



Painted wall hangings and backdrops

Over the years, I have tried several techniques for creating large, painted wall hangings and backdrops. While I can't offer much in the way of artistic inspiration, I can give you a few technical tips that may help.

- Unbleached muslin is an inexpensive and lightweight fabric that works fine for wall hangings. Be sure to pre-wash the fabric and dry it in the dryer, to take care of shrinkage, then iron out the wrinkles and stitch as many pieces as you want together. Fold and hem any exposed edges.

- Use natural or synthetic dyes (in the washing machine or bathtub) to give your fabric the color you want. Be careful not to make it too dark. Dark fabric swallows all but the lightest colors. Note the bad example above.

- Draw your basic image on a piece of sketch paper, then make a plastic transparency from your sketch.

- Borrow or rent an overhead projector (try schools, colleges or rental companies) . Tack your fabric to a wall and use the projector to trace your design.

- Use acrylic latex paints to apply your masterpiece. Thin the paint so it glides easily on to the fabric. Do not use tempera paints unless you can find a waterproof version.

- If the final outcome is really important to you, bribe an artist into helping complete the shading and detail work (unless you happen to be an artist).