Tole Painting Designs

A decorative painting pattern by Sheila Landry
7344 Hwy 1, PO Box 410, Meteghan, Nova Scotia, B0W 2J0   Canada
Phone Number: 902-482-7174   Email: sheilalandrydesigns@gmail.com
www.tolepaintingdesigns.com

SLDP291 Shabby Chic Large Bunnies

An original painting pattern with complete instructions.

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SLDP291 – Shabby Chic Large Bunnies

Materials and Supplies

- SLDPK738 - Large Bunny w/Stand wood kit from Tole Painting Designs
- Transfer paper and stylus
- DecoArt Americana Acrylic Paints: See color list following
- DecoArt Weathered Wood Crackle Medium (DAS8)
- DecoArt Glazing Medium (DA18)
- DecoArt Americana Acrylic Spray Sealer/Finisher (DAS13) in Matte Finish or finish of choice
- Organza ribbon and silk flowers (or embellishments of your choice)

DecoArt Americana Acrylics

- Antique Green (DA147)
- Aloe (DA364)
- Buttermilk (DA03)
- Cool White (DA240)
- Lamp Black (DA067)
- Melon (DA251)
- Milk Chocolate (DA174)
- Royal Purple (DA150)
- Soft Black (DA155)

DecoArt Americana Dazzling Metallic paint - Festive Green

Introduction

These adorable bunnies are quick and easy to do and will make wonderful additions to your spring and summer decor. My two samples use peach and purple tones, but you can make your pieces using blues, aquas, pinks, or any tone you wish. Just choose a darker and more intense color for the base and shading colors and match your ribbon and flowers accordingly. Anything that will contrast the Buttermilk color will work nicely.

Once the crackle is finished, the only real challenge for these pieces is painting the eye. I hope that the step-by-step photos will help you through this process without much trouble. If you like, you can practice on a scrap piece until you feel comfortable. I hope you have fun!

Procedure

Photocopy the original pattern and keep them for future reference. I like copying the pattern page on translucent vellum (the kind you get in the wedding section of your favorite office supply store) That way you can mirror the pattern easily and replace it to add details lines and easily realign it. Patterns may be reproduced for the purpose of making the project – not for resale or sharing purposes. Finished items that are made by hand may be sold for profit, but not mechanically manufactured. Credit to the designer is encouraged. Pattern and photographs are copyrighted by Sheila Landry Designs. Redistribution of this pattern, photos or instructions is not permitted.

Painting

Refer to the Basic Painting Terms and Techniques sheet (following instructions) for general terminology and techniques for painting. In general use the following brushes when painting:
-Shaders for base coating
-Angular Shaders for float shading colors
-Deerfoot brushes for stippling and dry brushing
-Lining brushes for detail work and lining

Applying the Crackle

When using DecoArt Weathered Wood Crackle Medium, it is important to have a smooth base. This will insure a nice end result with the crackle

Apply two or three layers of your base coat color(s) to the face only of the piece(s) you are painting. We will paint the edges later on.

Sand very lightly using fine-grit sandpaper and wipe the dust with a dry cloth in between each layer. Please don't use a 'tack rag', as they can sometimes leave residue behind that may interfere with the crackle medium. For my samples, I used Melon and Royal Purple as base coats as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Figures 1 and 2

After you are certain that everything is dry, you will be applying the Weathered Wood Crackle Medium. To do so, it is best to use a larger brush (at least 3/4" for pieces this size). You can use a flat shader, angular shader, or glaze brush - whichever you are most comfortable with.

Apply a generous layer of the medium to the piece using a side to side motion. Work quickly with the medium and sweep from the center of the piece to either the left or right side, trying not to get paint on the edges. With larger pieces such as these, it is best to work one area at a time. For example, you may start at the center of the head and work your way up the ears, all the time starting in the middle area and pulling the medium towards the edge, casting off as you reach the edge. Then move to the middle of each bunny and work your way down.

