

Paint on lace

Brush on dye for a variegated effect

Lace is romantic, but painting it with multicolored dyes opens a kaleidoscope of possibilities: color depth, precise application, and artistic blended effects. It's an easy way to create a beautiful, unique detail for garments and accessories. Dye bonds to the fibers without changing the lace's hand.

You can paint lace of nearly any fiber content using the proper dyes, but lace made from rayon—especially Venise lace—takes color best. Rayon Venise lace trims have a wonderfully fluid hand and come in many designs and widths. Their heavier, satin-stitched motifs also provide substantial surfaces to paint with color.

Use your custom lace trim to embellish garments or accessories. You can also cut the dyed lace apart to create appliqués or unique jewelry.

Cindy Losekamp teaches machine embroidery and lace painting. SewingArt.com

SUPPLIES AND SOURCES

- Permanent Lace Dye Kit (SewingArt.com), Rit Dye, or Jacquard iDye or iDye Poly (DharmaTrading.com)
- Rayon Venise lace trim in (AmoreFabrics.com, SewingArt.com, LaceHeaven.com)
- Bottle dropper caps or eyedropper
- Fine-mist spray bottle
- Old towels or paper towels
- Small dish, divided plastic plate, or other sectioned container
- Sumi-e or other paintbrush (DickBlick.com)
- Waterproof dropcloth or large plastic bag

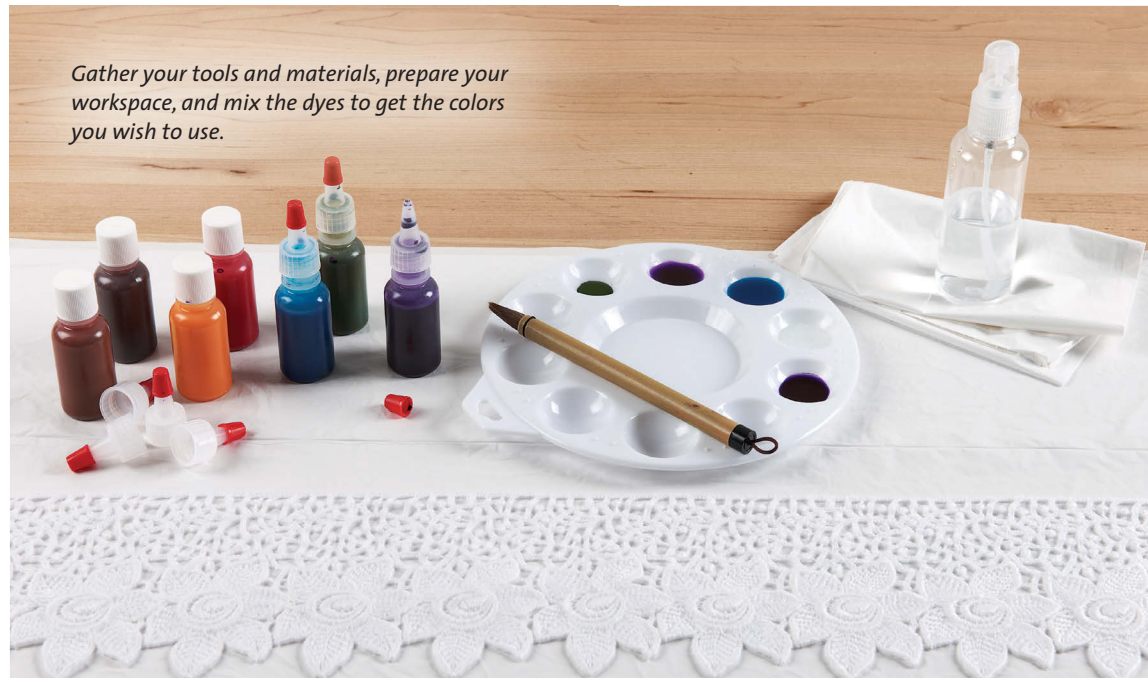
Design custom trim by painting rayon lace with dyes.

Pattern: New Look 6968, out of print. Fabric: Cotton sateen, MoodFabrics.com; lace, CheepTrims.com.

Prepare the materials

Set up a convenient work area, and have all the necessary tools at hand. Since the dyes' color density varies with the water saturation of the lace, it's important to work smoothly and have a misting spray bottle and blotting towels handy to keep the application consistent.

