

Block Printing Basics

Block printing is a quick and easy way to decorate fabrics. In the show we used foam letter stamps from a craft store, fabric paint and 100% cotton fabric. You'll also need a flat tray palette and a paint roller.

1. Begin by preparing your printing area. A smooth, slightly padded surface works best. We folded an old piece of fabric a couple of times and taped it to the worktop to make a functional printing pad. You could also use wadding/batting covered with a top layer of fabric. Ensure that the printing pad you make is large enough to accommodate the piece of fabric you wish to print.
2. Iron your fabric to ensure it's wrinkle free and then smooth it out onto the printing pad. Pin it in place at each corner and along the edges using straight pins into the padded surface.
3. Squirt out a blob of fabric paint (or acrylic paint) onto the tray palette. Use the roller to distribute it into a thin, even layer. We prefer to use a non absorbent printing roller for this as foam or sponge rollers drink up all the paint which is wasteful.
4. Take your print block or stamp and press it into the paint. You'll find that as you've rolled out a nice thin layer of paint that the print block will be loaded evenly with just enough colour.
5. Place in position on the fabric and press firmly.
6. Repeat to create your design. We used a mixture of letter stamps from different sets to create a printed design that had the feeling of a ransom note.
7. If you print using fabric paint, refer to the manufacturers' guidelines for fixing instructions. Usually you'll need to heat set the prints with an iron.
8. Clean up the print blocks, roller and palette thoroughly with water when you're done!

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