

## Technique of the Month

# Metallic Painting Effects

by Vicki Welsh

Need a little sparkle in your life? Maybe you have lots of really cool metallic paints and haven't used them yet. Or you have some really ugly fabric that could stand a transformation. This technique meets all of those needs.

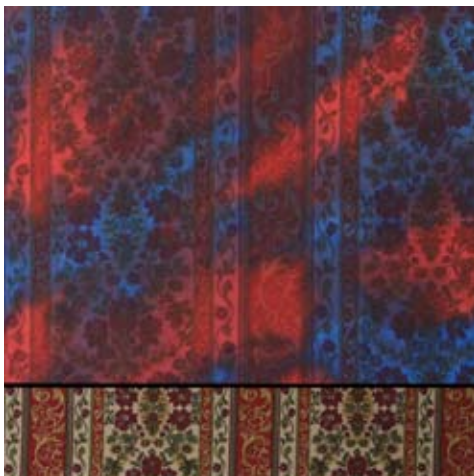
As with most things, this adventure started off innocently enough. I bought two fat quarters of metallic painted fabric at the International Quilt Festival in Houston. They are very striking and unique with lots of depth of color and several layers of metallic paint. I wanted to try to develop my own technique to produce similar fabrics. It was also a good excuse to finally use my collection of Jacquard and Stewart Gill paints.

### Preparing the Fabric for the Metallic Layers

If you are using a fabric that you like and that you want to have the original color and pattern show through in the finished piece, then there's nothing that you need to do to prepare the fabric for the metallic layers.

If you do not like the base fabric you need to add some color to develop the base layer. In these examples I will show how each of the base layering techniques transforms the base fabric.

In all of the photos in the article the base fabric will be shown at the bottom edge of the photo. In this photo, the base fabric is painted with two colors of Dye-Na-Flow paint. The paint is diluted with about 30%



water. This technique allows the print to show through slightly, giving added texture to the finished fabric. This layer can be painted flat, wadded and dipped on the paint, splattered or any other technique that you like.

If you want more coverage on the base fabric you can use the Dye-Na-Flow paint full strength and you can paint either the front or back of the fabric. You can use any textile paint for this layer and dilute it to the strength you prefer. The objective is to have the base layer non-metallic.

Once the base layer is done you are ready to move on to the metallic layers. You can do these layers on wet or dry fabric depending on the effect that you want.

### Supplies

Fabric – the technique was developed using fat quarter-sized cotton fabric. The fabric doesn't have to be cotton as long as the paint manufacturer indicates that the paint can be used on the fabric type. Size depends on your work area and your ability to control the bulk. Start with a fat quarter to get comfortable and then branch out.

Fabric paints – metallic and non-metallic. I used a variety of Jacquard (Textile Color, Neopaque, Lumiere) and Stewart Gill (True Colour, Colourize, Metamica, Pearlize, Byzantia and Alchemy) paints. Optional: Dye-Na-Flow paint to paint the base layer of commercially printed fabrics. Jacquard Exciter packs are a good way to start without a huge investment.

Foam rollers – you will need several of each, one for each color being applied to the fabric

Foam brushes to paint the base layer

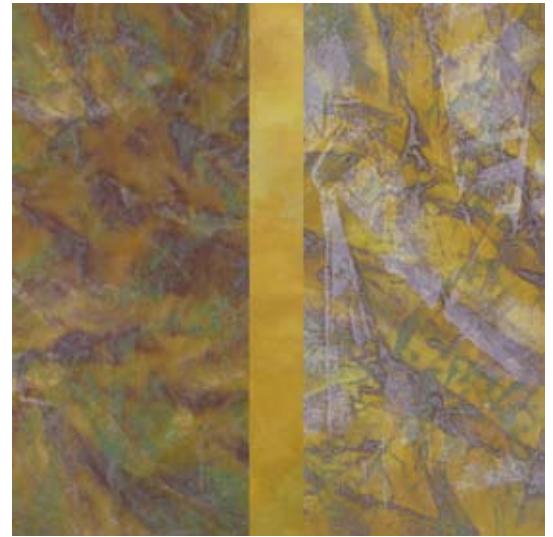
Styrofoam plates (or something similar) to use as paint palettes

Plastic to protect your work surface – dry cleaner bags, trash bags, plastic table cloths or plastic sheets – be creative, use what you have around the house. You will need one piece for each fabric.

