

Hair colors needn't be high commitment

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Feathers, chalk, dip-and-dye -- things you'd find in a child's craft box, right?

Try your hair salon.

Long, wispy strands of rooster feathers are used as clip-in extensions. Colorists are dying the tips of hair instead of the usual roots to create an ombre, a gradual dark-to-light effect. And wet chalk is being colored into hair for a night on the town.

None are drastic changes or commitments, but they still allow for an expression of color that might have once been overlooked.

Feather extensions are fun, says Dana Bannon, owner of Pageboy salon and boutique in Lawrenceville, "and also a nice way for people to experiment with color in their hair.

"And they are ridiculously popular!" says Bannon, who updates her Facebook page to notify clients when shipments arrive as they tend to fly off shelves.

Available in hues from neutral browns to fluorescent pinks and greens, the feathers can cost anywhere from \$10 to \$60, can be heated and styled up to 400 degrees and last for as long as 3 to 4 months -- although you can remove them sooner if you'd like.

Taryn Josephic, 28, a waitress at Fat Head's Saloon in South Side who recently switched from pink feathers to more natural browns, is a fan of their low commitment level.

"I'm not super, super trendy but I thought these were a nice way to accent your hair without doing something very permanent," she says. "They're noticeable, but they're not in your face."

At Izzazu salon, spa and serata located Downtown and in Wexford, co-owner Emilio Cornacchione says he's seen another not so drastic trend to hit his salon and make it's way up the tresses of clients -- literally.

With the ombre coloring technique, hair is dyed from the ends up, stopping around the cheekbone line. Its upkeep, therefore, is minimal because roots aren't an issue.

Amy Snyder, a stylist at Izzazu, says the ombre trend is appealing on all levels.

College students who aren't interested in continually getting their hair done, and

people who don't want to spend a lot of money on upkeep or who aren't into highlighted hair all might consider this new trend because it blends and transitions gradually with the natural hair color.

For those wary about significant changes, "it lets them experience a little taste of the color world." Snyder says, "It's really the best of both worlds."

An initial sitting costs around \$60, and follow-up coloring costs \$35 to \$65, depending on several factors, every two to three months.

"This is a trend that's going to go through to the fall because it's so popular," Snyder says.

If feathers and ombre aren't your thing -- too permanent or too costly -- there's another way to dabble with a little color in your hair.

Edward Tricomi, co-owner of Warren-Tricomi salons in New York, Los Angeles, Miami and Connecticut, says "chalking" is great for a special look, totally safe and easy to try at home.

The steps for chalk color are simple: Purchase pastel-colored chalk, wet it, and draw directly onto pieces of the hair. Finish with hair spray. It comes out with a shampoo wash.

Another way to chalk hair is to drop a piece of chalk -- the bigger the piece, the more vibrant the color -- into a spray bottle of water and allow the chalk to break down completely. Then, you can just spray the pieces of hair you want colored.

"I've seen people become less afraid of color of the years," Tricomi says. "It has become a way to express oneself."