

AirSick STEP-BY-STEP CUSTOM PAINTED MAILBOX



Mailboxes make awesome projects for custom painters of any skill level! Whether you want to paint up a quick display piece, or make some extra cash around the neighborhood, mailboxes are cheap to buy, and provide a large amount of canvas to show off your skills. For this tutorial we

are going to be creating a fusion of old and new school styles of custom painting by layering realistic fire, complete with fiery skulls, underneath some classic old-school flames.

...LETS GET PAINTING

PROJECT SUPPLIES

- ★ Standard US Mailbox ★ Large pad of tracing paper
- ★ Pencil, chalk or white charcoal pencil ★ Paper towels or lint-free rags, tack cloth
- ★ Mini gun or Large spray gun (for base coating) ★ Auto mask
- ★ Double action airbrush ★ Masking Tape
- ★ Single edge razor blades / X-acto knife ★ Rubber scraper
- ★ Airsick Arson stencils (mini) ★ Airsick Skull Background 1 stencil

AIRSICK
SKULL BACKGROUND 1



PAINT

We are using the following House Of Kolor automotive urethanes

COBALT BLUE: UK05
MAJIK BLUE: PBC37
ORIENTAL BLUE: UK04
PASSION PURPLE: KOP1
ORION SILVER: BC02
WHITE: BC26



UK05



PBC37



UK04



KOP1



BC02



BC26

OVERVIEW

In this tutorial we will be using several methods of custom painting to produce a killer mailbox. The skills we will focus on include: Flame layout and duplication, realistic blue fire, pin striping, and proper use of the Airsick Arson mini stencil and Skull Background 1 stencil.

STEP 1 - Scuff using a maroon scotch-brite pad



BEGINNING THE PROJECT

I started this project by mixing a custom blue for the basecoat. I used a mixture of 50% Majic Blue Pearl, 20% Passion Purple Pearl and 30% Orion Silver Metallic. This gives me a nice deep metallic blue base for my artwork (STEP 2).

PREP & BASE COAT

Please refer to the AirSick 101 Tutorial section for in-depth base coat and prep tutorials.

CUSTOM METALLIC BLUE



**Majic Blue
Pearl**
50%



**Passion
Purple**
20%

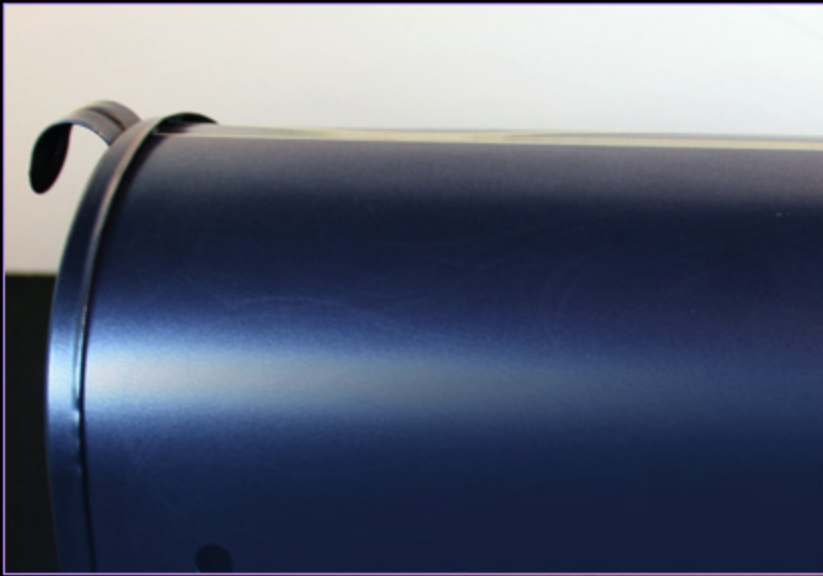


**Orion
Silver**
30%

STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



FLAME LAYOUT

Please refer to the **Airsick 101 Tutorial** section for a more in-depth flame layout tutorial.

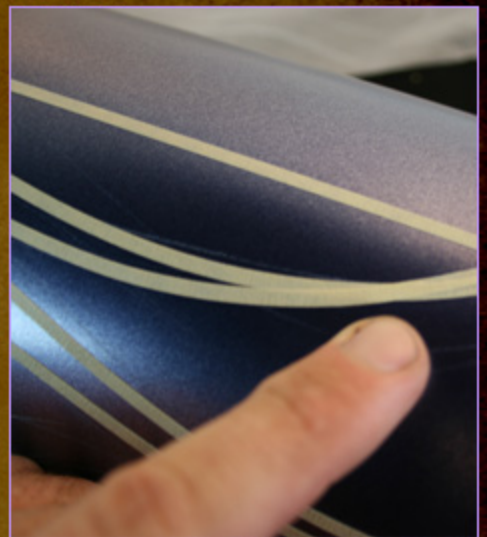
Before laying out my design, I find the center of the mailbox and mark it using a piece of 1/8" fine line tape (STEP 3). Using a white charcoal pencil I lightly draw out my flame design on one half of the box (STEP 4).

With my fine line tape, I carefully follow the chalk lines and lay down the flame design.

Tips and Tricks

Since I will be masking inside the flame pattern I will need to cross the ends of the fine line tape (STEP 5). I do this to create a perfectly pointed flame tip. As you can see, crossing the two tape ends makes a visible point that I can cut out with a razor blade (STEP 6).

STEP 5



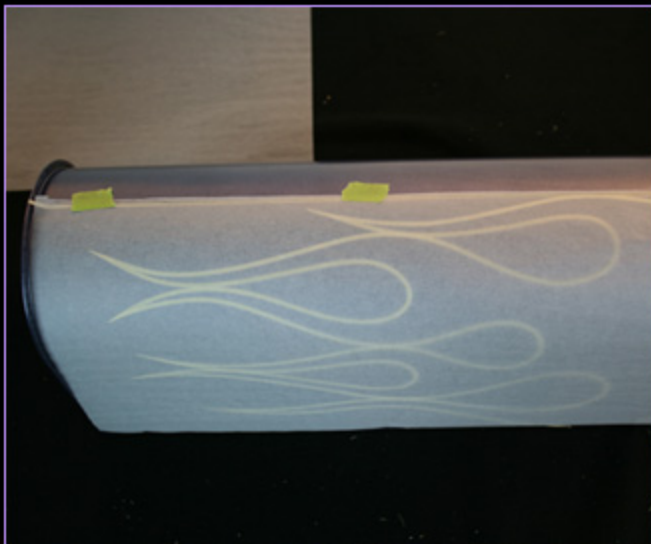
STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



DESIGN DUPLICATION

Design duplication is a vital skill for properly creating symmetrical flame designs. You want to be sure that both sides of the mailbox have a mirrored flame pattern. This is one way to create perfectly duplicated flame designs that will work with almost all of your projects.

Now that my flames have been laid out and all the tips have been cut to a point, I take a large sheet of tracing paper and tape it down to the center line, covering the side with the flames that I have already taped off (STEP 8).

With a white chalk pencil I carefully trace the inside perimeter of the tape (STEP 9).

STEP 10



Here the inside of the flames have been fully traced using my white chalk pencil. Take your time, and try to be as careful and accurate as possible during this step.

STEP 11



With all of the flames fully traced, we are ready to move on to transferring them to the opposite side of the mailbox.

STEP 12



STEP 13



DESIGN DUPLICATION (CONT'D)

I flip the tracing paper over with the chalk side down. I then line it up on the other side of the box and tape it back down to the center tape line (STEP 13).

When the tracing paper is secure I take a rubber spreader and firmly press the chalk line drawing onto the surface (STEP 15).

STEP 14



This method will produce a perfectly symmetrical flame design without the headache of attempting to hand draw the exact flame licks on opposite sides of the mailbox.

STEP 15



Be sure to use a rubber scraper (or a felt scraper) to avoid the risk of damaging your base coat during this process.

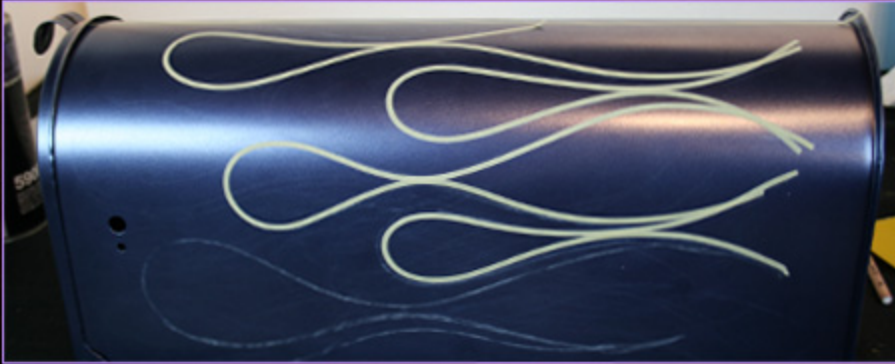
STEP 16



After you are sure that you have used the scraper over the entire flame design, you can lift the tracing paper and take a look at the transfer (STEP 16).

As you can see, the chalk line has been transferred to the surface and you now have a mirror image of the original design. Cool, huh?

STEP 17



STEP 18



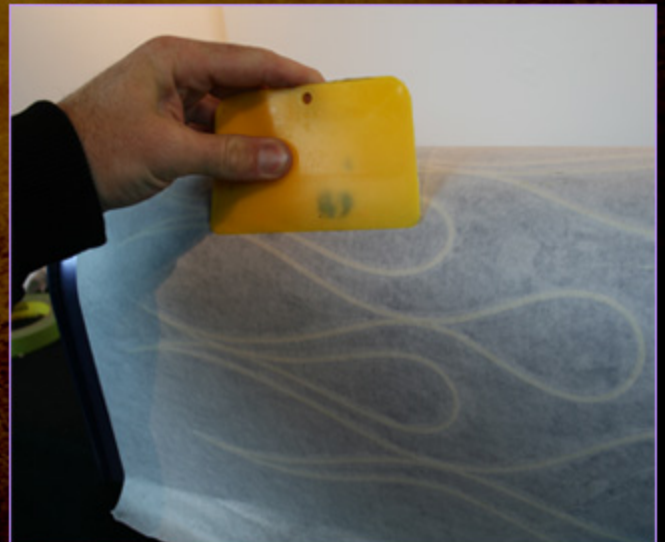
Follow the chalk lines with your tape, and lay out the flame pattern on the opposite side (STEPS 17, 18). With your duplicates flames layed out, proceed to trim the flame tips to points.

I cover the entire box with a sheet of auto mask and press it down to the surface using my rubber scraper to push out all the air bubble and wrinkles (STEPS 19, 20).

