


# WALLS:

## The Perfect Blank Canvas

A Price, Style and Application for Any Room

BY SHANE INMAN



The most expansive decorative surfaces in any room of your house are the walls. The square footage of walls in a space can be up to three times the amount of the floor space. What you put on the walls is the single most important decision you will make within a room. Walls are directly at eye level and are what everyone sees upon entering. Whether you are applying paint, wallpaper or fabric to your walls, you need to know the difference between prices, styles and applications.

### Paint

The most cost-effective way to change a space is with paint, but the options available to consumers can be a bit overwhelming to the novice. Whether it is a straight paint application, metallic or textured, stripes, squares or harlequin patterns, faux finishes or trompe l'oeil, you can hardly go wrong with painting. The variety of colors, manufacturers and applications are almost endless, and depending on your own standards of perfectionism, the job can be done by practically anybody.

Paint is a great medium for any room of the house and is recommended for those who like to change the feel of their space often, as well as those who are on a tight budget. You can use paint virtually anywhere today – it has been revolutionized to adhere to anything from garage floors to metal, plastic, glass and an assortment of other surfaces. To select that one perfect color from the millions offered can be a daunting task. Value, hue, saturation, tone and sheen can all be modified within each color to achieve varying results. If you are unsure on how to choose that exact shade, you may opt to consult with a professional designer who can provide a color analysis for both you and your space.

Paint has been around for thousands of years, and the psychology of color is known to have the power to elicit various moods,

stimulate the senses and even promote healing within the human body. Reds are said to make you hungry and some yellows are said to make you feel ill. It has even been proven that real estate can sell more quickly with the correct choice of paint. Some classic colors allow interiors to remain timeless even as interior fashions and fads change.

Metallic and textured paints lend a more dramatic feel to a room, whereas stripes, squares or harlequin patterns are more whimsical. The designs of faux finishes and trompe l'oeil are certainly elegant, but they are also less cost effective, since they need to be applied by true professionals who have been trained in that particular art and technique. And if you choose one of these "special effects" finishes, don't be fooled by promotional materials at the big box stores and the endless home improvement episodes on television that show before-and-after scenes happening at lightning speed. These finishes not only cost more, but also require more time to apply.

## Wallpaper

These days, wallpaper is also known as wall covering, because it is no longer just paper. Having it applied can be moderate to expensive, depending on the type of wall covering selected and the amount of wall space to be covered. Since the beginning of interior design, wallpaper has been gracing people's homes - from country cabins to the White House. And the choices extend far beyond just color or pattern: You can choose from real paper, expanded vinyl, anaglypta, wood, foil, flocked, glass or grass, depending on how elaborate you want your space to be. As many designers will tell you, wall coverings are back in style by popular demand.

Anaglypta is embossed wallpaper made to look like historic ornate plasterwork. Grass cloth has been present in a multitude of interiors, from contemporary to traditional and has never gone out of style. Wood and glass are relatively new inventions produced to bring back the art of wall coverings. Foil is most impressive, with its shiny surface drawing attention to flora and fauna graphics as well as the geometric shapes and patterns that were the focus of all 60s interior walls. Flocked wall coverings are those that combine fabric and paper to create not only texture, but also depth, offering the same sophistication as fabric but in paper form (which is also less expensive).

Wallpaper is great for damaged walls, adding an air of sophistication and accomplishing that high-style "wow" factor that

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many savvy homeowners are searching for. The best spaces in a home for wall coverings are low traffic areas such as bedrooms, dens and formal living rooms. Wallpaper doesn't usually perform well in kitchens and bathrooms because of water and cleaning issues. That said, many wall coverings can be purchased in vinyl, which is durable and can hold up to washing, scrubbing and marring in bathrooms and kitchens – but these are typically only found in commercial settings.

Wall coverings offer that extra element of texture that is required for more of a "designer look" within an interior space. The downside of wallpaper is that seams can start to lift over time, damage can be hard to repair, certain styles can become dated relatively quickly, and it can be a nightmare to remove. It is highly advisable to hire a professional wallpaper hanger to make sure that your goods are ordered properly and installed according to the manufacturer's directions. This will help you produce the desired look and guarantee that the result will stand the test of time.

### Fabric

Weather hung or padded, fabric wall covering can be any textile applied directly to any wall surface. Silk is the most renowned and ultimate in fabric, because of its lavish appeal. Silk has graced the walls of the most sophisticated boudoirs across the world for centuries. The downside to fabric treated walls is that they are difficult to clean and many fabrics can fade over time.

Fabric covered walls were used centuries ago to keep out the cold and to improve the acoustic quality of such large spaces but today are known to produce a distinctly sophisticated look that is only found in the most dramatic interiors. Fabric can either be hung or draped by rods or finials which gives more of an imperialistic style where padded fabric or upholstered shapes and patterns applied to walls appears more tailored and streamlined in effect.

Fabric covered walls are more likely to appear in bedrooms of today by blending texture seamlessly with window treatments and bed linens for an overall cohesive polished look. If you should choose to surround your bedroom walls in fabric it will be in your best interest to hire an upholsterer with the background needed to calculate yardage and the necessary needed elements to produce a professional installation. The expense of applying fabric covering to your walls has a varying cost depending on the decided upon fabric and the square footage of walls to be



covered but in general is the most expensive application.

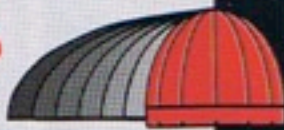
No matter what you're applying to your walls it is important to keep in mind what your overall style and vision are and what mood you want to create for yourself and your guests. Whether you're interested in painting, wallpapering, or upholstering your walls, the finished space should express your individual uniqueness, withstand the use of the room as well as highlight the qualities of your home. □

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