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Creating art on the porch

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY
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It's time to go outside and welcome the sunshine. One way to bring a bit of your living space outdoors is to arrange comfortable seating around a focal piece that you can create yourself. Skaneateles decorative artist Heather Bruno-Sears has some suggestions to get your creative juices flowing.

Bruno-Sears recommends creating a permanent painting on a porch or

sunroom floor. You can also create a portable piece of art by painting a thick piece of canvas that serves as an outdoor rug or wall hanging.

First, map out your space. Try placing a rug with an interesting shape in the space you want to paint. You can also use ceramic tiles, or other home improvement leftovers to guide the pattern placement and size of your painting.

Once you have the shape sized and lined up, use painter's tape to mark the edges. For this porch in Marietta, Bruno-Sears created two designs. "The owner chose a hand-wrought ornament style stencil to personalize her sunny inner sanctuary," she says. An octagon shape accents a cozy seating area, while the rectangle design pulls together "bistro"-style pieces for a quaint, sunny eating space.

With the floor pattern taped off, Bruno-Sears brushed a color-wash coat of white paint to help stylize the floor under the painted pattern. "I used a mixture of 25 percent paint and 75 percent glaze to create a cloudy marble color-wash effect which almost has the look of parchment paper when dried and makes the painted areas stand out from the rest of the painted floor," Bruno-Sears says.

Next, she painted a border around the painted rugs using a mixture of 50 percent white stencil paint and 50 percent green flooring paint. She embellished the border of the rectangle by stenciling it with white paint. "The designed border helps differentiate the painted portion from the rest of the floor color and adds graceful details and style," she says. Both painted rug areas feature matching lace-like stencils. For the octagonal area, she applied white stencil paint with a roller, matching the edges of the stencil design to create a continuous lace pattern. When stenciling the checkerboard rectangular area, Bruno-Sears used portions of the lace stencil to create a more "quilted" effect. →



THIS SUNROOM IN Marietta overlooks a perennial garden and swimming pool.



HEATHER BRUNO-SEARS USES area rugs and floor tiles as templates for each stencil design.



HEATHER BRUNO-SEARS EMBELLISHES the rugs with white paint stenciling.

"The room's owner is a quilter herself, so incorporating a design which reflects her passion for quilting and Victorian design is a plus," Bruno-Sears says.

Bruno-Sears used a mylar stencil pattern (found at any home improvement store) and used a light spray of stencil adhesive to keep the template in place while she painted with a foam roller. The adhesive also helps to prevent any paint from "bleeding" under the stencil. Both painted area pieces were adorned with painted tassels. Bruno-Sears created the look with two stencils, layered over each other and finished with final touches.

To add a touch of whimsy, Bruno-Sears added a star motif to the rectangular rug with gold metallic paint. To protect the finished painting, Bruno-Sears applied two coats of polyurethane. □