



coloring
cloth

WITH FOOD COLORING + GLUE GEL RESIST



In my small town, there are no art supply stores nearby. Since my artwork frequently starts with white fabric—because it gives me the freedom to create any design I want in any color I want—I have had to carefully plan my surface design projects, sometimes making do with what is around the house. This limitation inspired creativity, though, and led me to devise this coloring technique using items from my pantry and medicine cabinet.

by Margarita Koriath

My method is a twist on using school glue gel as a resist. When I first tried using a stencil to apply the glue to fabric, I couldn't see where the glue had been applied once it was dried. Mixing a few drops of liquid food coloring into the glue did the trick. I could see the resist on the fabric and yet the food coloring washed away with the glue gel—leaving no stain. My food-colored glue gel technique allows precise control, and can make shapes that are very distinct.



Figure 1



Figure 2

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the printing surface

1. Stack the newspapers on top of each other and top with the batting. Place the drop cloth or muslin on this stack, wrap the edges around to the back of the newspaper/batting stack, and tape it in place with the painter's tape. My surface is 20" × 30" but customize yours to fit your space.
2. Tape the printing surface to the worktable with painter's tape to keep it from shifting while printing.

Apply the resist

1. Iron the PFD fabric. Pin or tape it to the printing surface.
2. Pour 1/3 c. of blue school glue gel into a small container. Use the eye dropper or pipette to add 2–3 drops of liquid food coloring. Mix well with a plastic spoon. (Figure 1)
3. Tape the stencil to the underside of the silkscreen frame with painter's tape. (Figure 2)

TIP: Use a stencil with a fairly simple design and large openings. Fine details may not transfer well.

4. Pour some of the colored school glue gel into the well of the frame. Using an old credit card or a squeegee, drag the glue gel across the silk surface. This will push the resist through the stencil onto the fabric. (Figure 3)
5. If you are finished applying resist to fabric, remove the silk screen and clean it and the stencil immediately. Set the fabric aside to air dry. This may take 24 hours.
6. When the fabric is thoroughly dry, heat set the glue by pressing with a dry iron (no steam) at medium heat from both sides. Do not skip



Figure 3

MATERIALS

- Newspapers
 - Batting, 20" × 30"
 - Drop cloth or muslin, 1¼ yds.
 - Painter's tape
 - Prepared for dyeing (PFD) cotton fabric, fat quarter
 - Blue school glue gel
 - Liquid food coloring
 - Small plastic containers and plastic spoons
 - Eye dropper or pipette
 - Small silk screen frame (I used a 10" × 12" frame.)
 - Stencil (Use a stencil close in size to the silk screen frame.)
 - Old credit card or squeegee
 - Liquid fabric paint (I used Dye-na-Flow® from Jacquard®.)
 - Clear aloe vera gel or matte medium
- Optional**
- Foam brush

this step—even though the glue is dry it needs to be heat set to obtain a clear resist.

Paint the fabric

1. In another small container, mix 1 tbsp. clear aloe vera gel and ½ tsp. of liquid fabric paint. Mix well with a plastic spoon. (Figure 4)

TIP: I like to use Dye-na-Flow because it is a highly pigmented liquid paint. You only need a small amount of paint to color cloth, which makes it ideal for this technique.

2. Pin the fabric with the glue gel facing up on the printing surface.



Figure 4

tips for success

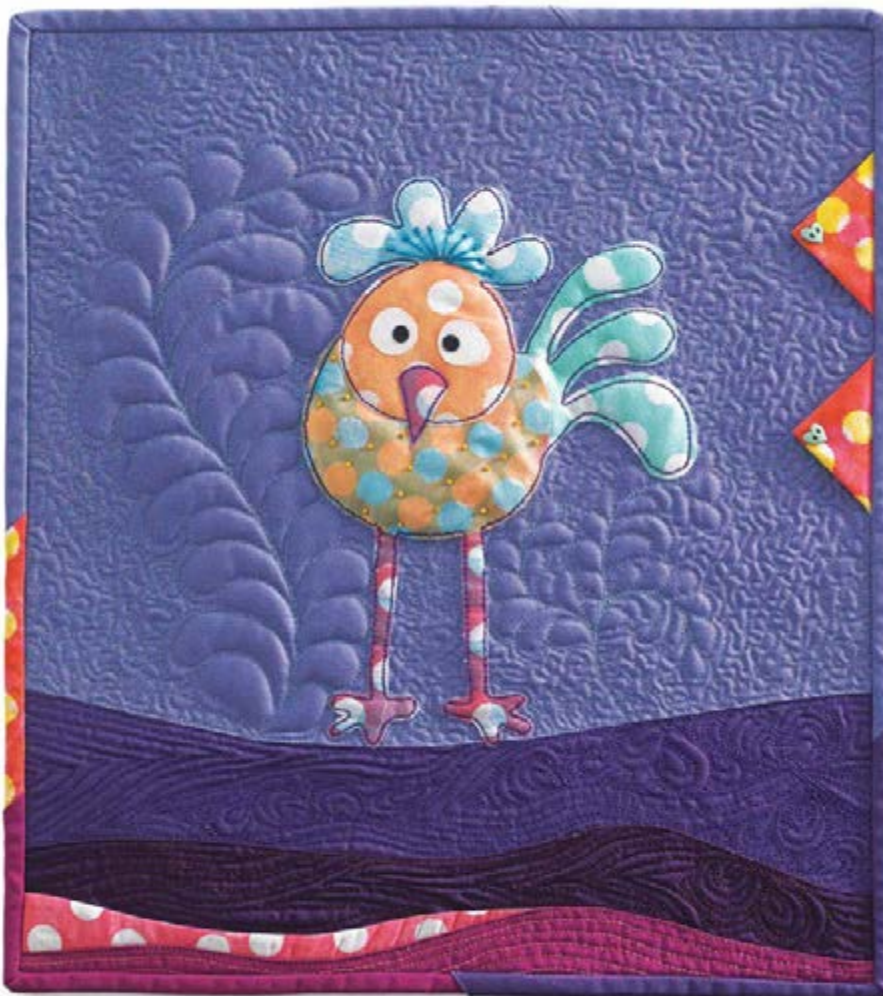
- Use only liquid food coloring for this technique. The gel kind is almost impossible to remove from the fabric.
- If you want to use this technique on silk fabric, choose green, red, or yellow food coloring to mix with the glue gel. Blue food coloring tints the fabric and will not wash out.

Use the credit card, squeegee, or foam brush to move the paint across the cloth. (Figure 5) Set it aside to dry. This usually takes 6–12 hours.

3. Once dry, heat set the fabric from both sides with a dry iron, following the manufacturer's instructions.
4. Soak the fabric in water for an hour and then wash it by hand or in a washing machine with a mild detergent. Air dry and press. Your fabric is ready for your next project! ✨



Figure 5



"My Dodo Bird" • 15" × 13½"

Photo by Hornick Rivlin Studio