## The Technique

The technique is quite simple. The secret to success is in the way that you fold the fabric and the selection of paints for layering. The fabric can be wet or dry. If you use the fabric wet, especially if it's wet with the base layer of paint, the colors will blend together more and create a softer look. If the metallic layers are painted on dry fabric the metallic paints will be more distinct.

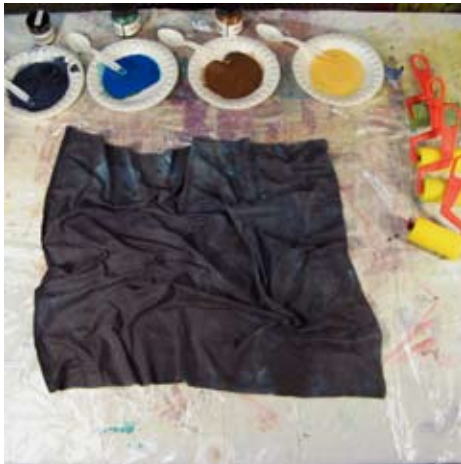
The fabric and paints used for both of these samples are the same. The one on the left was painted wet and the one on the right was painted dry. The gold in the middle is the base fabric.



The basic steps are:

I use these small pie plates and mix a generous amount of paint with about 30% water.

The white spot is Versatex fixer. You do not need that if you are not washing the fabric.



To get started, lay the fabric out on a sheet of plastic to protect your work surface. The base fabric is a dark blue hand dyed fabric. I have the paints mixed, the rollers ready and the fabric is lightly scrunched and ready for the first application.



In this photo the first color, Stewart Gill Metamica Willow Blue, was applied and then the fabric was scrunched again for the second color, Jacquard Lumiere halo Blue-Gold.



For the third color, Jacquard Lumiere Metallic Rust, the fabric was scrunched horizontally.



For the final color, Jacquard Lumiere Metallic Gold, the fabric is tightly scrunched. After the paint layers are done, spread the fabric flat and leave it to dry.

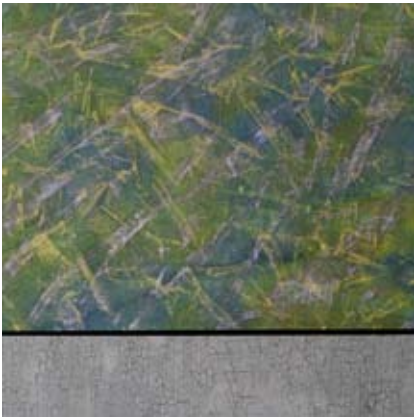


Here's the fabric after painting and drying.

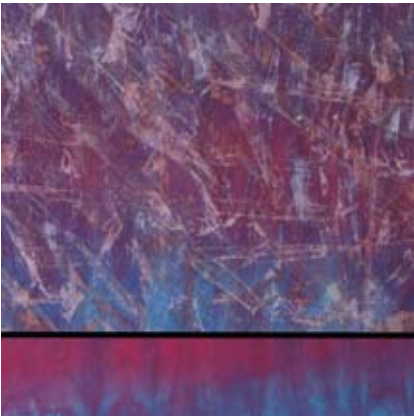


### **More Samples**

Blue hand dyed fabric painted with Pewter, Steel Blue, Silver and Pearl White metallic and pearlized paints.



Commercial print gray on white painted with blue and yellow textile paint and then Pearl Violet, Acid Green, Citrus and Gold metallic and interference paints.



Hand dyed turquoise and fuchsia fabric painted dry with Pearl Violet, Silver, Red, Opal and Hi-Lite Red metallic, pearl and interference paints.



### **Base Fabric Selection**

The great thing about this technique is that you can use just about any fabric! If you start with a hand dyed fabric or a mottled-effect commercial print (batik, tone on tone, color-wash effect) you can start with the metallic layers without having to paint or dye a base color. These samples are painted on dry/wet hand-dyed fabric.

You don't even have to use cotton.

You can

paint any fabric that will accept the paints. Let your imagination go! If you want to practice the technique go through your stash and pull six to ten fabrics in a wide variety and paint away. You will find some that you like and some that you do not. Add more layers of paint until you are happy. There are no hard and fast rules.

Then what? You can use these fabrics for all sorts of mixed-media projects. They are great for boxes, vases, and journal covers; but I most often use them in my fabric postcards.

