

stencil art making

3 free stenciling tutorials + how to make stencils

presented by cloth paper scissors®



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get your stencil on
LINDA BLINN

2 texture and layers
with paint and stencils
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LISA THORPE



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MIXED MEDIA DISCOVERY

Stencil Art Making: 3 Free Stenciling Tutorials + How to Make Stencils

presented by

Cloth Paper Scissors®

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Everywhere you look, artists are making stencils, painting with stencils, using stencils in their art journals and more. If you've been wondering what all the excitement is about or want ideas for how to make stencils and how to use them, you'll love our new eBook, *Stencil Art Making: 3 Free Stenciling Tutorials + How to Make Stencils*.

First, join Linda Blinn in The Workshop for "Get Your Stencil On," and learn the basics of how to make a stencil, how to use stencils, and stenciling techniques.

Next, Lisa Kesler shows you how to combine painting with stencils using custom stencils and masks in "Texture & Layers with Paint and Stencils."

Finally, Lisa Thorpe explores "Stencil & Stamp Synergy" inspired by the Farmer's Market. First you carve the stamps, then the complementary

stencils. The stencils block out and reveal different areas of the stamped images for painting, allowing you to create many colorful versions of the same design.

Stencil art is fun and easy, with unlimited uses and applications. Let's get started!

Warmly,

Cate Prato
Online Editor,
Cloth Paper Scissors Today

Where mixed-media artists come to play



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Left: "Winter Flowers"

Below: Figure 1



THE WORKSHOP

get your **stencil** on

BY linda blinn

Stenciling is currently undergoing a lively renaissance. You'll see stencils in home décor, packaging, jewelry, graphic design, clothing, accessories, and more. Mixed-media and graffiti artists are taking stenciling to the level of fine art, and we have the graffiti industry to thank for innovative pressurized paint products, custom spray caps, and trendy stencils. But you can also create your own stencils, and one of the many advantages of cutting your own is being able to reproduce your favorite motifs and original designs in any size you want (see "Cutting Stencils").



Figure 2



Figure 3

MATERIALS

- Protected work surface
- Project substrate (Various papers from poster board to fine watercolor paper, decorative papers, sturdy book pages, fabrics, and canvas. Consider walls, tabletops, windows and doors as surfaces.)
- Stencil(s), including the inside shape
- Double-sided removable tape
- Colorants (spray paint, spray mists, acrylic paints)

Currently my preference in stenciling is for bold silhouettes and large-scale motifs. This graphic contemporary style comes to life on solid backgrounds, or it can serve as a strong focal point against those gorgeous, layered backgrounds so essential to mixed-media artists. Using sprays, you can achieve a soft, watercolor-like edge, making each stenciled image unique. Innovative resist techniques using sprays such as gesso and clear acrylic also ensure that no two designs are identical...that is, unless you want them to be.

With the help of some fun and whimsical Chinese lanterns, I have demonstrated three basic techniques here: stenciling, masking, and layering.

the basics stenciling

In its simplest form, stenciling refers to applying color inside a cut-out shape, the shape being the outline of an image. The stencil is taped (with removable tape) or held in place, and paint is applied within the cutout. Stencils enable you to duplicate a design, over and over. In *Figure 1*, I repeated the lantern shape, applying black spray paint through the stencil to create a pleasing composition, and added the tassels with a black marker.

masking

Using a mask is quite simple. Shapes are arranged on top of the background

paper or fabric, taped in place with removable tape, and paint is sprayed lightly over each shape, leaving some of the surrounding background paper/fabric unpainted. The subtle shading around the lanterns in *Figure 2* was created by holding the spray can about 10" above the surface. I used a foil marker to draw the lines from the lanterns to the top of the page.

layering

Layering is just as the word implies. More than one stencil is used to create an image. One stencil is taped in position and paint is applied through the opening. Next, a smaller stencil is taped to the back of the original stencil, the stencil is placed back in its original position, and paint is applied again, often



using a different and/or contrasting color. In *Figure 3*, I used spray mists for the layers and added details with a black marker.

going further

The paisley motif is timeless and currently grabs our attention on textiles, wallpaper, clothing, and accessories. Design possibilities abound, and this shape is perfect for adding details and surface texture, whether you're working with fabric or paper (or both). Opposite, you see the same stencil, in multiple sizes, glammed up with foil, layered in lace, and embellished with beads.

