

The Basics of Using Textile Paints on Fabric



Supplies:

- Textile/Fabric Paints, transparent and opaque
- PFD Fabric or pre-washed fabric
- Brushes, such as angular size 0 through ½"
- Brush cleaning soaps
- Painters' Tape

Some basic tips:

- Always wear old clothes or an apron when working with fabric paints.
- Cover your work surfaces and floor to protect from stray paint.
- Never use paint utensils for food preparation.
- Transparent paints do not conceal the background. They are what their name implies – transparent. Use on white or light fabric. Patterns in the fabric will show through.
- Opaque paints cover the color or pattern in the fabric.
- Textile paints do not penetrate the fiber like dyes do. Textile paints adhere to the surface of the fiber.

Let's Get Started!

- If you are not using PFD fabric, prewash your fabric in hot water and dry. Do not use fabric softeners or dryer sheets.
- Stir your paint thoroughly.
- You can mix colors to attain a custom color. It's best to not intermix different brands. Refer to color mixing charts, such as the one on the PROfab Textile Paint instructions, to get some ideas.
- You can apply paint directly to the fabric by hand painting with a brush. You may also try using stencils, screen printing, or block printing.
- Ideas for use to enhance appliqued features
 - Shading the edges of applique flowers and adding details
 - Creating shadows on buildings
 - Adding details to buildings, such as door handles, hardware, light in a window, etc.
 - Adding details to trees, particularly birch or aspen – branch "scars," small branches

Finishing Up:

- Allow the paint to air-dry thoroughly.

- After it has air-dried, you must heat set the paint to make it permanent
 - Using an iron:
 - Set the iron to the heat appropriate for your fabric and allow the iron to pre-heat.
 - Lay a piece of parchment paper on your ironing surface.
 - Place your fabric, painted side down, on the parchment paper.
 - If you are working with delicate fabrics or have paint on both sides, lay a second piece of parchment paper or pressing cloth over the top.
 - Press each section of your fabric for 10-15 seconds. PROfab recommends heat setting for 5 minutes, keeping you iron moving to prevent scorching.
 - Using your dryer:
 - Paint must be completely air-dried, 3-7 days!
 - Run your dryer on the hottest setting for 30 minutes.
- Washing:
 - Do not wash your fabric for 10-14 days after heat setting the paint.
 - Hand or machine wash in cool to lukewarm water. Do not apply detergent directly to the paint.
 - When possible, turn the paint to the inside – such as in a pillow or shirt – for washing.
 - Line dry or dry on a low heat setting
- Clean-up:
 - Wash brushes in water and mild soap. Let them air dry.

After your piece has been heat-set and washed, it can be used in garments, quilts, etc.