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Review of a textbook on artistic fabric painting

Abstract. The article presents the structure of the first part and a summary of the thematic sections of the textbook “Technology of free-style fabric painting”, prepared at the Russian university of traditional art crafts. This manual is intended for students enrolled in the degree program 54.03.02 “Decorative applied arts and folk crafts”, with a specialization in “Artistic fabric painting”.

Keywords: artistic textile design, artistic fabric painting, free-style painting, aniline dyes, acrylic dyes, airbrushing, stencils, stamps, linocut printing, silkscreen printing, monotype printing, cyanotype process, discharge printing.

One of the popular types of artistic fabric painting is the method of applying paint in the “free-style painting” technique. A distinctive feature of this technique among many others is the absence of contour lines, as the artist does not use reserving agents, but mixes the dyes directly on the fabric. This allows for smooth transitions from one color to another. When using this method of painting, items created based on the same sketch by different artists turn out unique, demonstrating the level of the author’s craftsmanship.

The review presents a new educational publication developed for teaching the “free-style painting” technique at the Russian university of traditional art crafts.

The structure of the textbook “Technology and materials science in artistic fabric painting. Part 1. Technology of free-style painting” [1] (Fig. 1¹⁵⁰) includes an introduction, eleven thematic sections, a glossary, lists of recommended and cited literature, as well as appendices. Each educational topic is supplemented with self-assessment questions.

At the beginning of the textbook, the author formulates the key requirements for future fabric painting artists: mastery of the fundamentals of color theory and composition, as well as a developed skill in applying paint quickly without a preliminary drawing.

In the thematic sections of the publication, all technological stages of different dyeing methods in the “free-style painting” technique are described sequentially, as well as the composition of dyes, equipment, materials and tools. Each method of applying a design is illustrated with photographs of sample works, while mandatory technological rules for execution are highlighted within the text.

¹⁵⁰ Fig. 1. Krokhalova A. V. Technology and materials science in artistic fabric painting. Part 1. Technology of free-style painting : textbook for students enrolled in the degree program 54.03.02 “Decorative applied arts and folk crafts”, with a specialization in “Artistic fabric painting” / A. V. Krokhalova ; editor Yu. E. Lapina ; Russian university of traditional art crafts. – Saint Petersburg : RUTAC, 2026. – 122 pp. : ill. – Text : unmediated.



Fig. 1. Cover of the textbook by A.V. Krokhalova “Technology and materials science in artistic fabric painting. Part 1. Technology of free-style painting”

Describing the “free-style painting” technique, the author notes that one of the artist’s working features is the ability to freely experiment with compounds that restrict the flow of liquid dyes. Such agents may include salt solutions, gelatin, starch, dextrin and modern thickeners, which are easily washed off after the painting is completed.

In the “free-style painting” technique, several methods of dye application are used: dry, wet, on a thickened medium and with salt.

The wet method differs in that the dye is applied to wetted fabric. The advantage of this method lies in the possibility of refining compositional details at the end of the work, when the artist applies paints onto an almost dry fabric.

In the dry method, the dye is applied in small strokes and dashes using a semi-dry brush. As a result, the design turns out graphic, with clear contours and shapes.

Subsequently, the compositions and types of dyes used in the “free-style painting” technique are examined. The choice of dye determines the technological process of

creating an art piece. Two types of dyes are used in free-style fabric painting – aniline and acrylic. Acrylic dyes allow the artist to create any shades; they mix easily with each other and are suitable for use on dense fabrics (Figs. 2, 3¹⁵¹).

When using acrylic paints, steam treatment of the item, priming (applying ground) and the use of a reserving agent are not required. They can be used in any hand fabric painting technique. The resulting design may be decorative or pictorial. When painting with acrylics, one can use a special stencil and supplement the composition with decorative elements: beads, bugle beads, sequins and embroidery.

¹⁵¹ Fig. 2, 3. Krokhalova A. V. Technology and materials science in artistic fabric painting. Part 1. Technology of free-style painting : textbook for students enrolled in the degree program 54.03.02 “Decorative applied arts and folk crafts”, with a specialization in “Artistic fabric painting” / A. V. Krokhalova ; editor Yu. E. Lapina ; Russian university of traditional art crafts. – Saint Petersburg : RUTAC, 2026. – P. 38, 39. – Text : unmediated.



