

How to Paint a Design on Leather Goods

Sometimes your leather goods need a little help and you've got the urge to dye or paint it. With dye it's pretty straight forward, but if you want to paint it there's a little more involved to make it look good. Whenever you are attempting a project like this, always test it out on a scrap piece first. When using different pigments, be sure to let one dry before adding the next color.

What to Use

Use water-based acrylic paints designed for leather because they are more flexible than ordinary acrylics. If painting the entire surface of the leather, check to see if your leather goods are vegetable-dyed, as they absorb the paint better than leather goods tanned by other methods. Not sure if the leather goods are vegetable-dyed? Test a scrap piece to see how well it absorbs the paint.

by cleaning the leather goods, using a solution of one ounce of leather bleach to one pint of water, applying the solution with a soft brush or wool dauber. You can also lightly sponge the leather with water prior to painting in order to ensure a more even absorption of color. Don't soaked it, just get it damp.

You can paint over a large area of the leather goods or just a small part for highlighting effects. If you want to do the former, paint over the leather first with a water-diluted solution of the paint. In this way, you'll prepare the surface of the leather goods to receive the undiluted paint. Use one part paint and one part water, and apply in broad, even strokes with a wool dauber. Add more water if the leather is not absorbing the solution, and more paint if the color is not showing sufficiently. Two coats of the solution should be applied, leaving sufficient time between coats for the paint to be absorbed but for the leather to still be somewhat damp and not dry. Try this out first on a scrap piece of leather and take your time.

apply the undiluted paint using a brush or wool dauber, and broad even strokes. For small areas that you wish to highlight, use undiluted paint and a small paintbrush. To prevent the paint from cracking, it's important to flex the leather goods throughout the drying process. Do this between coats of paint as well.

Another option when applying paint is to use an airbrush. A double action airbrush allows you to control the flow of the paint and the air with one finger and avoids the initial blob of paint emerging with a single-action airbrush. You can strain the paint to remove any flecks by using a piece of pantyhose. If you over spray, acrylic paint can be easily removed while it is still damp.

water-based acrylic paints work best
 * Paint brushes or airbrush
 leather bleach
 paint to be absorbed

* Leather bleach

Summary

- * Clean the leather goods with a solution of water and leather bleach
- * Apply two coats of water-diluted paint, with sufficient time between coats for the paint to be absorbed
- * Apply undiluted paint

Tools to Use

- * Water-based acrylic paints
- * Wool dauber
- * Vegetable-dyed leather goods and leather bleach

About The Author:

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