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Gadget-Textile Painting

Kay Sharp Nelson

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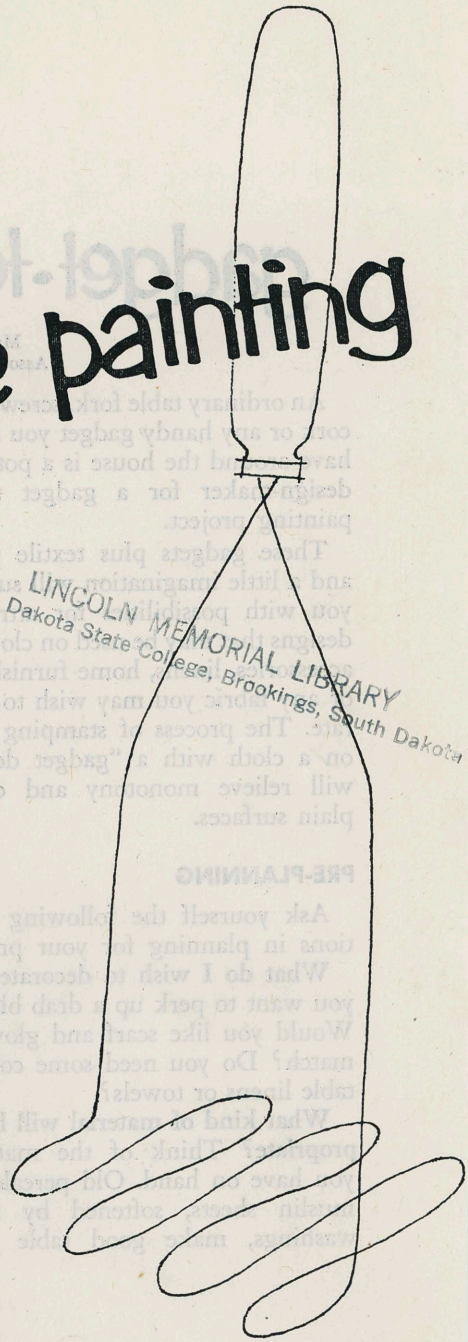
Gadget-textile painting



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gadget-textile painting

Mrs. Kay Sharp Nelson
Associate Extension Specialist

An ordinary table fork, screw head, cork or any handy gadget you might have around the house is a potential design-maker for a gadget textile painting project.

These gadgets plus textile paints and a little imagination will surprise you with possibilities for attractive designs that may be used on clothing, accessories, linens, home furnishings, or any fabric you may wish to decorate. The process of stamping color on a cloth with a "gadget design" will relieve monotony and enrich plain surfaces.

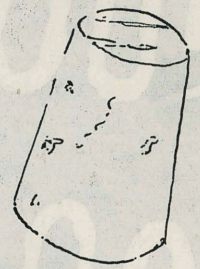
PRE-PLANNING

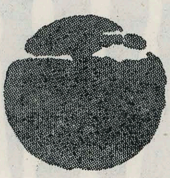
Ask yourself the following questions in planning for your project:

What do I wish to decorate? Do you want to perk up a drab blouse? Would you like scarf and gloves to match? Do you need some colorful table linens or towels?

What kind of material will be appropriate? Think of the materials you have on hand. Old percale and muslin sheets, softened by many washings, make good table mats, aprons and curtains. The back of an old shirt will make two or more guest towels.

Generally, smooth-textured and "cottony" materials are best for textile painting, but some rough materials print well if thinner ink, softer printing surface and greater pressure are used. Cotton and linen are the easiest to print. Silks and rayons are more difficult because they take the colors very fast. The informal and "peasant" look of block printing





seems unsuited to silky and sheer cloth.

What sort of spirit do I want to create? Is it for the purpose of humor, dignity, informality? Think of the interests and temperament of the one to use it.

How will the design be used? Will the design be seen from one direction or several? Will it be a border, repeat pattern, large or small design? Good design is governed by five principles:

HARMONY of design is achieved by repeating a conventional design in reverse in dark and light blocks of color.

FORMAL BALANCE is produced when a design is used in the same way in corresponding areas.