Fig. 2. Sample work executed in the “free-style painting” technique using acrylic paints.



Fig. 3. Sample work executed in the “free-style painting” technique using acrylic paints and stencils



Fig. 4. U. Blokhina. “Poppies” scarf.
Supervisor: N.N. Nemerenko

Aniline dyes are used exclusively on natural fabrics; they penetrate deep into the fibers and allow for creating an expressive, dynamic design (Fig. 4¹⁵²). To fix the dye, the item is treated with steam, during which the original color may change. Therefore, it is recommended to make test swatches before starting work to accurately predict the result. The textbook presents a diagram of color correspondence before and after steaming, as well as the recipe for preparing the paint with a description of its application stages.

A separate section provides a detailed description of the paint application technology using an airbrush. This method of decorative textile finishing involves non-contact spraying of paint using compressed air. The section also examines various options for applying patterns. Particular attention is paid to the fact that in this technique, the emphasis is placed on the harmony of colors in the painting rather than on the

¹⁵² Fig. 4. Krokhalova A. V. Technology and materials science in artistic fabric painting. Part 1. Technology of free-style painting : textbook for students enrolled in the degree program 54.03.02 “Decorative applied arts and folk crafts”, with a specialization in “Artistic fabric painting” / A. V. Krokhalova ; editor Yu. E. Lapina ; Russian university of traditional art crafts. – Saint Petersburg : RUTAC, 2026. – P. 33. – Text : unmediated.

precision of the drawing (Figs. 5, 6¹⁵³). Different types of dyes are suitable for airbrushing fabric: acrylic and aniline. The choice depends on the composition of the fabric.



Fig. 5. Sample executed in the fabric painting technique "Airbrushing" using aniline dyes

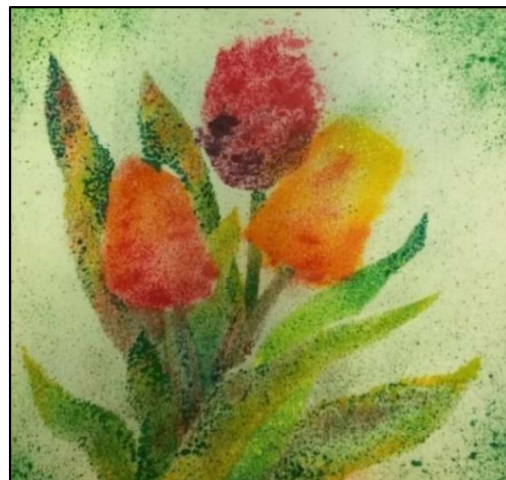


Fig. 6. Sample executed in the fabric painting technique "Airbrushing" using acrylic dyes

Methods of fabric decoration using stencils, stamps, linocut printing and monotype are considered by the author within a single thematic section; the text is accompanied by illustrations of sample works. Unlike airbrushing, these methods of decoration can be applied to any type of fabric. Subsequently, various methods of fabric finishing are examined in detail, such as discharge printing, silkscreen printing and cyanotype process (Figs. 7, 8¹⁵⁴).

The concluding sections of the textbook are dedicated to methods of decorating fabric in the "free-style painting" technique: "Contours for fabric, markers and pens for fabric painting" and "Additional effects". Markers and pens are used for applying graphic images or outlining contours on both artificial and natural fabrics (Figs. 9, 10¹⁵⁵), while aniline powdered pigments are used for creating additional decorative effects.

The concluding block of the textbook contains a glossary, lists of recommended and cited literature and appendices.

The appendix features artworks created by students studying fabric painting, as well as fragments of finished items. These serve as clear illustrative material for instructional purposes.

¹⁵³ Fig. 5,6. Krokhalova A. V. Technology and materials science in artistic fabric painting. Part 1. Technology of free-style painting : textbook for students enrolled in the degree program 54.03.02 "Decorative applied arts and folk crafts", with a specialization in "Artistic fabric painting" / A. V. Krokhalova ; editor Yu. E. Lapina ; Russian university of traditional art crafts. – Saint Petersburg : RUTAC, 2026. – P. 51. – Text : unmediated.

¹⁵⁴ Fig. 7, 8. Ibid., 78, 81.

¹⁵⁵ Fig. 9, 10. Ibid., 91, 93.