An important thing to remember is to try not to work the medium over and over. It will feel heavy and somewhat sticky. This is normal. It will tend to look uneven and as if there are 'pools' of medium in areas, but that is normal as well. Don't play with these areas too much. They will level out when you apply the top coat to them.

Once you reach the bottom of the bunnies, set them aside and allow them to dry completely before applying the top coat. They may still be slightly sticky when they are dry, but you shouldn't be able to 'move' the raised areas of the medium with your finger. You may use a hair dryer to hurry up drying, but it is possible to overheat the medium so you need to be careful and not apply too much heat to one area too quickly. If in doubt, you are best to allow it to dry naturally.

When everything is completely dry, you are ready for the top coat. In my project samples, I used Buttermilk paint.

Once again, I used a larger brush and a generous amount of paint. Load the brush fully and apply the paint much like you applied the medium - one area at a time. Instead of 'stroking' the paint as we usually do, it is best to kind of 'lay' the paint into place in a thicker layer, beginning at the middle of the piece and working outward toward the edges. As with the medium, I applied the paint using a side to side motion.

Once you have applied the paint to an area, move on to the next and don't go back over it again. The paint bonds instantly to the Weathered Wood Crackle Medium and if you go over it again, you will pull it up off of your piece. If you have a 'hole' or an area that you missed or has too little of the top color on it, you can gently 'tap' some more paint in place without disturbing it. You will be amazed at how everything levels off when things dry.

Work from area to area as you did before. You should see your paint beginning to crack almost immediately. When they are done, they should look something like Figures 3 and 4.

Figure 3

If you would like to watch a video of me demonstrating how to apply the DecoArt Weathered Wood Crackle medium, you can visit my YouTube channel at this link:

https://youtu.be/qX6N-w1sK08

While you are there, feel free to look around at my other instructional videos. I have several that address many different techniques used in decorative painting, as well as scroll saw and woodworking videos for those of you who cut your own wood pieces.

Figure 4

Painting the Eyes

Next, we will transfer the details. Transfer only the lines you feel necessary. The bunny is shaded in the same color that you used under the crackle for the base. When I painted my samples, I skipped around and did much of the shading while waiting for each step on the eyes to dry.

Begin the eye by filling in the iris with at least two coats of Milk Chocolate paint as shown in Figure 5.
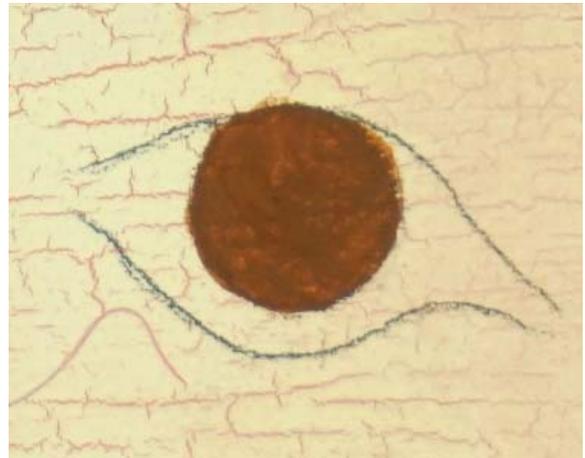

Figure 5

While that is drying, Float shade around the shape of the eye using the base color as shown in Figure 6. (For our demonstration purposes here, I am showing the eye painted on the peach-colored bunny. Just replace any "Melon" areas with the base color you used, (i.e. Royal Purple for the purple bunny)
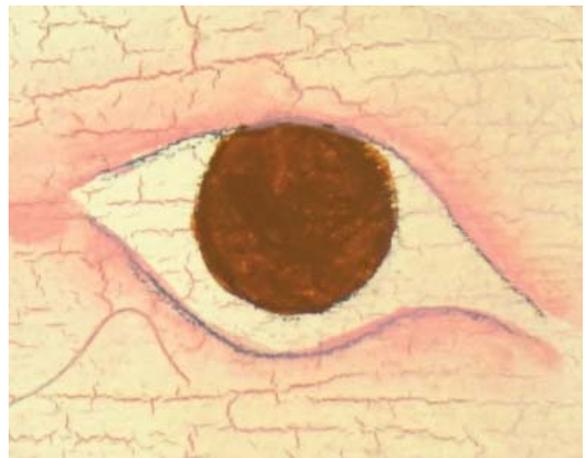