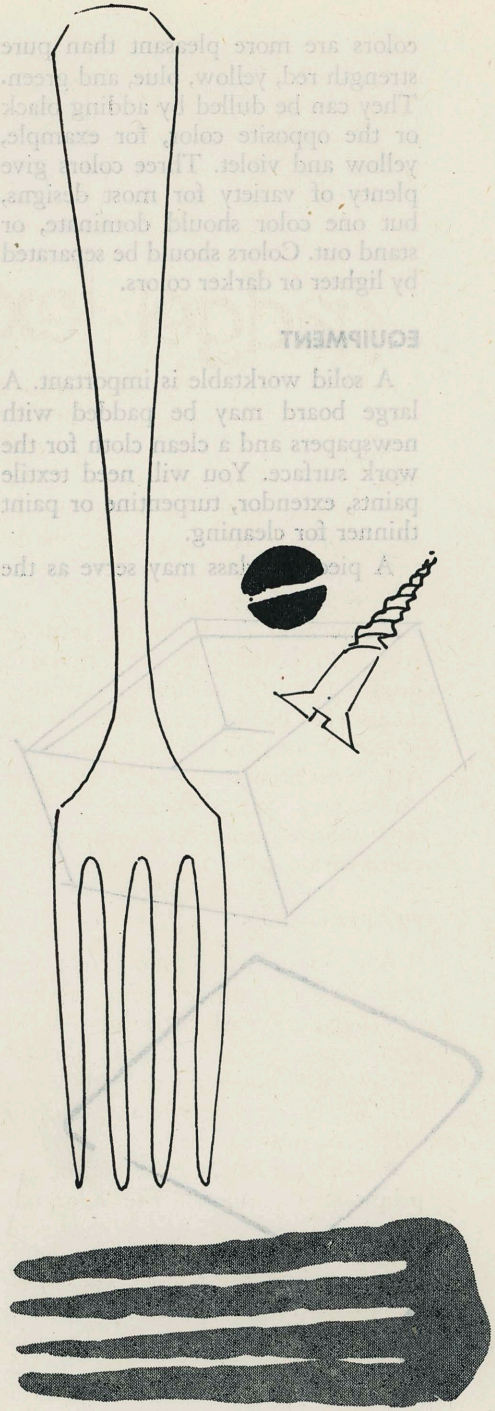
GOOD PROPORTION comes from interesting unequal division of space.

RHYTHM MOVEMENT is shown through repetition and unbroken lines.

EMPHASIS OF A SINGLE MOTIF creates interest in a dominant area when placed at structural points, used in moderation, and when the design is adapted to the material and its use. Use conventionalized forms of nature. Give small areas a simple design. Small articles require small designs; large ones, large designs.

What colors should I use? Most textile paints, being transparent colors, are most effective when they are used on light or medium backgrounds. If a dark colored fabric **must** be used, add white to the colors to make them opaque enough to cover the dark background.

Remember, background color of fabrics may change the color of the paint when applied to that fabric. Soft



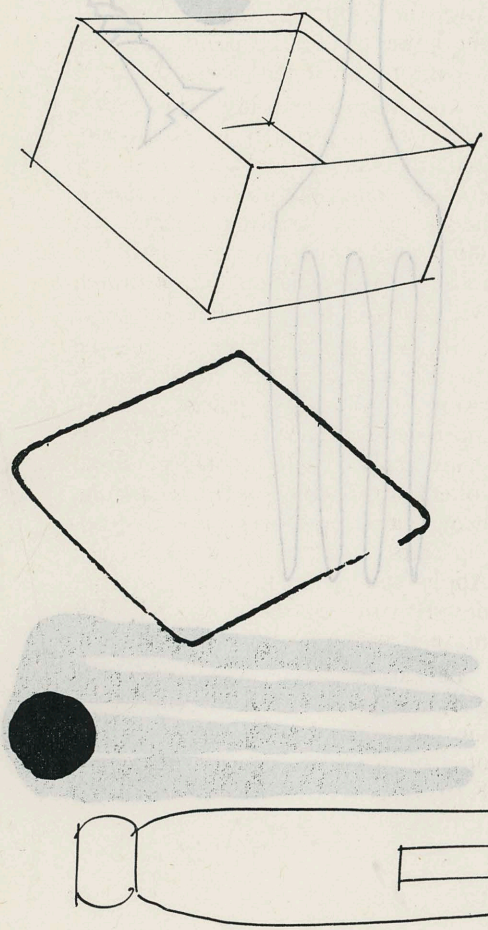
colors are more pleasant than pure strength red, yellow, blue, and green. They can be dulled by adding black or the opposite color, for example, yellow and violet. Three colors give plenty of variety for most designs, but one color should dominate, or stand out. Colors should be separated by lighter or darker colors.

