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DESIGNING OUTSIDE THE BOX

DECORATIVE ART BY DANA DONATY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLOS ARISTIZABAL
WRITTEN BY JAMIE JACKSON

Whether it's a wall size mirror or an exterior entrance that needs some pizzazz, Dana Donaty is no stranger to architectural challenges that demand inventive solutions that often require unconventional materials and methods to get the job done.

Dana draws upon a fine arts educational background, 15 years experience working within several media and established relationships with fellow artists as contributing to her ability to transform an unsightly space into a stunning scene.

"I begin a project by finding out what the client's goals are and then figuring out the rest of it. Basically, if I can think of something, I can invent it," explained Dana. "It's coming up with an idea and bouncing it off of other talented people that results in the final solution. Quite often we have to invent some architectural element that's cohesive with the architecture that they have."

Since most "transfauxmations" begin with a challenge that appears at the onset to be insurmountable, it takes a pioneering spirit and knowledge of materials like Dana's to search out the right solution. While some decorative artists are very secretive, Dana is grateful for the many gifted masters that have helped her and shared their time-tested methods. This 2007 Broward County American Red Cross Show House, located in Coconut Grove, Florida is an example of a home renovation where the owner did not want to break out the original mirrors that were previously installed and yet wished to update the room to reflect the Moroccan theme with subtle design elements.

Dana initiated the project in the same manner that she approaches any assignment, first by assessing the overall goals and then proceeding with figuring out how to cover the existing mirrors that overpowered the wall in the dining area and the fireplace on the opposite end of the room.

A classic mural was created as the backdrop for the dining area. The multi-paneled mural was installed using Velcro over the top of the mirror – a practical solution to a short or long term installation. The mural is painted on artist canvas using a combination of LusterStone® (Cappuccino, Brown Suede), Metallic Gold Palette Deco™, FauxColor™ (Amber and VanDyke) and FauxCreme Color™ glaze.

The interior designer brought in doors to cover the fireplace mirror. Dana created two panels incorporating an enlarged pattern design from the door. Taking the scale of the 22 ft. ceilings into consideration, each panel was made up of three 4 ft. by 3 ft. panels, measuring 3 ft. by 12 ft. after installation. As a finishing touch, she added faux finished trim to hide the seams and upholstery tacks to add detail.

With the exception of the installation, all of the work was done offsite at the Dana Donaty Designs studio in Boynton Beach, Florida. Dana prefers to work in her studio because it allows her more time with the project and she can add small final details that might otherwise be overlooked when murals are created onsite.

For more information, call 561.504.3374 or email Dana at ddrocks@mac.com.

transfauxmations



Dining Room Before: The wall length mirror (outlined above) posed a challenge to cover.



Dining Room: Industrial strength velcro was used to hold the canvas mural in place.

The Final Solution: Two panels placed on both sides of the fireplace were finished to match the hand-painted camel bone veneer doors above the fireplace that were imported from Morocco. To replicate the veneer on the doors, the panels were finished using a bone pearlescent finish and stencils were applied using LusterStone with colors hand painted onto the raised stencils for detail in three separate layers. 70 ft. of trim was faux finished, stenciled and hand painted in three layers and cut to size. Finished panels were attached to framework in three separate sections that were installed on site. Faux finished trim was applied to assembled pieces to make them appear as one large artwork. Upholstery tacks were added for additional detail. The artist used Faux Effects® Metallic Pearl, Gold and Silver Palette Deco, Snowflake LusterStone, and French Red and Turquoise FauxColor to create the Moroccan panels.



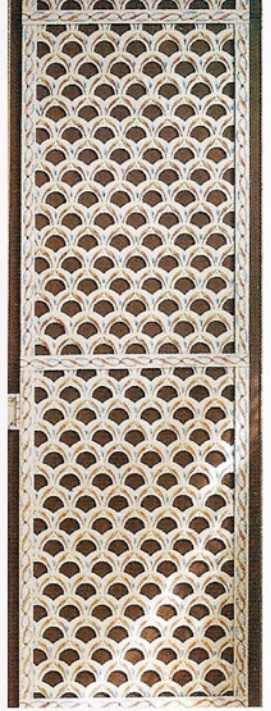
Dining Room After.



Living Room Before: The client wanted to cover the mirror without removing it.



Dana adding her special touch to the hand-painted camel bone veneer doors.



Detail of a door.



Living Room After.