Figure 6

Fill in the pupil area using Lamp Black. (Figure 7) The pupil is also a circle, but it is slightly smaller than the iris and should be placed to the front and top of the previously painted iris area as shown. Allow this to dry completely.
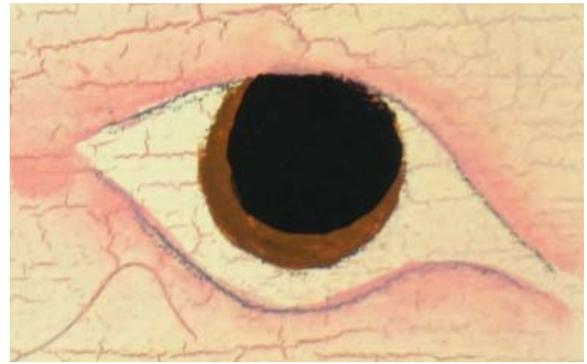

Figure 7

The next step is to float shade inside the eye area. This time you will use Soft Black paint. Float the upper line and lower line in two separate steps, so that you don't pull off the paint that you just put on. (Figure 8)
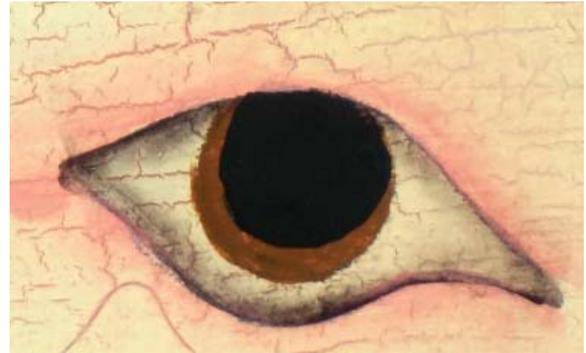

Figure 8

Next, float a Milk Chocolate circle about 1/8" wider than the pupil area as shown in Figure 9. This appears yellow in the photograph, but that is only because of the floating. This circle should reach to the bottom of the eye as shown in the figure.
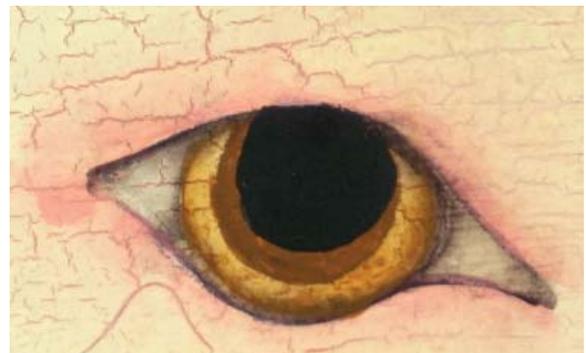

Figure 9

When the last step is dry, use Soft Black paint and float shade the solid Milk Chocolate iris using Soft Black paint.

Figure 10

Once again using Soft Black paint, float shade around the outside of the eye, allowing the previous (base) color to show through. (In this case, the Melon float that we did in Figure 6) (Figure 11)
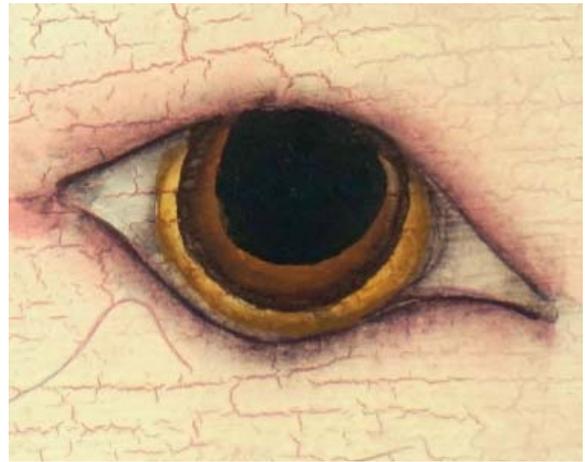

