

Rick Fischer, owner of Deco Illusions and Studio Di Arte

# The Art of Living

DECO ILLUSIONS, LLC  
*Studio Di Arte, LLC*

European-inspired faux artistry and decorative finishes

article by Laura Marie Carmody • photography by Steve Vorderman

Venetian Plaster using Old World Craftsmanship



Hammered copper finish on beam and matching display pedestal



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Troweled concrete columns to look hand carved



Studio Di Arte, LLC 6000 sq. ft. showroom and production facility



Custom ornamentation painted in a bathroom



Textured Venetian Plaster with embossed floral design

When it comes to making a house a home, it's often the unique, special touches that create something truly memorable. Rick Fischer specializes in unique. As the owner of Deco Illusions, he transforms the ordinary into extraordinary with an endless array of high-end faux artistry techniques.

Forget one-color walls, simple ceilings and basic floors. Instead, consider the eye-catching effects and creative alternatives that are the trademark of Fischer's custom decorative finishes. If you can imagine it, he can create it.

Deco Illusions opens the door to anything that relates to decorative painting. Fischer's art is a blend of replicated finishes and his own original creations. There are textures reminiscent of Venetian plaster or Italian stucco, custom stenciling applications, designs inlaid in wood floors or furnishings, faux custom ceilings, concrete overlays for existing countertops and so much more.

Columns may feature rich ornamentation, marbling or carving effects. Fireplace finishes may project the illusion of limestone, marble or other natural stone. External facades and walkout basements can take on a whole new look with decorative concrete.

One of the newest applications for faux artistry is the decorative concrete overlay, which is applied over a concrete slab or subflooring. Fischer can also imbed replicated or custom designs in the concrete, including logos and ornamentation. The result is an amazing, one-of-a-kind finish.

"Concrete is a fairly new desire in terms of decorative finishes," says Fischer. "When the overlay is complete, it can look like stone, plaster or organic in nature. And, because the material is man-made concrete as opposed to exotic stone, the overall cost of the flooring is reduced and it is a Green Product, meaning it is environment friendly."

Clearly, there are countless textures, colors and combinations from which to choose. Plus, Fischer has additional resources to further enhance the artistry of any given space. For example, he works with local artisans, such as Greg Young, to produce portraits, backgrounds or murals with true fresco finishes.

"Clients are hiring me as a decorative artist," says Fischer. "As an artisan, I take it to the next level. It is not just color effects. I offer much more ornamentation and design. I also offer exposure to other gifted artists such as Young as a complement to the services I provide."

"I have the experience and ability to put together the concepts of design theory and color sense," he continues. "I visualize the entire project to help keep things in balance, because what I do serves as a backdrop to the rest of the home, from furniture and artwork to cabinetry and even lighting. What we do on the walls and floors directly affects how the designer will finish a room. Communication with designers and mutual respect for talents and contributions to the work is very important in the creation of a perfect finish."

To begin the process, Fischer visits a client's home or business and discusses what they want. Next, he asks finely tuned questions to get a better picture of what the best overall look will be for their space. Based on the results of that conversation, he provides an estimate for review. After the estimate is accepted, he creates sample boards to share with the clients. Once approved, the actual process can begin.

"I strive to give each client what they will enjoy for many years to come," says Fischer. "Once the finishes are applied, the color, technique and style throughout a home or commercial space should all be in harmony."

"This is an investment because it enhances both home value and aesthetic value," he adds. "The key is to keep things natural, using earth tones and organics. Of course, focal areas can be more creative and colorful. But it must be in balance."

Fischer draws his knowledge and talent from a combination of genetics, training and passion. His mother is an artisan, influencing him early in life in terms of canvas work, antique furniture refinishing, home design and color. His first professional foray was

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in a custom-painted street rod and motorcycle business with his brother. He began to move into decorative finishes at age 22 after he saw detailed restoration work being performed in a Midwestern church.