With just this one stencil you have shapes within shapes to design with. Cut your own stencil and mask now, using the template provided below.

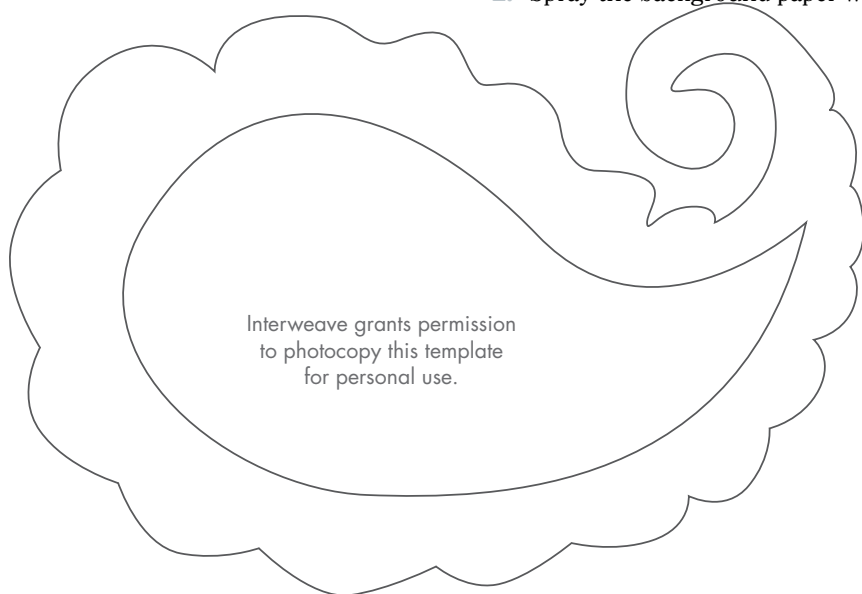
- Try each part separately or in various combinations.
- Attach lace to the back of the stencil and then spray through the stencil/lace with paint.
- Use lace as a background for your stencils.

foil & glitter paisley

1. Place the 2 parts of the paisley mask together and adhere them to the paper with double-sided tape.
2. Spray the background paper with gold glitter.

3. Remove the border section of the paisley mask and apply foil glue to this section of the paper. Set it aside.
4. Using the center part of the paisley mask, trace and cut the paisley shape from a double-sided adhesive sheet.
5. Remove the protective paper from the front side of the adhesive paisley shape, lay a foil sheet on top of the adhesive, and burnish with a bone folder to transfer the foil. (You can emboss the foiled adhesive sheet at this point, if desired.)
6. Peel the release paper from the back of the foil-covered paisley shape and affix the shape inside the paisley border.

note: Foil is always applied color-side up.



Interweave grants permission to photocopy this template for personal use.

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Gold glitter spray
- Foil glue
- Paisley mask
- Double-sided adhesive sheet
- Foil sheet
- Bone folder
- optional**
- Embossing tools or machine



7. Apply foil to the dried glue on the paisley border.

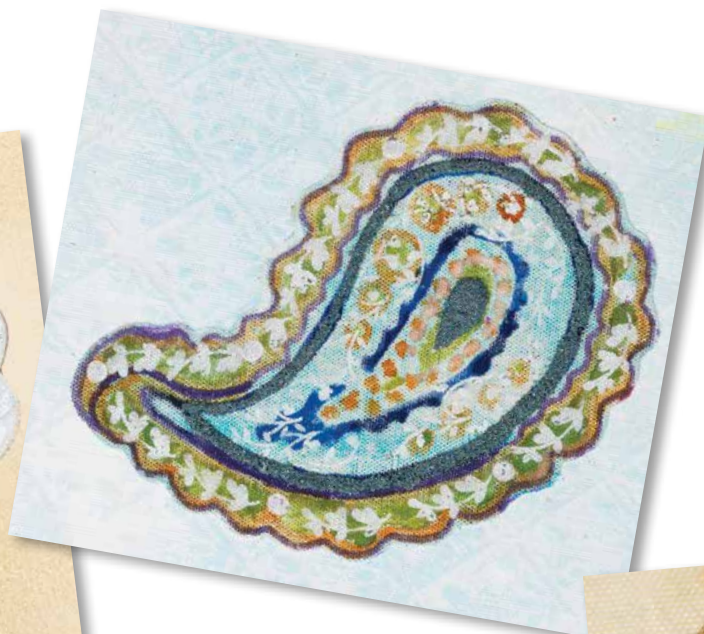
canvas paisley

THE BACKGROUND

1. Place a small-scale stencil on a piece of canvas, and spray within the stencil opening with clear acrylic gloss. Remove the stencil and let dry.
2. Paint the entire surface of the canvas with fluid acrylics, and then wipe the paint off with paper towels to reveal your stencil pattern.

