

Virtual Author Talk



Sassy Feet: Paint, Embellish and LOVE Your Shoes (and Bags)!

Margot Silk Forrest

The second edition of this book, written with co-author Destiny Carter, is the essential guide to painting, embellishing shoes and bags, and creating one-of-a-kind accessories.

Your book "Sassy Feet!" is about painting and embellishment of footwear. For those not familiar with the term could you please explain what you mean by embellishment?

Both the book and the Sassy Feet website are about painting and embellishing shoes and bags. By embellishing I mean adding decorations, like ribbons, beads, metal stampings, feathers, charms, zipper tape, chain maille, lace, studs, and so on.

What sparked your interest in painting and embellishing footwear, and how did you get started?

I got interested in painting shoes the day I discovered the fine print on the bottle of fabric paint I had just bought to stencil a sweatshirt. It was a bottle of Lumiere, made by Jacquard Products, and the label read,

"works on leather...." At first, I didn't believe it, because it seemed to me that if this beautiful, highly pigmented paint worked on leather, then people would obviously be painting their shoes. So, I called Jacquard and asked them about it. They said, yes, this paint it would stick to leather and would not chip, flake or peel off if applied properly. The customer service rep even volunteered that Lumiere would stick to manmade leather as well. After a few more questions on my part (like did I

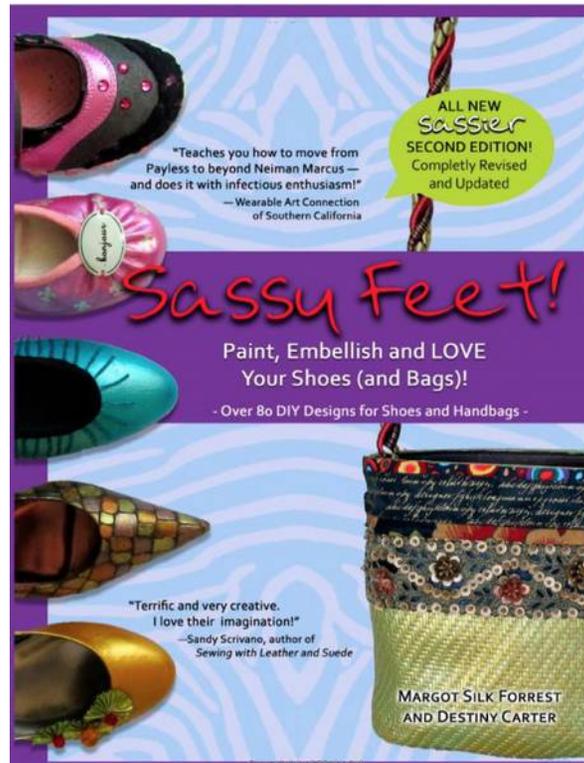
need to prep the leather first), I was ready to try it. And it worked beautifully!

Why did you eventually decide to write a book on shoe painting and embellishment with co-author Destiny Carter? Was this the first book for both of you?

I decided very early on in my shoe-painting adventures to write a book. That was because writing books – of my own and with other people – was my day job. Plus, I wanted people to know about all the cool things I was discovering about using the paint, attaching various types of embellishments, and so on. I was upcycling a lot of shoes, making plenty of mistakes, documenting them, and trying different solutions until I found what worked.

Shortly after "Sassy Feet" came out, in 2008, I met Destiny Carter and she took to upcycling shoes like the proverbial horse to water. We started designing together and several of our joint projects hugely benefited from the fact that Destiny is an artist, whereas I am basically a writer and crafter.

A couple of years later, Destiny suggested we do a second edition of "Sassy Feet!" to include the newer designs and techniques we were working with. This gave us the chance to reshoot all the photos of our creations and redesign the entire book, so it was more professional. We added new



sections on bridal shoes, handbags, and our "over the top" shoes and boots. We made our instructions more succinct, giving us room for adding all the pro tips we now knew. We also added topics like doing fabric collage on shoes and bags, applying metallic leafing to wedges or other non-flexible areas of shoes and bags, and changing out straps and handles on handbags.