Figure 11

Add the white highlights using Cool White paint and a lining brush. You want to keep the highlights circular in shape, so they follow the shape of the pupil. The largest highlight is to the back of the eye, about 1/3 of the way from the back of the pupil. There are smaller highlights behind it and also near the front of the eye, as well as above and below. If you get too heavy on these, it is easy to tone them down using Lamp Black and your lining brush after they are dry.

You may also want to pull a couple of thin, washy lines in the front corner of the eye and also under the iris as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12

Finally, use a lining brush and pull white 'fur' from the corner of the eye towards the back using Cool White. Pull longer strokes above the eye and shorter strokes underneath it. Then use a lining brush to 'line the eye to define the shape again using Lamp Black paint. (As if you were lining your own eyes with eyeliner.) Finally pull a few washy strokes of Lamp Black paint to create lashes. (Figure 13)

Figure 13

Final Detailing

Float shade the inside of the ears and the nose using Melon paint. I used this color for both bunnies and I suggest you use it for any color bunny you create.

Float the outline of the bunnies in the base colors, following the lines on the pattern. For the Melon bunny, the lines were a bit light for the nose, mouth and in between the ears. To make these stand out a little I went over them with a little bit of the Soft Black. Go light on this though. You could also use the Milk Chocolate. This wasn't necessary with the darker purple bunny.

Finally, I used some Cool White paint on a deerfoot stippler and stippled some white on the chest and puffed the tail(s). Figures 14 and 15 show the finished bunnies.

Figure 14

Figure 15

Painting the Stands

Base coat the stands using Aloe. (Figure 16)

Figure 16

Use a 3/4" shader or larger brush and the DecoArt Glazing Medium to create a marble-like effect on the stand. I have done this with a sponge, but because the stand has many cornered edges and the profile, it doesn't look right, as there are gaps near the corners. It is easier to use a brush for this step in this instance.

Pick up a generous amount of the Glazing Medium on the brush and 'wet' one side of the stand with a layer. Work quickly and pick up both the Antique Green and the Cool White alternatively, and 'schmuch' it onto the stand, blending slightly, but not all the way. You want the look to be soft and not too 'spotty'. You don't need a lot of paint here. Just add a little at a time. Don't over-blend so it begins to look muddy. I did my Antique Green first and then just added in a bit of the Cool White here and there and went back to the green. If you do get muddy, allow to dry and add some of the Aloe base color to tone it back.

When you are pleased with your marbled look, allow to dry. Finally, paint the 'band' that is the profile of the stand using the Festive Green Metallic paint. You can paint two coats of this and it will accent your bunny very nicely. (Figure 17)
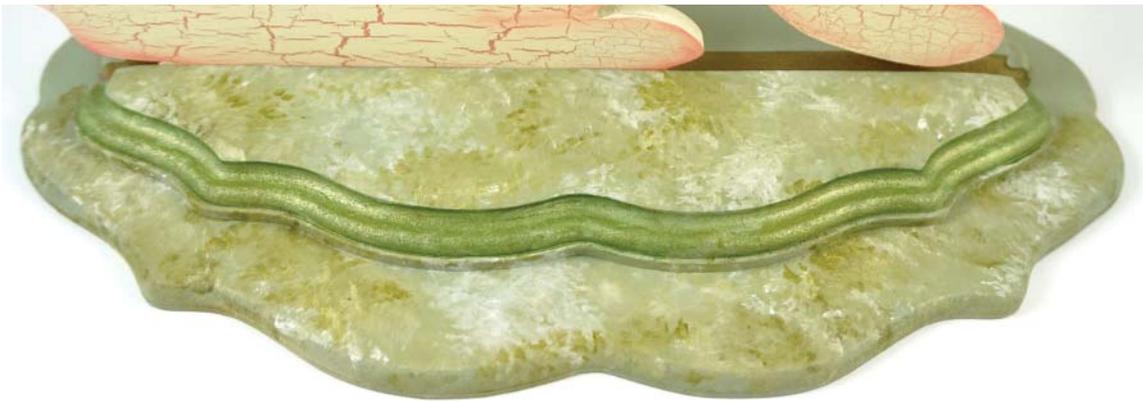
Figure 16