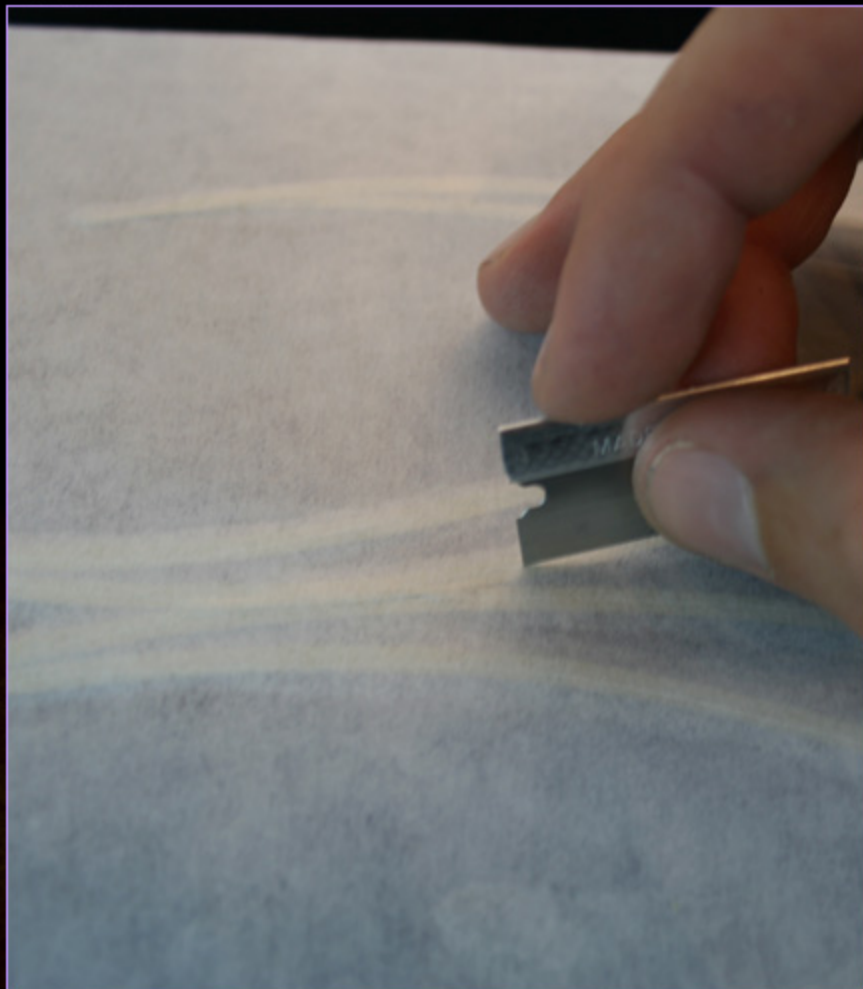
STEP 19



STEP 20



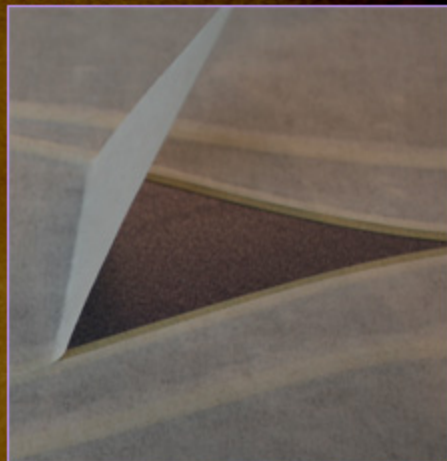
STEP 21



STEP 22



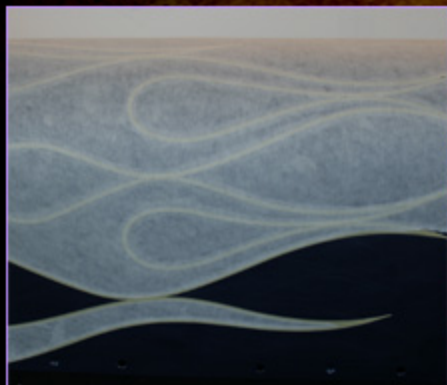
STEP 23



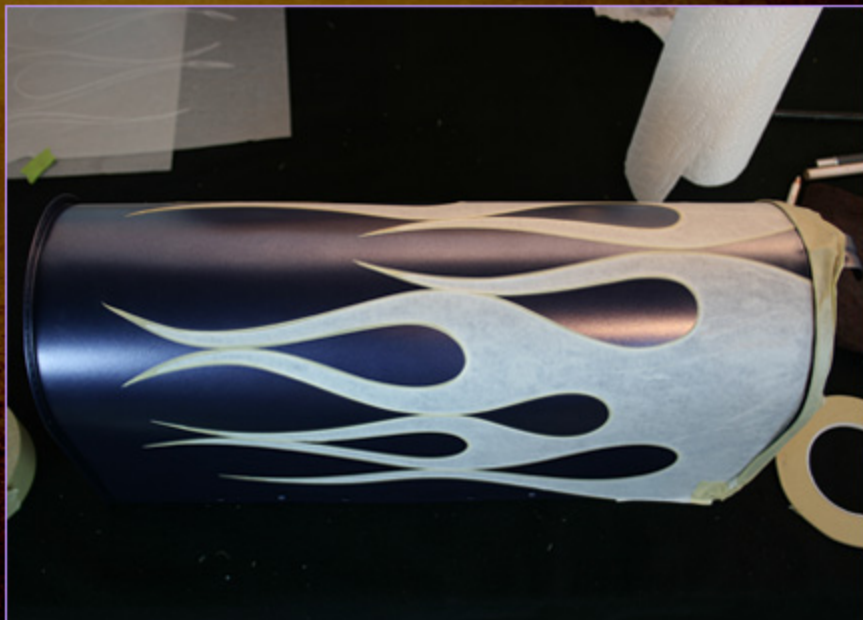
Using a single edge razor blade, I cut down the middle of my fine-line-tape, being careful to only cut the automask and not through to the surface. Remove the masking paper exposing the area around the flames as you cut (STEPS 21, 22, 23).

I am cutting and removing the masking in small sections. This is easier to manage than trying to peel off everything in one large piece.

STEP 24



STEP 25



STEP 26



STEP 27



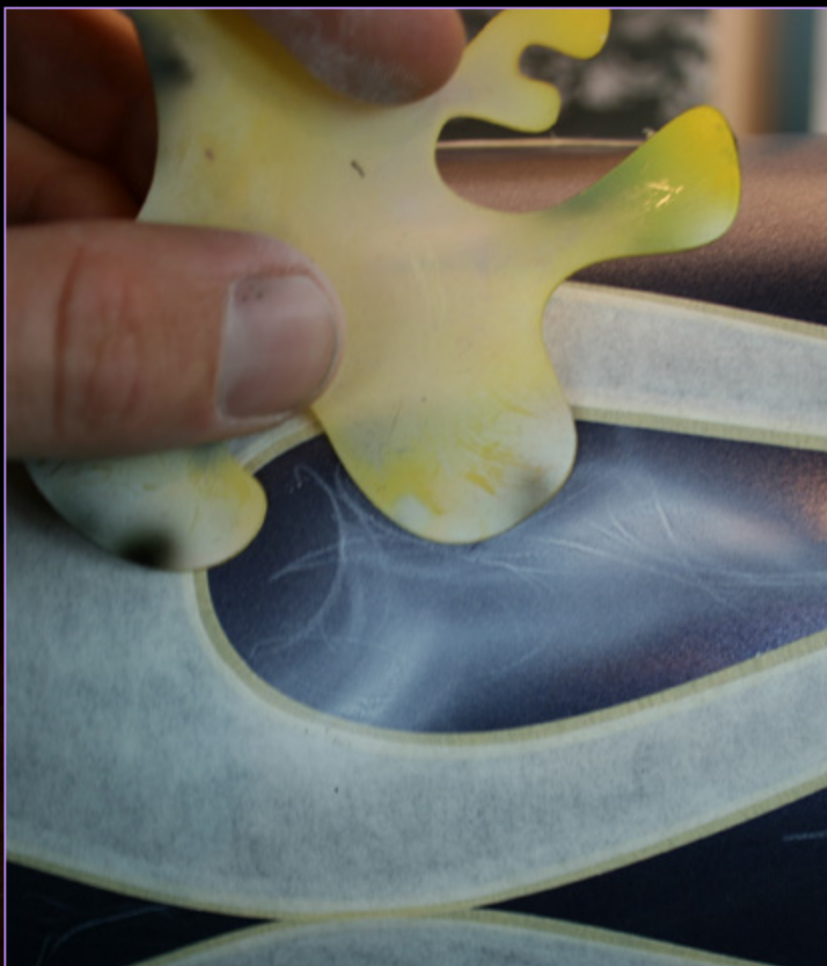
LAYOUT: SKULLS & FLAMES

I use my white pencil and "Skull Background 1" to sketch out the placement for my realistic fire design and skulls (STEP 26). This step will establish the flow of the fire and guide the overall composition. The "Skull Background 1" stencil is great for packing piles of skulls into small places. I am primarily placing small clusters of skulls within the "tear-drop" areas of the fire, as well as a few skulls near the end of the flame licks.

STEP 28



STEP 29



With white basecoat in the airbrush I begin to render my fire using the Arson minis for random shapes and hard edges (STEP 29, 30).

At the same time that I am building the basis for my realistic fire, I am also adding in the skulls (STEPS 31, 32).

STEP 30

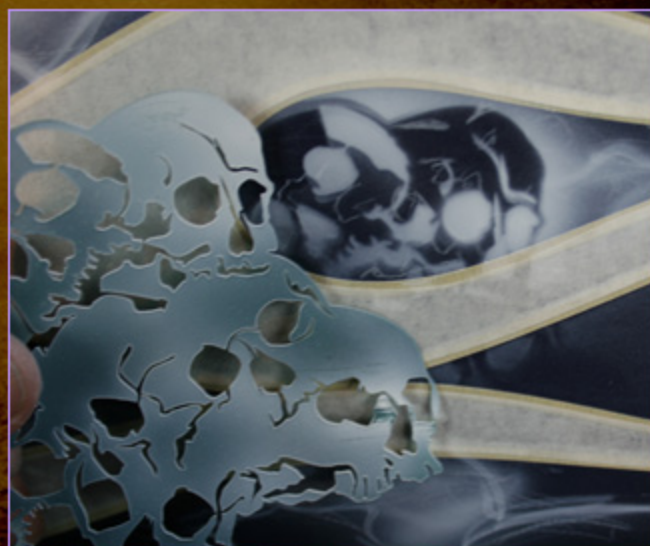


STEP 31



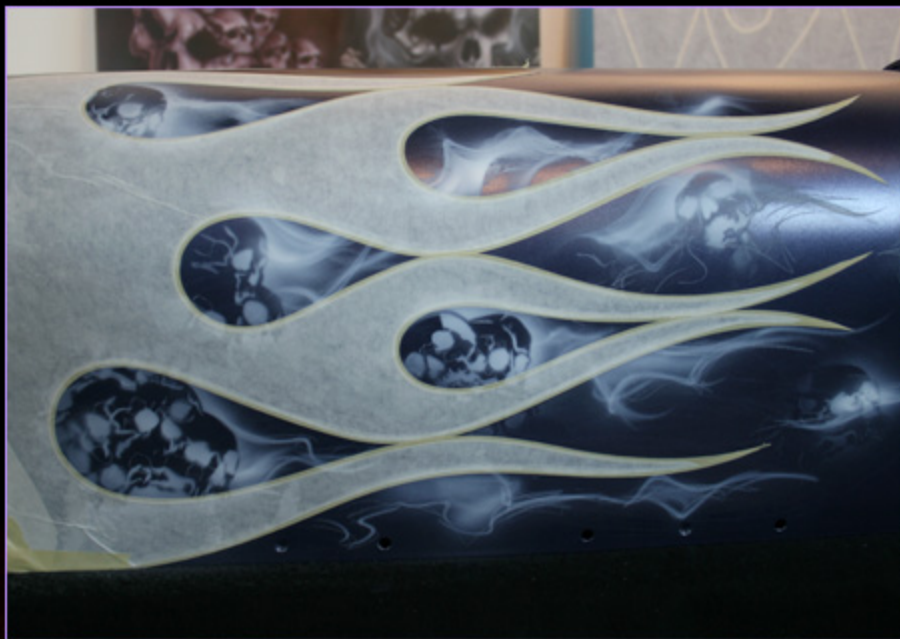
To get the cleanest outlines from the stencil, I am spraying directly down at the stencil, this will prevent paint from getting under the stencil.