The idea of painting and embellishing shoes might seem a little intimidating to some costumers. Can someone with no background really successfully paint and embellish shoes to go with their costumes?

Yes, it really is easy to paint and embellish your shoes, purses, cases, clothing, luggage, whatever (!) made of leather or manmade leather. (This paint also works on fabric.) We showcase a number of different painting techniques in the book,



1970's style men's boots, gold burnished -- a personal favorite.

from simple color blocking to creating sophisticated, multicolored textures with sea sponges, synthetic sponges, and cosmetic wedge sponges. We also discuss the possibilities (and drawbacks) of using stencils and rubber stamps.

We also have a couple of YouTube videos that show how to prep and stroke on the paint. We include detailed instructions with every paint order.

What are some things that readers will learn from the book about attaching embellishments to shoes and bags?

As to attaching embellishments, it's a matter of using the right glue (one that will dry clear and flexible and is formulated to work on BOTH the surfaces you are using it on, for example, on the leather and the lace, or on painted leather and lace). We have a glue chart in our book that shows the brands that have worked best for us over the years.

It's also important to consider where on your shoe or bag you are attaching the embellishment. If it's going to be on an area where the shoe (for example) will bend and flex



when you walk, you will need to stitch any inflexible embellishments like metal stampings or buckles. It's common sense really. Don't try to glue anything that doesn't bend onto a part of the shoe that does. The shoe will win and your embellishment will come flying off. I definitely favor stitching on embellishments, and we recommend using a leather or glover's needle and Fireline (or similar) beading thread. This thread does not stretch and it won't come unknotted if you use a surgeon's knot to tie it.

Talk a little about the paints your book recommends using for shoes made of various material.

The paints we recommend are acrylics, so they are water based and easy to clean up. Once they dry, though, they are permanent. They can be used on leather, manmade leather, fabric, wood, cork and many other surfaces. Other than the Lumiere line of paint, which has over 25 colors, we recommend (and sell) a sister line of Jacquard paints called Neopaques. While the Lumiere paints have metallic, gleaming, or pearl finishes, the Neopaques are bold matte colors. All of these paints can be mixed, so the color possibilities are endless. We carry a kit of the basic Neopaque colors with mixing instructions just for this purpose.



The book also has projects for readers to try. What are a few of your favorites?

My favorite projects are those that use sponging with multiple colors of gleaming Lumiere. Where two colors look good, three or four or five look better and better and better. This technique doesn't require a steady hand with a brush, and any mistakes (dabbing too much of one color in a particular area, for example) can be fixed by dabbing other colors lightly over it. You can also choose to keep the original color of the bag or shoes as the background for your sponging effects, or completely cover the entire piece.



Synthetic sponged pale pink sandal with three colors plus background.

My favorite embellishments are oddball things like zippers, chain maille, copper washers from the hardware store, and dichroic glass pieces. You can find these in our book or on our [blog](#).



Cosmetic sponging over black background.

Once readers have gone through your book, are there online forums where they can ask questions or get advice?

We don't have a forum where folks can post questions, but we do answer every email we get, usually within 24 hours. Destiny Carter and I also have over 250 [blog posts](#) you can search – and they are all focused on our craft, not our recipes, illnesses or pets.



Zipper embellished shoe with synthetic sponging.

Margot Silk Forrest is an artisan, craft teacher, and co-author of “Sassy Feet: Paint, Embellish and LOVE Your Shoes (and Bags)!” More photos of her work, along with free how-to information, are on the [SassyFeet.com](#) website. For leather paints (Lumiere and its sister line of products, Neopaque), books, tools, embellishments, and other supplies, explore the online store, and check out the Sassy Feet [blog](#) about DIY shoe design.

