

THE BASICS OF STENCILING

Stencils are available ready-made, in different motifs and themes, or can be created using your own designs. You can make your own stencils using freezer paper, stencil film or any paper which is translucent, easy to cut and durable. Traditionally, stenciling is done using brushes with soft, densely packed bristles but today, many people who stencil use high density foam rollers. Rollers allow for greater coverage, smooth and even areas of colour, and clean lines where precision is needed. The most common types of paint used by stencilers are acrylics and latex paints.

MATERIALS

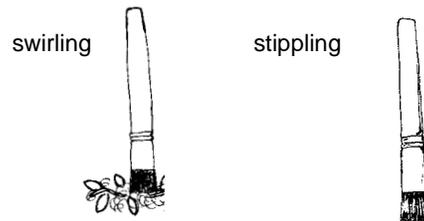
- rollers (smaller sized, high density foam)
- stenciling brushes
- acrylic or latex paint
- glazing medium or acrylic paint retarder
- freezer paper or ready-made stencils
- spatula or palette knife
- low-tack repositionable adhesive
- low-tack masking tape
- palette
- paper towels
- X-Acto Knife

BRUSH STENCILING

Stenciling requires a good quality stencil brush. These brushes are available in a range of sizes from 1/4" to 1" in diameter. It is important that your stencil brushes are made with soft, densely packed bristles as hard bristles are not as easy to use for layering colours of paint.

When stenciling with a brush there are two techniques which are used: swirling and stippling (also

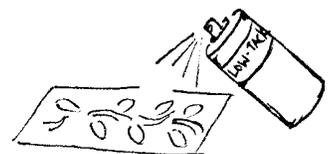
referred to as pouncing). To apply paint using the swirling technique, simply rub the paint in a circular motion over the opening in the stencil. To use the stippling technique, apply the paint by dabbing your brush in an up and down motion, perpendicular to the stenciling surface.



We recommend practicing these two techniques on scrap paper before applying them to your final stenciling surface so that you can see what results they produce. Before beginning, you should prepare your brush for either of these techniques by rubbing a small amount of glazing medium or retarder into your brush using a circular motion. Either of these mediums will extend the working time of the paint and will help to prevent the paint from drying on the brush bristles. Be sure to wipe off the excess otherwise the extra glazing medium or retarder will affect the final outcome of your stencil, either acrylic or latex paint. Next, place a small amount of paint on the palette, and using the same circular motion as above, work the paint into the bristles and again, remove the excess from the brush. At this point the brush should feel quite dry to the touch, and if rubbed on the palm of your hand little to no paint should come off.

It is important to secure your stencil with either a low-tack repositionable spray or tape before you begin to stencil. This will help to ensure that you have clean and consistent lines. To apply low-tack spray simply spray the backside of your stencil and allow the spray to air dry for a few minutes then place the stencil on the surface to be painted. Use these sprays in a well ventilated area with a respirator.

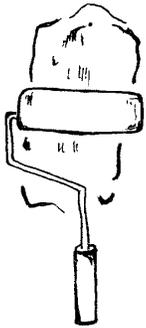
Next, take your brush and apply the paint using either the swirling or stippling techniques. Slowly



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build up the colour with successive layers of paint. Remember, when stenciling it is best to have too little paint rather than too much. Different colours can be used for shading, modeling and depth, however, it is recommended to use different brushes for each colour to prevent your colours from becoming muddy.

Brushes are an excellent tool to be used in conjunction with other tools such as rollers and palette knives. A combination of different tools allows you to go back into your image and add highlights, shading and texture.



ROLLER STENCILING

With roller stenciling a paint roller is used in place of the traditional stenciling brush. We recommend using high density foam rollers as soft foam and nap (fuzzy)

rollers hold too much paint. High density foam rollers allow for greater control, even coverage and cleaner lines and edges.

To prepare the paint for roller stenciling you simply apply a small dollop of paint on your palette and then using a palette knife or spatula spread the paint in one long, thin stroke. Next, take your roller, making sure it is dry, and roll it through the paint to lightly cover it. Now

roll the roller back and forth to evenly distribute the paint on the roller. Roll any excess paint off on a paper towel. Like brush stenciling, you should be able to roll the roller over your hand and produce very little paint.

If you are new to roller stenciling you may want to practice on a scrap piece of paper by rolling the paint on thinly and lightly. You can experiment using different directions and successive rolls of colour to build up depth and layers of paint. Consider separate rollers for each colour you use.

You are now ready to begin. Place your stencil on the surface to be painted using either the low-tack repositionable spray or tape and roll away!

STENCILING SURFACES

Most surfaces including walls, wood, paper, and clay pots can be used for stenciling as long as the surfaces are free and clean of any dirt or grease. Keep in mind that some surfaces, like glass and metal, do require special preparation. Also, the type of paint you use will be determined by the final surface you choose to paint on. We recommend researching and testing your paints and painting surface before embarking on any large or complex projects. This is particularly important when working on outdoor surfaces and large mural stenciling projects.



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