

Painting Clouds on the Ceiling

Materials list

All materials below can be found at a hardware or paint retailer.

- Drop cloth – A Plastic or rubber coated painters drop cloth. Paint will go right through a sheet.
- Latex gloves
- Blue tape
- Paint trays: plastic or Styrofoam plates work great
- Bucket for water
- Paint can opener
- (3) 4" chip brush

3 Quarts Benjamin Moore Aura Washable Matte in these colors:

- Dark: Majestic Mauve 2115-60
- Medium: Peach Parfait 2175-70
- Light: Vanilla Ice Cream OC-90

This video assumes you have already painted your ceiling with two coats of blue house paint. I recommend using the Benjamin Moore Aura product when painting sky ceilings. Blue flower 2057-60 is a great sky color. The aura line is low VOC, self priming, and comes in a washable matte. A Matte finish is nice because it cuts down on any reflective glare. The washable matte is important because it means the clouds paint can glide over the surface of the base coat so you can achieve a smooth, soft look. It is very difficult to achieve these results if you paint your ceiling with a flat finish paint. If you can't find washable matte, or if the room does not get a lot of light, you can also use a low sheen paint like eggshell.

Tip The ceiling has much more shadow than the walls, so whatever color you choose will be darker, and greyer than it looks on the color deck. Don't be afraid to choose a brighter color for the ceiling than you might venture to paint on the walls.

Here is an overview of the 4 steps you will use over each cloud:

Step one: Mix 50% of your blue sky color and 50% of white house paint, and block in the major cloud formations. It also looks nice to paint a handful of high, wispy clouds in this light blue color.

Step Two: Paint highlights around the "top" and edges of the clouds with your lightest color (Vanilla Ice Cream OC-90). Be sure to use a fairly dry brush for steps 2-4.

Tip: Change the position of the ladder each time you return to work on an area, so you are looking at it from a different direction.

Step Three: Paint in the deep tones on the underside (bottom or middle) of your clouds to create the illusion of heavier areas of the cloud. (Majestic Mauve 2115-60)

Step Four: Even out the clouds with the mid tone color, Peach Parfait 2175-70.

Tip Use a dry brush on edges and color transition areas to keep a soft color transition. Also, remember to keep the cloud shapes varied and irregular. This is key to achieving a "natural" look.

Murals by Morgan

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A Note on Colors and the colors I recommend in my video

If the base coat is too light, there will not be enough contrast between sky base coat and the clouds, and the clouds will not pop. On the other hand, too dark of a blue background will have too much contrast with the light clouds, and have a harsh effect, and not be as soothing to the eye. If you want a dark blue sky, consider keeping the clouds in a similar darker color tone so that the contrast is diminished.

By adding a little bit of color to the clouds in terms of warm highlights and shadows, the clouds pop out against the blue better than just white, or would white mixed with blue.

Using Artists Acrylic paints instead of house paints

You can also use these artists acrylics colors mixed with titanium white to achieve beautiful clouds.

-OR-

Tubes of acrylic artists color. I recommend Golden brand in these colors:

- Mars yellow
- Cerulean Blue Deep
- Hansa Yellow light
- Alizarin Crimson Hue
- Titanium White
- Matte medium

You will have more control over the exact color values you want to achieve by mixing the colors yourself. However, be forewarned that it is a difficult skill to mix the artists acrylics without going overboard on color. If you are comfortable with artists acrylic paints and *want* to mix the colors yourself, go for it! Otherwise, I recommend you play it safe and start with the Benjamin Moore colors listed in the materials list.

Remember, it's only paint, so have fun!