



PAINTING A

FLAMIN' PROFILE

FROM THE "HORROR OF SKULLMASTER" SERIES BY CRAIG FRASER

IN EACH ISSUE WE DEMONSTRATE AND EXPLAIN THE USES OF THE STENCILS I HAVE created for Artool over the past six years. The stencils featured here are not only for use on cars and bikes. They work for everything from body art, to wall murals, to cake decorating. Because they're made with a solvent-proof polymer, you don't have to worry about your choice of paint; you won't damage these babies!

In the last column we had some fun messing around with *Dolla Bill* and *The Blob*, both point-and-shoot stencils (they require little if any freehand skills to paint with). Now, we're gonna tackle *The Horror of Skullmaster*, the latest in the *Skullmaster* line. Heck, these suckers are so new, they're not even out as I write this. Hopefully, my timing will be just right, or I can imagine the hate mail! The stencil we're going to use is one of the first ones I have designed that comes with both a positive and negative sheet. This means that you have complete control of all aspects of the design. *Horror of Skullmaster* is also the first time we've gone for a more anatomically correct skull. With all the stylizing I've been doing over the years, it's time to introduce a more accurate anatomy. I also gave each of the stencils in the set three different sizes to accommodate what you're painting on, with the largest being life-size. For this demo, I rendered realistic fire painted onto one of Coast Airbrush's fiberglass tank blanks—a perfect canvas and lightweight display sample for your shop's wall. Well, 'nuff talking, *lets' paint*.



STEP 1. Coast's tank blanks come gel-coated. To prep the surface, I sanded the gelcoat with 220-grit sandpaper, then applied primer, based in black, and cleared it with House of Kolor UC-35 clear. Artwork always comes out nicer when it's applied over sanded clear. Notice the negative and positive stencils for the profile skull.



STEP 2. Using a few pieces of tape to hold down the stencil and to prevent overspray, I lightly sprayed SG-101 lemon yellow for my base color. I mainly emphasized the outside edge and details of the stencil, leaving the center alone for later.



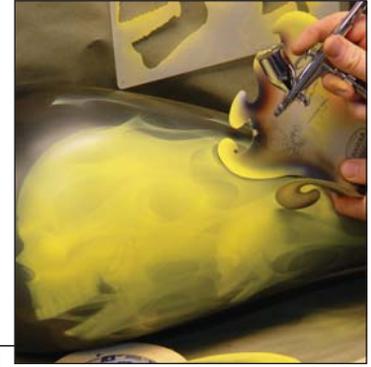
STEP 3. Taking advantage of the whole stencil, I threw in a few other side profile skulls of different sizes. I'll use the realistic fire effect to connect and tie in the overall design. With the jaws in the open position, you can always mask them off in the stencil, and reposition them any way you wish. Pretty cool, huh!?



STEP 4. With the yellow sprayed into the negative shape, I then used the positive stencil to lay in the details with the same yellow. Normally, I would use a darker color for these fine details, but don't forget these skulls are on fire! Another cool thing about these designs is that they feature four registration marks at each corner to line up the designs easily and accurately. These work great when incorporating both stencils in a design.



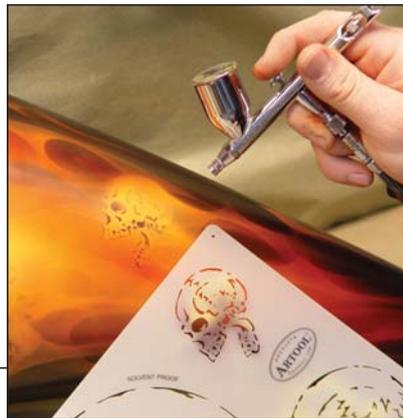
STEP 5. Using one of my *H* stencils, (keep an eye out for the new *H is for Hybrid* stencil line and DVD from Artool... shameless plug,) I brought in the realistic fire effect and connected the separate skull elements in the design. I used this stencil to bring in long sweeping flames and to tie in the tight radius of the same flame licks. The trick with all realistic fire is to try and keep the appearance random. Oddly enough, the best versions of fire I've painted were created with stencils that looked nothing like fire...hmmmm.



STEP 6. Putting the *H* aside, I returned to my old faithfuls, the *FH1* and *FH2* stencils from Eddie Young. These French curve-style shields are killer, and remain my two favorite workhorse stencils. I used them here to add interesting shapes, and to give the fire a bit more chaos.



STEP 7. With the yellow sketching completed, I switched gears and separately mixed a batch of KK-08 Tangerine and KK-11 Kandy Apple red—be sure to mix them only 20% by volume to the SG-100 intercoat clear before reducing. I then layered the kandy basecoats over the yellow for added color and killer depth to my fire.