EQUIPMENT

A solid worktable is important. A large board may be padded with newspapers and a clean cloth for the work surface. You will need textile paints, extendor, turpentine or paint thinner for cleaning.

A piece of glass may serve as the palette (hard surface on which to mix paints). Small sticks are excellent for stirring paints. A small spatula will blend paints on the glass palette.

Round up several not-too-large gadgets and be sure to try them out for design and handling before deciding on them. They must be able to take the paint to their surface easily. Choose a gadget that you can grasp firmly, so that your fingers don't slip off and smudge the fabric.

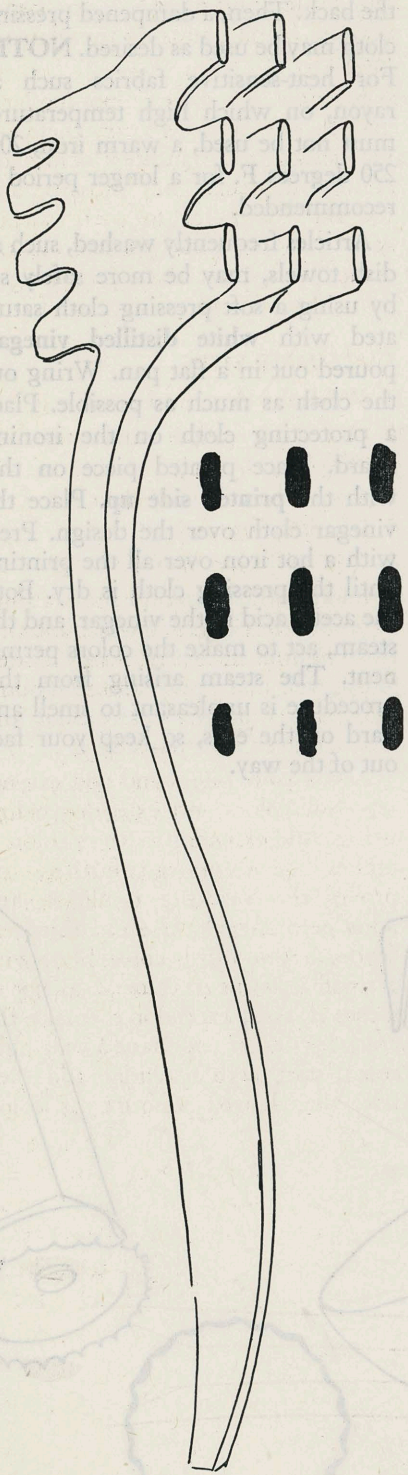


FIVE SIMPLE STEPS

1. Wash the cloth and press
2. Mix your colors and add extendor
3. Apply the color to fabric
4. Dry thoroughly
5. "Set" with hot iron

1. Wash the cloth and press. Eliminate all size or filler from the fabric by washing in warm soapy water. Rinse well and press carefully. Some fabrics may not have any filler and will not need this first step.

2. Mix your colors and add extendor. Stir colors and extendor before using. Add extendor to every color. It makes the colors go farther, improves the working qualities, and adds permanency. Use one-third extendor to two-thirds color. Start with a small amount of color so as not to waste it. Add extendor to make the color lighter. If you want a very light color, start with extendor and then add the desired amount of color.



(White paint will also lighten the colors, but will cut down on washability.) To make a color darker, add black. (A little goes a long way.) A tacky, sticky consistency is usually best, but it can be a little thinner when used on rougher-surfaced materials.

