



Blood painted this plaster pillar to resemble marble.



A variety of molding-like techniques in Blood's studio

A VAST CANVAS

Local designers line up to hire Charlie Blood, whose talents run the gamut.

ORIGINS

Charlie Blood always had a flair for the dramatic. "Besides doodling in the margins," he says, "I did murals and worked on set designs in high school." Blood helped redo Lafayette Square's "painted ladies," and in 1986, he launched his business (314-223-4651, charlesbloodartistic.com), replicating a wide range of surfaces.

TECHNIQUES

Blood's repertoire continues to grow. "It's evolved from sponge-painting to all of the metallic finishes," he says. He has created faux plaster medallions, imitation wood inlays, sky-inspired ceilings... "You research those images and products," he says, "then figure out how to process them as efficiently as possible and still have a convincing story."

ROUTINE

You'd think that Blood would be ready to relax after a long day of painting someone's house. "Unfortunately, you don't get to relax," he says. He spends hours researching images and projects, as well as working on sample boards to prep for upcoming projects. "You don't want to be flat-footed when that job comes around."

ADVICE

Blood emphasizes the importance of planning before painting. "Prep is everything," he says. "Once the prep's done, the painting is almost a given. Without that, it's one hassle and fiasco after the next." Another tip: Use quality materials. "You don't really save anything by going cheap," explains the seasoned painter. —Jarrett Medlin



Fantasy marble in acrylic



Trowel-applied metallic glazes



Distressed silver leaf over gold

Art on the Side

Blood's work can be seen in galleries, too. His fine art is fairly contemporary, though he appreciates many styles. (He's taught at the Saint Louis Art Museum, leading students through the exhibits.) His own art is "more graphic in nature." One recent series explores exclamation points—apt, given his impressive work. —J.M.