STEP 8. Keeping the tangerine in the gun, I added some KK-17 violet and a bit more intercoat clear. This produced a nice reddish-brown color, and allowed me to darken the details without killing the colors with a black. Even when painting a mural over black, I will rarely use black because colors are so much cleaner to darken with. The positive stencil allows me to revive the details that disappeared with the airbrushing.



STEP 9. Using the same violet/tangerine kandy mix, I rendered the details of the skull with the new Eclipse CS Kustom airbrush. You must connect all the stencil lines and soften them enough so the final image doesn't look like a stencil was used. With proper stencil application, the final result should look freehanded.



STEP 10. I switched back to kandy apple red and blended more color into the flames. This also softens the tight details and eliminates any leftover violet that may have been showing through. Even when working on small projects, you should always wear, at the very least, a dual-cartridge active charcoal respirator.



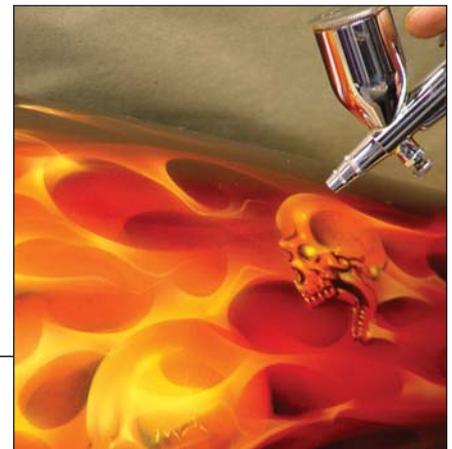
STEP 11. I returned to the SG-101 lemon yellow using the Iwata HP-CH Kustom detail airbrush. I get killer detail with this gun and the ability to control the air pressure at the airbrush to eliminate spitting. The yellow initially kills the depth with its opaque overspray, but in the long run it really benefits the overlapping fire look I'm after.



STEP 12. Along with freehanding, I also use the stencil. This allows me to create those killer soft, yet sharp edges that are necessary to show the actual anatomy of the flame. For this application, I don't use the airbrush's air cap for two reasons: With the cap removed, I can tell when the airbrush is going to spit by being able to see the amount of paint build-up on the needle, and, I can spray closer to the surface for better details. Barring that, I typically keep the cap on to protect the needle.



STEP 13. To knock down some of the yellow overspray, and to really bring back the brightness of the fire and richness of color, I airbrushed a mixture of KK-12 Pagan gold, and SG-100 intercoat clear. This is one of my favorite colors for brightening a mural. If you want something less orange, you can also use Spanish Gold kandy. Or, if you desire a green tint (as in lime green flames) the Limegold kandy is killer. If used properly, any kandy will eliminate the visual clouding of overspray and liven up your mural.



STEP 14. The final touches are always the last highlights. I do these with an overly reduced mix of SG-101 lemon yellow and just a drop of white. Use this mix sparingly or it will generate a lot of overspray and undo all your hard kandy work. Often, I'll use this mix to create smoke, too, since the white dominates.

Craig Fraser, author of *Automotive Cheap Tricks & Special F/X*, has been airbrushing for nearly two decades. The owner and operator of Air Syndicate, Fraser has also been the in-house airbrush artist and designer for Kal Concepts since 1992. Located in Bakersfield, California, Kal Concepts/Air Syndicate specializes in custom graphics, automotive airbrush, and the fine art of the custom culture. Craig divides his time between working

in his shop, writing magazine articles, and instructing. He has also appeared in a number of instructional videos, and is credited with pioneering the original automotive custom paint workshop for the Airbrush Getaway more than 10 years ago. Craig works directly with a number of manufacturers to develop new and innovative custom paint products. You can check out his artwork at www.gotpaint.com.

FINAL: Amazing what you can do with a few stencils. The new *Horror of Skullmaster* stencils are perfect for bikes and cars. And because they're what I like to call rendering stencils, they act as great sketching tools, leaving your own style and creativity to turn them into anything your imagination can come up with. Remember that a stencil is only a tool. They can make your work go faster, and give you better continuity in your designs, but they never replace freehand airbrushing. That's why I always incorporate additional effects and freehand work with each of my stencil demos. I hope you enjoy using them as much as I enjoyed making them. Until next time, keep on stencilling. ✖



Tune in next issue for the continuation of *The Horror of Skullmaster* series. I told you that I like to jump around a lot!! Who knows what top secret stencil will appear on my desk next from Artool. If you have any comments, suggestions, or requests, please submit them to Craig Fraser at Fraser@gotpaint.com. You can also cruise the new

Q&A forum at www.kustomkulturelounge.com where you can get any of your stencil questions answered, not to mention step-by-steps from time to time. See ya there!!

Paint to live, live to paint... and sometimes with stencils. —Fraser