

*from*

# DESIGN to DECOR

Learn how to Concept, Paint, and Style your Furniture

*with* **Barb Blair**



All About

# Barb Blair

## Artist, author, and Knack founder

Barb Blair became hooked on the transformative power of paint when she redid her kitchen cabinets in 2000. After years of experimenting and learning from trial and error, she opened her first full-time furniture makeover shop in 2007. She has since written a best selling book, *Furniture Makeovers*, published by Chronicle Books, and a second book, *Furniture Makes the Room*. Barb has helmed the journey of Knack from selling only her furniture makeovers to offering an entire collection of gifts, housewares, decor and other finds. She chooses each item with intentionality to ensure that it offers both aesthetic and functional value.





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All of us are influenced by something or someone. Our upbringing, our family, our surroundings...all play a huge part in how we view the world and the things around us.

I grew up understanding that home was about storytelling and displaying the things you found beautiful and meaningful.

The only design rules are those that you create and decide fit your space.





## Starting

When I start a new piece of furniture—whether it be for my own home or for a client—I always begin the same way: I find inspirational images or objects, and develop a design plan that includes hardware, paint colors, and papers.

I love the design process so much, and I find it to be crucial in producing furniture projects that you will love for a long time. Above all, be intentional about your design.



## Sources of Inspiration

**Pinterest:** In looking through my feed, I may find inspiration in the brightness of meadow flowers, the bright blue shell of a crab, the pink beak of a pelican, or a gorgeous plate of food.

**Fashion:** The different textiles, patterns, and combinations of unique elements that are not often found together can spark an idea.

**Magazines:** I often find beautiful images that I can lay out and use as an inspiration board for the entire project.

## Questions to Answer During the Design Process

- Where is the furniture going to be placed in your home or your client's home?
- What function and purpose will it serve?
- Is the furniture piece a jumping off point for the entire room, or does the furniture design need to fit into a pre-existing room design?

Answers to all of these questions will help you in formulating the perfect plan for your furniture piece.



## Four Tips for Successful Furniture Project Design

1. Never rush through the design process. Relish the time you have to create something unique and beautiful.
2. Think “timeless” over trend.
3. Sketch out a plan for the entire project; it makes gathering all of your tools and materials much easier. It also gives you energy and excitement as you move forward with your project.
4. Most importantly, have fun with the process, create pieces that can be passed on to future generations and tell the story of your life and family.

By taking the time to design well, you will ultimately create a versatile piece that will move effortlessly throughout the home and last for a lifetime. Furniture makes the room, and is functional art for your home!



## Choosing Your Paint

Painting furniture isn't rocket science, but there is a technique to achieving a beautiful finish. After spending years perfecting my finishes and working with paints of all varieties, I've come to favor a creamy, high-coverage paint that can be manipulated well when wet and settles nice and flat as it dries.

## First Coats

First coats are everything, and less is more! The goal of furniture painting is to create a finish that looks one with the wood rather than thick uneven coats that have settled on top of the wood. Nice, even, thin coats work beautifully to create a long-lasting finish.

The very first coat of paint is the foundation for your finish, so focus on smoothness in your first coat. Don't worry if your first coat is streaky and doesn't provide complete coverage. Focus on applying a super-smooth first coat. Let your second and third coats handle the coverage issues.



## Take the Project a Section at a Time

Work in sections in order to be able to move and manipulate the paint while it's wet. If you are painting trim and detail and then using a roller for the larger flat surfaces, make sure to roll immediately after you've finished trim and detail in order to overlap the two paint lines and keep everything smooth.

If you roll after the detail and trim has dried, you will end up with an undesirable shadowbox effect! Work in nice, manageable sections and move on after each section is completed. I tend to start on the left side of a piece, move to the front, then the right side, and finish with the top...but there is no perfect way! Just do what works best for you and your piece.







