

POINTERS FOR WALLS & FLOORS

There are loads of stencil paints on the market today. Many of you experienced stencilers already have a favorite product. If you are a beginner, much more comprehensive advice can be given in the craft shop than I can provide in this space, nor do I have the experience to do so. Keep an open mind for a system that may work best for you while I take you through my personal choices and pointers.

Paint. Jo Sonja acrylic paints in tubes are great. They have an emulsion base which prevents cracking and yellowing, and mixed with all-purpose sealer they adhere well to wood, cement and canvas. There is an excellent selection of colors and the mediums allow for creating a solid or a transparent look and for painting one color over another. They clean up easily with environmentally-friendly Simple Green™ (found in your grocery store) and a ScotchBrite™ pad with the stencil laid on a flat surface. We now carry a good selection of colors and as well as brushes and finishes. Call 1-888-649-1790 for orders and a free color chart.

Brushes. We now carry Royal Stencil Brushes. 1" brushes are \$4.00 each, 1 1/4" brushes are \$5.00 each. To order, call us at 888-649-1790, or fax 802-295-8003 or 978-464-0162.

Maintaining Your Brush. While working, always slip your brush into a plastic baggie and keep your paint covered with plastic wrap.

With water-based paint. After you have been stenciling awhile, your brush will get “crusty”. To fix this, put some water on a folded paper towel in the palm of your hand and pass the brush across it closing your hand around it. Brush the tips of the bristles too. Be very careful with water! It can cause too-wet paint and a great mess very easily. If a few drops of water must be added to the paint, spritz it on and mix it thoroughly with your palette knife. Never go directly into it with your brush while painting. At the end of the day clean your brush very well with soap and water. Roll it in paper towel so the bristles will maintain their shape as they dry. Do not use again until dry.

Clean The Stencil

- a) when paint smears on the back.
- b) before the pattern gets “crusty” or “gummy” and small holes clog or edges get ragged.
- c) or when you take a break.

When cleaning always use a flat surface. Be careful of vulnerable places such as serrated leaves and long curved openings. I find a bristle brush works well with the solvent. For oil paint, I clean on a flat piece of cardboard. Blot the back and front carefully with paper towels. For water-base paint, I clean in a sink on the flat with fingers and soap and water or Simple Green™ and Scotch Brite™ for stubborn paint. If using again right away, be certain the back is totally clean and dry.

Repairing A Stencil. If you do have the misfortune to tear a stencil, Scotch™ tape across the place back and front. If you break off a piece, for example, a point of a leaf, stick both sides with Scotch tape over the missing part so the faces stick together and recut it with a single edge blade knife on a pane of glass for a background.

Plumb Bob (for walls). I tie a washer for weight onto a thread. Tape it with masking tape above the fall line of the centers of the motifs. Use it to align them and then when you are painting, it can be taped aside out of the way.

Freeing Up Stencil. Take care to free up and away from your work. Do so gently so as not to stress it and cause it to tear.

“Fat Over Thin”. This little rule means that you can paint oil (fat) over water-base (thin) with success, but not to reverse the procedure as in acrylic (thin) over oil-base background paint (fat).

Wall Paint. One final word of caution. Allow your wall paint to be totally cured before stenciling. Attempting to stick anything to it may pull it off.



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