STEP 32



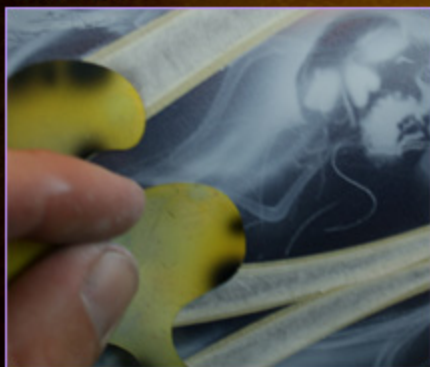
Here are the first few skulls. I am going to go through my flame's "tear-drops" and place a small cluster of skulls in each one.

STEP 33



Here is the first half of our mailbox, with all of our skulls placed, as well as the foundation for our real fire (STEP 33). We want the fire to appear to be interacting with the skull, so we use the Air-Sick "Arson" stencils to create some hard edges for the fire wrapping around the skulls (STEPS 34, 35, 36). The "Arson" stencils work great for defining the form of the fire, but don't rely on them too much. Keep your fire loose and flowing to achieve the most natural look possible.

STEP 34



STEP 35



STEP 36

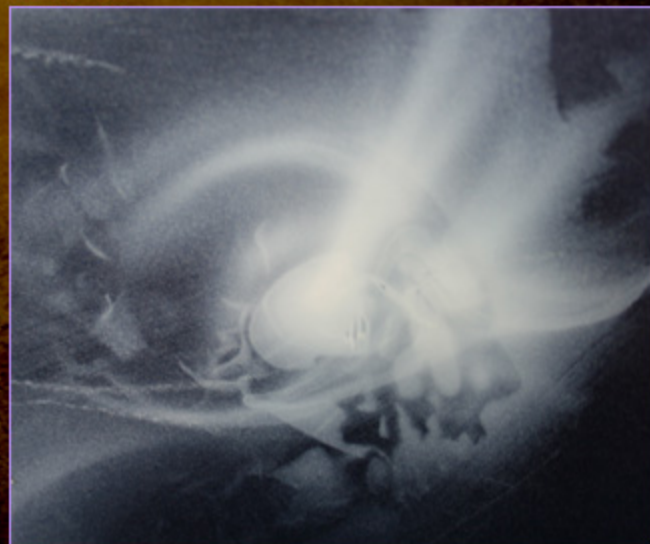


I add some minor rendering to the skulls (STEP 37). There is no need to go into too much detail for the small skulls. I just want the skulls to lose the flat, "stenciled" look. Using small dagger strokes. I decided to add some light beams coming out of the eyes of a few of the skulls (STEP 38). The fun part about working with these stencils is the freedom to add your own artistic touches - this keeps the stenciled designs fresh throughout your projects.

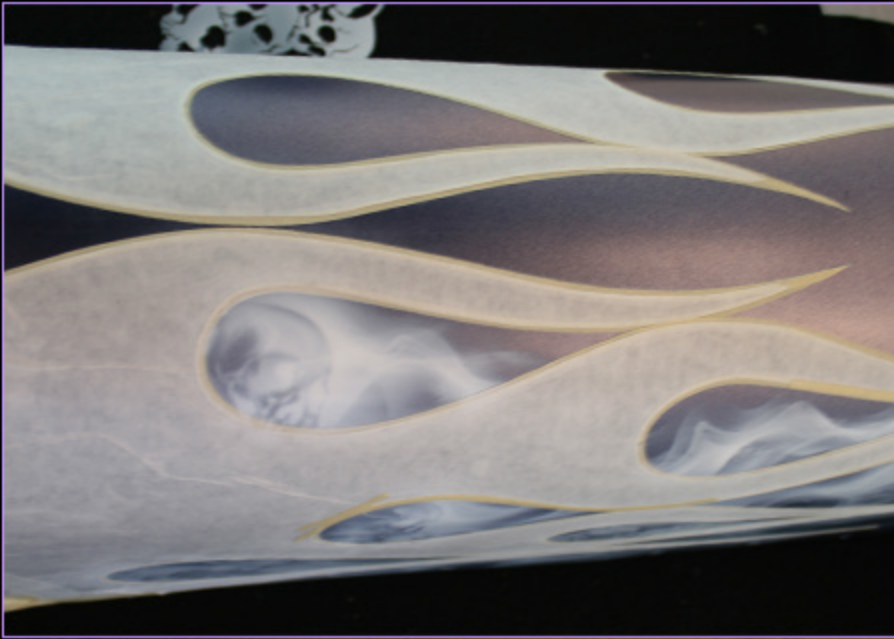
STEP 37



STEP 38



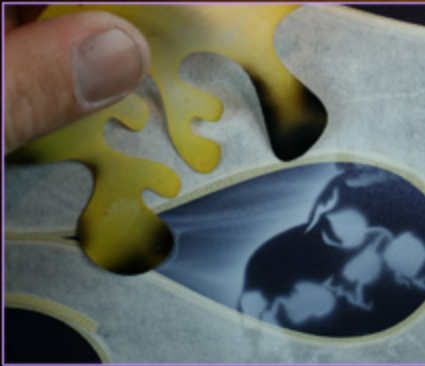
STEP 39



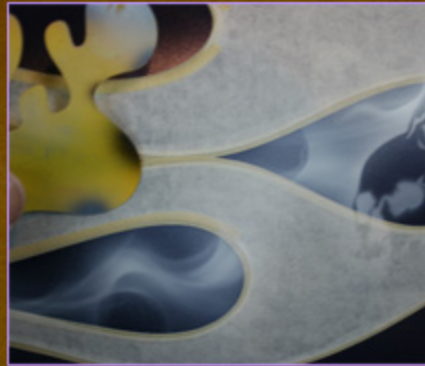
With the first half completed, we move on to the second half of the mailbox, and repeat the same steps. We begin with a basic real fire layout, spray in the skulls, then render.

Note: It is important to remove as much overspray as possible while you are painting, by wiping everything down with a tach-rag between layers or after each color change when layering with pigments and dyes. If you let overspray build, it can bleed through the other layers of paint and give you an undesirable muddy effect.

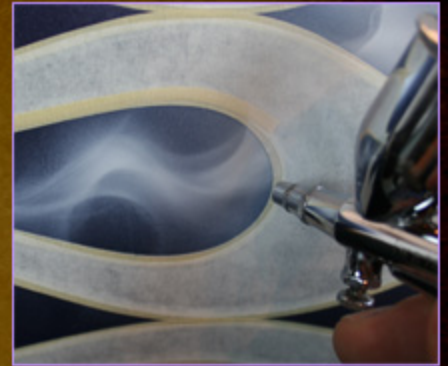
STEP 40



STEP 41

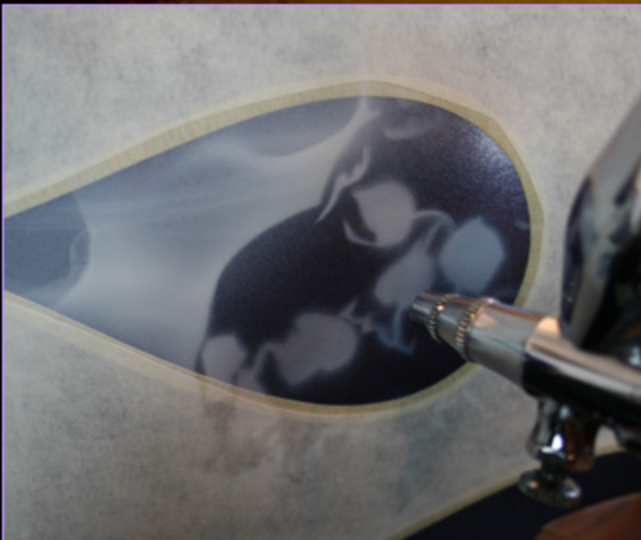


STEP 42

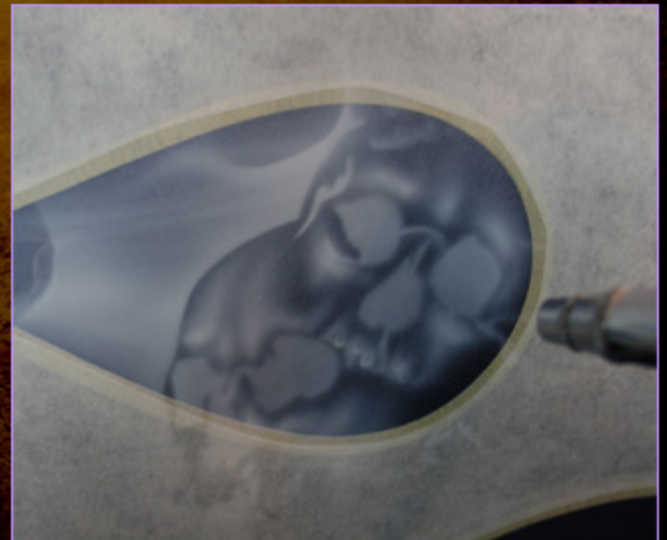


Again, I am using the AirSick "Arson" stencils to define the form of the real fire (*STEPS 40, 41, 42). STEPS 43 and 44 are great detail shots of the simple rendering I am using on the skulls. I am giving them just enough dimensionality to not appear flat and boring.

STEP 43



STEP 44



STEP 45



STEP 46



Now that that I have completed both sides of the box and removed the overspray, I load Cobalt Blue Kandy into my mini gun and give my design a few even passes (STEP 46). As you can see, the cobalt blue has tinted my airbrushed skulls and fire a nice deep blue.

After removing the overspray with a tach-rag, I come back in with white and continue on with my third layer. I go over the entire design with the white base (STEPS 47, 48). The goal with layer three is to begin tightening up your design by cleaning up lines and brightening hot spots.

