of your design. Place the foil on the bonding agent and, using a warm iron and a pressing sheet, iron the foil to the painted fabric, piece by piece. I used both Mistyfuse, torn into

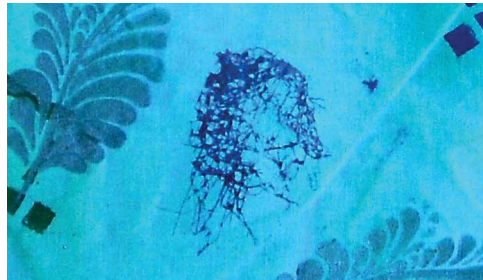


Figure 4



Figure 5

small bits and placed on the fabric, (Figure 4) and Bo-Nash bonding powder, sprinkled in spots. (Figure 5)

Complete the quilt

After creating a background fabric, you can highlight it with any number of techniques. For my sample, I added appliquéd flowers. Experiment with your own design.

Finish the quilt in your own style. You can stitch around the appliqué by machine or by hand, embellish further with embroidery, and scatter charms on the surface of the piece after it is quilted. Use your imagination and have fun. ✨

want to know more?



See Cecile demonstrate her techniques on "Quilting Arts TV" Series 1600 available at QNNtv.com and quiltingartstv.com or check your local PBS listings.