



THE ROLLING DEAD

AIRBRUSHING A ZOMBIE SKATE DECK
BY SEAN CAHILL

Zombies have always been extremely popular subject matter in film, art and pop-culture, and the new **Zombie Stencils** from AirSick make painting zombie scenes and figures a much less intimidating task.

For this project we are going to be creating a promotional piece for the brand new line of Zombie Stencils from AirSick. We are going to be painting up a skate deck, complete with blood-thirsty zombie horde and some clean, plotter-cut type.

LETS GET TO IT!

PROJECT SUPPLIES

- Blank skateboard deck
- Double action airbrush
- Masking tape 1/8"-2"
- Razor blades or Xacto knife
- Airsick Zombie Stencils
- Auto Mask



WICKED
BLACK



WICKED
RED



WICKED
WHITE

STENCILS

AVAILABLE AT AIRSICKSTENCILS.COM



ZOMBIE TORSO 1



ZOMBIE TORSO 2



ZOMBIE TORSO 3



PROJECT MOCK-UP

STEP 1



I used dry 400 sand paper to lightly rough up the surface prior to painting. There were a few blemishes in the deck that needed to be removed with a light sanding.

After a good cleaning with wax and grease remover I based the board in wicked red and used 1/8" fine line tape to make a border around the deck - inset about 1/4" from the edge (STEPS 1,2).

STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



In this tutorial we employ the help of a plotter machine for our text. If you don't have a plotter available, you have several options: The easiest would be to print your own text and transfer it to auto mask that has been applied to the decks surface. You can then cut out each letter using a razor blade. The second option would be to leave the text out all together, your choice.

With my text layed down, I cut the letter "K" so that there will be a 1/8" gap between it and the border of the skateboard (STEP 4).

STEP 5



I use Wicked Black to make a gradual fade from left to right covering about half the skateboard deck (STEP 5).

For this project we worked up a digital mock-up of the skateboard layout. With the composition already worked out on the computer, it will be very easy begin placing elements on the actual board.

STEP 6



STEP 7



As you can see in our project Mock-up, there is a burst of light placed directly behind the skull being held by our topmost zombie. I create the burst using 1/8" fine line tape and making a fan pattern using the severed heads position as a center point. I make sure to mask off all surrounding areas that could be affected by overspray (STEP 8). After the area is masked, I fog some Wicked White in-between the tape lines (STEP 9).

STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10



I am now ready to start laying in the Zombies. I remove the masked letter "A" in AIRSICK since the tallest zombie will be coming over top and overlapping it (SEEN IN STEP 10).

I position each zombie stencil one at a time based on the placement of my mock-up, tape it in place and fog it in using Wicked White (STEP 10).

STEP 11



STEP 12



Because of proper planning, my topmost zombie has lined up perfectly in front of the burst (STEP 11). Since the zombies will be overlapping, I need to fog the topmost in a little more with white. I have re-applied the "Zombie Torso 2" stencil (STEP 12), and give it one more dusting with white. This gives me the proper amount of overlap for the hand (STEP 13).

STEP 13



STEP 14



STEP 15



Note: Go slowly and use light passes to build up paint. When using the stencil, make sure it is secure and as flat to the surface as possible. You will need to use both hands in most cases. One to paint with and the other to hold down stubborn stencil sections. This will help you to get clean lines and avoid overspray under the stencil getting into places you don't want. Use gravity to your advantage by laying your project parallel to the floor whenever possible. This will help the stencil sit flat to the surface.

With all of my zombies fogged in with white, I begin to define them using black. I am being a little loose at this stage, since I will be using the stencils after to tighten up the forms. I black out the zombie's mouths (STEP 16), and begin to darken the chest cavities to give them depth. In STEP 18, I start to render the chest of the bottommost zombie.

STEP 16



STEP 17



STEP 18



STEP 19



I continue painting with black to define the forms, and give roundness and depth to the artwork. The brain takes quite a bit of brush control (STEP 19), but I am simply following the lines of the stencil. Because these zombies are quite small, you do not need to overload them with micro-detail, in fact, much of the detail of zombies can be implied in the dark pits and holes in the broken flesh.

STEP 20



STEP 21



STEP 22



I continue tightening up the artwork with a mixture of hard lines and soft shadows. This stage is very tedious and requires a steady hand and good brush control. The stencils only give you a solid foundation. It's up to you and your artistic vision to bring them to another level. Always staying true to your light source is the key to a full and well rendered piece. In this demo I have the light coming from the top down and slightly from the left. I switch back to white and start the next layer of the painting. Here I am filling in a section that I am not entirely happy with (STEP 24).

STEP 23



STEP 24



STEP 25



I add small details to the dripping guts (STEP 27), and add highlights to the thin strands of torn flesh on the zombie's chest (STEP 28). During this stage, you do not want to cover up your shadows and recesses. Use the white to fill in the spaces around the shadows that you have already created.

STEP 29



This stage of white will really begin to pull the artwork together and lose the "stenciled" look. I tape down the Zombie Torso 2 stencil, and begin to enhance the brighter points of the zombie's features, such as the cheek and the hand (STEPS 26,27).