STEP 47



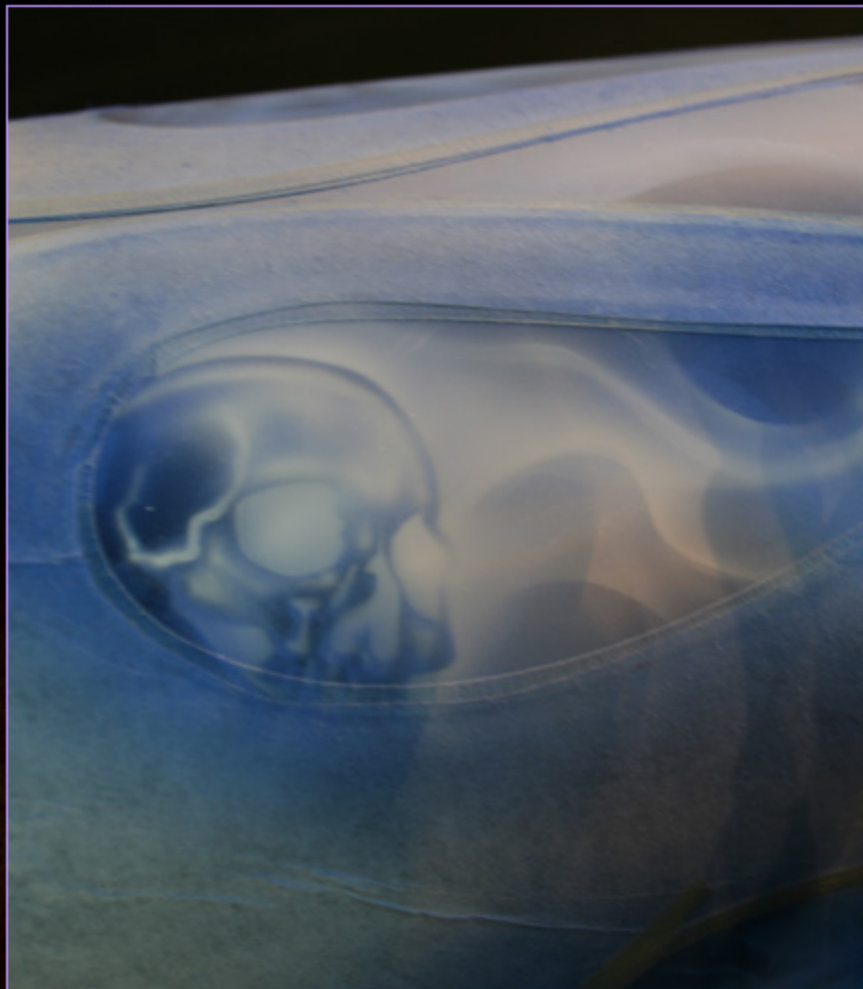
We simply re-align the skulls with the previous layer of artwork. This process of layering produces some really nice depth with very little work.

STEP 48

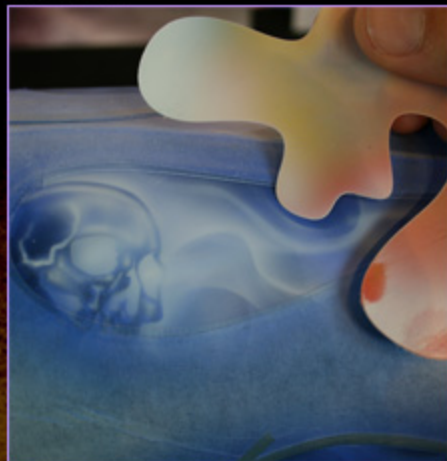


Keep the stencil help firmly down as you begin the flame licks around the skulls. You want to keep the edges of the skulls as sharp as possible.

STEP 49



STEP 50



STEP 51



Simply repeating the process, I render the skulls a bit more with white and begin to focus on the second layer of real fire (STEPS 49, 50, 51). This step pulls my skulls and fire up from the first layer and create the depth I am looking for.

STEP 52



You can really see how the layers are working together. The first layer of fire sinks deep into background, and the new layer really comes forward.

STEP 53



STEP 54



Wipe the overspray with a tack-rag after completing layer three and load the mini gun with Oriental Blue Kandy. I make a few passes over the box, tinting my white base a nice bright blue (STEP 54).

For my final layer I go back to the white base and hit only the brightest highlights in and around the skulls and fire (STEPS 55, 56, 57). Be careful not to go overboard here, I just want to add some minor highlights to the skulls & fire.

STEP 55



STEP 56



STEP 57



With the skull and fire background complete I unmask the design, being careful to remove all fine line tape and auto mask before clear is applied (STEPS 58, 59).

Take a good look at your work. Now is the time to fix anything you are not happy with.

To finalize this project I added a small design on the back of the box using the same 5 layer method as before. I added a violet pin stripe and about 5 coats of clear.

The final project is simple yet eye catching. The layers of kandy colors under the flame layout gives the appearance of depth and movement. All in all this is a good intermediate lesson and I hope you all learned a little something new. Be sure to check out the final pics on the next page.

STEP 58



STEP 59





**PRINTER
FRIENDLY**



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- ★ Mini gun or Large spray gun (for base coating) ★ Auto mask
- ★ Double action airbrush ★ Masking Tape
- ★ Single edge razor blades / X-acto knife ★ Rubber scraper
- ★ Airsick Arson stencils (mini) ★ Airsick Skull Background 1 stencil

**AIRSICK
SKULL BACKGROUND 1**



PAINT

We are using the following House Of Kolor automotive urethanes

COBALT BLUE: UK05
MAJIK BLUE: PBC37
ORIENTAL BLUE: UK04
PASSION PURPLE: KOP1
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STEP 1 - Scuff using a maroon scotch-brite pad



BEGINNING THE PROJECT

I started this project by mixing a custom blue for the basecoat. I used a mixture of 50% Majic Blue Pearl, 20% Passion Purple Pearl and 30% Orion Silver Metallic. This gives me a nice deep metallic blue base for my artwork (STEP 2).

PREP & BASE COAT

Please refer to the AirSick 101 Tutorial section for in-depth base coat and prep tutorials.

CUSTOM METALLIC BLUE



**Majic Blue
Pearl**
50%

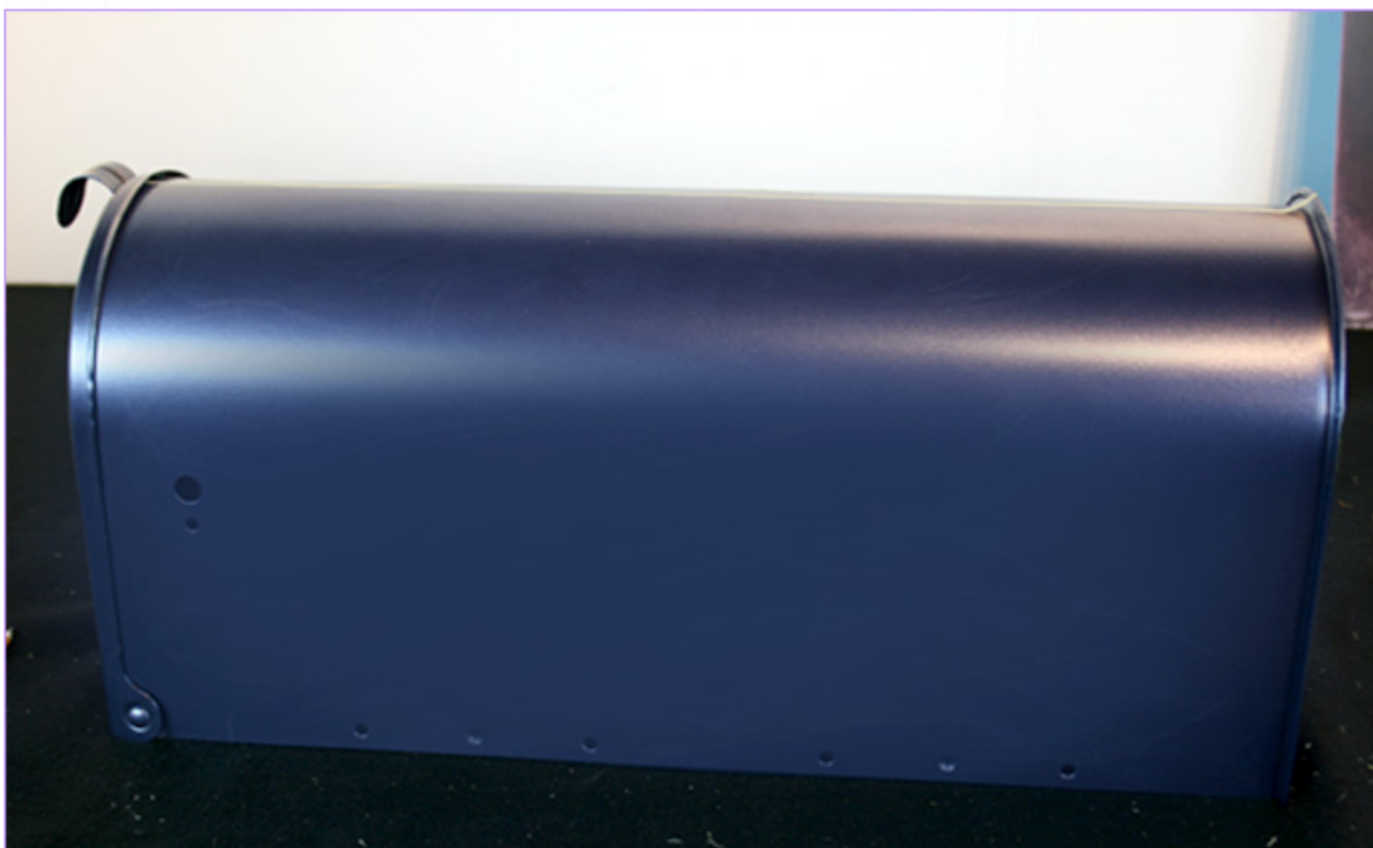


**Passion
Purple**
20%

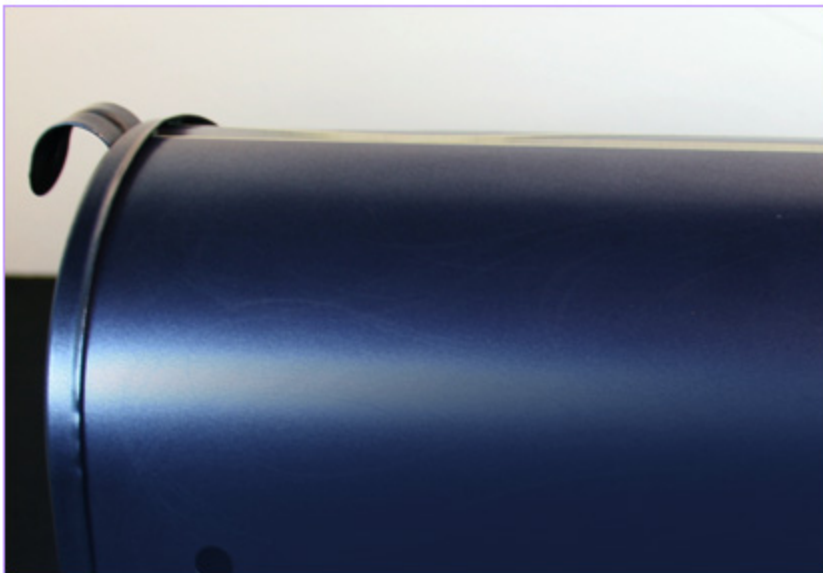


**Orion
Silver**
30%

STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



FLAME LAYOUT

Please refer to the **Airsick 101 Tutorial** section for a more in-depth flame layout tutorial.

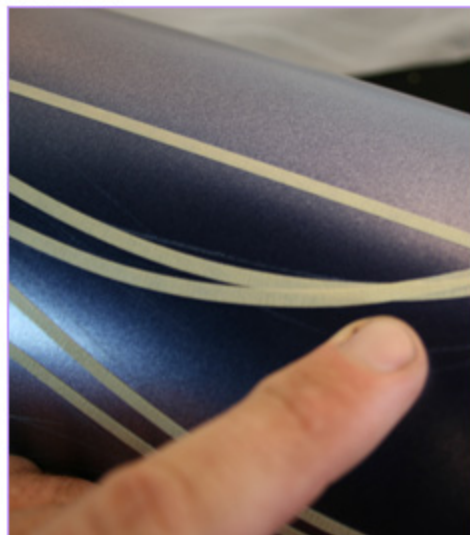
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With my fine line tape, I carefully follow the chalk lines and lay down the flame design.

