PIRACY

By Craig Fraser

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 our 21st installment, I grabbed *Piracy*, the new 6-stencil series—inspired by *The Pirate*—from Artool. Because so many artists liked the stylized pirate skull in *Wrath of Skullmaster*, it made good sense to develop a stencil series dedicated to the fine art of piracy. With a stellar lineup of *Pieces of Eight*, *Tortuga*, *The O'Cursed*, *Flyin' Dutchman*, *Tell no Tales*, and *Jolly Rodger*, how can you go wrong? For this demo, I used elements of each stencil to create a full mural design. The number of designs you can create from this set wholly hinges on your imagination.

By the way, much of this project was done in response to the feedback and suggestions I've fielded from emails, forum comments, and Airbrush Getaway participants. Some of the favorite topics out there range from which airbrush is the best to which one gives the best detail to how many skulls can one paint in the size of a dime. Detail is fine, but if you can't airbrush to begin with, all the Microns in the world won't make you a better painter. To prove a point—and because somebody challenged me to do a mural without my Micron—I painted this entire demo using a Kustom Eclipse CS. Another challenge dared me to create a composite stencil design that didn't look stenciled. Let's see how it goes! ▶▶

Artool Stencil Series #21

1. After scuffing the powdercoated black metal blank with a red Scotchbrite pad, I back-masked the panel with Ultramask, a new masking product from Artool. Unlike AutoMask, Ultramask has the advantage of being transparent. It also comes with a backing paper for use in cutting your own stencils on a plotter. And unlike frisket, Ultramask is solvent-proof and will stick to basecoated and clearcoated surfaces.
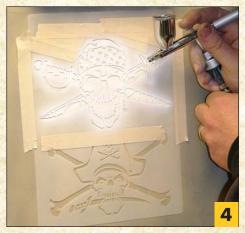

2. To create the ripped edge of the pirate map, I airbrushed basecoat white over the furls of the Tortuga stencil. Keep the rip effects simple so you can match the stencil furls to the outline later on.

3. After cutting and unmasking the map area, I made a batch of off-white by adding some House of Kolor KK-08 Kandy Rootbeer and KK-12 Pagan Gold into BC-26 Basecoat White. I wanted this color to have a dingy, aged, parchment look. It sure has that. Don't be too even with the coat. This is one of the few times that you want poor coverage to create an aged look.

4. With the map's base done, I airbrushed the classic skull and crossed-sword design using the *Tell No Tales* stencil and basecoat white. I mean, really, how many pirate things have you seen without a skull and crossed swords?

5. Using Tortuga again, I airbrushed the furls for real this time. Because I only used about six of the different furls in the stencil, they were easy to keep track of from the outline. Too few look weird, and too many look busy, so be sure to find a nice balance.

6. Now for the rest of *Tortuga*. With a mixture of Rootbeer Kandy and BC-25 Black Basecoat, I airbrushed the treasure path and various pirate map goodies, including a few ships from the *Flyin' Dutchman* stencil, and a couple of pirate flags from *Jolly Rodger*.

7. With the pirate map stenciled in, I freehand-airbrushed some stencil lines and added fades to eliminate that pesky stencil look. Because the mural is much bigger than the stencil, I got creative with the placement of the treasure path and made the island in the map even bigger.

8. The Rootbeer and Black give the overall map a very cool aged sepia look. With the details finished, I continued to use the same color mix for the shading and around the furls. Be sure to keep your light source in mind.

9. To protect all my detail work, I unmasked and then re-masked the holes. Yes, I know I should have saved the negative part of the mask that I cut, but in reality it's really difficult to reposition something this large and with this many odd cuts. For me, it was easier to re-cut the sucker.

10. Lost pirate souls fill ripped holes really well, and The *O'Cursed* stencil was perfect for this. Filled with a bunch of damned (literally) pirates, *O'Cursed* is killer for rendering background ghouls in murals, or as some cool underwater zombie fest in a background graphic.
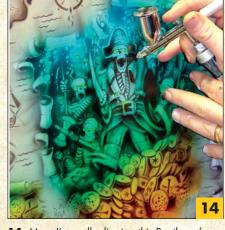

11. I wanted something in the foreground that didn't have just pirate zombies everywhere. What do pirate zombies like? Oh, yeah, money. Time for *Pieces of Eight* to add a whole mess of loot. Because I work primarily with kandies in these areas, a white basecoat really make the kandies pop.

12. With the white basecoat applied, I airbrushed, separately, House of Kolor KK-04 Oriental Blue, KK-12 Pagan Gold, and KK-09 Organic Green. Make sure when mixing these kandies to use only 20% of a KK color to the SG-100 before reducing. More than that will cause bleeding.
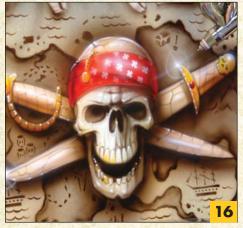
13. After returning some of the details in the coins with *Pieces of Eight* and the Rootbeer/Black color, I added a little KK-07 Tangerine to give the coins a more golden look. Keep the tangerine away from the blue or green or it will darken and kill those colors fast.

14. Man, I'm really digging this Rootbeer/Black. It's very versatile, and good for detailing, dark line work, and soft blends. I brought back some life to the pirate zombies with this color. With a little shading and a little detailing, you can hardly tell that it was stenciled.

15. With more Rootbeer/Black, I finished details to my skull and crossed swords. I also separated it a bit from the background map by airbrushing a subtle drop-shadow.

16. I airbrushed the bandana with KK-11 Red Kandy, and followed it with some over-reduced BC-26 white, and my skull was just about finished. Don't go too crazy with the white. A few highlights really punch out the design, but too many will make it cartoony and lame.

17. Of course, the zombies needed glowing eyes and small bubbles floating around them. **Caution:** this white may appear as overspray, and will kill your colors if you're too heavy with it.

18. After unmasking everything, the furls needed highlights to make them punch out. Using the edges of the coins from *Pieces of Eight* to spray through, I gave the furls a nice highlight, but didn't allow the overspray to "jack up" my background.

FINAL. This turned out to be a killer mural, employing every stencil from the new Piracy series. The balance of stencil use, backmasking, and freehand work gave the painting a clean mixed media look without screaming "Stenciled!!" This further proves that you can use a medium workhorse airbrush, the Iwata Eclipse CS in this case, and still get some killer detail.

Please submit your comments, suggestions, or requests for this column to Fraser@gotpaint.com, or you can cruise the new Q&A forum at www.kustomkulturelounge.com.

Paint to live, live to paint; and sometimes with stencils. –Fraser ✉

ARTOOL
STENCIL
SERIES
#21

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 Koncepts since 1992. Located in Bakersfield, California, Kal Koncepts/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.