



Susan Purney Mark
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The Creative Reset: Reimagine Your Surface Design Style

100 Inspiring Ideas by Medium

Tips to Begin:

1. Protect and cover your work surface
2. Wear protective clothing and gear where appropriate
3. Make notes of your process
4. Take photos as reminders
5. Build a journal for record keeping

PAINT

- Try painting with the "wrong" end of your brush for unexpected mark-making
- Dilute paint to watercolor consistency and let it pool in fabric hollows
- Apply thick paint with a palette knife for sculptural texture
- Splatter diluted paint from different heights: how distance affects the spray pattern
- Paint on wet fabric and watch colors bleed and merge unpredictably
- Roll crumpled plastic wrap across wet dye for organic, cellular textures
- Use a brayer to blend colors directly on fabric in a single rolling motion
- Scrape away wet paint to reveal the layer beneath
- Paint with strong tea or coffee for subtle, natural tones that can be overdyed
- Press painted fabric face-to-face with another piece for mirror-image monoprints
- Stencil with opaque paint over transparent dye work for contrast
- Build up thin glazes of diluted paint for luminous depth
- Drip paint or dye while walking around the fabric laid on the floor
- Flick loaded brushes rhythmically to create directional energy
- Drag wet fabric across a painted surface to pick up color selectively
- Swing a paint-filled container on a string pendulum-style over fabric
- Paint around torn paper shapes for soft, organic edges
- Use painter's tape to create crisp geometric boundaries
- Mask areas with cut stencils and sponge paint for soft transitions
- Work at miniature scale with tiny stencils or stamps for intricate detail
- Use oversized tools—wide brushes, large squeegees—for bold, sweeping marks



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- Work with your non-dominant hand for unexpected results
- Close your eyes while applying marks or color
- Layer stenciled shapes under loose gestural painting
- Apply paint or dye to only the selvage edges and let it migrate inward
- Use a spray bottle to mist diluted paint over stencils for soft edges
- Dye fabric, then paint with thickened dye for dimensional surface
- Scrape metallic or iridescent paint thinly for shimmer effects
- Layer transparent and opaque mediums in alternating passes

DYE

- Dye fabric multiple times without rinsing between colors to build depth
- Apply dye with ice cubes placed on fabric—let them melt and create organic patterns
- Use salt on wet dye to draw moisture and create crystalline effects
- Dip-dye at angles instead of straight across for diagonal gradients
- Overdye printed or patterned fabric to unify disparate elements
- Drop rubbing alcohol into wet dye or ink to create blooming halos
- Sprinkle dry pigment powder onto wet fabric and mist with water
- Screen print over previously batik-ed fabric to combine techniques
- Spin fabric on a lazy Susan while dripping color from above
- Twist fabric tightly into a rope before dyeing for spiral effects
- Pleat fabric and clamp between wooden blocks before dipping in dye
- Scrunch fabric into a ball and secure with rubber bands for unpredictable resist
- Fold fabric in precise geometric patterns for symmetrical designs
- Roll fabric around a pole and bind tightly before painting or dyeing
- Mix a single color in five different values and use only those in one piece
- Apply complementary colors side-by-side and let them mix at the edges
- Overdye with a transparent color to unify disparate elements
- Use only warm or only cool colors in a piece to create temperature harmony
- Apply analogous colors in gradual transitions across the surface
- Pre-wash fabric with soda ash to intensify dye absorption
- Dye fabric in sections at different times for color variation
- Use natural materials like flowers or leaves as both stamps and stains
- Apply dye with sponges cut into custom shapes
- Apply thickened dye with a cake decorating bag for precision



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RESIST & BATIK

- Apply wax in layers, cracking it between dye baths for complex networks
- Use household items as resists—masking tape, contact paper, or plastic wrap
- Draw with resist directly from the bottle for loose, gestural lines
- Scrape wax across fabric with a credit card for thin, unpredictable coverage
- Combine flour paste resist with wax for varied textural effects
- Remove wax resist while fabric is still warm and re-wax before the next dye bath
- Apply wax over dried painted areas before dyeing to preserve color
- Apply rubber cement as a removable resist before painting
- Place objects directly on wet fabric and let them dry in place as natural resists
- Combine batik with screen printing on the same piece
- Apply wax over dried screen prints before final dye bath
- Paint sizing on selected areas to resist dye penetration
- Apply wax in dots or dashes rather than solid lines
- Use string or rope dipped in dye to "draw" across fabric
- Create resists with masking fluid applied with various tools
- Layer different resist methods—wax, tape, and paste—before dyeing
- Combine hot and cold wax techniques in the same piece

STENCILS

- Layer the same stencil in slightly offset positions with different colors
- Use found objects as impromptu stencils—leaves, hardware, lace
- Deliberately overprint stencils to create moiré or interference patterns
- Use a spray bottle to mist diluted paint over stencils for soft edges
- Use freezer paper as a temporary stencil that irons onto fabric

SCREEN PRINTING

- Blend two colors directly on the screen while printing
- Print with thickened dye for sharper edges or thinned for soft, watercolor-like prints
- Print the same screen multiple times without re-inking for ghost prints
- Use discharged areas as a base for re-dyeing or painting
- Print with screens over previously stenciled designs

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TEXTURE & MARK-MAKING

- Press bubble wrap, corrugated cardboard, or textured wallpaper into wet paint
- Drag a comb, fork, or notched squeegee through wet medium for linear patterns
- Print with carved erasers, potatoes, or craft foam for quick repeating motifs
- Wrinkle fabric and press creases before applying color to emphasize texture

DISCHARGE/BLEACH: use in a well ventilated area, wear appropriate protective gear and use a neutralizing agent to prevent fabric deterioration

- Discharge dye with bleach applied through a squeeze bottle for drawn lines
- Use a spray bottle of bleach to mist patterns on dark-dyed fabric
- Sand dried painted surfaces lightly to distress and reveal underlayers
- Use household bleach as a drawing tool on dark fabric

LAYERING & COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

- Alternate warm and cool colors in successive layers for visual vibration
- Combine very small and very large elements in the same composition
- Repeat a single motif in progressively larger or smaller sizes
- Break up large areas with fine detail and dense areas with open space
- Set a timer and work quickly without overthinking decisions
- Embrace mistakes and incorporate them into the design
- Stretch fabric on frames for taut, controlled painting surfaces
- Leave fabric deliberately unstretched for organic pooling and bleeding
- Layer sheer fabrics and dye them together for shadow effects
- Create negative space by painting around objects placed on fabric
- Finish with hand-stitching to add linear elements to painted surfaces
- Apply wax resist over discharged areas, then overdye for multi-layered complexity
- Screen print with transparent base, let dry, then stencil opaque shapes on top
- Dye fabric first, add painted details second, finish with stitched or stamped accents
- Alternate matte and glossy mediums in successive layers for surface contrast

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Safety Note: Always use dyes, paints, bleach, waxes, and other materials in well-ventilated spaces and follow manufacturer guidelines. Wear appropriate protective equipment including gloves, masks, and aprons when working with chemicals, hot wax, or spray applications. Dispose of materials responsibly according to local regulations. Take care when using heat tools and ensure proper ventilation when working with fumes from dyes, discharge agents, or melted wax.