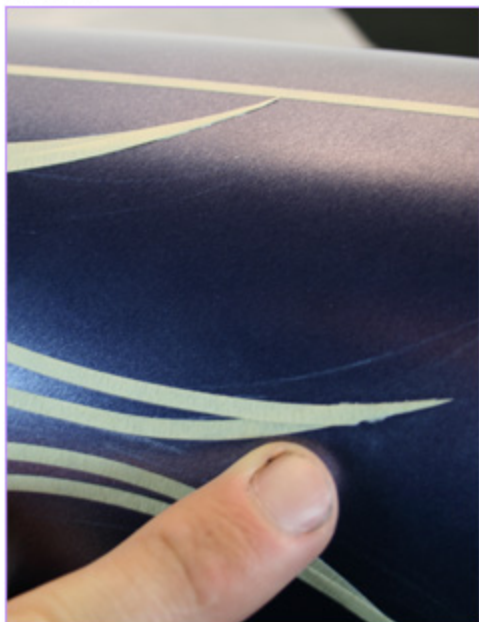
Tips and Tricks

Since I will be masking inside the flame pattern I will need to cross the ends of the fine line tape (STEP 5). I do this to create a perfectly pointed flame tip. As you can see, crossing the two tape ends makes a visible point that I can cut out with a razor blade (STEP 6).

STEP 5



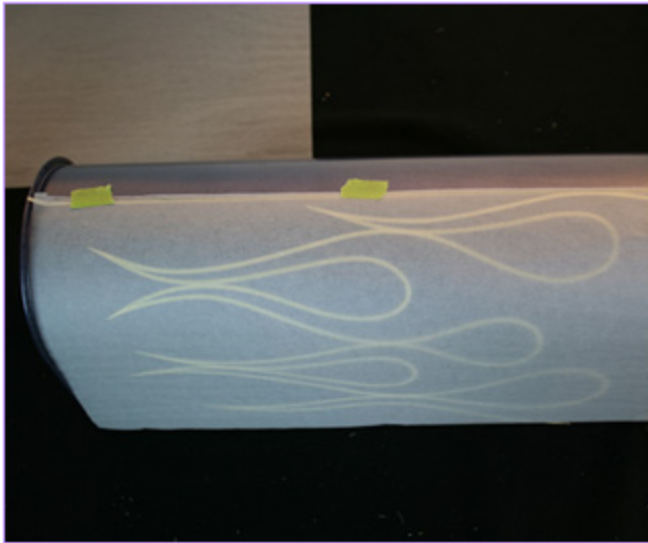
STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



DESIGN DUPLICATION

Design duplication is a vital skill for properly creating symmetrical flame designs. You want to be sure that both sides of the mailbox have a mirrored flame pattern. This is one way to create perfectly duplicated flame designs that will work with almost all of your projects.

Now that my flames have been laid out and all the tips have been cut to a point, I take a large sheet of tracing paper and tape it down to the center line, covering the side with the flames that I have already taped off (STEP 8).

With a white chalk pencil I carefully trace the inside perimeter of the tape (STEP 9).

STEP 10



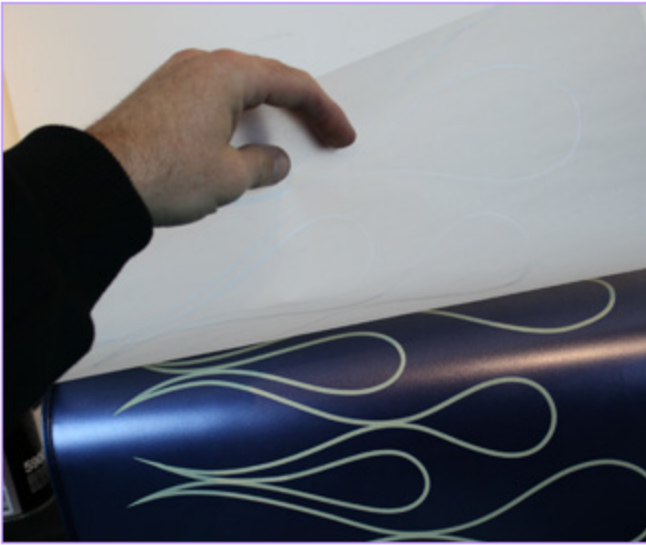
Here the inside of the flames have been fully traced using my white chalk pencil. Take your time, and try to be as careful and accurate as possible during this step.

STEP 11



With all of the flames fully traced, we are ready to move on to transferring them to the opposite side of the mailbox.

STEP 12



STEP 13



DESIGN DUPLICATION (CONT'D)

I flip the tracing paper over with the chalk side down. I then line it up on the other side of the box and tape it back down to the center tape line (STEP 13).

When the tracing paper is secure I take a rubber spreader and firmly press the chalk line drawing onto the surface (STEP 15).

STEP 14



This method will produce a perfectly symmetrical flame design without the headache of attempting to hand draw the exact flame licks on opposite sides of the mailbox.

STEP 15



Be sure to use a rubber scraper (or a felt scraper) to avoid the risk of damaging your base coat during this process.

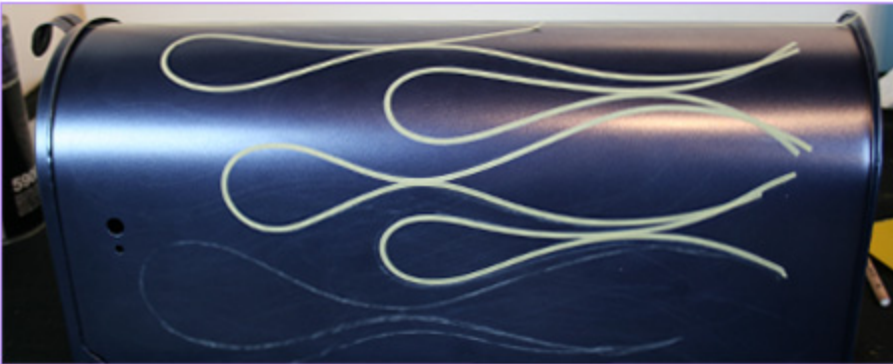
STEP 16



After you are sure that you have used the scraper over the entire flame design, you can lift the tracing paper and take a look at the transfer (STEP 16).

As you can see, the chalk line has been transferred to the surface and you now have a mirror image of the original design. Cool, huh?

STEP 17



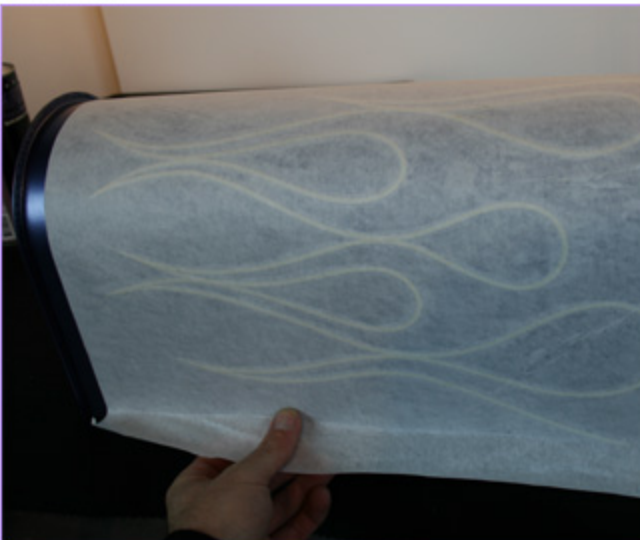
STEP 18



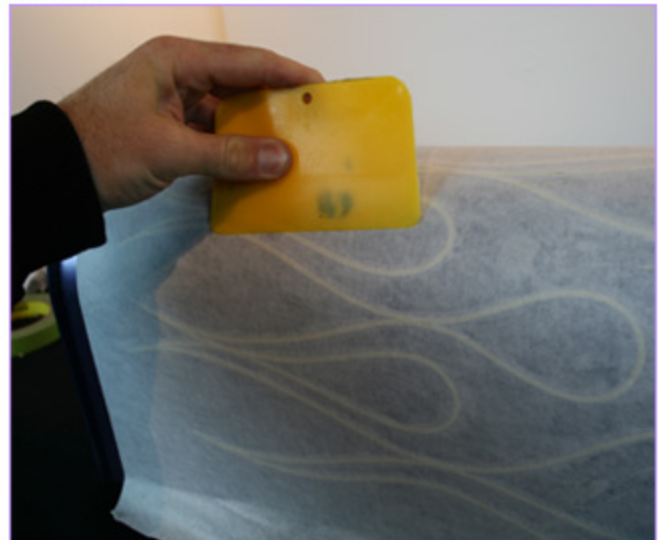
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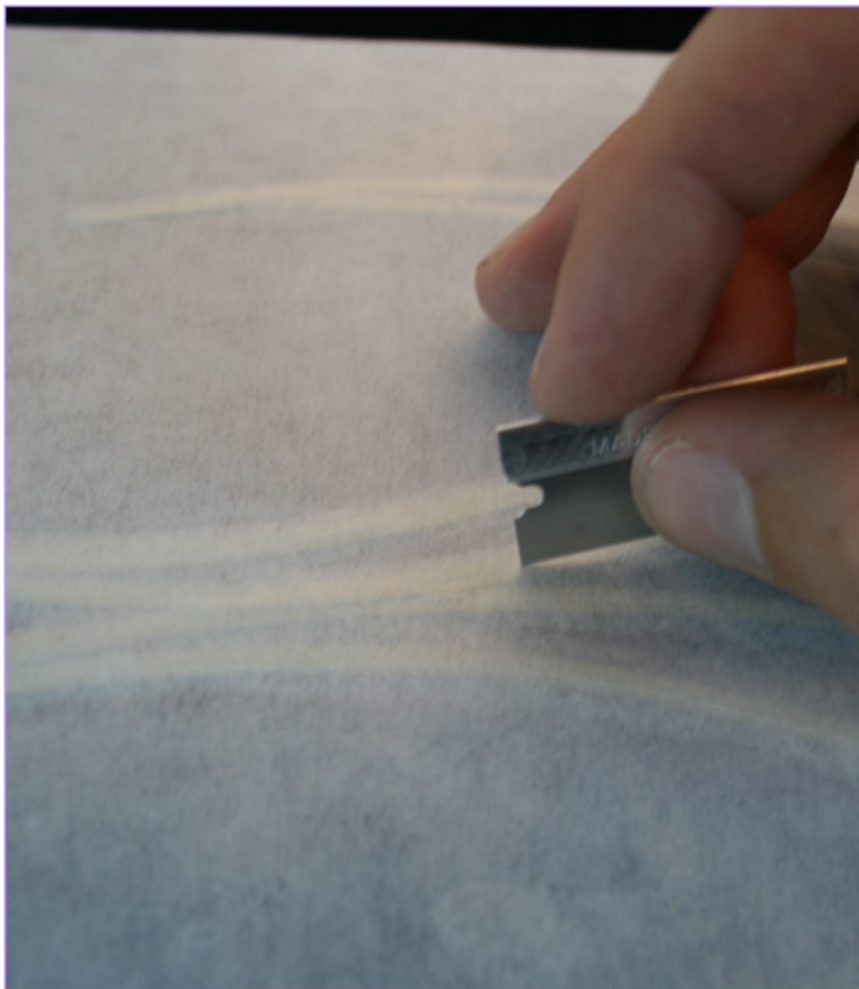
STEP 19



