

## WORKSHOP: FABRIC PAINTING



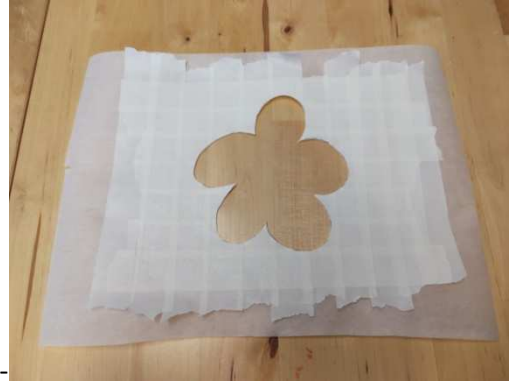
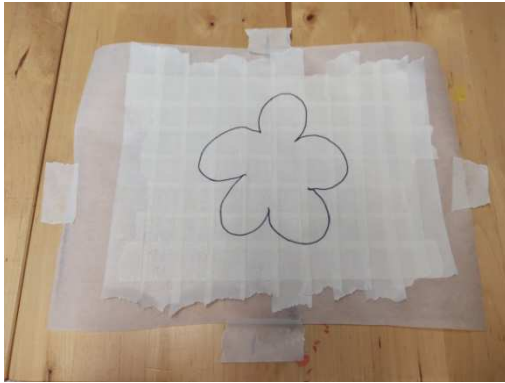
**Summary:** We will use acrylic paints mixed with fabric medium to paint designs on various clothing or fabric materials such as cotton, canvas or denim. Participants can supply their own item of clothing to work on, or paint on their fabric fish pillow created in the previous workshop. You can paint whatever design you would like to have on your material as a way to repurpose, personalize or revitalize the item. The instructor will demonstrate painting a design that you can follow or you can create your own at the same time.

### Materials and Equipment:

chalk pencil or washable marker	pencils
water container	sketch paper
GAC900 Golden fabric painting medium	masking tape
fabric to paint (fish pillow or your own garment)	t-shirt scraps for cleanup rags
plastic lids for palettes	paint brush $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide, and assorted sizes
t-shirt for press cloth	8 plastic containers 2-4 oz size
parchment paper	plastic lids to use as palettes
scissors	instructions/ideas sheet
optional – smock	iron, ironing board or clothes dryer (not provided)
optional – hair dryer (not provided)	
craft liquid acrylic paints – red, yellow, blue, green, white, black and silver or gold	

### Class Plan:

1. Place a sheet of plastic over your work area and a rag underneath the fabric to make cleanup easier and avoid paint spreading on your table.
2. Choose the fabric surface that you would like to paint on.
  - a. You could paint on a piece of old clothing you would like to liven up. Painting can also be used to cover spots on fabric and rejuvenate otherwise lost items.
  - b. You could paint patterns or a picture on the fish pillow made in a previous class, or if you didn't do that class, you could choose a cotton fabric from the fabrics provided to paint on.
  - c. This project also works well on cotton t-shirt fabric.
3. Optional: Rip the masking tape into small pieces to mask out the outline of where your design will go on your fabric. This avoids painting outside the lines and can give more precision.
  - a. For a more complicated design outline, you can apply rows of masking tape to a piece of parchment paper. Draw your design outline on the tape and cut out the design working saving the outline of it. Then apply the tape the outline to your fabric and start painting.



4. Optional: Create a white ground on your fabric to work on. Remember that more layers of paint make your finished fabric stiffer.
  - a. With a ratio of 1:1, mix white paint with the fabric medium until the two look like they have merged.
  - b. Paint the silhouette of the desired design and allow it to dry. Drying can be sped up with a hair dryer.



