Add Dimension to Paint

WITH JACQUARD PUFF ADDITIVE

by Lynn Krawczyk

a s a 2-D artist, I'm constantly challenged to make my pieces appear to have more depth. Even though the work is flat, I want it to be rich with details and textures. Paint alone can do some pretty nifty things, but once you start adding mediums to it, the sky is the limit!

MATERIALS

- Fabric
- Jacquard® Puff Additive
- Jacquard® Professional Screen Printing Ink
- Jacquard® Textile Color fabric paint
- Jacquard® Neopaque® fabric paint
- Thermofax® screens
- Gelli Arts™ gel printing plate
- Sponge brush
- Palette knife
- Plastic spoons, small bowl, and measuring spoons (all dedicated to nonfood use)
- Heat gun
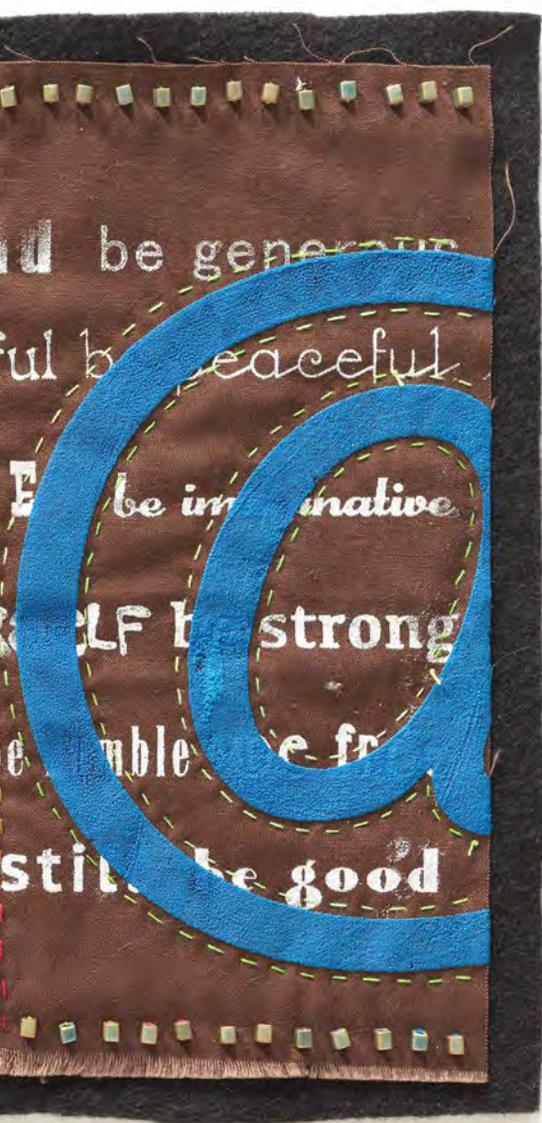
Jacquard's Puff Additive is a prime example of how paint can be altered to create really unique effects. As its name implies, this product gives a raised effect to paint when dried and heated.

I decided to put it through several trials with a variety of paints, including trying to see how far I could push it before it would "break." I found it to be really versatile and easy to work with and I'll definitely add it to my printing toolbox.

Ratio & dry time

My first task was to come up with a dependable mixing ratio of paint to puff additive. The formula that gave a good puff was 1 tbsp. paint to ½ tsp. puff additive. Less puff additive didn't change the paint enough, and more created an unstable puff that resulted in the paint flaking off when the surface was handled.

The other crucial component was how long to let the print dry before applying heat for the puffing action. I did four time trials, ranging from no dry time to a 10-minute dry time. I didn't go beyond that because the paint was nearly dry after 10 minutes and a little wetness is needed for optimal puffing. I obtained the best result with a 2–5 minute drying time. There is no noticeable difference between the puffing, but shorter and longer dry times required more heat.

Note: If your work environment is very dry or very humid, you might experience different results. Experiment before working on a large piece to determine which dry time works best for you.

Printing & foam brush application

I performed a number of experiments using the puff additive with screen

printing and foam brush applications. Here's what I learned:

- The paint will become more opaque after it puffs, causing it to block out whatever is underneath. (This opacity shift is noted on the instructions on the jar.) I found the effect to be quite pleasing. For example, I screen printed with a brown paint that was close in color to my base fabric and not very interesting. After puffing, the brown paint became much bolder; its opacity improved 100%.

- Too much puff additive causes an unstable puff. I was able to flake the paint off the fabric by wiping my hand across it. The recommended ratio must be observed to avoid this. It did eventually stop flaking off, but the appearance of the puff is choppy and the design is not as clean as other screen prints done with the right ratio of additive to paint.

- A screened puff design can be used as an outline for later painting inside the design. The puff outline acts as a barrier.

- The puff additive works in textile paints as well as in screen printing paint.

- When only a little puff is desired, apply the paint in a very thin layer with a brush. It will still puff, but not too much.

- It is possible to use the puff additive with screen-printed text and symbols. Delicate text stood up better than expected. The text that was chunky and had letters close together was harder to read, but the text was still very readable.

Gelatin plate monoprinting

Although Jacquard's Puff Additive is advertised for use with screen-printing paint, I rarely restrict a paint (or additive) to a single printing process.

"I used the puff additive with screen-printed text and symbols. Delicate text stood up better than expected."

"With a palette knife, I applied paint in random swipes to a Gelli Arts plate and made a monoprint on fabric. The uneven printing produced several effects that were delightful."

