

Not Just a Quick Paint Job :

How to mix house paint with fine art

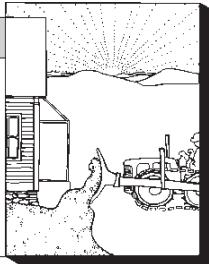


Figure 1. This faux-marble inlaid floor features three overlaid stars on a forest green and black marble background. This design contains over 195 individual sections of marbleizing. It was first sketched on the floor in chalk. After client approval, Perry's master painters labored for over 100 hours to produce this one-of-a-kind floor design. The walls of the entry hall are covered in copperleaf. Standard glazes would have robbed the sheen from the copperleaf, so the company's chemists developed a glaze formula that lets a soft sheen come through.

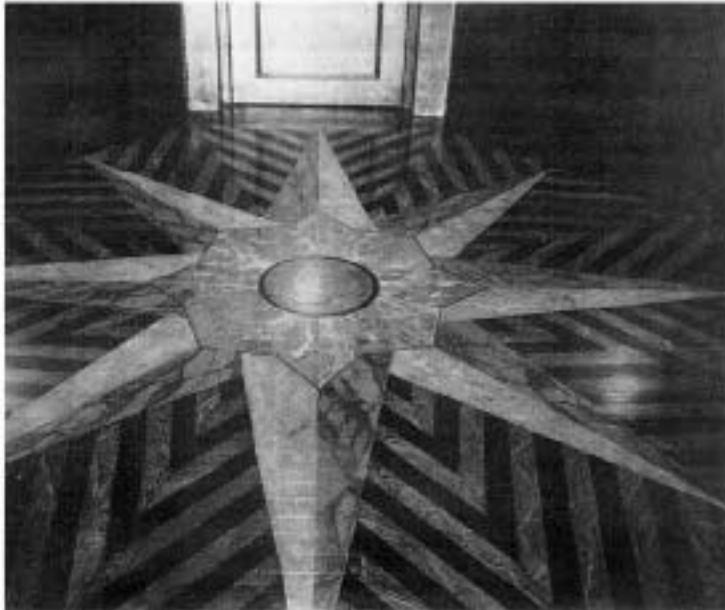


Figure 2. The oriental feel of this piece was created with a "Japaning" technique (using a dark-colored, short-oil varnish to provide a hard, glossy surface). The doors are a combination of stencils that were designed, cut, and executed by one of Perry's craftsmen, while the flowers' colors and deep dimension was created by another. At this point the center panel was at least two days from completion, with each successive day's painting adding more vibrance and depth to the piece.

A Boston-based painting company prides itself on craftsmanship, and it shows. Specialty painting is one facet of the work done by Perry Painting Company, which also does restoration, glazing, and in the words of Peter Chick, president of the company, "regular painting, done first-rate."

Architects and designers who want specialty paint jobs call on the company, whose motto is "preserving traditional values." But projects like the marbleized star pattern (see Figure 1), come along about six times a year, according to Chick. "Our bread and butter is quality painting, glazing, and correcting other people's mistakes. We started out in 1985. The first job we did, the lady wanted the interior of her home painted, and she wanted something different in her living room. A friend of hers saw the job, and wanted a specialty job too. Word of mouth got us started, and we've been doing it ever since. But most of what we do is high-quality painting and glazing."

A straight paint job means something different for Perry Painting Company than it might for the average paint contractor. The company "aims for perfection—no ripples, no brush strokes." So Perry employs a special team of skilled painters from all over the world. Painters from Italy, Brazil, Ireland, and Czechoslovakia bring old world skills to their work with the company. Despite their ability to do work which approaches artistry, they must "like to paint," says Chick. The same crew that paints the hallway's walls, will be used to create designs like those pictured here.

You might think that the star project would be priced out of the reach of all but a very select clientele, but the charge for such a project is really not out of line—\$30/hour, which is the same price the company charges for a regular paint job. If the client wants specialty work only, however, the hourly rate increases to \$50.