1 Set up the workspace. Lay a plastic bag or dropcloth on a flat surface. Fill a fine-mist spray bottle with water, and keep it near the workspace for quick touch-ups and to keep unpainted lace damp as you work. If you are using the Permanent Lace Dye Kit (see "Supplies and Sources" on the facing page), replace each bottle's cap with a sealed dropper cap, then shake the bottles well. Position the divided dish on the dropcloth, along with the paintbrush and towels for blotting.



Gather your tools and materials, prepare your workspace, and mix the dyes to get the colors you wish to use.

2 Squeeze one to two drops of each dye color onto a divided plastic plate or other sectioned container, and add 10 drops of water. The dyes are concentrated, so a little goes a long way. For stronger, darker color results, increase the ratio of dye to water.

3 Soak the lace in a sink or basin of water. Remove excess water by rolling the lace in a towel, until the lace is just damp. If the lace is lightweight or loosely patterned, spritz it with water from the spray bottle a little at a time as you paint.

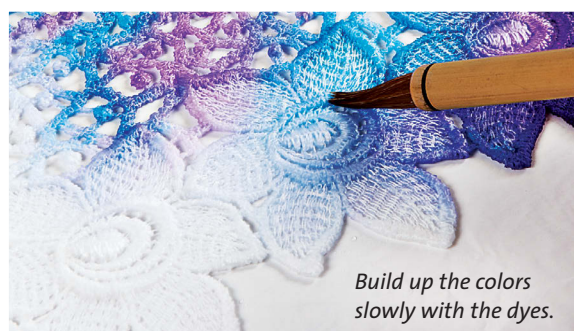


Immerse the lace in water or spritz it with a spray bottle, depending on the color density you want.

Apply the colors

Test the dye-to-water ratio on a lace scrap first, to assess the color saturation and blending. Proceed with the desired painting effect, then dry the lace for final results.

1 Load the paintbrush with dye, then paint it on the lace. Venise lace absorbs dye quickly, so paint with a light touch and build up to the desired color depth. Use just the tip of the brush for precise application; to cover larger areas more quickly, use the entire brush head. Encourage a watercolor effect by keeping the lace damp as you apply dye and using the brush to blend the dyes further.



Build up the colors slowly with the dyes.



Dampened lace creates a blended, watercolor effect.

2 If the lace becomes saturated, blot away the excess. Use a paper towel to remove excess dye. If you aren't satisfied with your results, you can remove the dye from the lace (see "Care for Painted Lace" on the facing page). Note: Dyes are darker when wet.



3 Overdye to darken colors that dry too light. Allow the dyed lace to dry completely, then paint additional layers of dye on any area where you wish to intensify the color or accent details of the lace's design. Don't wet the lace again.



Darken an extralight area with added dye.

4 Dry the lace. Let the lace dry naturally to acquire a mottled look. Using a hair dryer to speed up the drying process reduces the migration of dye colors as the liquid evaporates, limiting the mottling effect.

5 Once the lace is dry, set the color. Iron it from the wrong side for about two minutes, using your iron's wool setting and without steam. Heat-setting the color this way also softens the lace.



Iron the dry dyed lace on the wrong side to set the colors.

Photos: (p. 24; p. 27, left) Jack Deutsch; all others, Sloan Howard. Stylist: Jessica Saal. Hair and makeup: Patrycja for Halley Resources. Styling credits: earrings and bracelets—RJGraziano.com, shoes—Jessica Simpson (Macys.com).



*Dye-painted
variegated lace
has the same hand
and fluidity as
unpainted lace.*

CARE FOR PAINTED LACE

The lace treated with dye does not require much special treatment. Some preparation will preserve the colors and integrity of the lace longer. On the other hand, if you desire, it's possible to extract the dye from the rayon lace.

- **Machine-wash thoughtfully.** The lace can be machine-washed in warm or cool water; place the garment in a mesh bag. It can also be machine-dried on medium heat or permanent press. Dry the garment alone to prevent abrasion and damage from contact with other garments and closures.
- **If you change your mind, you can remove dye from lace trim.** Fill a basin with water and add two to three tablespoons of bleach. Immerse the lace and agitate it in the solution. Most, if not all, the color will be removed. Rinse thoroughly, then wash the lace with a gentle detergent, such as hand dishwashing liquid. To repaint the lace, let it dry before beginning the dampening and painting process again.

web extra

For tips on sewing lace trim to garments and for a tutorial on how to make delicate lace earrings, visit ThreadsMagazine.com.

