

EASY OMBRE FABRIC PAINTING

Ombre describes a fabric dyeing technique where the color grades from dark to light, or from one color to another, in a gradual manner. The typical ombre dyeing method uses a container of dye, the fabric rolled onto a pole and suspended above it, and the fabric gradually dipped into the dye and slowly removed so the more concentrated color is at the bottom of the piece. This "fake" ombre is easy and much less time-consuming.

Materials--

Setacolor fabric paint or craft paint thinned with fabric medium.

Inexpensive chip brushes--one for each color.

Fabric prepared to dye.

Disposable cups or bowls--two for each color. Large pitcher of water.

Protective gear--latex gloves, plastic or other surface protection, apron.

Dampen your fabric and lay out on a protected surface, smoothing out and removing bubbles under the fabric. Put a couple of tablespoons of thick, full-strength paint in a bowl. Thin with the same amount of water. Fill another bowl with water. Starting at one end, lay a heavy line of paint all along the edge with the brush. Using a light stroke, brush across the heavy paint towards the center of the fabric for a few inches. Immediately dip the same brush in the bowl of water and brush from the heavy line towards the center. "Scrub" any obvious lines of paint with the brush. Brushing perpendicular to any lines will soften them. Adding more water will push the paint to travel towards the center. Continue dipping the brush in the water bowl, extending the fainter color as far as you like. Heavy paint can be added at the starting edge if you need to darken it. When one end is finished, use a second color at the other end and duplicate the process, using a clean brush and another bowl of clear water. The center area should be very pale. Where the two pale tints overlap in the center you'll get a soft third color. Pick your colors with an eye to the color wheel. Adjacent colors work well, like orange and yellow with a soft coral in the center. Or blue and green with soft teal in the center. Experiment---maybe use three colors. Or make a sky or sea fabric out of blues.

The fabric will need to dry completely to set the color. You can let it dry in place, at least overnight. I carefully lifted the fabric from the surface and placed flat on newspapers in the hot sun. They were dry in about an hour. I heat-set with an iron but the Setacolor will cure in 24 hours without ironing.