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Stenciling 101

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Supplies List

Stencils – Did you know that DecoArt makes and sells a HUGE variety of Stencils? You can find them at DecoArt.com

Stenciling Applicators – Stencil Brushes and Paint Daubers

NOTE: There are many ways you can apply paint over stencils – these are just the two applicators we will focus on for our Stenciling 101 lesson.

Others Suggested Stenciling Tools - Painters Tape, Post It Notes, Paper Towels, Hand Sanitizer, DecoArt Brush & Stencil Cleaner.

Instructions

Stenciling can be a little tricky so I'm happy to share some basic tips with you to give you instant success with all of your stenciled projects.

It's easy and so much fun to add style, design, and pizzazz with stencils to all of your painting and crafty projects! One of the biggest challenges when stenciling is knowing how much paint to use. Below are some helpful tips and tricks to help you achieve perfect stenciling every time!

Securing Stencils

Painter's tape will not only help keep the stencil in place, but it can also be used to mask off areas you don't want painted. It also keeps the stencil in place allowing you to lift the corner of stencil up - so that you can see the progress

Paint Application Methods

Pouncing: Load either a stencil brush or paint dauber with paint and pounce on a paper towel to get rid of the excess paint. With your applicator straight up and down, lightly pounce the paint over the stencil. Add a little more pressure as the paint starts to dissipate. You will get more coverage applying the paint this way, however; you want to remember to build the layers gradually and try not use too much paint on your applicator. Too much paint can result in the paint seeping underneath the stencil.

Circular Motion: When applying paint using a soft circular motion, it's best to use a brush instead of a sponge. Load the stencil brush with paint and then wipe almost all of the paint off on a paper towel. Apply paint over the stencil using a soft circular motion going clockwise AND counterclockwise. This will help move any paint that might be building up on the stencil area edges. Add a little more pressure as the paint starts to thin. If you need to reload the brush with paint, remember it's very important that you wipe almost all of the paint off on a paper towel before going back to the stencil.

TIP: Add layers slowly. Allow the stenciled area to dry and then stencil over it again using the same application (Either pouncing or using a soft circular motion). This will build up the paint, making it more opaque.

TIP: Use painter's tape or post in notes to mask off areas where you don't want the paint to go.

NOTE: Almost all stencils, regardless of size, can repeat the pattern. This allows you to stencil larger areas if necessary. See where the design leaves off and lines up/overlaps to extend the stenciled design.

Cleaning Stencils

You want to make sure to clean your stencils often, especially if you're using mediums such as gesso or modeling paste that can interfere with the intricacies of the stencil design. After using a stencil, squeeze some DecoArt Brush & Stencil cleaner over the stencil and using the same circular motion, brush over the stencil. This will clean both your stencil and your brush! Rinse the stencil and pat dry with a soft paper towel. Allow to dry before storing. For difficult areas not cleaning well, simply squeeze a little hand sanitizer and repeat with the brush. Make sure to rinse well to remove the residue.

Storing Stencils

There are many ways to store stencils so here are three suggestions.

1. For small/medium sized stencils, place in page protectors and put into a 3-ring binder.
2. Store in an accordion style holder (as pictured below) and organize by size.
3. Store larger stencils in 12x12 plastic scrapbook paper holders.



Make sure to check out DecoArt's YouTube Channel for Craft Minute Tips on stencils. Especially the one about creating a reference journal for all of your stencils! This makes choosing a stencil for your project easier and helps you keep track of the stencils you have in your stash.

More Tips for Basic Stenciling

1. **Stencil bridges:** On some designs and especially words/letters, there are bridges that keep the stencil design intact. You can take those away with paint. Load a damp liner brush with the same color used to stencil and make it into an inky consistency. Paint where the breaks are on the design/word/letters. With words, this will give it more of a hand lettered appearance.
2. **Shadows:** Stencil a color on as instructed and let dry. Line the stencil back up on the stenciled area, shift to up, down, to the left or to the right and secure in place. Stencil a different color – allowing to dry and adding additional applications as desired. This will give your stenciled design or word an instant shadow!
3. **Layering:** Stencil on your design or word and allow it to dry. Line the stencil back up with the stenciled area, lay another stencil on top and secure with tape. Use a complimentary color to brush over the stencils. This can create some amazing effects and layers with words and designs.