

ARTOOL INSTRUCTOR SERIES:



MASTERING DIAMOND PLATE

PART 6

"Everything you wanted to know about your new stencils,...but were afraid to ask."

By Craig Fraser



For the uninitiated, this column instructs on the use and techniques of all stencils in the innovative Artool line, from Skullmasters to FX to Flame-A-Rama, and anything else we have laser cut out of plastic.

In the previous column I demonstrated the use of Bullet Ridden, the first stencil in the FX line. Following suit, we dig up Diamond Plate, an oldie but a goodie because I have rendered this effect with stencils for more than a decade. In my first video, I hand-cut the sucker out of an 8x10 photograph. Then, in my book *Automotive Cheap Tricks & Special F/X*, I performed the effect with the design cut on vinyl using a plotter. Currently, my preference is the laser-cut freehand stencils because I don't have to spend hours cutting them with an X-Acto knife.....hehehh. The computer-cut vinyl is still a good technique, but for small areas, and over paint where you might worry about tape tracking, the freehand shields are usually the best bet.

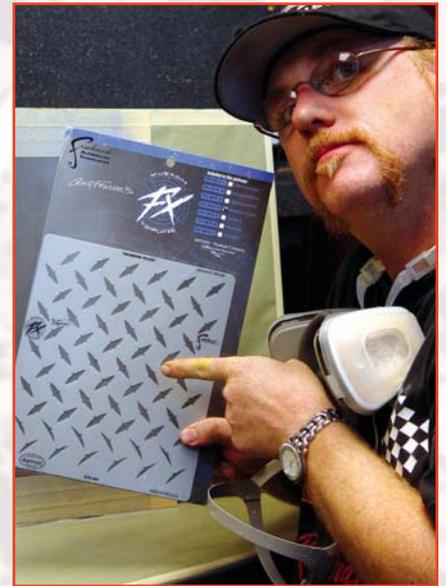
The diamond plate effect can be used for anything from a background graphic to main applications in murals. Although it's a simple effect, I still receive a fair share of questions regarding this stencil's use.



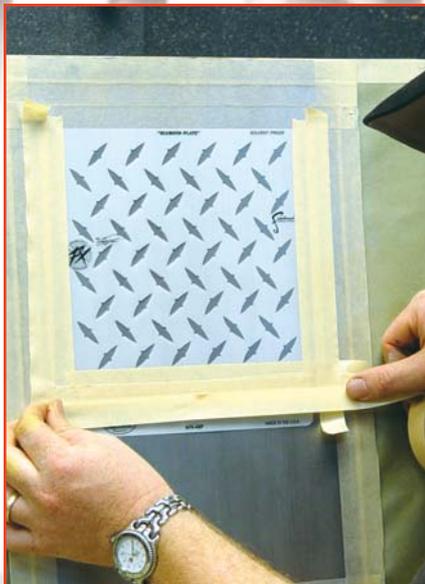
STEP 1. After masking off the powder-coated panel, I scuff the heck out of the surface. Normally, I would just scuff it enough to get the paint to stick, but in this case I'm going to use some of ALSA's Ghost Chrome for a brushed-aluminum effect. The extra scratches I give the panel make the effect even more realistic.



STEP 2. Using the new Iwata trigger airbrush, I spray on a few layers of Ghost Chrome. This new trigger side-feed model sprays the Ghost Chrome pretty killer without layering it too heavy. This airbrush is also beneficial to painters who are used to using sprayguns. With the Ghost Chrome layered evenly, the panel now looks just like a brushed sheet of aluminum.



STEP 3. For large surfaces, consider purchasing more than one stencil to eliminate the down-time required to clean off the wet paint from the stencil. (No, this is not a shameless plug,.....well,...actually it is.)



STEP 4. Before spraying, I like to protect the edges from overspray using masking tape. The tape also allows you to position and hold the stencil, leaving your other hands free to control the airbrush. I don't recommend spray adhesive for stencil holding. For automotive this can cause some serious issues with contamination.



STEP 5. Loading the airbrush with House of Kolor BC-25 basecoat black, I lightly dust the individual diamond shapes with an Eclipse HP-CS. Don't apply too much paint at once or the stencil will get too wet, unusable, and may cause the paint to creep underneath.



