

Deck the walls

Sarah Withell's project provides contemporary Christmas cheer.

Traditional Christmas decorations certainly have their charm, but what if you have a contemporary living space that doesn't exactly lend itself to lashings of red, green and tinsel? This year I decided to create some bold new decorations and prove that silly season decor can be fresh, colourful and a lot of fun if you are willing to think outside the square. Although this wall arrangement may not be your standard "boughs of holly", it encourages tradition in the sense that making your own decorations to complement your living space can be something for the whole family to enjoy every year.

YOU WILL NEED

- 35cm polystyrene wreath
- 20cm-high papier-mache numbers or letters of your choice to spell out something festive
- Resene paints Aqua, All Black, White, and Red Berry
- Various faux flowers of your choice
- Rope: 5mm x 15m
- 25mm masking tape
- Thin cork craft square
- 6mm dowel
- String



1

Paint your letters or numbers with a good three coats of Resene White paint. I used the number 25 as a subtle nod to Christmas Day. While the numbers are drying, wrap the rope around the wreath, leaving enough space for your flowers. Discreetly secure the rope at each end with masking tape or pins.



2

Mask out the stripes on your now-dry numbers. Ensure the tape is pressed down firmly, especially at the edges. Measure out the stripes with a ruler and pencil if you want to keep them straight and even. Paint the stripes in thin layers to build up the colour slowly and avoid running or smudging. I used Resene All Black.



3

While the stripes are drying, paint the wreath in a bright colour. I used Resene Aqua for a modern twist on traditional green. Paint roughly over the rope to get a decent colour coverage. Set it aside to dry. Once the paint on your numbers is thoroughly dry, carefully remove the tape to reveal the stripes.



4

Press flower heads into the empty space in your wreath. I chose bright colours that made me think of a New Zealand summer (no snow and mistletoe here). Be sure to include greenery.



5

Arrange the wreath and numbers above your mantel or similar. To complete the wall hanging, I made a small banner with a stag painted on it in Resene Red Berry. I used a soft cork sheet, but fabric or card could be substituted. Simply cut to shape, paint on a stencil image of your choice and hang from a small strip of dowel.