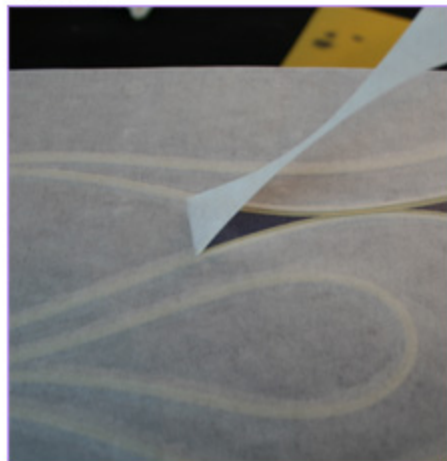
STEP 20



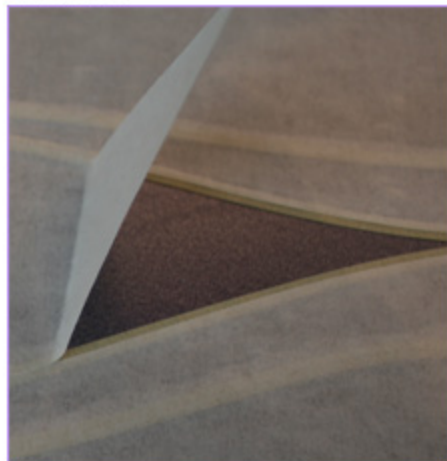
STEP 21



STEP 22



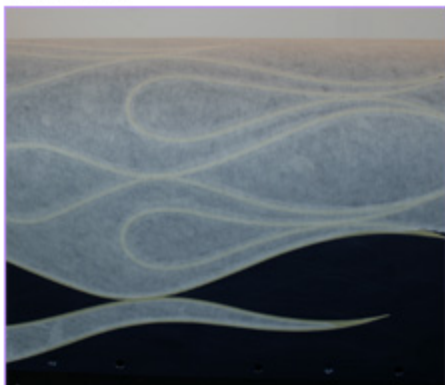
STEP 23



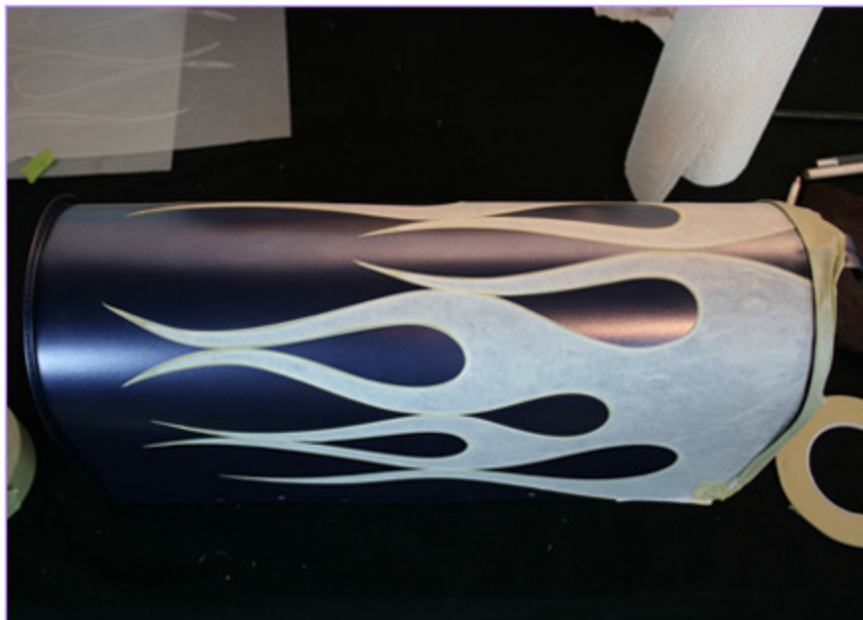
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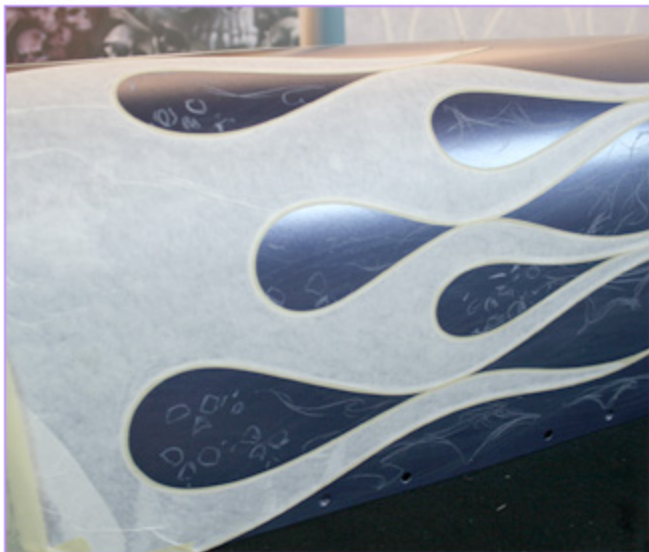
STEP 24



STEP 25



STEP 26



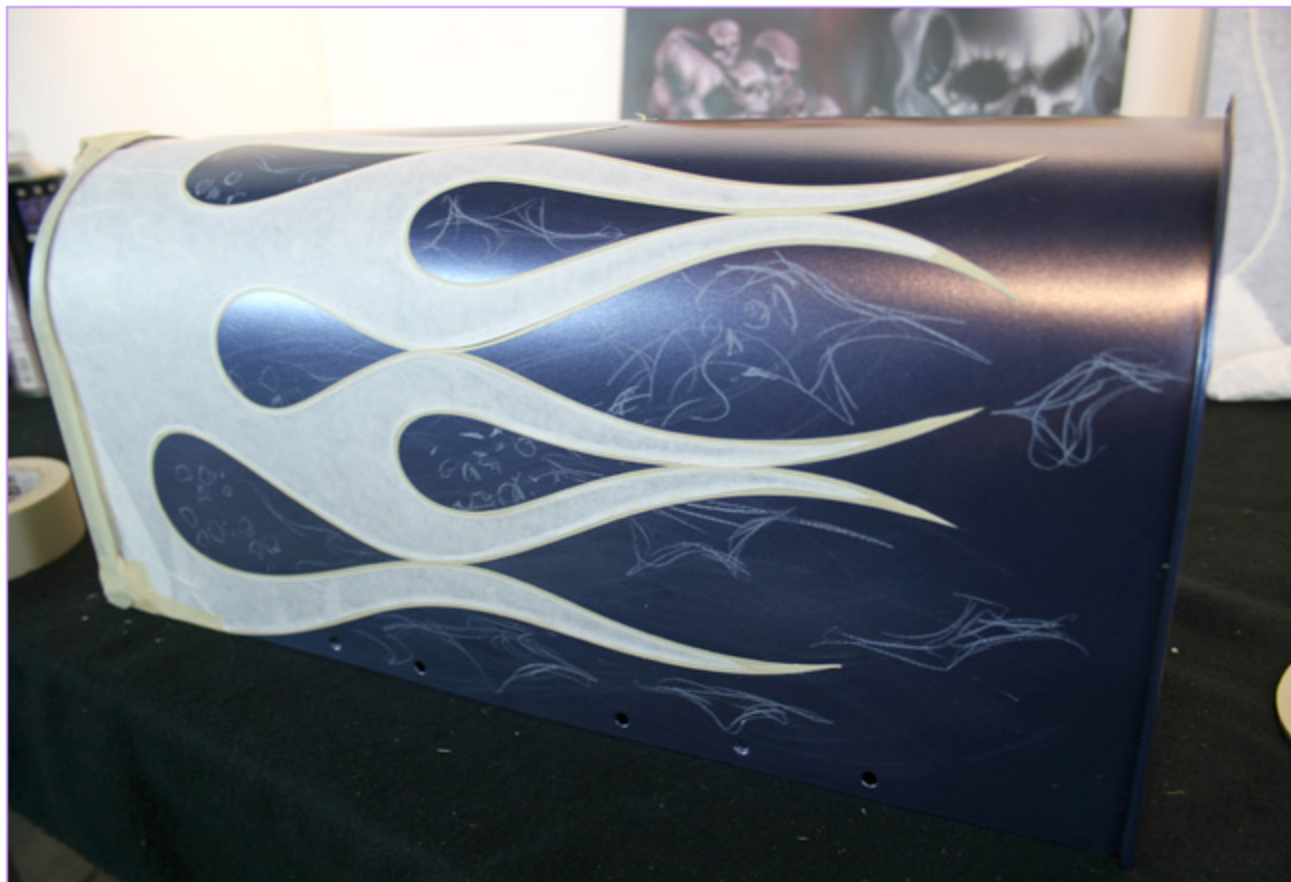
STEP 27



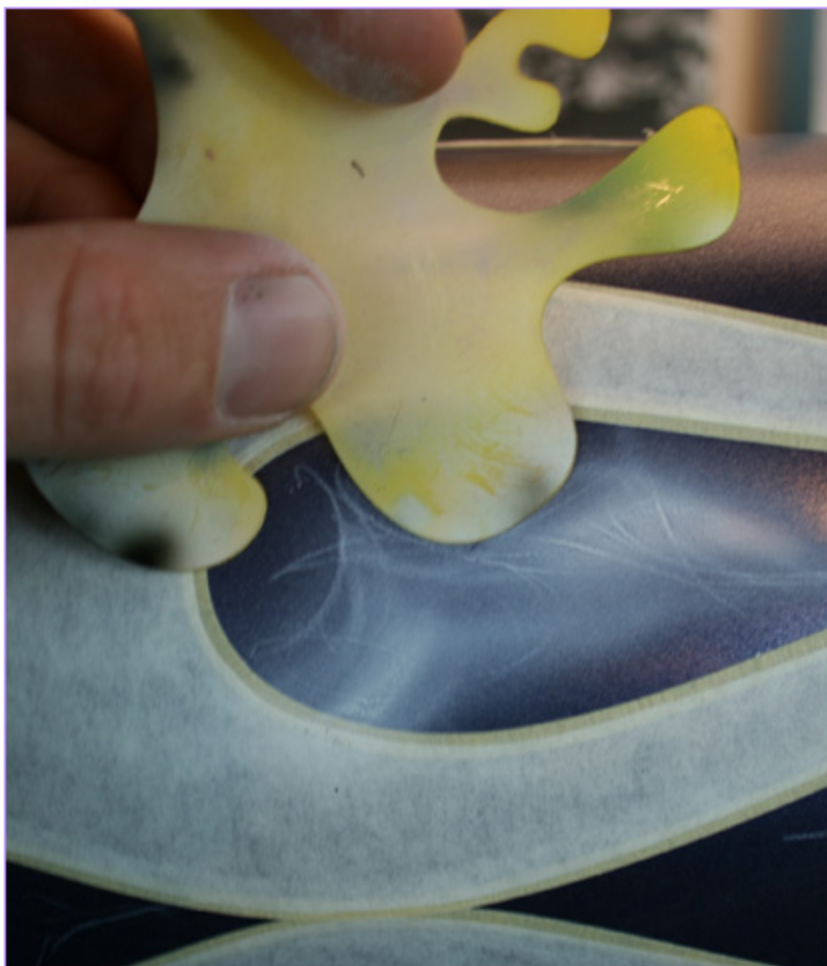
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STEP 28