STEP 6. After the first layer of paint is applied, I come in with a heavier coat, but only on the bottom edge of the diamond shape. This gives a natural 3-D look to your piece. This technique is also used to show a curvature or shadow on any small stenciled objects, such as rivets.



STEP 7. When I run out of stencil, I remove the sheet and reposition it lower to fill the rest of the panel. I recommend overlaying at least one row of diamonds to get the line-up just right. The stencil can be tiled endlessly.



STEP 8. Still using black, I freehand the dropshadows. Without shadowing, the diamonds won't have depth. Spray the drop-shadow lightly or you risk ruining the effect.



STEP 9. Remember the mention of rivets a few pics back? Well, what a coincidence that we get to practice them now. A number of my stencils have different circles in them that you can use for rivets. In this case, I use the original Skullmaster Frontal stencil. Heck, an architectural circle template will work just as well.



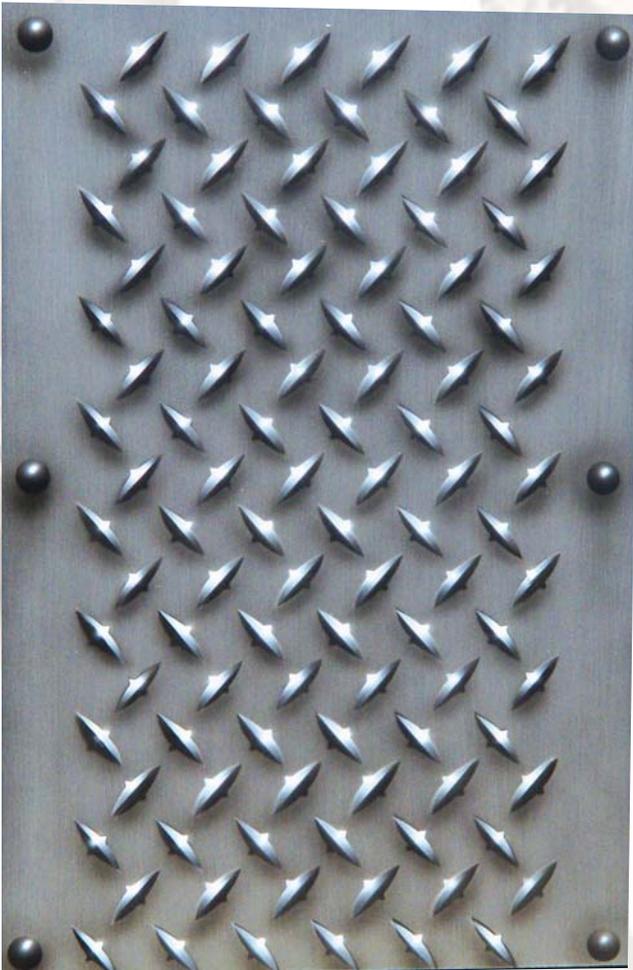
STEP 10. With the black finished, I then use HoK BC-26 basecoat white. The bottom half of the Diamond Plate has some half stencils that are used for the highlights. Lining up one row of diamonds at a time, I spray in the top highlight of each.



STEP 11. Next, I freehand a small glowing dot onto the top center of each one. Without the stencil, the freehand dots create a realistic glow around the diamonds. If the white is not extra thinned down, you'll get spitting, which will truly "jack up" your realistic highlights.



STEP 12. Normally, I recommend adding a few drops of the base color silver to your black, and white to keep the highlights in a more realistic plane. By itself, the white will look like it's floating above the rendering. The cool thing about Ghost Chrome is that it's so thin you can dust a light coat over everything, and that puts all the values of the piece back into perspective. I use my trigger gun to spray a light dust coat. For larger areas, I recommend a small touch-up gun.



Well, there you have it; a nice piece of realistic diamond plate easily rendered with your new best friend from the FX stencil collection. Any time you start to believe that stencils are for beginners, and that you're too good an airbrusher to use them, just imagine how much fun it would be to freehand render each one of those little suckers on a car! Yeah....not a good visual, is it?!

Tune in next issue for the continuation of the stencil series. If you have any comments, suggestions, or requests, please submit them to Craig Fraser at Fraser@gotpaint.com

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

Craig Fraser, author of *Automotive Cheap Tricks and 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, Calif., 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.