## Start with Firm Strokes and Finish with Lighter Strokes

While you can really move the paint back and forth in order to get good coverage on the first coat, you should use long, smooth strokes on subsequent coats. For the very last coat, lighten the amount of pressure that you put on the paintbrush and slightly “feather” the finish. By reducing the pressure applied, you’ll smooth the paint even more and eliminate brushstrokes.

The key is to use a more firm application on the first coat and then move into increasingly softer strokes to smooth and finish on subsequent coats. Allow for plenty of drying time between coats, and be sure to apply additional coats in the same pattern as you did the first in order to get a beautiful finish!

# Color Palette Inspiration



## WARMTH

Colors make the room and this palette spoke to me as I reflected on rustic elements in the home. These deep and rich colors will create a warm and inviting space for friends and family to gather.

- Bavarian 34152
- Tuscan Red 34994
- Monarch 34996
- English Lavender 36022
- Lilac 34163



## SEASIDE

Cool blues, greens and grays remind me of beach vacations with my family. Incorporating a coastal palette coupled with pieces collected on vacation is a great way to keep those beloved memories top-of-mind all times of the year.

- Seaside Villa 34924
- Cascade 34159
- Glacier 34162
- Nantucket Blue 36038
- Castle 34168



## RENEW

Greens and grays have a tendency to refresh and renew any design space. Let this color palette inspire you to bring the outdoor elements indoors.

- Parisian Grey 34167
- Sheepskin 34151
- Maui Sand 34932
- Sage 34999
- Spanish Moss 34801

## The Power of Paint

It's amazing what a little paint, new knobs, and clean, paper-lined drawers can do for a piece of tired, worn-out furniture. The furniture makeover process is so rewarding and addicting that it never gets old! Listed below are the tools and step by step photos and instructions that you will need to complete your very own transformation.

## Materials Needed:

- FolkArt Home Decor Chalk
- FolkArt Chalk Brushes (small for trim and wide for larger flat surfaces)
- FolkArt Wax
- FolkArt Wax Brush
- Shop towels
- Knobs
- Sanding sponge
- Paper for drawers
- Craft knife
- Mod Podge® or double sided tape (for attaching paper in drawers)
- FrogTape® Painter's Tape



# The Painting Process

## Step 1: Clean your piece.

Since we are using FolkArt Home Decor Chalk, we do not have to sand or prime the piece of furniture; however, you should clean your piece with a vacuum and a clean, slightly damp cloth in order to remove all dirt and grime. Do not use any type of chemical cleaner on the wood surface as it will soak into the wood and cause problems with the paint finish. Use water only and not a lot of it. Wood is a porous surface and will absorb anything you put on top of it.

## Step 2: Tape off the sections you won't be painting.

Once the furniture is dust-free and clean, tape off all the drawer runners, drawer sides, and any other areas that you want to keep clean and paint-free. This is a really important step! Details matter, and no one wants to see messy paint lines.

## Step 3: If using new hardware, apply wood filler to existing holes.

Determine whether you are keeping the original hardware or changing out all of the hardware for new. If you are changing out the hardware, I suggest using wood filler on the existing holes, then measuring and drilling new holes for the new hardware.



## **Step 4: Apply your first coat of paint one section at a time.**

After you've cleaned your piece, taped off the sections you want to protect, and applied wood filler, it's time to paint. Work section by section and apply the first coat of paint smoothly and evenly. I used the small paintbrush for trim and details and the wide paintbrush for the larger flat surfaces. Remember to apply the first coat of paint super-smooth. You can catch any coverage issues on the second coat. Use long even strokes, and keep the pressure on the paintbrush light in order to eliminate brush strokes.

## **Step 5: After allowing the first coat to dry, apply a second coat.**

Let the first coat of paint dry for about 30-40 minutes and then apply a second coat of paint exactly as you did the first with the same amount of drying time.

## **Step 6: Sand and distress your piece. (Optional)**

When the paint is dry, it is time to distress. Distressing is a matter of preference, so if you don't want to distress your piece, you can skip this step.

