

Basic Process of Painting a Drop

Contributed by Laura Salvaggio
 Monday, 05 March 2007
 Last Updated Monday, 05 March 2007

There is a process to painting a drop. There is flexibility in the details of the process, and some drops will necessitate a different approach, however following the steps as outlined below is a very good place to start.

Obtain a Painters Elevation Consider where and how to paint it. Circumstance may dictate that you must paint your drop either horizontally or vertically, or you may have a choice. (See post on Vertical vs. Horizontal Drop painting.) Plan your steps and needs. Even if you technically have all the time you want, schedule your process and practice sticking to your schedule. (This planning will help you later in life when you are asked to estimate time requirements for projects.) Gather needed materials. This will include making sure you have appropriate tools, paint and safety equipment on hand. For example, if you intend to use a pneumatic sprayer, make sure you have fresh filters in your respirator. Prep drop space. If you're working vertically this includes making sure your frame is set at the right size. If you're working horizontally, this includes laying out bogus paper. Attach drop. The drop wants to be tacked down all the way around the edge, beginning at the center of all the sides and working out toward the corners to stretch evenly. Size drop. The exact process of this step will depend on the needs. For example, if you are painting a backlit translucent drop, you will probably size your drop with starch solution, and not paint. More often than not, your size coat will be paint that has been watered down a little to allow for best absorption by the fabric. Base coat appropriately. Block in big areas of color. Lay in large areas of detail and texture most often working background to foreground. Work in the smaller details. Line shades, which are the middle tones that aren't quite shadows. Line shadows. Line highlights. Refine detail as needed; the closer your audience is, the more finished the detail needs to be.