



SKULLING OUT A SEMA PANEL

FROM THE HORROR OF SKULLMASTER SERIES

By Craig Fraser

REMEMBER THAT ALTHOUGH THIS IS AN AUTOMOTIVE COLUMN DOESN'T MEAN you have to stick to painting cars and bikes. These stencils are very applicable to everything from body art, wall murals, cake decorating, t-shirts, hobby arts, and much more. Made with a solvent-proof polymer, you don't have to worry about what you paint them with; you aren't gonna hurt these babies.

The previous issue's installment, *Tribalnometry*, by Vandemon, was killer. I was in the middle of developing the *Horror of Skullmaster* series, and I figured you could all use a break from my mug. And, frankly, I needed the break (hehehehe!). As promised, here's the continuation of the *Horror* series. In this article, I introduce *Frontal*, which, like the rest of the stencils in this series, is a two-piece freehand shield system with negative and positive designs that allow you to have equal amounts of fun on light and dark backgrounds. For this project, I chose a panel to paint on, but not your run-of-the-mill sign blank. The panel was commissioned for display atolor's exhibit booth at the 2006 SEMA show. Each artist featured in the booth usually contributes about ten panels, and are granted enough artistic license to paint literally anything as long as it's rendered.



Step 1. Here are the two stencils before I gunk them up with paint. They may not be pretty after you've used them on a couple of paintjobs, but no worries, these suckers clean up beautifully with a lacquer thinner. Although the stencils are solvent-resistant, don't soak them overnight in the gun washer. They won't be ruined, but they will get soft and take a while to dry and harden up again.



Step 2. I know... I'm cheating. I have more than one set lying around to speed things up. I use the negative stencils from three of the sets to airbrush my base skulls. Each of the stencils come with three different-sized skulls of the same approximate design. I mask off the stencils to prevent overspray, and airbrush BC-white to make 'em pop.

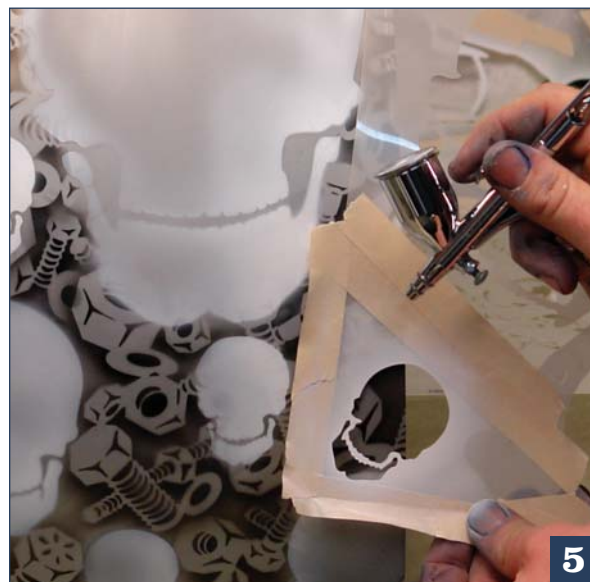


Step 3. Here, you can check out the pattern that I laid them in. This is not a mural by definition, but more like a skull landscape. Deb Mahan liked it; said it reminded her of wallpaper. I guess that's a compliment...



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Step 4. For fun, I employed another stencil: *Nutz n' Boltz* from the FX II line. This stencil is pretty straight forward; just point and shoot. I used black. With this transparent stencil, I can avoid as many of the skulls as possible, especially since I'm just trying to establish a background here.



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Step 5. No matter how careful you are, at least some overspray is unavoidable. Correcting with basecoat white with the previous stencil, we're back in business.

ARTOOL
STENCIL #14
SERIES



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Step 6. Using the new Iwata TH-3 fan-pattern trigger airbrush, I sprayed a coat of Kosmic Krome MC-01 Aluminum Effect (I turned the panel sideways for the photograph). In fact, MC-01 is so reflective, that the curved surface of the panel makes it almost impossible to photograph vertically.



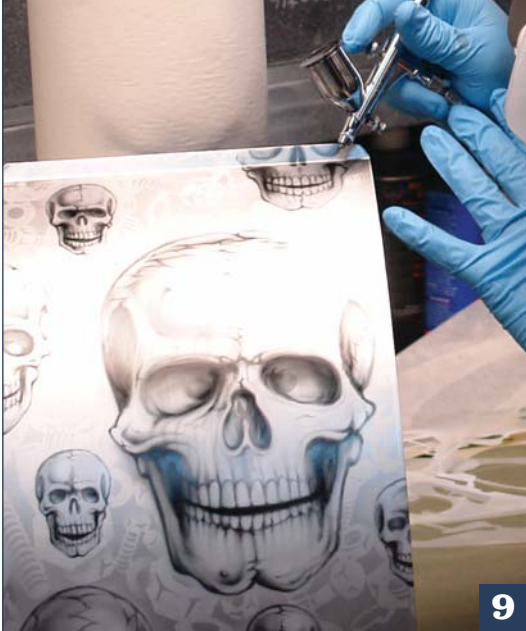
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Step 8. Using the black kandy in Iwata's Kustom HP-CH, I freehand-airbrushed the shading, shadows, and details. The nice thing about working with transparent black is that you can take your time building layers without muddying up the design.



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Step 7. Using the positive *Frontal* stencil, I airbrushed the details of the skulls with black kandy (a mixture of black, violet, and blue). With these stencils you may line them up visually, use the reference marks on the sheets, or both.



Step 9. I finished all the details on the skulls with the same black. At this point, Kosmic Krome, not white, would be used to repair any mistakes or to create a highlight because the white would stand out too much and cast a dark shift when the aluminum reflects the light.



Step 10. The skulls really stand out in comparison to the Kosmic Krome background. The layered Kosmic Aluminum over the black gives the background the look of a laser-etched bolt pattern. Very cool.



Titleshot. Well, there ya have it. Another completed image that doesn't look stenciled. It's amazing what a little freehand work can do for a design. The new *Horror of Skullmaster* stencils are perfect for use on bikes and cars, and even cranking out some cool SEMA display panels. Because they're what I like to call rendering stencils, they act as great sketching tools to the extent that your style, creativity, and imagination will allow. Remember, stencils are only a tool. They will help expedite your work and offer better continuity in your designs, but they should not replace freehand airbrushing. I hope you enjoy using them as much as I enjoy making them. Until next time, keep on stenciling. ✖