3. Apply the color to fabric. Prepare the working surface by using a few layers of newspapers, two thicknesses of cotton flannel or an old blanket, to make a slightly soft printing surface. Most fabrics will print better if a damp cloth is smoothly stretched out before the fabric is placed. Thumb tack carefully and securely to a substantial table or board. Too soft a printing surface allows the gadget to sink down, and the fabric to pick up paint from the background, and outlines blur.

Too hard a printing surface will cause the impression to be uneven and the fabric will not take up enough paint. Coarse, rough fabric needs a softer printing surface, but soft, thick fabric prints well on rather hard surfaces. **Experiment** with gadgets on samples of fabrics.

Smaller gadgets may be pressed directly in the smooth, thinly spread paint on the glass palette. Larger more detailed surfaces may have the paint applied with a brayer (small roller) or tapped on with the spatula, being careful to cover only protruding parts of the design of the gadget. Apply the painted gadget straight down firmly on the cloth. **NEVER** move it once it has touched the cloth.

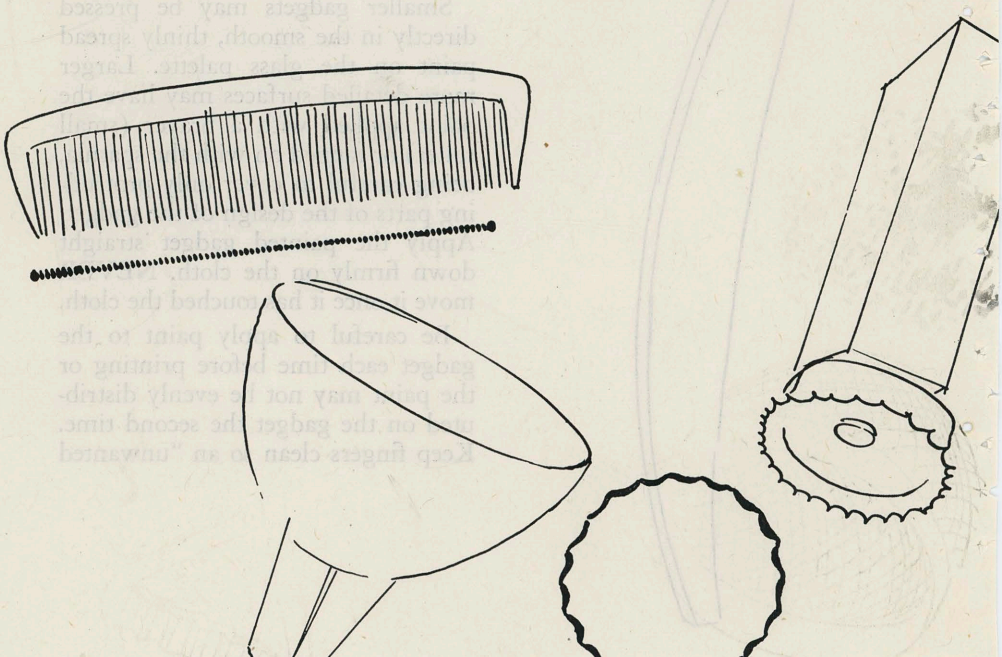
Be careful to apply paint to the gadget each time before printing or the paint may not be evenly distributed on the gadget the second time. Keep fingers clean so an "unwanted

design" will not appear. The print should be fairly even and solid; every thread in the printed area should be solidly covered.

4. Dry throughly. Lay your finished work on newspapers or hang it over a firm clothes line to dry thoroughly before setting the colors. Paints take longer to dry on heavier fabrics than on thinner ones. A safe rule is to allow 4 to 10 days to dry, depending on weave of cloth, air circulating in the room, and the humidity. Test the color for dryness by wrapping a clean cloth tightly over your first finger; press down in the center of a printed area (being careful not to smudge design if paint is not yet dry) and twist your finger around. If no color comes off on the cloth, paint is dry. Heat and circulating air will speed drying.

