

STENCIL 101

A stencil is just a cut-out of a picture. Remember carving pumpkins as a kid...same idea. It is a completely easy way to get a color cover for your comic/ zine without spending money on color-reproduction (printing, photocopying, etc.), which can be expensive. Hopefully this will help you make your first stencil.

TOOLS

Okay, first of all, here is the list of tools and supplies you will need to make a stencil:

-A cutting tool: Exacto knife, razorblade or boxcutter will all work. I personally like and use an Exacto knife.

-Someplace to cut your stencil. I use a 3' x 3' piece of wood (about 1" thick), usually setting on my coffee table. This way you don't cut the hell out of your table. You can also use thick cardboard, but be careful not to cut through it.

-Something to cut your stencil out of. You can use everything from any random cardboard, old record sleeves, paper, cardstock, mailing envelopes, almost anything that will hold the shape. Just keep in mind, paper will tend to warp and be destroyed after a hand full of uses (I can usually stretch them out to 10-15 stencils before the paper is ruined). I normally use cardstock and old record sleeves (which can normally be found for free/ or around a quarter at most thrift shops/ used record stores).

-First Aid: I know this sounds funny, but eventually you are going to cut yourself. I've had some horrible little slices into my flesh. Not to mention some dastardly little paper cuts. So, be careful and pay attention when your cutting two inches from your finger tips.

The first thing to keep in mind when making a stencil is that you must have *good connection* and *ample dead space*.

What this means... Your stencil will fall apart if it is not planned out well enough. If too much is cut, in the wrong places, your stencil will not be strong enough to support its own weight. It must have connecting points that help hold it together.

SPRAY PAINT

Now once you have it cut out, it's time to spray paint your stencil. Make sure you are in a well-ventilated area (or you will fill up with paint fumes, feel dizzy and get funny colored snot). Make sure your stencil is flat and spray away. If you are doing this outside, make sure you are out of the wind. This can mess up your final image, causing it to be fuzzy. Also, don't spray to heavy because the paint will smear and run. You want to get as tight of an image as you can. If you are doing multiple colors/ stencils, make sure that the last coat is application is dry before spraying the next stencil. If you plan on stenciling on a piece of paper/ cardstock that will also have photocopied images/ text on it, make sure to stencil after the photocopying has been done. Some copiers will smear the paint (even if it appears dry) or leave a residue on the copier parts (trust me, Kinko's doesn't like this...I know this from personal experience). After your cover is dry, put your book together and

you have a color cover. Stenciling is a cheap and fun alternative to printed covers. Good luck and try not to cut yourself to deep.

Note: Keep in mind that stencils are also great for a lot of other projects. You can use them to decorate record covers (CD's, LP's, 45's, 10"''s cassettes), patches, t-shirts, flyers, your city, you name it

Spray paint the world,



Nate Higley
You can catch me making small press comics, stenciling and usually putting band-aids on my fingers at all hours of the day and night. O i .
natehigley@aol.com
www.natehigley.com

S.P.A.C.E.
2005

CHECK OUT:
stencilrevolution.com
stencilarchive.org
stencilgraffiti.com

softskull.com
(search on "stencil pirates" book)

STENCIL