

Painting on fabric is nothing new. After all, the base of most artists' work is made from canvas stretched onto wood and coated with a medium. Some artists have taken the fabric up a notch by painting on silk. Traditional silk painting, or batik is actually more of a dye technique. The silk is stretched on a frame and selected areas of the cloth are brushed with hot wax to prevent the dye from reaching those areas. The fabric is then dyed and the wax removed, creating an abstract design on the fabric not unlike traditional tie-dyeing.

Silk painting can also be done to create a more detailed painting. Floral done in this method can have the same intensity of color as the models. Traditional painting is done by controlling how much and where the paint goes on a canvas using brushes. When paint or dye is applied to silk, it will immediately spread like that dreaded wine stain on your favorite dress. To achieve a more controlled design, a silk artist will control the flow of the dye by enclosing the area with a resist called gutta. The dye is then applied inside the enclosed area filling it and creating the beginning of your picture.

You can add a unique project to your home by making your finished silk painting into a window treatment. Feature it in the center of a flat valance or a stationary roman shade or even make it a one of a kind roller shade. A company called Shades of Colour (www.shadesofcolourgallery.com) (1-866-630-7413) in Waco, Texas, has designed an entire line of custom ordered painted roller shades. The shades are done on matte vinyl rather than silk, but come in a range of designs including flowers, whimsical landscapes, and college logos. You can order a shade with your own artwork by submitting it on a digital file.



fabric & paint — the perfect marriage

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Another company located in Stowe, PA can create custom fabric shutters. Kestrel Manufacturing Inc., (1-800-494-4321, 610-326-6679), carries a full line of shutters inserted with a painted fabric shade. The shutters feature removable fabric rods so you can change the prints as often as you like. They carry 12 standard floral designs, but will have artists available to create custom prints. With a little ingenuity, a paint brush and a sewing machine you could paint and sew your own inserts for a true one-of-a-kind window treatment.

Visit www.silkpaintinggallery.com for more information on painting on silk, including a supply list and instructions. The Batik Guild can be reached through their web site at www.batikguild.org.uk. ✽

