

# THE OPTI-ENHANCING SUPRA-ETHEREAL COSMIC GAZING DEVICE



CREATING SOME COOL EFFECTS ON STEAMPUNK ART USING GERALD MENDEZ'S NEW TEXTURE F/X

REMEMBER THAT JUST BECAUSE THIS IS AN AUTOMOTIVE COLUMN DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO stick to painting cars and bikes. These stencils can be used for everything from body art, to wall murals, to cake decorating, and they're made with a solvent-proof polymer, so you don't have to worry about what you paint them with because you aren't going to hurt these babies.

For this 22nd installment, I wanted to introduce *Texture F/X*, the new stencil line by my good friend, Gerald Mendez. For those unfamiliar with Gerald's work, he's an innovator in fantasy artwork and airbrush master for as long as I can remember. Killer space scenes are one of his trademarks. So, in honor of Gerald, I'll render my own take on a space scene. And guess what; there won't be a skull in it!

I'll also demonstrate a relatively reborn style of airbrushing I've been experimenting with lately: a neo-Victorian style of art known as Steampunk, which is a cross between biomechanical and retro-futuristic. You've all seen variations on this style in the films *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*, *Brazil*, *Wild, Wild, West*, *Water World*, and *The Golden Compass*. It has also been used in the games *Myst*, *Riven*, and *Bioshock*, the newest X-Box sensation. There's also a complete Steampunk subculture centered around sculpture, clothing, music (Dr. Steel), and more.

So, why am I bringing up Steampunk, you might ask? Simple. Because I received such a positive response from the previous installment, the *Piracy* stencil, I decided to continue in a similar direction of creating innovative artwork with varied and unique styles. Also, Steampunk focuses heavily on the appearance of aged, or borrowed technology. One of the best uses of Gerald's new *Texture F/X* stencils is to create patinas and worn surface effects. Perfect fit. Plus, with all the brass and antiqued patinas used in Steampunk, it gives me another good reason to use the House of Kolor Kosmic Krome paints. >>



**1.** For this demo, I painted on a black powder-coated sign blank. First, I scuffed it up a bit, and performed some minor masking with 233 3M masking tape, and Automask. I decided to render a retro-futuristic gizmo that gazes at the stars. The gizmo will be composed of brass fixtures, aged and textured metal, switches, gears, and a broken gauge or two. Oh, and lots of pointless rivets.



**2.** I airbrushed a nice coat of House of Kolor's Kosmic Krome Bronze to the exposed areas of the panel. Using a TH-3 Iwata, I have better control than with a spraygun, and get higher volume than an airbrush. By sequentially unmasking different areas of the panel while spraying, I create different intensities and depth with the bronze. Very cool.



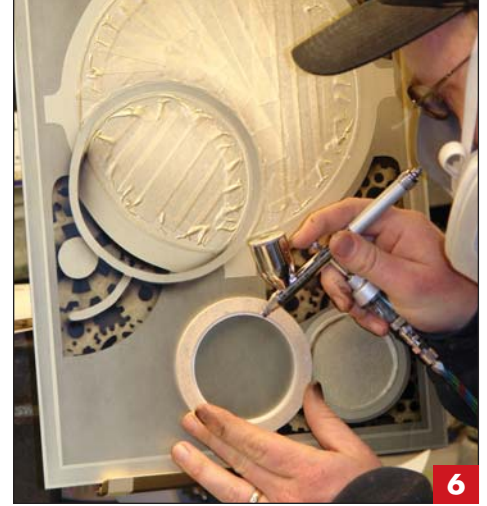
**3.** Using Gerald's *Organic* stencil from the *Texture* series, I sprayed a mottled texture that instantly gives the bronze an antiqued, aged look. To achieve this effect I sprayed a little over-reduced black with some SG-100 and violet. Notice the nice thrashed texture this stencil creates.



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4. After spraying more of the Kosmic Krome Bronze over the texture, I applied layers of the Bronze through the mini version of the same stencil. The original texture is visible underneath, and the additional texture with the smaller stencil gives a very interesting effect. It looks like a thrashed bronze panel that someone hopelessly attempted to clean, which is exactly what I was looking for!

5. With the texturing finished, I brought in *Gearhead* (my old faithful stencil) from the FX2 series. Nothing says Steampunk like a complicated mesh of gears providing mysterious functions. This is done with the same black-violet mixture that I used on the texture. I also added a bit around the border of the masking to create a natural shadow effect that recedes the gears into the panel.

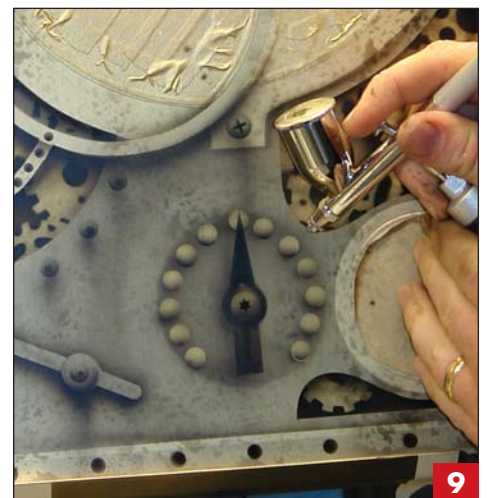
6. With the majority of the piece unmasked, I added a few more details. At this point I used my most trusted circle stencil to outline a switch area: a roll of tape! Remember, a stencil can be made of anything you choose. Take a look around your work area next time you're painting!