THE PAISLEY

1. Using the paisley stencil, paint or spray the paisley shape onto the second piece of canvas.
2. Add some details to the shape with fabric markers.
3. Affix microbeads to the paisley shape with liquid glue.
4. Cut out the paisley shape, and attach it to the background piece. Sew it in



Far left: Foil and glitter paisley.
Left: Canvas paisley.
Below: Layered paisley.

MATERIALS

- Canvas (2 pieces)
- Small-scale stencil
- Clear acrylic spray, gloss
- Fluid acrylics
- Paintbrush
- Paper towels
- Paisley stencil
- Paints or spray mists
- Fabric markers
- Microbeads
- Liquid glue
- Fabric scissors
- Fabric glue

place or affix it to the background with fabric glue.

layered paisley

1. Place the paisley stencil and the center part of the mask on the white cotton and apply fabric paint through the stencil. Allow to dry.
2. Cut out the paisley shape.
3. Spray the lace with glitter gold. Let dry.



4. Place the cut-out paisley shape on top of another piece of white cotton, and then place the gold lace on top of the paisley shape.
5. On top of the lace, machine or hand stitch around the edge of the paisley through all 3 layers.
6. Using fabric markers, outline the paisley shape on top of the lace, and add some adhesive-backed jewels.

MATERIALS

- Spray mists
- Paper
- Stencil
- Permanent marker
- Double-sided adhesive sheet
- Scissors
- Bone folder
- Foil sheets

‘winter flowers’

I call this technique “painting with foil.” Here, the stencil is used as a pattern to cut doubled-sided adhesive for this foiling technique.

DIRECTIONS

1. Spray the paper with a variety of spray-mist colors.
2. Trace the flower motif onto the double-sided adhesive sheet with the marker and cut it out.
3. Remove the protective paper from the back side of the flower, and place the flower (adhesive-side down) onto the paper.
4. Peel back the top protective layer from the stem and leaves, leaving the flower section covered.
5. Using small pieces, burnish foil onto the stem and leaves, alternating colors. I used blue and green foil.
6. Remove the protective layer from the flowers and burnish small pieces of foil onto the flowers, using a variety of colors. I used red, orange, pink, and gold foil. ●

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cutting stencils

Creating a collection of your own stencil designs in various sizes is a useful addition to your mixed-media supplies. Change up the sizes from tiny to tall, or use the stencil as a pattern to cut shapes from patterned papers. If you can hold a pencil, you can cut a stencil. (There is barely a learning curve.)

MATERIALS

- Stencil design (your own sketch or a copyright-free image)
- A piece of glass (such as one from an old picture frame)
- Low-tack masking tape
- Mylar® or a plastic sheet
- Electric stencil cutter