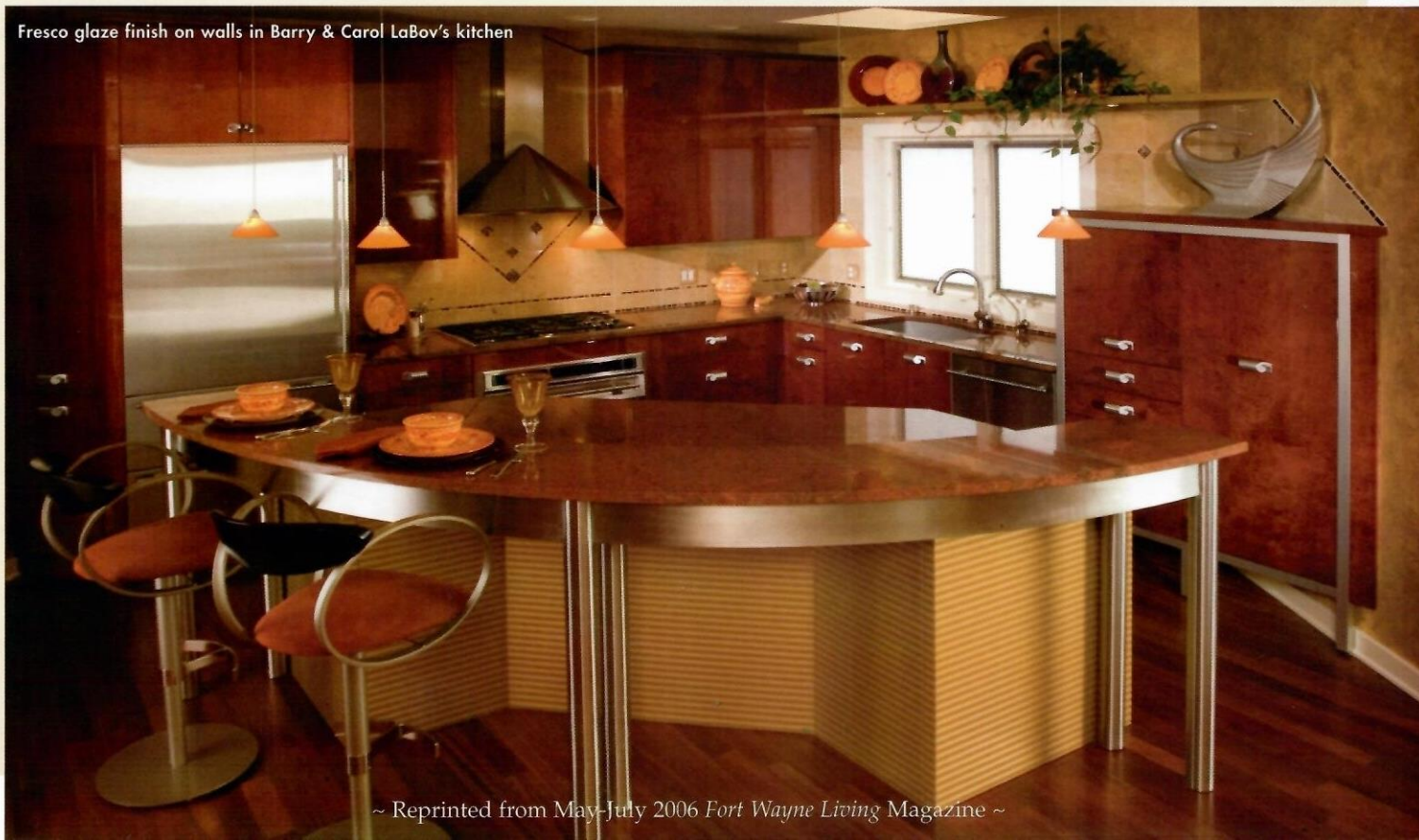
"I felt a natural connection with the old gilded finishes, murals and the like," says Fischer. "I enjoy history and architecture and with my mother's artistic influence, it was just a natural progression for me."

