

Frequently Asked Questions

The Frequently Asked Questions of my website is where I answer questions that come to me by email. There are lots of lonely decoupeurs in the world, struggling along by themselves and now reaching out by email.

The following questions came from as far away as Tunisia and South Africa, as well as from the United States and England.

Q. Can I use photographs to decoupage? Do I need to prepare them in any way?

Yes you can use photographs. I would prefer to use colour or black and white photocopies of the photograph in order to keep the original intact. If you insist on using an original photograph, then you need to prepare it.

- Apply 6 coats of sealer (or ModPodge) to the back of the photograph. Let each coat dry before applying the next.
- Soak the photo in warm water for about 30 minutes
- Roll the corner of the back of the photo around a pencil, separating the backing paper from the photo
- Continue to roll the pencil diagonally until the backing paper is completely rolled off
- Allow the photo to dry
- Seal the back with one coat of sealer
- Decoupage in the usual way

Not sure what I mean by this?



Roll a pencil on the corner, around the backing paper, separating it from the photo.



Continue diagonally across the back of the photo until you completely separate the layers. Allow the photo to dry before proceeding with your decoupage.



Q. I usually do very good crackling but lately it has not been turning out as expected.

Most likely the weather is doing this. Most decoupage products are formulated to be used within a certain temperature and humidity range. If you use them when it's too cold or too humid, disasters can happen. If it's winter where you live and you don't have central heating, then try the following. Put your piece about 30 cm away from a desk lamp. Use a 75 or 100 watt bulb in the lamp. This will warm and dry the air enough for the crackling medium or varnish to act as expected.

Q. I want to decoupage my fridge to give it a new lease on life. What do I do?

You don't need to turn the fridge off but it is wise to notify the family that you are doing this. You'll probably get that "Mum decoupages anything that doesn't move" comment but press on.

After the family has left for the day:

- Lightly sand the surface to give it a "key" for the glue and paint to adhere to.
- Apply a coat of Matisse Polymer Gloss Varnish. Allow it to dry.
- Next apply a coat of Matisse Background Colour. This paint is quite dense so you will probably only need one coat.
- Crackle now if you wish.
- Apply a coat of sealer.
- Now decoupage.
- Seal with 6 coats of Matisse Polymer Gloss Varnish, allowing each coat to dry before you apply the next.
- Finish with a couple of coats of varnish. Don't worry about "sinking" your paper cut outs under varnish.

Thanks to Matisse Derivan for the process.

Q. I want to decoupage on some bathroom tiles but I don't know where to start.

- Lightly sand the tile to give it a "key" for the glue and paint to adhere to.
 - Paint a background if required.
 - Glue on your cut-outs.
 - Seal with 6 coats of sealer.
 - Varnish.
 - For bathroom tiles, it is not really necessary to "bury" the cut-out completely so you can't feel the edges, unless you want to.
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Q. I want to decoupage some fabric onto a lampshade.

- If using a pre-loved lampshade, clean it first.
- If using one of the craft lampshades that comes with an ecru-coloured form, seal it with Liquitex Gloss Medium & Varnish
- Spray varnish your fabric before cutting to prevent fraying (hang it on the clothesline and spray both sides twice, allowing the fabric to dry between coats – about 15 min)
- Cut the shapes out of the dried varnished fabric
- Paint a background if required.
- Glue on your cut-outs.
- Seal with 6 coats of sealer.
- Varnish.
- For a project like this, it is not necessary to "bury" the cut-out completely so you can't feel the edges.

NOTE I made a tray using fabric cutouts using the method described above. I finished the surface with 2-pack resin (Aristocrat or Envirotex) because of the depth of the fabric cutouts and it turned out well.

If you have any questions/problems you can email me at

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5th update July 2005