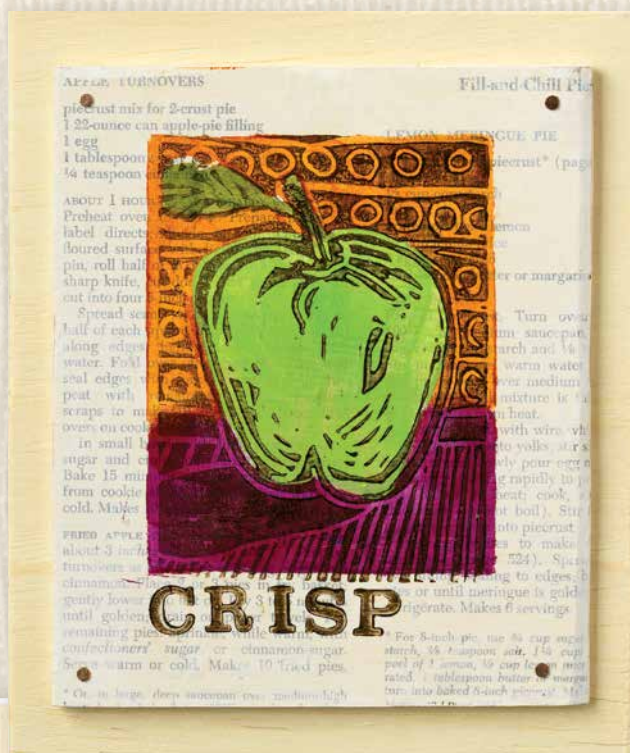
DIRECTIONS

1. Affix your design to the cutting mat with tape.
2. Place the glass over the design and tape it on all sides to secure.
3. Position the Mylar (or plastic) over the glass and secure it with tape.
4. Heat the stencil-cutting tool, according to the manufacturer's directions.
5. Holding the tool like a pencil, trace the outline of the design, applying a little pressure to the tip of the tool. Move the tip slowly and evenly around the design.

stencil stamp & synergy

INSPIRED BY THE FARMERS' MARKET

BY lisa thorpe



I EAT LOCAL BECAUSE I CAN



Figure 1



Figure 2

I am a big fan of the local farmers' market, and images of gorgeous fruits and vegetables often find their way into my art. When I wander the stalls I'm not only thinking of dinner, I'm also wondering if that plump pear or juicy tomato might pause and pose for me before finding its way into the sauce or salad.

Last year I was asked by the manager of our local farmers' market to be a judge at the fall pumpkin-carving festival. I wanted to have a topical t-shirt to wear so I carved up an E-Z Cut block and used acetate to create a stencil for color blocking, and a fun farmers' market series was born.

You can use carved stamp blocks to print on all kinds of surfaces. I've printed on wood, paper for cards, fabric-paper, and I've printed on fabric to make banners, flags, and t-shirts.

directions

preparing the stamps and stencils

note: The basic steps are the same no matter what substrate you use.

1. Place the E-Z Cut on a piece of paper and trace around the block with a pencil. Draw your image within the traced shape. When you have the design you want, draw it directly onto the carving block with pencil or transfer the design to the block with transfer paper. (Figure 1)
2. Carve the block with the lino-cutting tool, remembering that what you carve away will be white and the areas you leave will print. (Figure 2) Be sure to carve any text in reverse.

MATERIALS

- E-Z Cut block, cut to desired size
 - Paper
 - Pencil
 - Lino cutting tools (My favorite blade is a #2.)
 - Acetate, .005 mil
 - Heat pen or craft knife, for cutting stencils
 - Glass cutting mat or scrap piece of glass
 - Permanent marker
 - Tape
 - Paint, appropriate to chosen substrate (See Choosing Paints.)
 - Brayer and tray, to roll out ink or paint
 - Cosmetic sponges or a foam or bristle stencil brush
 - Substrate: wood, paper, unstretched canvas, fabric
- optional**
- Transfer paper
 - Letter stamps

choosing paints

- Use acrylic paint for wood. You can use regular acrylic paint for stencil areas, but when rolling paint onto a stamp, use open acrylics to allow time to roll on the paint and print before the paint dries. Alternatively, you can put a drying retardant into regular acrylics to slow the drying time.
- For paper projects, use acrylic paints or printmaking ink. Stamp pads work well for printing small images, too.
- For fabric, use acrylic paint if you aren't going to wash the item, or use fabric paints and heat-set the item according to the manufacturer's instructions before washing.

tip: Carve away a little at a time and then do a preview print onto paper to see what you have. You can always carve away more, but you can't put it back.

3. Print the completed block onto paper and use the printed image to determine what you want your stencil to look like.
4. Place the printed image under the glass plate, put the sheet of acetate on top of the glass, and cut the central image out of the acetate with the heat pen or craft knife. Now you have both the positive and negative stencils. (Figure 3)
5. Trace around the carving block on a second piece of acetate and, on the glass cutting mat, cut out the shape using the heat pen or craft knife to

create the background color-block stencil, which will also be used as a guide for the stamp. (Figure 3)

6. Place the negative stencil over the background color-block stencil and transfer the location of the corners with permanent pen. (Figure 3)

printing

1. Place the background color-block stencil over the substrate. You can also use tape to mark off the shape but only on surfaces that won't tear or stretch.

tip: If you are printing on a dark surface, make a block of white or a light color by blocking it off with the background color-block stencil and painting as in Step 3 (below).





simplify

Paint only the central image and leave the background unpainted for a simpler look.

- Roll a piece of tape and put the tape on the back of the positive stencil. Use the negative stencil to help place the positive stencil within the background color block.

note: The stamp will print in reverse so make sure you put the stencil down the way you want the block to print.

