

## Painted Fabric, Stunning Quilts

The capacity to make your own fabric is very empowering. Creating or altering fabric with paints allows you to tailor your feature fabrics or backgrounds to exactly what you want for your project, extend your theme or capture something unique about the individual you are making something for or the story you want to tell. Painting your own fabric allows you to extend your creativity into the media you are using, to personalise your materials. It is also incredibly quick, easy and fun.

Paints come in many forms. Different brands will be described and marketed in different ways and it can be confusing to know which product is optimal for which technique. The reality is that most of them are interchangeable and there is no single product that has a single use.

There are four questions I recommend you ask yourself when selecting a paint for a project:

1. How viscous does the paint need to be to achieve my effect: do I want it to run and blend or do I want it to sit where I put it;
2. Is transparency important: am I trying to cover a background and set a 'stage' or do I want to create a wash or a blended colourwash, stained glass effect;
3. Do I want a flat finish or a luminous, metallic or opalescent finish; and
4. Do I need the paint to be colourfast and washable. Many art quilts will not need to be colourfast and if a paint gives you the finished effect you want it may not be that important to be permanent on fabric. All colour products can be made colourfast with the addition of a textile or fabric medium, but that may change the drape or hand of the fabric.

As a rule of thumb, the more liquid the paint or the wetter the surface or the more water added to the process, the more the paint will shift, move and blend. So you can control the look of the finished piece by the amount of moisture incorporated into the process. For a blended effect, use a liquid, transparent paint on a wet fabric. To create movement and light, keep the fabric dry and brush small amounts of paint on to capture the sweep of the brushstrokes. White space will create movement and light and can be useful to include in your painted surface.

Creating depth can be a matter of manipulating light vrs dark paint and iridescent vrs flat paint. Light colours come forward, dark colours recede; metallic or opalescent paints come forward, matte, flat paints sit flat or recede. By combining different mixes of paints, you create an active, sometimes quite dramatic surface.

Textile or Fabric Paints have a medium or binding agent already added to the paint. These will generally just need to dry out and cure to be permanent. Generally we would iron to heat set, but the reality is that if you just leave the fabric alone to dry out over a few weeks, the same effect is achieved.

Once dry, you can use your fabric as amazing backgrounds or whole quilts or cut it up as a feature fabric.

If you have questions you can email me on [cecile@uniquestitching.com.au](mailto:cecile@uniquestitching.com.au). Join me on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/uniquestitching](https://www.facebook.com/uniquestitching). Check out the products on [www.uniquestitching.com.au](http://www.uniquestitching.com.au).