The "@" symbol on the left was painted with puff additive; the one on the right was not. The puff additive gave visible dimension to the graphic.
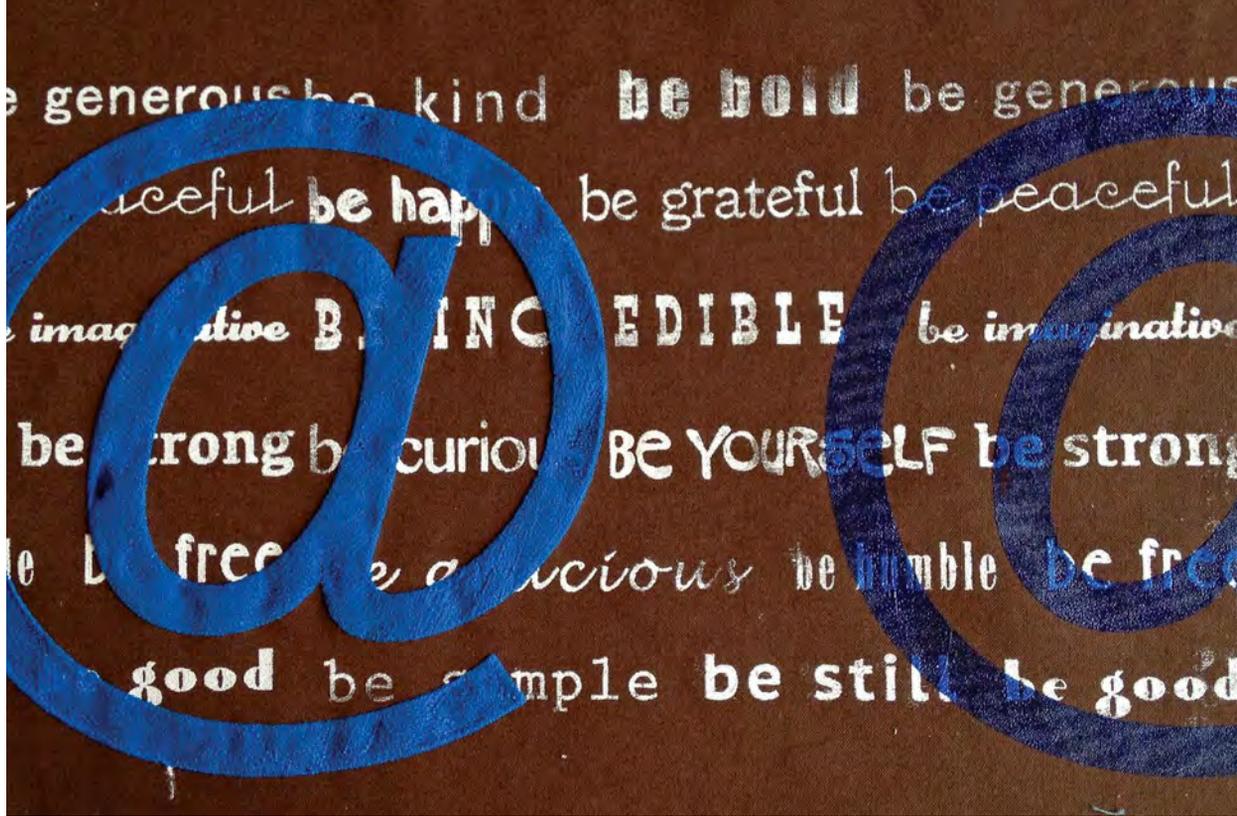
I wanted to see how the puff additive would perform if I used an entirely different printing process and if I used paint that was not meant for screen printing. I put it to the test with gelatin plate monoprinting using a Gelli Arts plate.

With a palette knife, I applied paint in random swipes to the Gelli Arts plate. The fabric was placed on top of the Gelli Arts plate and pressed lightly into the paint. This was repeated across the entire fabric. The uneven printing produced several effects: puffing where the paint was thick, mild puffing in areas with less paint, and color shifting of paint in areas with barely any paint. This would be an excellent way to mimic textures in nature (like tree bark) or movement (like running water).

Layered printing

I did a simple test to see how this product performed in layered printing. I applied a layer of paint with no puff additive in it and then overprinted with an image using paint with puff additive in it. The paint without the puff additive was not bothered by the application of heat. Painting one "flat" layer and then a puffed layer created great dimension. ❖

additional *observations*

- The puff additive has a mild odor out of jar and during puffing. I left a window open while I was working with it and it was fine.
- The additive thins the paint slightly, but when used in the suggested ratio it didn't affect the paint's performance.
- The additive successfully washes off of printing tools. However, never let paint dry on your Thermofax screens or it may permanently clog them.
- You can iron fabric that has puffed designs. I recommend ironing lightly on the back side of the fabric with an iron set at high heat, no steam.
- If an area doesn't puff the way you like it, add a small amount of the paint/puff additive mixture over it and re-puff just that section. Use a very small amount, just a light swipe.
- I didn't conduct any wash tests, but the label indicates the puff additive is washfast when mixed at their recommended ratio. Before using the additive on a quilt that will be washed, be sure to test a sample first.

Don't miss Lynn's Quilting Arts Workshop™ videos, "Color Theory Made Easy: An Exploration of Color & Composition through Surface Design" and "Print Design Compose: From Surface Design to Fabric Art," at shop.quiltingdaily.com.