5. "Set" with hot iron. If your test print washes well, then pressing with a hot iron is all that is necessary to complete the job. Place the dry cloth over the design, face up, and press the decorated portions with a hot iron (at least 3 minutes at 350 degrees F). Turn the material over and press the back. Then, a dampened pressing cloth may be used as desired. **NOTE:** For heat-sensitive fabrics such as rayon, on which high temperatures must not be used, a warm iron, 200-250 degrees F. for a longer period is recommended.

Articles frequently washed, such as dish towels, may be more safely set by using a soft pressing cloth saturated with **white distilled vinegar,** poured out in a flat pan. Wring out the cloth as much as possible. Place a protecting cloth on the ironing board. Place printed piece on this with the **printed side up.** Place the vinegar cloth over the design. Press with a hot iron over all the printing until the pressing cloth is dry. Both the acetic acid in the vinegar, and the steam, act to make the colors permanent. The steam arising from this procedure is unpleasant to smell and hard on the eyes, so keep your face out of the way.



MORE DETAILS

Some craftsmen have printed good designs and then finished them with very haphazard sewing jobs. This spoils the entire result. Take time to finish your work by giving it a well tailored look. Hand rolled or plain hemstitched hems are very suitable for hand blocked fabrics. Small pieces like napkins and place-mats may be fringed by pulling threads on all four sides. You can secure the edge by machine stitching just inside the fringe.

Clean up is easier when an old toothbrush dipped in turpentine is used for scrubbing small details of gadgets. Paper towels, newspapers and rags dipped in turpentine also make cleaning easier. **Burn all turpentine rags and papers immediately.** They are a fire hazard if left lying around. Small amounts of prepared paints may be stored overnight for immediate use the next day by carefully wrapping in aluminum foil.

OTHER USES FOR GADGET PRINTING

Children and adults, alike, find fun in printing their own jiffy-gift wrapping paper. The work surface should be more solid than for textile painting. If tissue paper is used, use one layer of plain white tissue paper inside to show the design more and to give strength for wrapping purposes. A checkerboard paper or a paper marked off in desired size squares may be laid under the tissue paper as a guide for the design.

Finish stamping with one color before starting with another. Keep occasions or personalities in mind when planning designs. The gift-wrap paper makes nice gifts or bazaar sale items, when planned as a gift package in itself.

Print your own Christmas cards or decorate stationery for the unusual touch.