- Using the cosmetic sponge (or stencil brush), paint the background colors, working from the outside in to avoid having paint seep under the stencil. Let dry. (Figure 4)



Figure 3



Figure 4

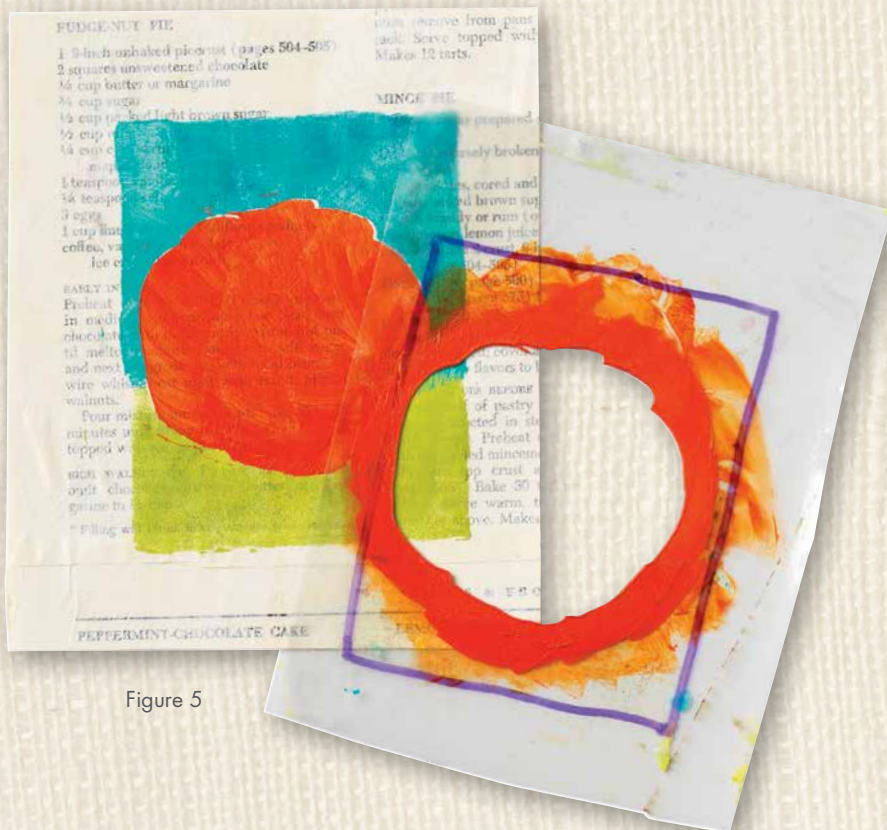


Figure 5

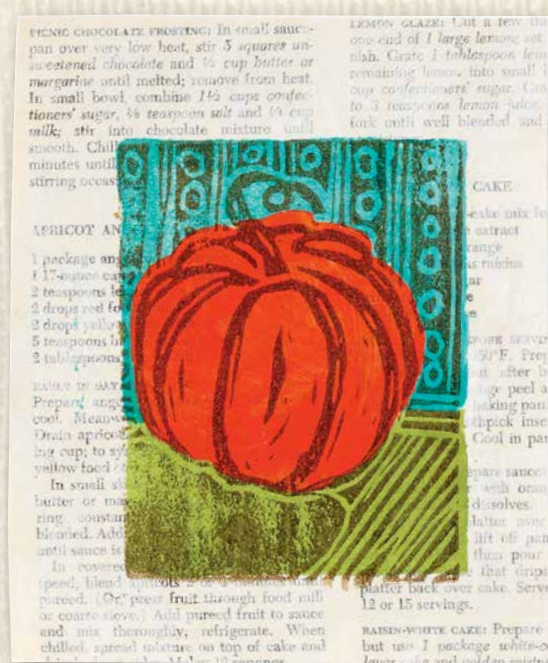
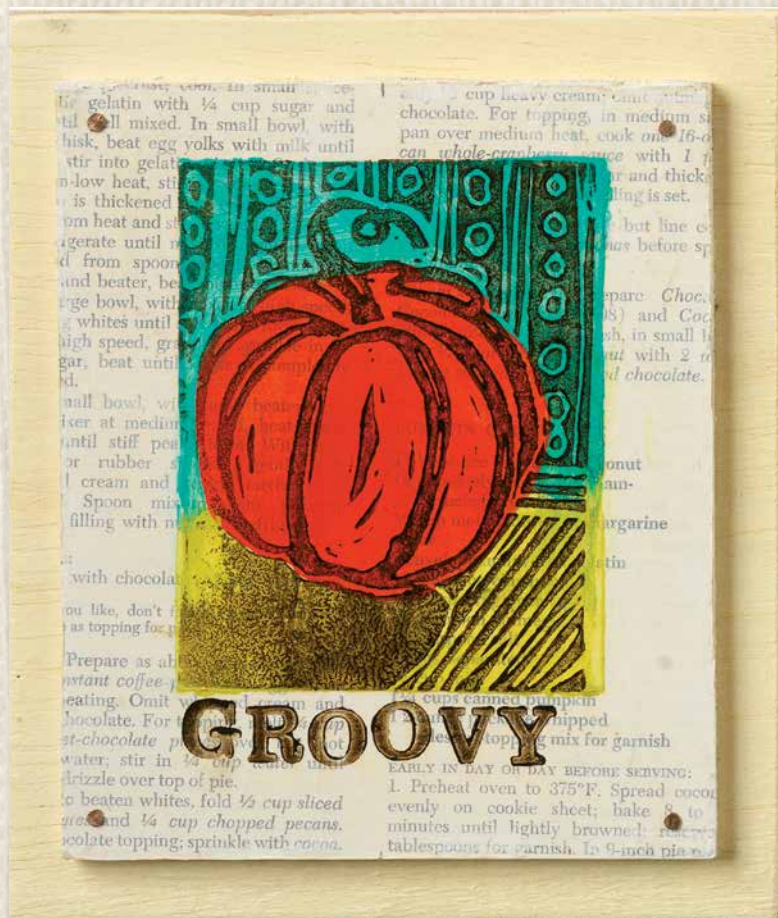


Figure 6

4. Remove the background color block and the positive stencil. Place the negative stencil on the background and apply paint as before. (Figure 5)
5. Roll paint onto the stamp with the brayer. Place the background color-block stencil over the image, line up the stamp with the opening, and print. (Figure 6)
6. Add words, as desired, with letter stamps (optional). ●

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texture & layers with paint and stencils

Adapted from
CLOTH PAPER SCISSORS®
September/October 2010

BY lisa kesler



"White Flower on Brown" • 12" square

I used to think of myself as a watercolorist. I had the idea that you were supposed to specialize in a certain technique and label yourself accordingly. But after working for a large collaborative art studio that produced a variety of decorative art for furniture stores, department stores, and interior designers, I quickly let go of my self-imposed label. Provided with all of the materials, supplies, and studio space I needed and a task to be as innovative as I could, I did a lot of experimenting and began thinking of myself as simply an artist. From that point on, I have enjoyed taking traditional techniques in new directions.

My most recent paintings incorporate a richly textured surface, many layers of paint, simple shapes, and colored pencil highlights. I love watching the painting take shape as I build up the layers of texture and paint.