Final Touches

When everything is dry, spray it with a couple of coats of acrylic finish, allowing each coat to dry completely before adding the next.

You can decorate your bunnies in a variety of ways. I added some pretty organza ribbon and some silk flowers at their necks. You can also add some flowers to the base or if you plan on using your bunny for Easter, you can place Easter grass around it and put some pretty colored eggs.

I hope you had fun making this project!

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me at 902-482-7174 or you can email sheilalandrydesigns@gmail.com for a prompt response. You may also see and purchase additional wood pieces, as well as other patterns and kits for painting and scroll sawing at www.tolepaintingdesigns.com and download a free catalog.

If you have difficulty finding any of the DecoArt products used in this project, you can now go online and visit www.decoart.com to see and order directly from DecoArt. Their web store carries a complete line of their painting products and mediums.

Basic Painting Terms and Techniques

Base Coating –   Blocking in the color. When base coating, you are laying a foundation for the rest of the design. Use a flat "shader" paint brush for doing base coating. You may wish to use a small round brush for smaller areas. If the paint is thick, you may also wish to use a little water to thin it down so there are no ridges and the base coat is flat and even. It is best to apply several thin, even coats rather than a single thick one. Some colors cover better than others. If the paint looks streaky or the color is uneven, let it dry completely and then re-coat as many times as necessary to get full coverage. Be patient!

Float Shading –   I find that using an angle shader brush will make this step much easier, although many people prefer a flat shader. Wet your brush with clean water. Touch the very tip of the brush to a paper towel to pull the excess water from the brush. Touch only the corner edge of the brush into the paint. Go back to the water, then touch once again to the paper towel. Do not "wipe" the brush on the paper towel – just allow the excess water to be drawn from the brush. Now apply the paint to your surface. Your result should be a gradation of color, with one side deeply colored fading to the other side with no color at all. Much of this step is 'feel'. This back and forth motion will become second nature to you after a while. It may take a little bit of practice, but it will give you the depth and three dimensional look you desire in your painting.

Stippling –   Use a "deerfoot stippler" brush for this process. It is a round brush with short, angled bristles that resembles the shape of a deer's hoof. You can also use old, warn out brushes for this depending on what you are painting. Use no water when stippling. Load the dry brush with a little paint and work the paint up into the bristles by rubbing it on a clean paper towel. Scrub off most of the excess paint on the towel and gently tap the brush in a straight up and down motion to apply the paint. You should not have a 'blob' of paint, rather lightly mottled color. Build up color a little at a time as you need by using several applications.

Dry Brushing –   This is very similar to stippling, but you use even less paint. Use this method of painting for very subtle shading and changes in color, such as on cheeks or with animals and birds. Use a very dry brush as with stippling, but instead of tapping on color with the brush, gently rub it in a circular motion to softly blend the color into the surrounding colors. Use very light pressure when doing this step. Test the color on a scrap or clean paper towel first. If it is too strong, remove more color from the brush before proceeding. This will give you a beautiful and subtle effect.

Line Work –   Most of the line work is done with the paint thinned to the consistency of ink. Use a small round brush or a liner brush for this step, depending on what you are painting. Test your paint consistency on a palette or a scrap of wood so you know you are not using too much water and your line work won't bleed into your other work. For work when you need to paint longer lines, you may wish to use a longer 'script' liner, which will hold more paint. You will have a bit less control but with a little practice, you will learn to use it in no time.