

# CASART

## E N E W S L E T T E R

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## HOUSE/ART NEWS YOU CAN USE

by C. Ashley Spencer

### Calm, Modern and Back to Nature

are just some of the design ideas featured in home decorating magazines, design show houses and how to books lately. All can give inspiration.

- Sophisticated wall panels were used in the master bedroom of the 34th (and sadly, final) NSO Decorator Show House in the fall of last year. Framed, pale colored, Venetian plaster panels were applied on the serene aqua-sea colored walls. The highly polished nature of the walls reflected the outdoor light and resembled the iridescence of mother of pearl. This was in keeping with the calm, color palette and modern, back-to-nature decorating styles that are fashionable now but sophisticated enough to be timeless. There's another advantage: by treating only sections of the walls, there's less application and, therefore, less cost involved for this labor intensive decorative finish but with all the full impact.

- Color palettes range all over the spectrum but simplicity (again timeless) tends to be all the rage. Keeping colors muted--in the same hue--creates a contemporary look. Adding a colorful focal wall, however, adds interest.

- One can have a very clean-lined, modern decor while still using some simple decorative treatments. For example, there are multiple ways linear room features can be enhanced, particularly if one wants to create height or expanse to a room: vertical tone-on-tone stripes, wide horizontal stripes, contrasting stripes with matte and gloss sheen add interest and a brushed on, vertical, decorative treatment adds height without stripes and creates a linen-like look. A crisscross pattern in this treatment adds texture.



### Faux House Reopens

*This is the last chance to see the faux house. There will be no entrance fee but donations will be accepted to support the ongoing efforts for Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans. Dates open are: Aug 4-5, 11-12, 10am -6pm. New hardcover and softcover books will be on sale. Check out [www.fauxhouse.com](http://www.fauxhouse.com)*

# HOW TO

## Stair Upgrade

There are so many inspirational how to ideas from The House that Faux House Built, it's hard to pick just one or two, but Amy Ketteran's stairwell mural on Roc-Lon canvas stands out as an excellent solution to covering up all those unsightly dings on stair risers. I've decided to use it on my own stairs--when time permits. I haven't decided on a theme, but it could be anything. Here is a single monochromatic image of a classical country scene that is cut up and pasted to fit on each riser. It is a clever and practical use and offers endless possibilities.

## Floors get Fixed

Another idea is to paint cement floors to look like expensive custom laid marble with wood inlay, as Tania Seabock did in the dining room. Of course it's all faux but doable and now on DVD (along with others) through [www.fauxwarehouse.com](http://www.fauxwarehouse.com) and the [faux house website](http://fauxhouse.com). Proceeds from Tania's DVD also benefit the faux house's fundraising efforts.

Tired of that old tiled bathroom? The Washington Post ran an article, "[Triage for Dated Tile](#)," by Terri Sapienza, discussing traditional ways to fix it: rip out and replace, refinish, installing liners (all of which are expensive), paint or decorate around it. The faux house tried something new by troweling right over the tiles in the upstairs bathroom with a plaster product called Lusterstone. It was sealed to repel water in the shower. Many types of plasters were used throughout, both for their durability and coverage as well as for their decorative quality.



## New Faux House Hardback Book

*Expanded over the softcover version by 40 pages, with nearly 100 new photos and more detailed tips and "how to" explanations for achieving the many decorative art transformations seen at the Faux House.*

*Go to [www.fauxhouse.com/booksales.htm](http://www.fauxhouse.com/booksales.htm) to order for \$34.95 + shipping and handling and to even download the first chapter for free. Proceeds go toward the ongoing commitment to help hurricane Katrina victims in New Orleans.*



*There are a multitude of sources for creating your next project's palette*

## Resources

The House that Faux Built has an entire four page list of all the products and resources that were used to accomplish each room transformation and many of the finishes.

