

Hands-On Review

gadgets, upgrades, gizmos, and accessories

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Screen Goo

The DIY large screen maker . . . convert your lounge room wall into a quality movie screen

One of the biggest problems facing potential large screen projector buyers is just that 'the large screen'. What type is best (there's so many to choose from) and just where do you hang the blessed thing. Then there's the ill-informed 'hanging sheet' and 'project-direct-to-wall' projector owners. Until now, both these were definite 'no-no' compromises to the traditional confusion and expense of buying a screen . . . that was PSG (pre Screen Goo).

So what is Screen Goo? Calling it a paint, although adequately descriptive, does the product an injustice. It is in fact a specially formulated wall coating that has been developed by Canadian company Goo Systems, and consists separate Topcoat and Basecoat 'paintable' mixtures that can provide a permanent video screen when applied correctly to a good quality wall surface.

Various types of Screen Goo products are available in the range suited for the type of projector used. The Digital Grey duo is formulated for smaller screens in close to ideal, low ambient light conditions. Greater reflectivity and/or larger screen use is accomplished using the lighter mixes such as CRT White. We were supplied with the Digital Grey Topcoat and Digital Grey Basecoat kit for this appraisal.

With a stippled-like finish to my lounge room walls, we cheated a little with this review by applying the Screen Goo to a specially prepared sheet of 25mm MDF laminated with Gyprock plasterboard. Assuming that in 'normal' circumstances the Screen Goo would be applied to an already painted wall, we coated our virgin plasterboard with a coating of readily available low-sheen paint. Once complete this was then temporarily fixed back to the brick rendered wall surface and was ready to be 'Screen Goo-ed'.

According to the manufacturer, application is best achieved with a spray gun (something we don't have here at AVL HQ) although I personally wouldn't fancy using a spray gun in the lounge room for fear of the spread of airborne particles landing where they shouldn't. The next best method (and safest for DIY-ers in my opinion) is via a very high quality paint roller and tray. The smoother the 'pile' on the roller, the better. We took the second option! A one litre Screen Goo kit of Basecoat and Topcoat will cover around five square metres.

Applying a couple of thin coats from each of the Screen Goo 'paint-pots' (as the recommended roller method), and allowing around two hours drying time per coat ensured an

even coverage with less chance of thickening. This again, recommended by Goo Systems, as well as being a method I've learned over the years when house painting.

Our MDF/ Gyprock 'wall' was eventually completed without any real difficulty, and after some experimentation, we found that once a coat was applied in either a vertical or horizontal roller motion, finishing off with a multi-directional roller motion produced good results.

With this DIY project completed, it was time to put our temporary screen into service. Setting up one of Sanyo's popular entry-level LCD projectors, and with the drapes closed, lights dimmed and loaded-up with *The Matrix - Reloaded*, some serious screen testing was affected one evening last month, all aided by the company of 'my good lady', a couple of glasses of Shiraz and a bowl of cashews.

And the results? Well, the movie is great entertainment anyway, particularly for a devout '*Matrix*' fan like myself. And the Screen Goo/Sanyo combo? Much better



than I had anticipated. At typical viewing distance and screen dimensions for the room size the resulting image proved to be clear with good contrast and image depth. On-axis and off-axis were equally impressive. Colours too were vibrant.

So there you have it. If you're looking for an inexpensive video screen and are a dab-hand with a paint roller, Screen Goo could well be the ideal answer for you. AVL

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Verdict: ★★★★★