

Sunset Backdrop

This document describes how to make the painted background for the Snack site.

You Need:

2 or 3 king-size flat sheets (More space to cover requires more sheets. We purchased yellow flat sheets online.)

Tempera paint in magenta, turquoise, yellow, white and blue. We used large 128 fl oz containers, but depending on the size of your backdrop, a 32 ounce size may work. One part equals ½ cup.

1 quart of flat white latex paint

1 2 fluid ounce small container of black paint

2 to 4 hand-held spray pumps (purchased for under \$10 at home improvement stores)

Paint tray, paint roller, paint brush, sea sponges, plastic drop cloth, painters tape, tape measure and a string.

1. Assemble supplies.
2. Prepare the sheets. Most flat sheets come with a pocket at the top of the sheet. If it does not, you will want to sew a pocket on the sheets before you sew them together. After the top pocket is complete, then you will want to sew the side seams together. Start at the top just below the pocket and work your way to the bottom because not all sheets are the same size. Once this is complete, you are ready to paint.
3. Start by putting a drop cloth on the floor. Then, stretch your cloth out on the floor on top of the drop cloth making it as straight and wrinkle-free as possible. Weights like
4. Next you use a tape measure and string to determine where you would like your horizon line. We made our sea 36 inches “deep” and the rest was our sky sunset! Stretch the string across the fabric tightly so you have a nice straight line to work from. Using the string as a guide, apply the painters tape right above the top of the string. Important: apply the tape evenly and smoothly.
5. Now you are ready to spray the paint on the sky for the sunset. You’ll spray yellow, magenta, and turquoise. Then you’ll spray the sea with turquoise and blue. This can be done with only 2 hand sprayers, if you are willing to clean up after each color that is used.
6. Start with the yellow tempera. Add 1 part tempera and 5 parts water to this spray container and shake well. (One part equals ½ cup.) ***Make sure that you test your color and the sprayer before you use it on the backdrop. The nozzle can be adjusted for a finer mist and that is what you will want to start with. Use those extra pillow cases. They are good for practice!***
7. Standing at the top of the backdrop, evenly spray the yellow across the sheet. You will want more color towards the top and less color towards the horizon line.
8. Once you are finished with the yellow, it is time for the magenta. Add 1 part magenta, 1 part white and 6 parts water to the second spray container and shake well. (One part

equals ½ cup.) Again, test your sprayer before you use it on the backdrop. You will want to overlap the magenta onto the yellow and also slightly above it so we can see the color definition. Once the magenta is sprayed on, take a dry paint roller and use it to blur the paint edges and splotches. This will make it look like a watercolor.

9. Then clean up the yellow sprayer (or use a third sprayer) for the turquoise. Add 1 part turquoise, 2 parts white and 7 parts water to this spray container and shake well. (One part equals ½ cup.) Test your sprayer first and then add to the balance of the top of the sky. Add some blue to the magenta areas for overlap, but then again, you want a defined area for the turquoise at the top as well.
10. Once you are finished with the turquoise, take the roller and start blending the magenta and the turquoise together. There is no need to clean the roller.
11. Once you have completed the sky, you can start on the ocean. We covered the sky with cardboard so that we did not get any of the turquoise spray into the sky. We started at the bottom with the heaviest concentration of turquoise and worked our way to about a foot or so below the horizon line.
12. For that last foot below the horizon line, we mixed the blue: 1 part blue, 3 parts white, to 8 parts water. (One part equals 1/3 cup. You can make these parts smaller since it covers a much smaller area.) You can clean the sprayer or use a fourth sprayer. It is best to start from the top of the horizon line and spray towards the bottom. This is water based paint, so it will bleed, but this is a backdrop meant to be seen from a distance, so this is not going to greatly affect the outcome. Just make sure that the edge is not completely saturated with the blue color. Instead, use the paint roller to mix the color and move it towards the tape edge.
13. When everything is dry, add the clouds. Using damp sea sponges and a paint brush, add your clouds to the sky. Start with the white sponge and create a cloud shape. Then, take the dry brush and spread the white paint to make an outline.
14. For some contrast and definition in the clouds, we used white latex paint and a small container of black acrylic to mix a gray color. Use another sponge, add the gray color and work it into the fabric until you are satisfied with the result.
15. After the clouds are finished, use a dry brush and turquoise and blue tempera at full strength to add water accents to the ocean.
16. Carefully remove the tape from the fabric and your backdrop is complete.