If you're a DIYer, homeowner, renter, real estate agent, interior designer, or decorative painter, you'll want to check out the Faux Forum ([www.fauxforum.com](http://www.fauxforum.com)). Its purpose is for painting professionals and enthusiasts to share information, ask questions and post projects and photos. Many other online forums are listed in The House that Faux Built book, so once you decide on a project, you can do the research and have the information on hand for a hassle free production.

If you're interested in some of the how to projects described above, I have priced out similar projects, so I'm happy to meet with you and discuss the possibilities.

## WHAT'S NEW

## Product Reference



Seen a lot of mirrored furniture lately? That's because new products in interior design and paint are the ones that reflect light.

## Reflection

- Antique Mirror Patina Solution
- Metallic Paints and Treatments
- Candlelight Topcoat by Ralph Lauren
- LusterStone\* by Faux Effects
- ShimmerStone\* by Modern Masters
- Madreperlato\* by Raffaello/Oikos
- Interference & Flash (hue changing) paint by Golden and Modern Masters

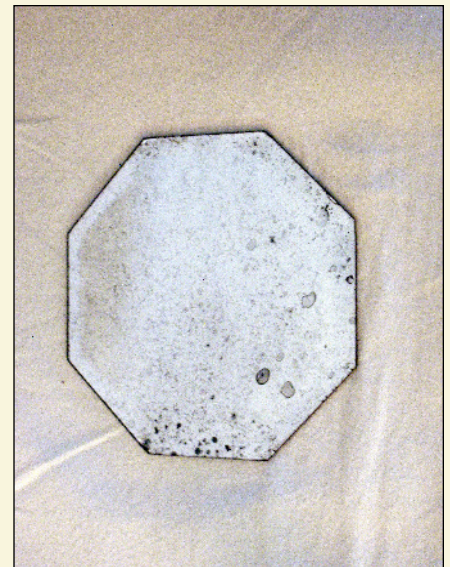
Many of these products can be used with glazes to create unique decorative wall finishes. They are water based and can be topcoated over existing latex base paints--depending on the colors to be used. \*Textured coats can be troweled over existing bases to create an updated look. (See the link for a before after transformation movie using [LusterStone](#).)

*Specialty finishes require specialty tools to enhance the outcome.*

**Antique Mirror Patina Solution**

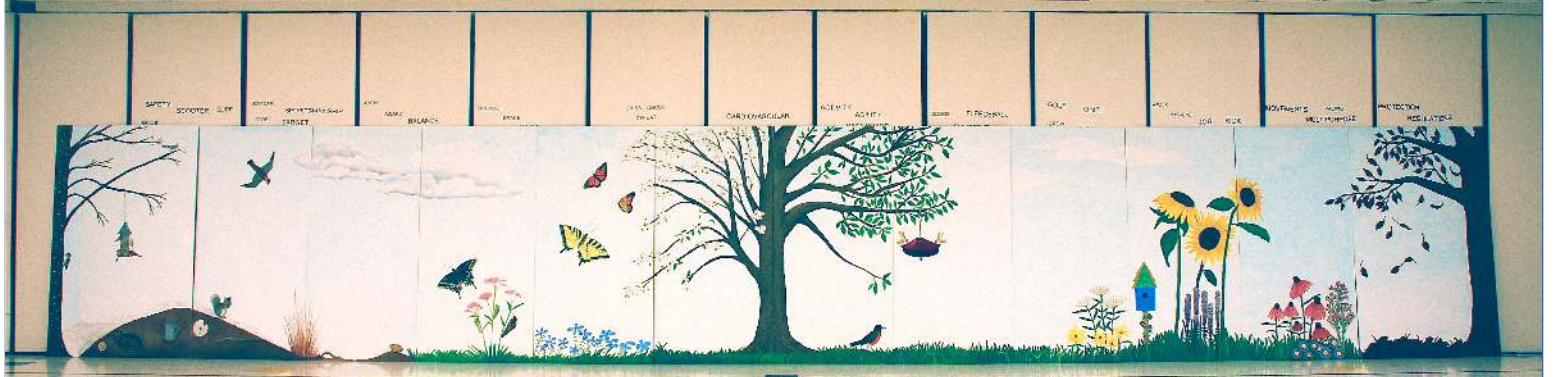
*Can be used on the back of most mirrors to age the finish to combine that sophisticated time worn feel with something modern. Unexpected designs using intricate Modellos (adhesive stencils), damask stencils, or even lace can be used with the solution to add pattern and interest.*

