

QUICK-CHANGE ARTIST

Use paint, paper to update interiors

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Copley News Service

Tired of that Navajo-white (non)color scheme in your home? Are you wishing for a new look in your surroundings to boost your own outlook? Are you considering selling your home but want the most you can get for it?

These are all good reasons to consider some of the most affordable products to update your interior design: paint, wallpaper and fabric. They can transform walls, windows, floors and even furniture.

COLOR

"Color is the single most powerful element in decoration; its ability to transform surroundings and excite a variety of responses is second to none," says Tricia Guild in her book, "On Color" (Rizzoli).

"An extraordinarily powerful subject and a fascinating tool, color can alter a domestic environment, enhancing the mood of an interior and improving the quality of life within," says Guild.

Don't let the breadth of choice available today confuse or intimidate you, she advises. Start learning what colors you favor by collecting color swatches, such as scraps of fabric, ribbon, postcards or photographs. You may find you're attracted to a certain family of colors and you can use them to redefine your home your way.

Rethink even your traditional notions of what colors go together. Blue, peaceful and refreshing, can be homey when paired

with white, electrifying paired with yellow or invigorating with gold, she says.

PAINT

You can paint textured walls, plastered walls, wood paneling, wood floors, countertops, cabinets and furniture, recreating a room enormously.

You can give your paint job a designer look with the vast array of faux finishes in vogue today, from color washing to rag rolling to shadow striping to sponging to smooching to stenciling.

In decorative painting, you often use two or three shades or colors to achieve the look you want. Often a glaze is the final coat, which then can be manipulated with various tools, from combs to rags to sponges to feathers, creating a textured appearance even on a flat surface. Consider these techniques from Drucker and Rosen:

Marbling. You can make wall panels, floors, moldings, columns, tabletops, fireplace mantels or furnishings appear to be made of marble by painting them with a base coat, glaze and three shades of color, using large feathers and cotton rags.

Fresco. Give a warm glow to a room by applying pigment to still-wet plaster, using a white base coat and a colored glaze, applying the glaze with squares of cotton sheeting.

Moire. Create the look of that satiny, watermarked fabric called moire by using a base coat, a glaze and a graining comb.

Textured surfaces. Here are several

choices, from corduroy ragging on, in which you apply glaze over your base coat with a piece of corduroy; feather-duster finishing using exactly that tool; plastic-wrap ragging off, in which you use plastic wrap to create a "wrinkled" look of texture, sometimes called "smooching."

Stencil designs can be realistic, abstract, historical, geometric or country-style. They can be applied in muted shades or with sponging techniques for a watercolor look or in rich shades for striking contrast. They can accent architectural features such as a window or archway, or can pattern walls, floors and ceilings.

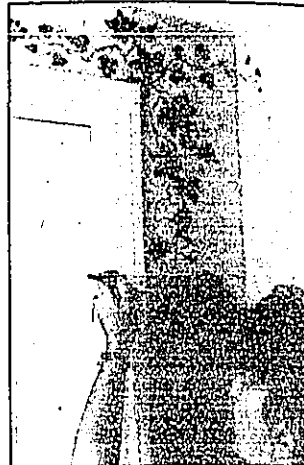
WALL COVERINGS

"Of all the things I do now in my home improvement business, I'd have to say hanging wallpaper gives me the most pleasure and satisfaction," says Matt Nikitas in "Grand Finishes for Walls & Floors" (Globe Pequot Press). "The transformation of a room can be spectacular."

Wallpaper costs more than paint. A typical roll measures about 36 square feet, typically about 15 feet long and 27 inches wide. It usually costs between \$10 to \$30, but designer wallpaper can exceed \$200 per roll.

Wallpaper borders can be used not just at the tops or bottoms of walls, but to add interest at architectural features in a room, such as door frames, fireplaces or staircases.

Wall coverings aren't limited to wallpaper, either. Vinyl-coated or vinyl-backed by paper is among the most durable wall

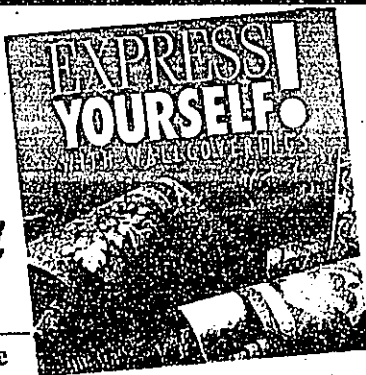


coverings available, according to Seabrook, the Memphis, Tenn.-based manufacturer of wall coverings since 1910.

Natural wall coverings such as grass cloth, cork or burlap are highly distinctive but harder to install and should vacuumed, not washed. Textile wall coverings, such as silk, velvet or cotton backed by paper, are also better hung by professionals.

Embossed wall coverings such as Anaglypta, the first embossed, paintable wall covering to emerge in the late 19th century, today manufactured by Crown Berger of England, can appear like an authentic tin ceiling at a fraction of the cost.

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