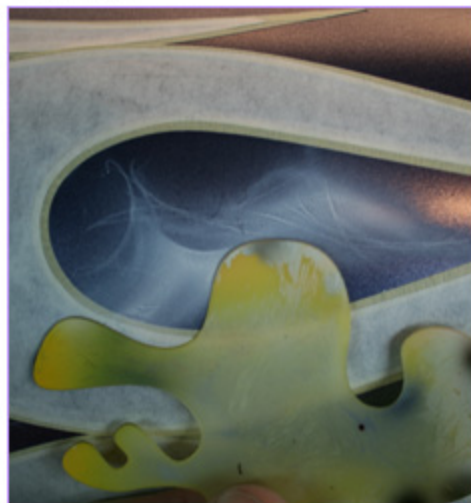
STEP 29



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STEP 30

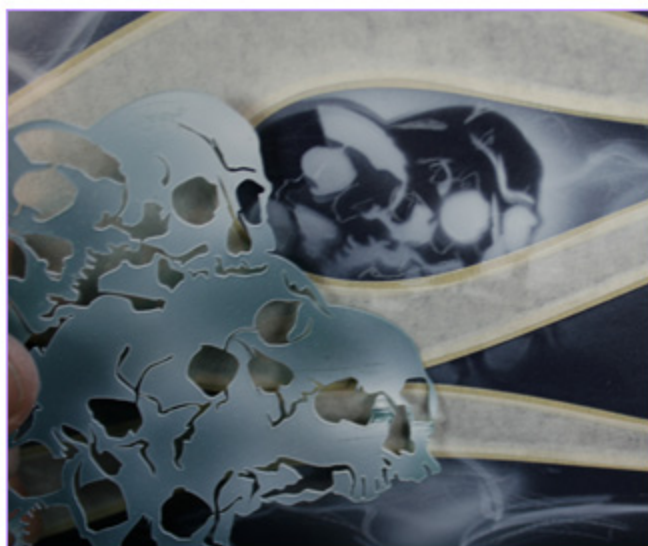


STEP 31



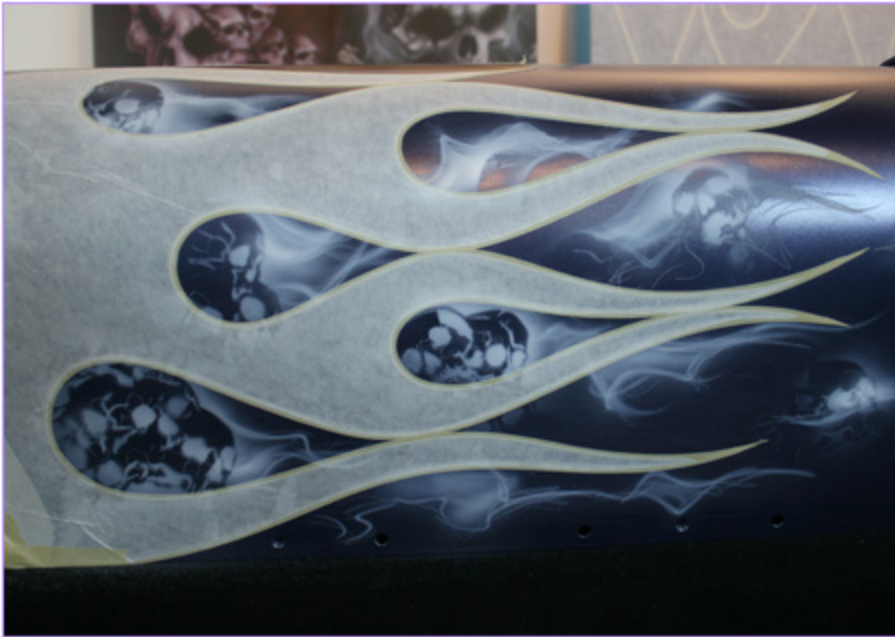
To get the cleanest outlines from the stencil, I am spraying directly down at the stencil, this will prevent paint from getting under the stencil.

STEP 32



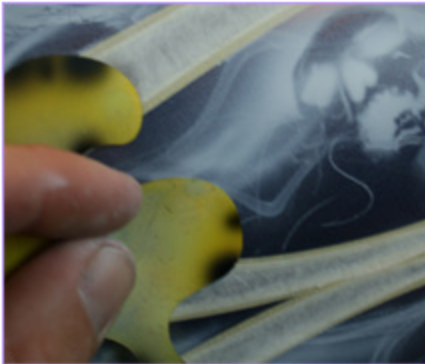
Here are the first few skulls. I am going to go through my flame's "tear-drops" and place a small cluster of skulls in each one.

STEP 33

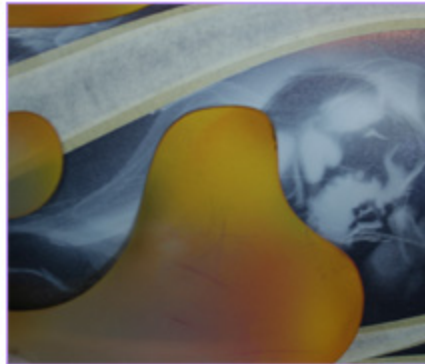


Here is the first half of our mailbox, with all of our skulls placed, as well as the foundation for our real fire (STEP 33). We want the fire to appear to be interacting with the skull, so we use the AirSick "Arson" stencils to create some hard edges for the fire wrapping around the skulls (STEPS 34, 35, 36). The "Arson" stencils work great for defining the form of the fire, but don't rely on them too much. Keep your fire loose and flowing to achieve the most natural look possible.

STEP 34



STEP 35



STEP 36

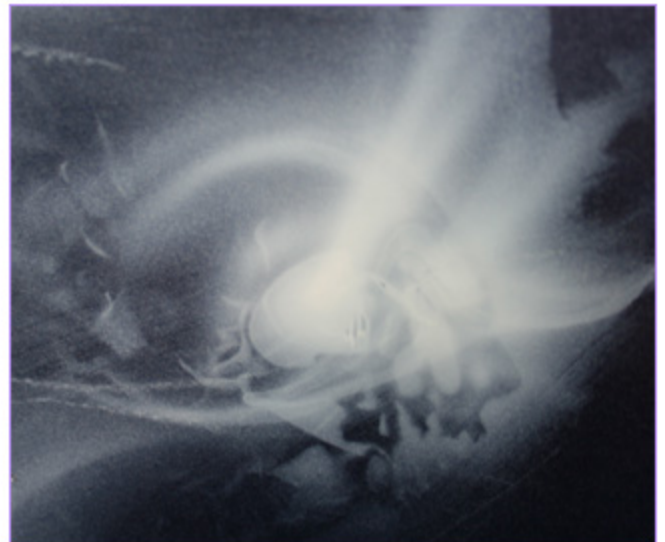


I add some minor rendering to the skulls (STEP 37). There is no need to go into too much detail for the small skulls. I just want the skulls to lose the flat, "stenciled" look. Using small dagger strokes. I decided to add some light beams coming out of the eyes of a few of the skulls (STEP 38). The fun part about working with these stencils is the freedom to add your own artistic touches - this keeps the stenciled designs fresh throughout your projects.

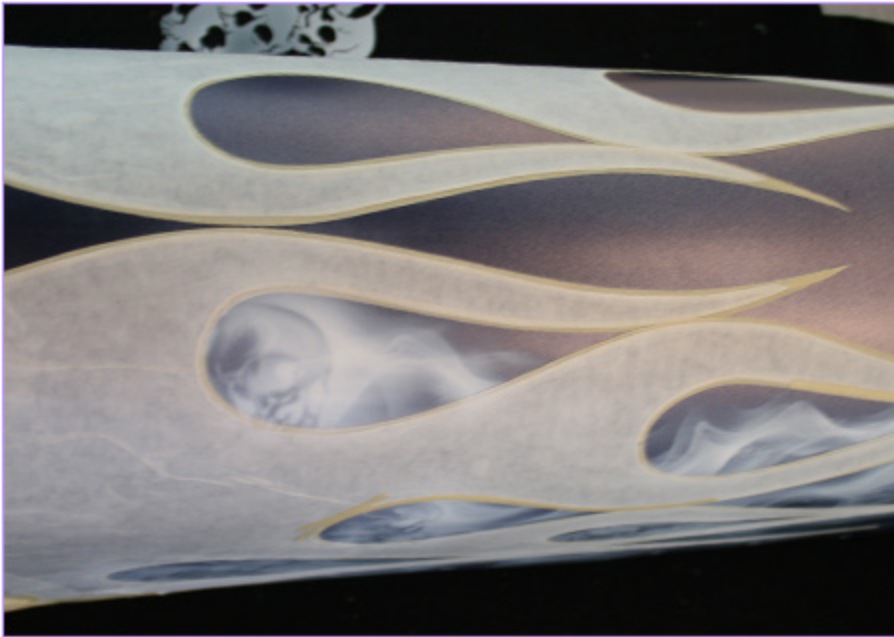
STEP 37



STEP 38



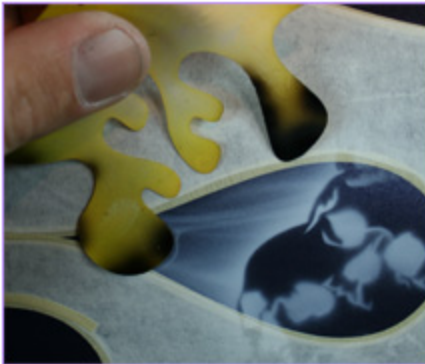
STEP 39



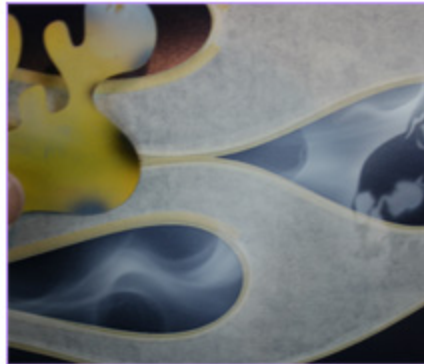
With the first half completed, we move on to the second half of the mailbox, and repeat the same steps. We begin with a basic real fire layout, spray in the skulls, then render.

Note: It is important to remove as much overspray as possible while you are painting, by wiping everything down with a tach-rag between layers or after each color change when layering with pigments and dyes. If you let overspray build, it can bleed through the other layers of paint and give you an undesirable muddy effect.

