THE CAMO-BOARD

Putting down some killer military camo on an ol'school street stick

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.

F OR THE 24TH INSTALLMENT, I WAS PUTTERING AROUND IN MY SHOP, TRYING TO FIGURE OUT what I would paint using the new FX-4 stencil series just released by Artool. While pondering this quandary, and with the deadline fast approaching, I happened to notice a couple of skateboard blanks sitting off to the side of my work area. You see, I had bought a few blanks to play around with from my good friend Mike "Munk" Carmody. Mike is an old-school airbrush artist who's been around as long as I've been going to the Party. Not only does he tear up the T-shirt airbrush circuit in California, but he's also a killer boarder. Besides kustom painting them, he also screenprints his designs on them, and sells them at his airbrush T-shirt venues.

Mike is not the only one. If you watch any of the Tattoo shows on TV, you will notice quite a few kustom-painted boards hanging on walls as artwork. With skateboard popularity at a constant high in this state, it was only a matter of time before the boards would elevate themselves to the status of modern art. Even many Airbrushers has gotten in the game by hosting a competition sponsored by House of Kolor for airbrush artists to design kustom boards using HoK paint. The winning three, selected by HoK, will be represented at the 2008 SEMA show in the HoK booth. (If you're interested. Getting back to the article… I decided to grab one of the boards waiting to be painted and throw a few stencils on it.

Following in the footsteps of the other FX stencils, FX-4 is a variety of textural and patterned designs that can be used as graphic backgrounds or in mural effects. The series of six stencils have patterns such as *Gater Skin*, *Wrenches*, *Digital Camo*, *Ol' School Camo*, *Palm Fronds*, and *SRAEG* ("Gears" spelled backwards, since they are done in the negative on this stencil). All right, I thought it was funny... For this design I'll stick with just two: *Digital*, and *Ol' School*, or *Traditional Camo*. Well, that's enough blah, blah, blahing. Time to start painting. ➤➤

1. Since this board already has a thin layer of lacquer clear over the screened artwork, I do not need to reseal it. A little dry sanding with 600-grit paper and the board is ready for artwork. The screenprinted logo came off with hardly any work. I always appreciate such gifts.

2. No, this is not primer. I mixed up a batch of basecoat BC-25 black with BC-26 white. This gives me a nice medium gray that will be the base color of both sides of the board. I sprayed this color using my TH-3 fan pattern gun, the best tool for coverage at this scale.

3. With the *Digital Camo* stencil from the FX-4 series, I lay in a random pattern of black pixels using pure BC-25 mixed with RU-311 reducer. Remember, the key to camouflage is to break existing lines and visible shapes. This is done best with random patterns. (*Never thought I would be airbrushing in square pixels; in the past I always tried to get rid of them! Heh, heh.*)

4. Using the same black, I came in with the same digital stencil and sprayed at half intensity. This gives me a great half-tone faded pattern to blend with the solid black. Be sure to overlap your work to keep the camo confusing. Also, mask the edges of the stencil. The last thing you want is a hard overspray edge in the middle of all your chaos.

5. For the biggest contrast, I mixed up some pure BC-26 white. This will really make the design pop, not to mention making it hard to focus on. (Don't worry; it's supposed to be hard to focus on. That's the point). Just be careful of the overspray. You want the pixels in this pattern to remain crisp, giving it that modern digital look.


6. With a mix of basecoat White, Black, KK-08 Tangerine, and KK-07 Rootbeer, I created a cool burnt sand color. This will work nicely for my old-school camo effect. The stencil is none other then the *"Ol' School" Camo* from the same FX-4. Again, the varied patterns are created merely by going full strength on the spray, or by half-toning it in a fog.

7. Jumping back to my black, I put in the thinner spidery pattern throughout the design. If at this point you are wondering how I separated the two patterns, I actually created a Ying-Yang line that flows from one end of the board to the other. (You will get the full effect after it's unmasked and striped. Trust me on this one).

8. The final pattern with the camo stencil is the white. For this one, I used the smaller isolated design. You can easily mix and match the varied patterns on these stencils by masking off the ones around the one you want. Heck, you can even use your tape to mask them in half, creating other patterns.
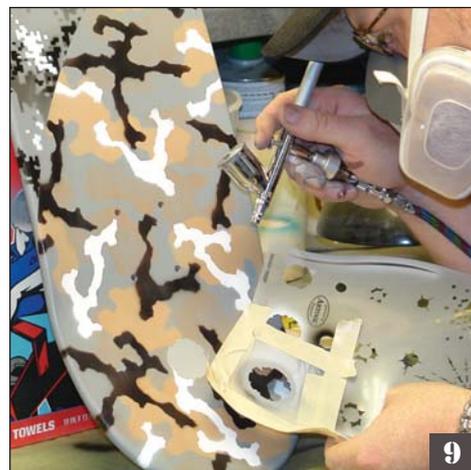
9. Here you see the flow of the two camo patterns with the Ying-Yang line separating them. For the eye at each end, I decided to use my *Bullet-Riddled* stencil from a while back; the entrance hole is signified by the radius of chipped paint, showing the metal under the camo paint. I got this metal effect with a little Kosmic Krome Aluminum effect, MCC-01.

10. To give the hole depth, and to show the indentation created by the actual bullet striking the surface, I added a little shading and a few highlights. With some over-reduced black, the shadow will be above the center point that I cleverly put in the middle. (Don't worry, the actual hole will hide that, and the point will help you lay out the stencil). The white highlight is on the underside.

11. Spray just a little black through the hole, and you have one realistic bullet hole. I normally would add smoke, but with all the camo patterns in this board, the smoke would probably not come across very well. These bullet holes will work for me just as they are.

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12. I know, I know—Von Dutch striping is not your standard camo pattern; but, heck, it screamed for it! Not only does it center the board nicely, and add a killer touch, but it outlines the Ying-Yang pattern and really punches the design out nicely.

13. In keeping with the balance and color schemes, I predominantly stripe one side with white, and the other with black, tying both in together on the center-line with Von Dutch work. I think that is enough Von Dutch. I wanted just enough Von Dutch to work with the camo, but not overpower it.

FINAL.

There you have it. One customized, camouflaged, and cratered skateboard. With blank board prices being so cheap ($25-$50), anyone can afford to kustom paint a board that will not only tear up the local skate park but look killer hanging on the wall as an innovative art piece.

Originally, I was going to paint the board just for this article. When finished, I was going to sand it down for the actual project that was supposed to go on it. Guess I will be getting another board from Mike, because I kind of dig the way this one came out. A little flattened clear and it

Paint to live, live to paint.   —Fraser ✉

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also the author of *Automotive Cheap Tricks and Special F/X*, and the star of 15 instructional DVDs on kustom painting techniques. You may view more of Fraser's