5. Sketch out your desired design onto the fabric with the washable marker, white chalk or a pencil. This is particularly useful for more detailed designs. You can also paint free-hand without a drawing guide if you prefer.
  - a. Note: if you draw your design on a white background with a pencil, the pencil lines will likely blend a little with your first layer of paint and darken it a little. If you want to avoid this use a disappearing fabric marker if available instead.
6. Paint your design but as you continue to put different colours onto the fabric, always make sure that you mix each colour with the fabric medium. The ratio for any acrylic paint and fabric medium is 1:1.
  - a. We are using GAC900 Golden fabric medium, but there are many other options that also work well.



7. Since fabric medium thins the acrylic paint a bit, you may need to apply second and third coats of paint to increase the opacity of your painting. The flower on the left is paint mixed with medium and the flower on the right is just paint with no medium (for reference on opacity only).



8. Optional: Use a hair dryer to speed up drying your paint layers.
9. Mix paint colours to get more variety of colours:
- Colors to mix: (1:1 ratio) Red & Blue = Purple / Red and Yellow = Orange / Blue and Yellow = Green / Orange and Black (1:0.5) = Brown.
  - You can add white or black to darken or lighten the colour. Change ratios if you want a bluer green vice versa.
10. Always wait for the first layer to dry if you need the colour to stay unblended and to paint on top of that colour layer.
11. You can also bring out texture and add depth to your painting by 'dry brushing' areas of your painting. This involves dipping a dry old frayed brush in a tiny amount of paint, blotting it on a separate paper and then dusting it over areas of your painting.



- The center of the flower below has black and brown dry brushing in the center and some on the white petals.



12. Once finished and completely dry, heat set your painting. We recommend letting your painting dry for 24 hours before heat setting it.
  - a. Flip your painting over and iron on the back of the design in order to heat seal it. Place a cloth under your painted fabric when heat sealing. Keep ironing for 3-5 minutes on medium heat without steam.



- b. If you can't iron on the back like with a pillow, place a piece of cotton fabric (e.g. a layer of an old t-shirt) over your painting for a press cloth and iron on top of that. Iron through this cloth for 3-5 minutes on medium high heat without steam.



- c. A few layers of towel on a table top can double as an ironing board, and a pot of hot water or a hot flat bottom kettle can double as an iron if needed.
  - d. If you don't have an iron you can place your painted fabric in a clothes dryer for 30-40 minutes on high. Warning: This will also shrink cotton fabric that isn't pre-shrunk!
13. If you want to wash your fabric, wait at least 24 hours before washing it after heat setting. On the left is before washing and the right is after washing of fabric painting that was mixed with medium.



14. We have also tried using acrylic paint without mixing it with fabric medium with mixed results. Follow the same procedure for heating setting and washing even if you don't use fabric medium.
- a. Paint applied thinly with water and allowed to dry at least 24 hours before heat setting has produced good results.



- b. Paint applied thickly and without 24 hours before setting didn't survive the washing machine as well but produced a nice aged effect. On the left is before washing and the right is after washing of fabric painting that was not mixed with medium.



- c. If you'd like to experiment it would be interesting to see if painting fabric medium over the washed aged flower and re-washing would set it in that state or if it would wear even more.

15. Try your own experiments if you like and we'd love to hear about the results!

#### **Useful Information/Adaptations/Variations:**

- Think of it as just like a regular painting, but with more layers and instead of mixing it with water, mix the paint with fabric medium.
- If you are stuck with not knowing what design to use, look online for inspiration!
- We have found that craft liquid acrylic paints are better to mix with if you want more opacity. Ours came from Dollarama.
- When drawing with a pencil and then painting on top of it, you might mix the colour with the charcoal, you would have to do more layers to cover the muddy charcoal color

#### **Troubleshooting:**

- If you paint in an area that you didn't want to, you can dip a rag in water and rub it off right away.
- If you aren't happy with the layer you are painting, wait for it to dry and repaint the layer again. It may need re-painting over it in order to cover up the previous one, but it can be fixed.
- Start with larger details and then work your way down to smaller details to help make the process easier.