The fledgling artist spent four years teaching him-

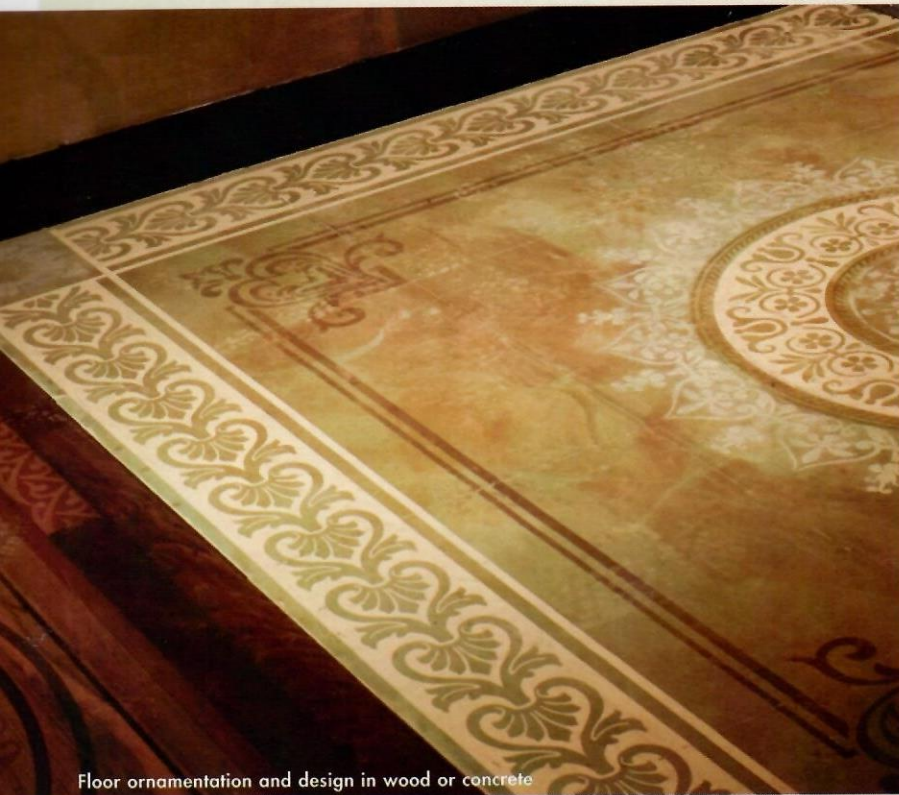


Rich metallic plaster effect with gilded silver leaf motifs and a custom casted medallion

Fresco glaze finish on walls in Barry & Carol LaBov's kitchen



# PROFILE



Floor ornamentation and design in wood or concrete



Floor ornamentation design in Zuber model home

self techniques, then sought out professional, hands-on opportunities for growth and development. "I studied as an apprentice under a number of master artisans from Europe and the United States," says Fischer. "After exhibiting a desire and passion to learn all I could about the craft, I was consistently hired for project after project. My education evolved from learning on a job site to being taught by the masters in their studios."

"The high caliber of the artisans I have worked and traveled with has certainly influenced my own work," he continues. "I had the pleasure of learning the proper techniques from these masters and then began creating my own applications from there. I have continued to evolve my skills ever since."

Fischer will begin showcasing his extraordinary range of applications in his new showroom, Studio Di Arte, opening this summer. The showroom is located in Roanoke just down the street from Joseph Decuis and Carroll's Furniture.

Clients visiting this intriguing space will be introduced to numerous large-scale wall, ceiling, flooring and Architectural Millwork. Although the showroom will be open by appointment only, passers-by can still peer in the picture window and get an idea of all that's available through Deco Illusions.

"The showroom will allow me to sit down with clients, designers and architects and discuss what they are looking for in more detail," says Fischer. "This will help them select the best choices and finishes for their home or business."

Studio Di Arte will also serve as an artisans' gallery, featuring some of the best talent in the area. Original paintings by Young will be a highlight, as well as stone carvings, hand-crafted glasswork and even custom wood flooring from local talents.

Eventually, Fischer plans to utilize a portion of his studio space, adjacent to the showroom, as a training facility. He will offer hands-on seminars, classes and workshops to the next generation of artisans. As a certified installer and educator of Old World Italian plasters, decorative concrete floors and other faux finish techniques, it is something he already does in other cities around the country.

"I speak at seminars and give lectures for manufacturers of the products I use," says Fischer. "I have traveled to different areas of the country to teach aspiring artisans various techniques." He has even served as a co-project manager for training programs in which artists learn on the job by refinishing a home room by room.

But don't worry. Fischer won't be giving away all of his trade secrets during his training sessions. He is saving his very best, most unique decorative approaches for his clients' homes or businesses. FWL•

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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**HOURS:**

By Appointment

**YEARS IN BUSINESS:**

Over 40 years of combined experience  
in commercial and residential

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**DECORATIVE SERVICES:**

- Architectural Old World Venetian plaster and Italian lime stucco
- European Fresco's, Trompe L'Oeil, stenciling, wood inlays and murals
- Distress color lime washing, glazing, wood graining and marbling
- Gilded leafing and patina metal effects
- Custom painted furniture, antiquing and distressed stone effect on all architectural millwork, columns and cabinetry in both wood and PVC.
- Interior and exterior decorative artistry in concrete, which includes creative and unique designs and color combinations, custom inlaid business logos, hand-made floor tiles and faux masonry and stonework on floors, walls fireplaces, columns and millwork.
- Decorative concrete countertop effects for kitchens, bars and tabletops.