



THE PAINTED HOUSE

patterned paint rollers

FABRIC APPLICATOR

This has a swiveling tank that has two parallel chambers, which means you can use either one or two coloured paints for a design.

A series of cylinders within the tank transfers a thin layer of paint on to the pattern of the design roller, which then applies it to the fabric. The design rollers are interchangeable and reusable.

THE FABRIC

The finished material has the look of traditional handmade block-printed fabric. It is a decorative fabric and not for heavy use. Like any other hand-printed fabric, it needs very delicate hand washing with a mild detergent. The best fabrics to use are cotton, linen, linen union, cotton drill, & calico (great for bunting). The fabric can be washed to soften it and to remove any surface treatment of the cloth, though personally I prefer the crisp new look of material so I leave it unwashed, particularly when doing curtains. I dry clean my curtains, although this does very, very slightly alter the colour. Before you start on your best material it's worth practicing on some old sheets to get the technique, and then on a small piece of your final fabric to see how the paint takes. The paints take differently to every fabric.

THE PAINT

Traditionally, fabric paints are recommended for use on fabrics. Fabric paints are good for fabrics intended for heavy use - clothing, tablecloths etc. For this we have found Deka permanent, slightly watered down, works well. We encourage reusing paints you might already have. For fabric that you will never wash - bunting, decorative fabrics etc - we encourage you to use slightly watered down, water based, matt wall emulsion paints. For all my curtains and cushions I use slightly watered down, water based, Dead Flat Farrow & Ball paint on linen. You can't iron traditional paints, unlike the fabric paint, so I peg them up in a steamy shower room to hang out instead. They need very gentle hand washing with a very mild detergent, or dry cleaning; of course green dry cleaning would always be preferable.

THE PREPARATION

Before you start on your finest fabric, it is worth refining the technique on an old sheet, particularly if you are doing a repeat pattern. Tape the material on to a flat wall (it is best to protect the wall with some newspaper taped on first). Alternatively, you can tape it to a piece of hard board, making sure though that it is an absolutely upright. Stretch the material so it is flat and level, and it is best if it is ironed. Do the ironing in a well ventilated area.

THE SYSTEM

Attach the handle bracket to the tank, using the middle hole, with the number calibration on the tank facing towards the handle. It is easy to get the handle upside down (see photo to make sure it is correctly positioned).

Put one small cylinder into each of the chambers, making sure they fit into the slots. Fill both chambers of the tank with paint, making sure the paint is no higher than the top of the slots either side of the panel that divides the tank. Make sure both chambers are equally full. As there are two chambers you can use two different coloured paints for a design.

Turn both cylinders around until both are fully flooded with paint. Then add the black bar into the v-shaped slot in the tank. Follow this by putting the large cylinder in the slots so that sits above the two smaller cylinders (to make it slot in easily, pull the black bar towards the handle), making sure that both ends of the cylinder are in the slots.

Then turn the main cylinder until it is fully flooded with paint. Dribble a little water the length of the main cylinder, between it and the black bar. Turn the cylinder until the paint is flowing well. Insert the design roller into the elongated slots of the handle brackets. With the applicator unsupported by anything other than being held by the handle, turn the roller so that the pattern is evenly covered with a thin layer of paint. The roller and upper cylinder of the chamber should now roll together easily, almost without friction. On a scrap of material, rolling from the top to the bottom, remove the excess paint, as this will get all the paint flowing smoothly. It will also show you if you have the design the correct way up!

All patterns can be applied in either a repeating pattern, resembling wallpaper, or a non-repeating fashion. To achieve a repeating pattern (which particularly suits designs nos. 1, 3 & 6) mark the roller with a minus near its end at one point, then halfway around in the same position on the roller mark it with a plus. Start the first pass with the plus mark pointing upward, and the next pass with the minus pointing up, and so on alternating as you move across the wall.

“How to assemble” on youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWIx_5-R-PE

THE METHOD

Always start working from the upper left corner, passing from top the bottom, in vertical columns working towards the right hand side of the fabric. Use the left side of fabric as a vertical guide. Hold the applicator with the handle at 45 degrees to the wall, and maintain the angle as you pass down the fabric. **Allow the next pass to touch and slightly overlap the previous pass, so as to avoid gaps in the pattern.** Remember to alternate if you are doing a repeat pattern. After each pass, wipe the bottom of the chamber with a cloth in case of drips, and check that the chamber is not getting less than a quarter full. If needed, top up from the pre-watered-down paint, taking out the cylinders and rebuilding the roller as you did before. After you have topped up the paint, check the roller is in the same way up, charge up the cylinders with paint, and roller off the excess.

If you are doing really long pieces of fabric, for example curtains, you may need to apply the paint by moving down a ladder, or on and off a chair. Try and make each pass one fluid movement. If you are using one of the patterns where it does not matter whether the pattern is applied in a horizontal or vertical direction, it is easier to roller a long piece of fabric when it is taped horizontally across a wall. As before, start in the upper left corner, with each pass going from top to bottom of the fabric. You can see a picture of me doing some material in this way on the About & Contact page.

If you struggle with lining up by eye you can use a lazer guide. I recommend the Strait-Line Lazer Level 30, available on Amazon.

“How to use” on youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cavDPnQLAFY>

THE FINISHING OFF AND CLEANING

Leave the material taped to the wall until it has completely dried. If you are using fabric painy fix with an iron according to the manufacturers instructions. Ensure you do the ironing in a well ventilated area.

Wash the tank, rollers and cylinders in warm soapy water. Take particular care of the design rollers: do not leave them immersed in water, and let them air dry on a tea-towel not touching anything else. Store them wrapped in an old tea-towel and avoid them getting squashed.