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7. I used a Berol circle template, to create assorted screws and rivets. Oh, yeah, I also did a quick mask, and sprayed a switch knob inside my previous circle area.

8. I added a series of electric contact points to the switchknob. With the positive circle template from Scott Mackay's pocket stencils. I love the screw-heads and goodies in them.

9. I added texture to the rest of the surfaces with the *Master Texture* stencil and the black mixture. I re-stenciled the contact points with the bronze to give them a worn metal look.



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10. I masked it all off with Automask and rendered in the magnified space scene. Of course, what's a space scene without a moon? Hence, my trusty moon stencil to the rescue. I get a lot of mileage out of this one!

11. I stippled and splattered white with the Eclipse airbrush, making the space scene pop to life. After making a few of the stars really stand out, I cast a nice fog over the rest of the area with over-reduced BC-26 basecoat white. Kandies won't appear on a plain black base, so a white base is necessary.

12. Before this step, I airbrushed a mixture of KK-04 Oriental Blue and SG-100 intercoat clear (no more than 20% of the KK to the SG by volume before reducing). The nebula gas cloud effect was created using another of Gerald's new stencils: *Cosmic*. This black was concocted with a heavier dose of KK-17 violet in it.



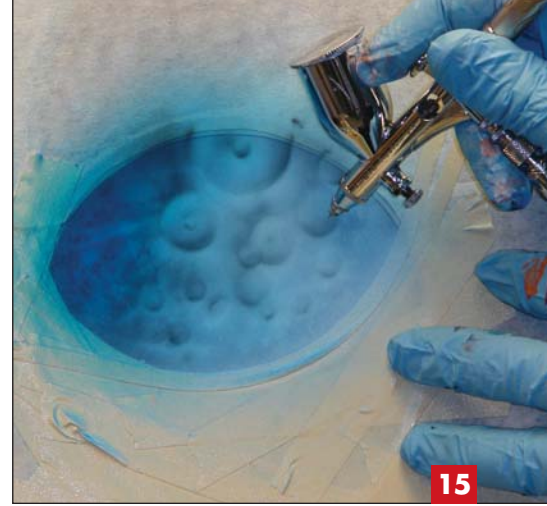
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**13.** With the coloring and texturing complete, I added the final highlights to the moon and additional details to the overall piece with white. Be careful and sparing with your final whites or they'll kill the details.



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**14.** With the primary viewing port finished, I worked on the magnification lens over the screen. Since the moon is magnified, I added a lot more texture in the white with the mini version of the *Organic* stencil.



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**15.** With a mix of kandy blue and over-reduced black I added some texture and shading. You must always be mindful of your primary light source. In this image, the light source comes from the lower right-hand corner.



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**16.** After adding the final highlights to the moon, I unmasked the surrounding area, added a few stars, a little glass reflectivity, and more texturing. For the gas cloud I used the mini *Organic* again, spraying very lightly—I didn't want to overpower the scene because the moon is the main focus of the painting.



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**17.** Last, I used the most valuable stencil of them all: the business card. We all have 'em and use 'em for everything from stippling to shading to picking one's teeth. Here, I used the card to render a nice reflective light cast on the lens of the magnifier.



**FINAL.** No matter how you slice it, Steampunk looks pretty cool. Keep an eye out for more of this style of artwork in the future. Not only is it getting quite the internet following, but I also have a few interesting Steampunk projects currently in the making. If you're interested in the performance artwork mentioned earlier, or would just like some killer music to read this article by, visit [www.doctorsteel.com](http://www.doctorsteel.com)

I highly recommend that you check out Gerald's new stencils. Regardless your style—faux finish artist, chopper painter, or whatever—these very clever texture creators are a must-have.

Please submit any comments, suggestions, or requests to Craig Fraser at [Fraser@gotpaint.com](mailto:Fraser@gotpaint.com), or [www.kustomkulturelounge.com](http://www.kustomkulturelounge.com). See ya there.

Peace, isocyanates, and robots.

—Fraser



**Craig Fraser** has been airbrushing for more than twenty years, is the owner of Air Syndicate Inc., and, since 1992, has been the in-house airbrush artist and designer for Kal Concepts, of Bakersfield, California. Kal Concepts/Air Syndicate specializes in automotive kustom graphics and the fine art of the Kustom Culture. Craig divides his time between the shop, teaching workshops (the esteemed Airbrush Getaway, House of Kolor, Coast Airbrush), and writing articles. He's also the author of *Automotive Cheap Tricks and Special F/X*, and the star of 15 instructional DVDs on kustom painting techniques. You may view more of Fraser's artwork at [www.gotpaint.com](http://www.gotpaint.com).

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