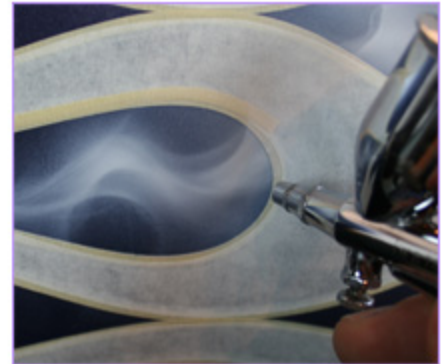
STEP 40



STEP 41

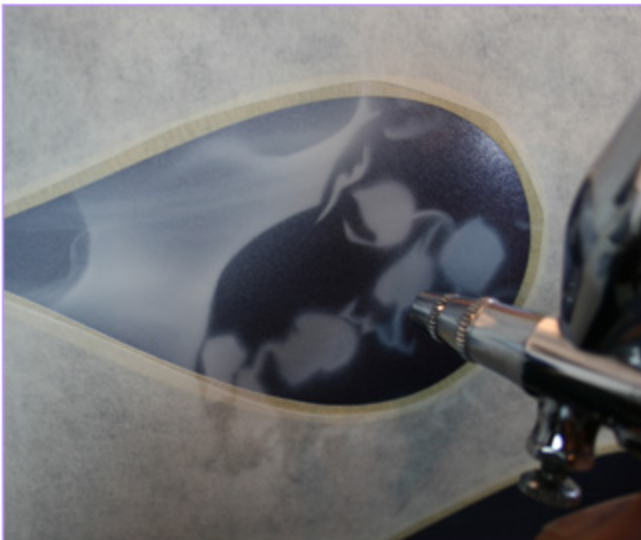


STEP 42

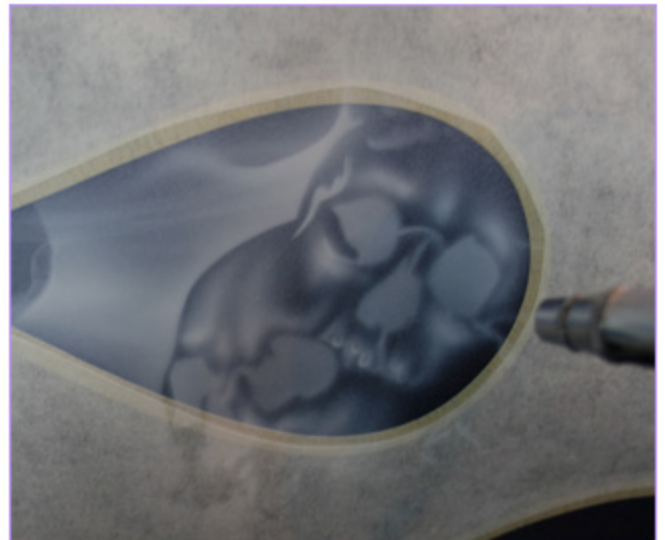


Again, I am using the AirSick "Arson" stencils to define the form of the real fire (*STEPS 40, 41, 42). STEPS 43 and 44 are great detail shots of the simple rendering I am using on the skulls. I am giving them just enough dimensionality to not appear flat and boring.

STEP 43



STEP 44



STEP 45



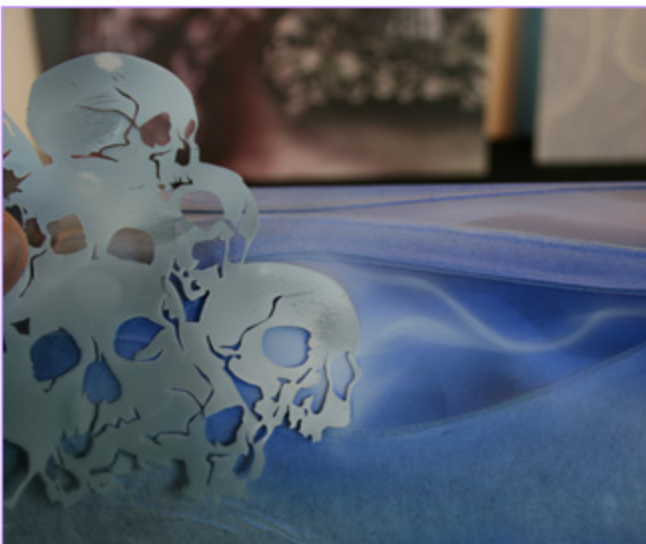
STEP 46



Now that that I have completed both sides of the box and removed the overspray, I load Cobalt Blue Kandy into my mini gun and give my design a few even passes (STEP 46). As you can see, the cobalt blue has tinted my airbrushed skulls and fire a nice deep blue.

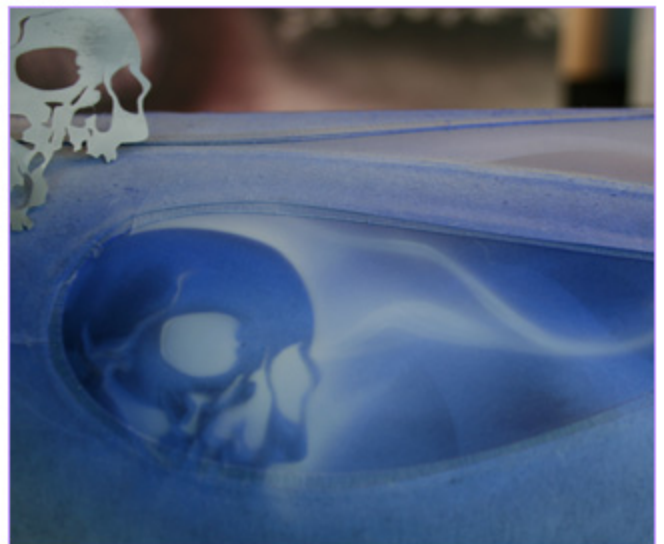
After removing the overspray with a tach-rag, I come back in with white and continue on with my third layer. I go over the entire design with the white base (STEPS 47, 48). The goal with layer three is to begin tightening up your design by cleaning up lines and brightening hot spots.

STEP 47



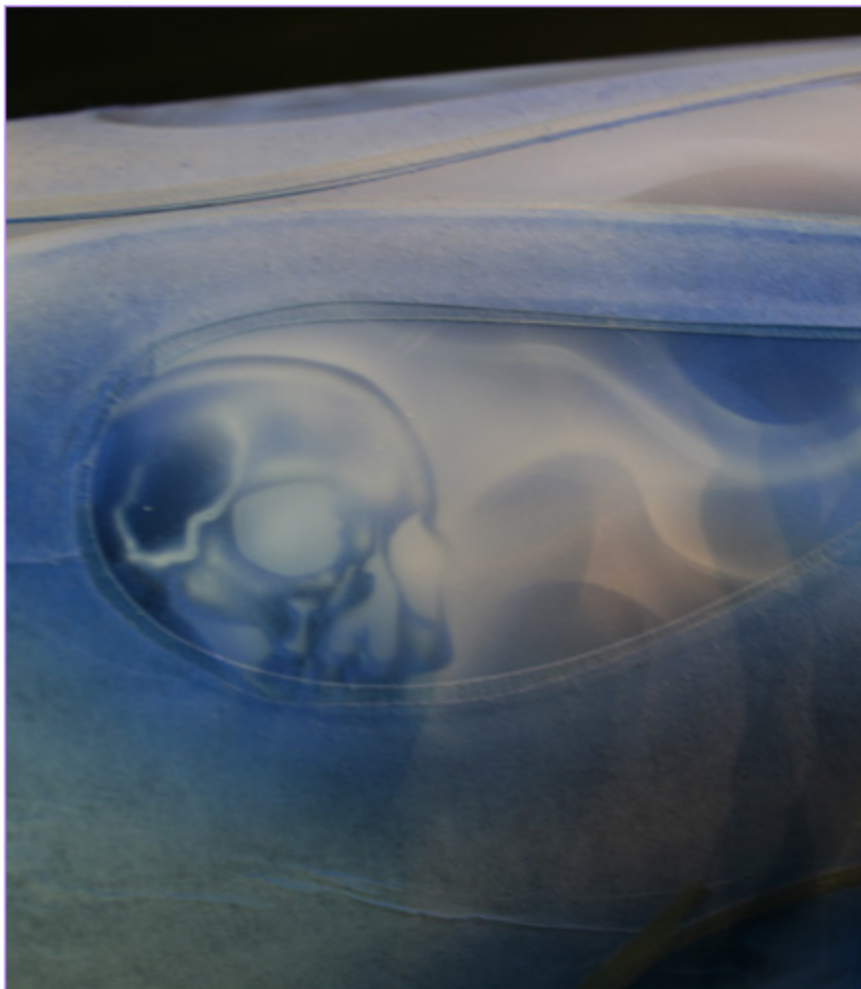
We simply re-align the skulls with the previous layer of artwork. This process of layering produces some really nice depth with very little work.

STEP 48



Keep the stencil held firmly down as you begin the flame licks around the skulls. You want to keep the edges of the skulls as sharp as possible.

STEP 49



STEP 50



STEP 51



Simply repeating the process, I render the skulls a bit more with white and begin to focus on the second layer of real fire (STEPS 49, 50, 51). This step pulls my skulls and fire up from the first layer and create the depth I am looking for.

STEP 52



You can really see how the layers are working together. The first layer of fire sinks deep into background, and the new layer really comes forward.

STEP 53



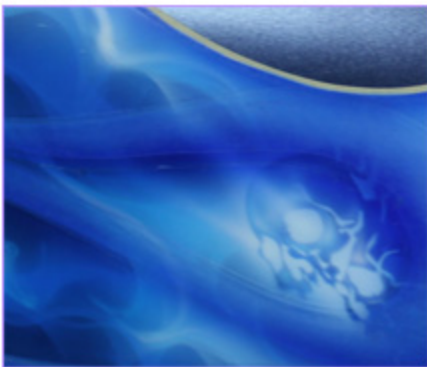
STEP 54



Wipe the overspray with a tach-rag after completing layer three and load the mini gun with Oriental Blue Kandy. I make a few passes over the box, tinting my white base a nice bright blue (STEP 54).

For my final layer I go back to the white base and hit only the brightest highlights in and around the skulls and fire (STEPS 55, 56, 57). Be careful not to go overboard here, I just want to add some minor highlights to the skulls & fire.

STEP 55



STEP 56



STEP 57



With the skull and fire background complete I unmask the design, being careful to remove all fine line tape and auto mask before clear is applied (STEPS 58, 59).

Take a good look at your work. Now is the time to fix anything you are not happy with.

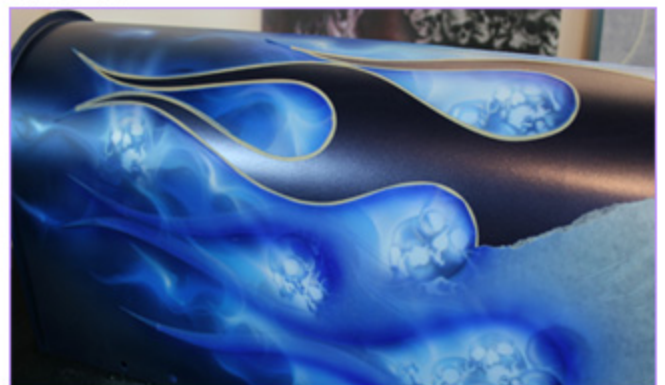
To finalize this project I added a small design on the back of the box using the same 5 layer method as before. I added a violet pin stripe and about 5 coats of clear.

The final project is simple yet eye catching. The layers of kandy colors under the flame layout gives the appearance of depth and movement. All in all this is a good intermediate lesson and I hope you all learned a little something new. Be sure to check out the final pics on the next page.

STEP 58



STEP 59





AirSick