STEP 26



STEP 27



STEP 28



STEP 30



With the majority of my white layer completed, I go back in with black, but this time I am going to be painting much tighter and focussing on enhancing the smaller details of the painting - such as the splitting flesh on the zombies face (STEP 30).

I begin to render the severed head using very tight dagger strokes and small dots (STEP 31)

STEP 31



STEP 32



The small details of the spine would be very difficult to render free-hand, so we are going to re-apply the stencil.

STEP 33



This is one of the great things about working with detailed stencils. you can simply add back elements at any time. Here I am going to get the spine's hard lines back.

STEP 34



After filling in the hard lines with the stencil, the spine looks great (STEP 34). I finish adding the details to the skull, including rendering the fingers and adding shadows underneath them (STEP 35).

STEP 35



STEP 36



I add some final soft shading to the faces and bodies of the zombies.

STEP 37



With the darker shading complete, I switch back to white and add my final touches. Here I am adding some shiny highlights to the dripping guts.

STEP 38



STEP 39



I am working with small tight dots to enhance the wet look of the zombies brains and guts (STEPS 38,39). I don't want to go overboard with this stage and too much detail, just enough to get the impression that the details have a slimy look to them.

I am happy with the overall level of detail, and the amount of contrast in the piece (STEP 40). I am ready to move on to the last couple of steps, and finish this one off.

STEP 40



STEP 41



I decide to add a small halo of light around the severed skull. This step requires me to tape off the negative spaces of the light burst (STEP 42).

STEP 42



With the fine-line tape in place, I spray a soft half-circle for the halo (STEP 43). This will help draw a little more attention to the severed head

STEP 43



STEP 44



With the painting complete, I am ready to finally remove the masking and reveal the bright red letters beneath (STEP 44). At this stage I also remove the fine-line border.

I apply the mask for the word "ZOMBIES" (STEP 45).

STEP 45



STEP 46



I build up a few light layers of white, being careful to not let too much paint build up around the edges of my masking.

STEP 47



Once the paint has a little time to dry, I remove the masking.



AirSick

The final skateboard will make a great promo piece for the new AirSick Zombie Stencils. After a few coats of clear and some buffing the board is ready to display.

We hope that you enjoyed this step-by-step, and picked up some good info along the way. As always, feel free to drop us a line with any questions, comments or feedback.

**PRINTER
FRIENDLY**





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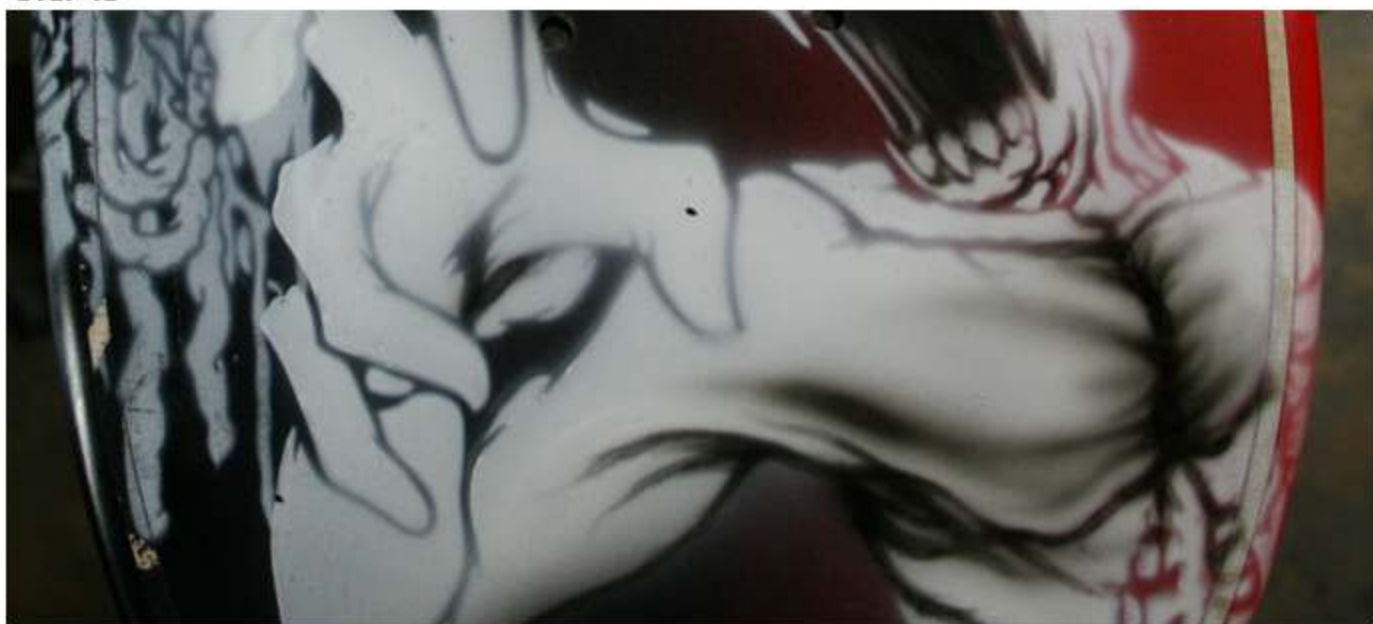
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