*Here are two examples of mirrors I treated with the Antiquing Patina Solution. One uses a Modello design and the other is aged.*



*Mirrored pieces can be purchased to cover tables and other furniture.*

# LATEST PROJECTS



## Jefferson Houston School Public Art Mural for Kids

Jefferson Houston School for the Arts in Alexandria, VA commissioned me in January 2007 to paint a 50 foot long outdoor mural. Originally the project was going to be painted directly on the exterior brick wall by the playground, but for time, cost, and quality sake, it was decided to paint the mural on 14, 4 x 8 foot panels of MDO (medium density overlay), typically used for outdoor signage.

After a meeting with Wendy Sparrow, a liaison for the project, and art teachers and coordinators, I illustrated a mural concept to include a wide array of subjects that the grade school kids were studying in their SOLs. The theme is Native Virginia urban plants and animals presented in a seasonal progression.

The painting began in June. Several interns were brought in for the prep work and initial blocking in of elements. The

mural panels were completed in July and will be sealed soon with an anti-graffiti coating for added protection. The installation should take place in September and be on display for public viewing. Currently, I have it on view as a slide presentation on my [Public Art](#) webpage. Note: more than 40+ hours and counting were donated along with paint from Potomac Paints in Bradlee Shopping Center.

## Magic of Marble

I recently completed marbling two columns in a faux [Carrara](#) finish. This added polish and architectural significance, to what would otherwise be standard painted columns. Considering that real marble costs anywhere from \$65 - \$95/ square foot, this was a great addition! I have added this finish for viewing on my website.

## Country Cabinets

What does one do with stock kitchen cabinets? They can be updated with a

[brushed on glaze](#) and some distressing. This kind of treatment adds warmth and appeal to the overall decor. A sense of timelessness is perceived and appreciated. I have added this finish to my website for viewing.

## Last Minute Notes

Artisans from Twig, a non-profit organization for Inova Alexandria Hospital, will be displaying their wares and talents during the [Annual Historic Old Town Homes Tour](#) on September 29th from 10am - 3pm. I'll be there with samples. Hope you'll be there too!

### Ah ha observation

- The appreciation of art is getting noticed through the Americans for the Arts and the Ad Council
- Download the [Caravaggio](#) ad here.. He's one of my favorite artists!

### Mural Inspiration

*Contrary to popular thought, murals do not require a lot of space. Featured in the August issue of [House & Garden](#) magazine, murals are painted around an entry*

*in about a foot high border and painted below a bar.*

*Murals don't even need to be directly painted on a wall. They can be painted on canvas and installed. This offers the ad-*

*vantage of flexibility. The artist can have the convenience of painting the canvas in the studio and the client can have the option of removing the installed work of art at a later date.*

## MAKES SENSE



### Make it your own

From furniture to walls to artwork on display, make it your own. Customizing is the key to establishing your own decorating style from anyone else's. My clients had an heirloom table but in its original, unfinished state, it didn't fit their decor. They made it their own by having me paint it in a cool, Swedish blue with metallic highlights, which accented the linear structure and some

Gustavian motifs, as well as the family initial "M" to make it their own. They were able to recall the heritage of the piece by the trompe l'oeil matchbook I painted referencing the French market where it was purchased.

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*These photos above have been added to the [Furniture Page](#) on my website to view in detail. This [eNewsletter](#) is downloadable on my website.*

*C. Ashley Spencer is an artist--decorative painter, muralist and illustrator. She lives in Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia. She has been working throughout the DC metropolitan area as well as in her studio for 19 years. She can be contacted through her website: [www.ashley-spencer.com](http://www.ashley-spencer.com).*

## CASART ENEWSLETTER

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