Personally, I love a little distressing, and always incorporate it into my work. I sand the entire piece of furniture—that's right... the ENTIRE piece. This gives the entire surface a nice, even level of porosity. If you distress only the edges or certain sections, those sections will not only show through in your finish, but they will also take the wax differently than the non-distressed parts of wood. Sand the entire piece and apply more pressure to the hard edges and areas that you want more distressing.





**Step 7: Wipe down the piece.**

When the distressing and sanding is complete, give the furniture piece a good wipe down with a clean, dry shop towel in order to remove the sanding dust.

**Step 8: Apply the final wax finish.**

Sometimes, blending and applying wax can be difficult, but FolkArt Home Decor wax is super-smooth and easy to apply. Apply it almost as you would a water-based polyurethane and work in a well-lit area so you can see the coverage. Coat the entire surface with even amounts of wax. Let the wax dry according to the instructions on the label, and then buff it out with a clean lint-free shop towel.

**Step 9: Add the finishing touches.**

Line the drawers with paper. Measure the paper horizontally across the top of the drawer first, and trim to size, leaving a little excess on all sides. Place the paper in the drawer and trim along the edges with a ruler and craft knife to achieve the perfect fit. Remove the paper and lay down a thin, even coat of Mod Podge on the bottom of the drawer. Put the paper in place; and carefully smooth out the wrinkles. Apply an even top coat of Mod Podge to seal and protect the drawer lining.

*Tip: For a less permanent solution, you can use double-sided mounting tape to adhere the paper.*

When all of the drawers have been lined with paper, attach your new hardware.

## Styling as Storytelling

When you gather and collect what you love, it all works together in your home perfectly. Each home decor accent, piece of furniture, and wall-hanging is a strand in the rich tapestry that is the narrative of your home.

For instance, if you were to walk in my den, you would see giant portraits of my kids hanging on the wall, shelves full of books, photographs, rock dinosaurs picked up on a trip across country, a carved wooden bowl a friend brought back from Africa, a grouping of metals from marathon-running days gone by, a painted piece of furniture that became our entertainment center, brass lamps that I spray-painted and put new shades on, a giant paper mache moose head made by an artist friend and proudly hung over the fireplace, Mexican blankets slung over the couch, a kilim rug, and found chairs that have been reupholstered in bright and cheery fabrics.

All of these things were collected over time and all of them have a story and a place in my home.



## Five Tips for Styling Furniture

1. Don't be afraid of color! Color is so versatile, and can move effortlessly throughout your home. Bright green, pink, or turquoise pieces of furniture aren't just for a nursery or tween room; these colors look amazing in foyers, dining rooms and kitchens.
2. Style a piece a few different ways until you find a vignette that you love.
3. Periodically go shopping in your own house and switch out lamps, artwork, plants, and ceramics to create entirely new looks!
4. Move pieces in and out of rooms and have fun with the different uses you can create for each piece. Challenge yourself to find at least three uses for each piece of furniture... I dare you.
5. Stay true to yourself. After all, your home is your canvas! Understand that you are the curator of your story. Create a home you love filled with special pieces created and collected.



**Part IV: Styling Furniture to Create  
A Home You Love**



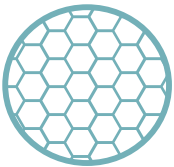
# Notes/Inspiration





# HOME DECOR

Transform your everyday items into one of a kind treasures.



## wax

- Seals and protects
- Adds rich texture and depth
- Buffs to a soft glowing shine



## chalk

- Ultra matte chalk finish
- Perfect for layering and distressing



Learn more at:

<http://plaidonline.com/home-decor-chalk>

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Join in on our conversations across all our various social media platforms and be a part our creative community! We count on artists and crafters like you who use your imagination to bring our products to life! We'd love for you to share pictures from your classes and events.

Tag #plaidcrafts in your posts so we can share your work.

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