paint style
the new approach to decorative paint finishes
Benjamin Moore®
Paints

CHAPTER 3

glazing

The term "glazing" covers a multitude of techniques, ranging from soft, atmospheric color washes to more formal striés and stipple effects. In all of them, a glaze—a clear liquid medium to which color is added—is applied over a base color and manipulated with a brush, comb, rag, or other tool. As a result, the glaze and base colors are juxtaposed rather than mixed; it is the eye that blends them, creating subtle finishes of great depth and interest. (The nineteenth-century Impressionists and Pointillist painters called this "broken color.")

In positive, or applied, techniques such as color washing, glaze is added to the surface; in negative, or subtractive, techniques such as combing, glaze is selectively removed.

OPPOSITE
The rich apricot-glazed walls of architect Gil Schafer's New York apartment are given depth and texture with a crosshatched strié technique, done by Weidl Associates. The glowing color makes a flattering contrast to the sculptural black scagliola mantel, created by hand through a painstaking process of mixing color with plaster, then laying in colored threads to simulate marble veins.
BASE: Soft Beige 2156-60
GLAZE: Jack O'lantern 2156-30

on location: going with the grain

THIS ELEGANT LITTLE JEWEL BOX of an apartment began life as three formal parlors in an 1850s New York townhouse. By the time architect Gil Schafer acquired it, the years and a succession of tenants had taken their toll in the form of modernist additions and clumsy renovations. But with his disciplined sensibility, trained eye, and love of neoclassical detail, Schafer was able to reclaim the altered space and imbue it with a sense of its original dignity.

The process began with the imposition of architectural balance. The space is small—only 900 square feet—but the ceilings are an impressive 13 feet high, so Schafer added two weighty, classic columns at one end to accentuate the soaring ceiling and opposing 12-foot windows. Next came recessed moldings, custom-detailed door frames, plaster ceiling medallions, and a black scagliola mantelpiece, with fluted columns and a Greek key frieze, to replace a stock marble hearth.

The massive double doors that open into the main living-dining area are perhaps the best example of artisanal skill. Almost 10 feet tall, the paneled doors are entirely done in a faux mahogany finish, with exquisite handpainted wood graining and ebonized borders.

"I wanted mahogany doors, but to buy beautiful crotch-grained doors would have been too costly," says Schafer. "The idea of faux grain fit with the historical basis of the interior—people often used that technique when a certain wood wasn't accessible or was too expensive."

The doors took more than two weeks to complete, in an elaborate multistep process that involved multiple coats of paint, glaze, and varnish, with detail added incrementally in watercolor and artist's acrylics. The decorative painter, Jean Carrau, is a fifth-generation artisan, who learned the technique by working alongside his father and studying and teaching in France and Belgium.

The surrounding walls were also given their share of attention: the surfaces were done by Weidl Associates in a rich terra-cotta cross-hatched glaze, which echoes the luxurious, auburn tones of the doors. The subtle, gridlike effect is in keeping with the rigorous sensibility of the space, and the deep color is the perfect backdrop for Schafer's extensive art collection.

"From the doors to the wall glazing, this whole apartment is very much about working with different artists and their skills," says Schafer. "Respect for craft is what made it all come together."

THIS PAGE:
The deep, lustrous tones of the faux-grain mahogany doors are a tribute to the skill of French decorative painter Jean Carrau. To complete the look, the panel borders were ebonized, and all of the hardware was custom-made in patinated brass with cobalt glass knobs.

OPPOSITE:
A rich apricot glaze echoes the complex, earthy shades of the doors and wood tones of the antique table. The finish is a cross-hatched strié which adds depth and texture within a crisp framework.
BASE: Soft Beige 2156-60
GLAZE: Jack O'lantern 2156-30