

DIY Inlay Dresser

I love mother of pearl inlay furniture. The layer of texture it gives to a room is so COOL, but is it really worth the price tag? Larger pieces are several thousand dollars ([sometimes](#) more than \$10,000 for repros!)



I bought this dresser at the flea market last fall for my girls bedroom. It fit perfectly between their twin beds and made a great joint nightstand. I thought the size and shape made this piece a great candidate for an inlay DIY. I was super excited when Sherwin-Williams invited me to join a group of talented bloggers to spread the word about [National Painting Week](#). Each of us was assigned a color and I was thrilled to get purple.



Inspired by the lilac wall color in this amazing Katie Ridder room, I chose Rhapsody Lilac for the main color

of the dresser and Minuet for the highlights/faux inlay.



Rhapsody Lilae

Minuet

Sherwin-Williams

I used Sherwin-Williams [waterborne interior alkyd enamel in both shades](#). It wears as well as full on oil-based paint, but cleans up like latex paint. It's low VOC and there is hardly any smell, (though you'll still want to keep your windows open or do the painting outside). It really is a great paint. It's made for trim and doors, but the hard-wearing formula is awesome for furniture as well.



I lightly sanded the dresser and gave it two coats of Rhapsody Lilac in semi-gloss with a foam mini-roller. Once the base coats were fully dried, I took a glance at some inspiration inlay pieces online and just started doodling with an artists brush. I tried a couple different brushes and quickly discovered you only need one for this project - a 1/4" wide angled artist's brush.



You can see on most of the real inlay pieces that the patterns are simple - a couple of circular stylized flowers with vines and simple leaves, all inside a border.



It feels like an intimidating project, but I found that the more relaxed you are, the better and more authentic the result is. I was over-thinking the design on the top of the dresser and that's my least favorite section now. Also, don't go over the leaves twice. The real bone or mother of pearl inlay pieces have a lot of color variation, so you don't want solid white design here either. The real inlay patterns are often not exact and are even a little crooked. Don't worry about perfection here. No painters tape needed!

Here's a little 10 second video to give you the sense of the speed of the project. It takes a couple hours probably to cover every surface with the doodling, but it feels like quick, light work.

Can you hear my kids chattering in the background? This was happening on the other side of dresser :)



Once all the big surface designs were done, I went back and added small leaf patterns to all the edges and sides. This was the fun part for me and the look really started coming together with the addition of the smaller patterns.





It doesn't really matter what design you paint or where or how, the idea is just lots of movement and pattern, in varying shades of white. The result is folksy and pretty charming. Perfect for a child's room!



Oh - and a quick note about the knobs. After I started the project I realized I would need new knobs to replace the super traditional brass pulls. I was planning to just pick up some of those round unfinished wood knobs, but then I remembered I had a bunch of these green glass knobs from the clearance section at TJ Maxx. They already had a flower design on the fronts, so I just painted those white.



I love the dimension the knobs give!





One of my girlfriends stopped by our place last week, coincidentally after some shopping at ABC where she saw lots of inlay furniture in pastel shades. She noticed the dresser as she walked past the girls room, gasped, said "Oh no you didn't" as she ran up to get a closer look at the inlay. Trickery = Success! Insert evil laugh and tapping together of finger tips!



Later my friend confessed she was pretty confused at the thought of me spending five grand at ABC. She said that's not really my style, which I *think* I'll take as a compliment. :) I'm happy with the dresser, even though it's clearly not perfect, and super glad I didn't have to spend thousands to get the inlay look. Especially for something in my kids' room!



Have you checked out the other [National Painting Week](#) participant projects? Tomorrow is Aicia and Bruno from [Curbly](#), so be sure to pop over there in the morning.

Also, I just wanted to thank you guys for all the sweet comments and emails about our super sick Gracie girl.

I'm happy to report she is on the upswing today. Thanks for the suggestions and for giving me a little time off to take care of her. Have a GREAT weekend! xoxo