COURTESIES:
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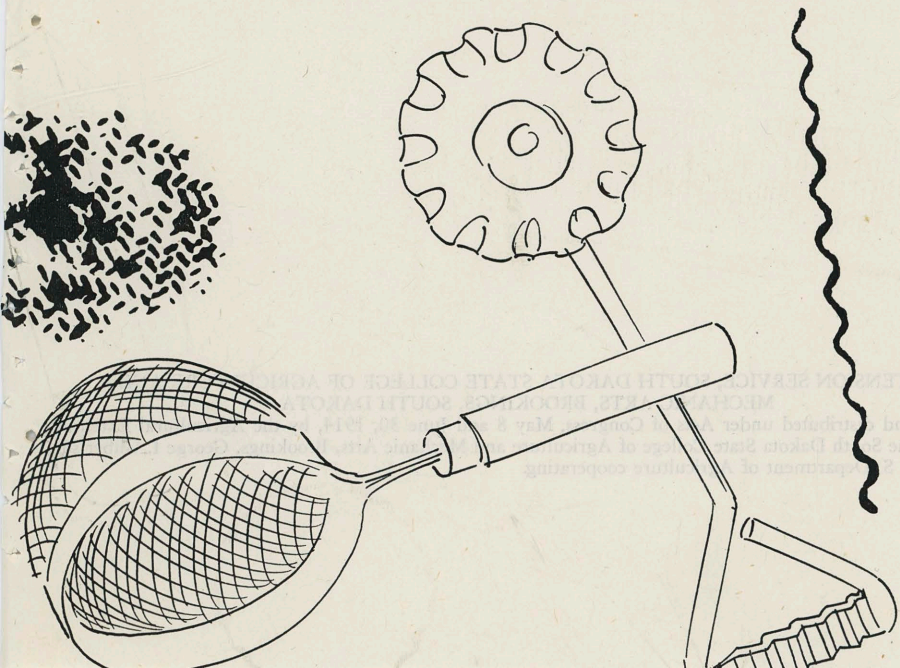
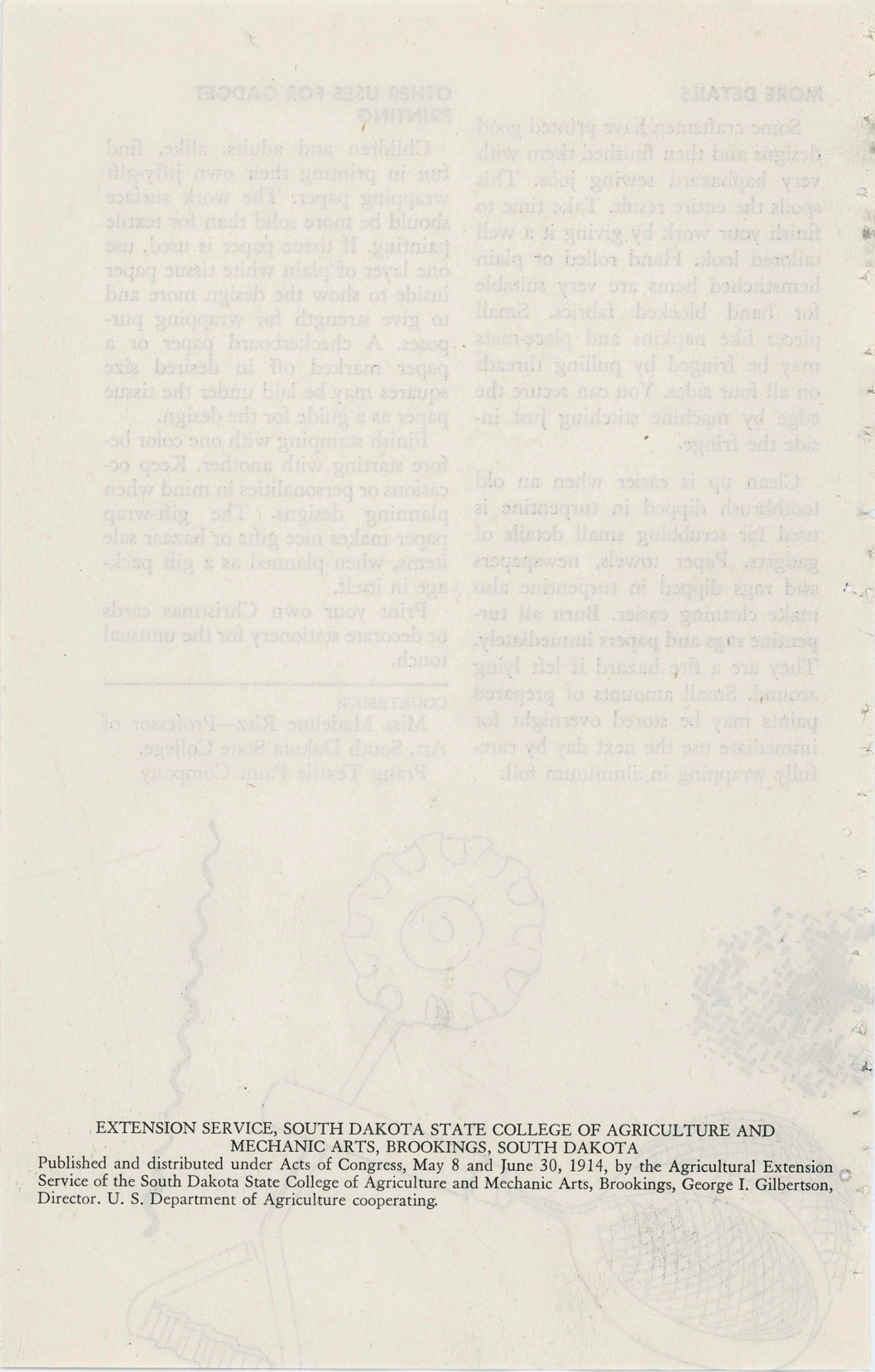
Prang Textile Paint Company





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