

Sponge Painting

http://www.paintinganddecoratingconcourse.com/Faux-Painting.html#anchor_669

Sponge painting is a good finish for those who are just beginning in the world of faux finishes. Sponging has been in vogue and now is sometimes looked at by some of my pompous faux finish contemporaries as being a simpleton finish just for beginners. I disagree. I think their view is largely influenced by the fact that sponging is so easy to do and many DIY'ers have done very poor jobs with sponge painting in their attempts to decorate their own homes.

But I shall not as they, "throw the baby out with the bath water" . The fact of the matter is: poor work can be done by an inexperienced applicator using even the most expensive tools and excellent work can be done by the skilled craftsman using the most simple and crude implements. So I will retain the sea sponge as a valuable faux finish and decorative painting tool, and let my work shall speak for itself.

Sponging is easy to do.

Sponge painting does not require a lot of tools or a lot of experience to do a fairly decent job. I don't even use glaze with sponging, just straight paint sometimes thinned a bit with water. So lets delve into the subject with a open mind and a creative spirit.

The Sponge: used for sponge painting is usually a natural sea sponge because every sponge is a little different from the next. A good random appearance can be created with a sea sponge, whereas the synthetic sponge will give you a rhythmic pattern (which is good if you are "stamping" a uniform pattern) that doesn't work well with a mottled finish. Ideally you want to have several sponges for a painting job. One for each color and one or two that you can "modify" for getting into corners and make small sponge fragments for small areas.

Sponging a Room With One Color.

Pick your color scheme, light over dark, dark over light, or two similar hues.

The first thing you will do is base coat one of your colors onto the wall in the standard way: with a roller and brush. You can for a little more dimension, use a satin or semi-gloss for your sponging color and a flat for your base coat. Don't use a latex flat over a semi-gloss - you *might* get another faux finish (crackle) by accident if you do this. The general painting rule which applies to all types of painting is you can paint glossy over flat but be careful (don't do it without priming with a solvent based primer) about painting flat over glossy.

Before you begin sponging you will need to prepare the sponge. This is done by wetting the sponge in a bucket of clean water or under a faucet and ringing it dry.

Technique

Begin your sponging away from any corners (you will work toward the corners - don't start in the corner), you can stop and start at any time to step back and look at your work for overall balance. The sponging technique is done by loading the sponge by dipping just the tips of the sponge into your paint tray and then blotting off the excess on the roller grid and then a paper towel if needed. It is important that the paint not be too heavy on the sponge and that your hand pressure also be light or you will get a smudgy mess. Using a light touch, pat the sponge onto the wall, changing your hand position each time you pat the wall. Even with a sea sponge you will get a repetitious pattern if you don't change your hand position with each pat on the sponge.

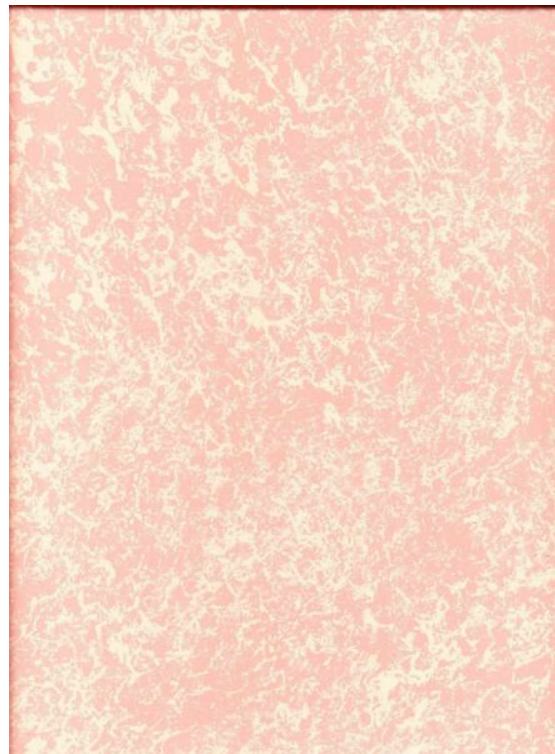
Mistakes: How to correct them

If you get some heavy handed smudging or got your sponging density a bit too dense, you can "open" it back up and correct it by sponging your base coat color back on. If you used a flat base coat with semi gloss sponge paint, you could get some crackle if you do this so you have two options: 1. keep it light and at a minimum using the flat and hope for the best - preferably test a spot first to see if it crackles 2. buy a quart of the same color in a satin sheen and use that to open up and correct any blotches.

Softening your sponging

I won't delve into this at length here but using a variety of "tools" will give you a more varied look and will make it hard to determine just how the finish was created. Just because you are sponging doesn't mean you have to use **only** a sponge.

Softening with a lambs wool pad. If you are using latex you will need to immediately upon sponging on your paint follow up in a random blotting action with a lambs wool pad to mute areas here and there which will give your sponging a softer look. If you over blot your can re-sponge or use the correction method above to make any adjustments.



You can create a shimmer by sponging semi-gloss over flat paint, or clear water-based "varnish" over a flat paint for a very subtle shimmer.