preparing the surface

I make my textured paintings on hardboard panels like Masonite or Gessobord. The hard surface holds up well to the texture I apply.

I like to use Gessobord because it is already primed. If you use an unprimed surface, such as Masonite, it will be necessary to seal it with a few coats of gesso before beginning your painting. If you are using a cradled Gessobord (a board with sides), cover the sides with painter's masking tape to protect them and keep them clean.

applying texture

1. Completely cover the painting surface with strips of 3" masking tape, each strip touching the next so that the entire surface is covered.
2. Using a piece of tracing paper the same size as your surface, make

a simple drawing using basic shapes. The shapes can be abstract or realistic, but they should be silhouettes without a lot of detail.

3. Turn the drawing over and trace over the lines on the back with a graphite stick. Flip the drawing back over, so the right side is facing up, and place it on top of the tape-covered surface.
4. With a ballpoint pen, firmly trace over the outlines of a couple of shapes in your drawing. This transfers the outline of these shapes onto the tape-covered painting surface. The rest of the drawing will be transferred later.
5. Cut around the transferred shapes with the craft knife and peel off the background tape around them, leaving the tape shapes still on the surface of the board.
6. Apply the molding paste with a plastic scraper or a strip of cardboard to add texture to the background. It can be applied in any thickness, but I usually vary the thickness from about $\frac{1}{16}$ "– $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Spread the paste over the entire surface using light pressure.

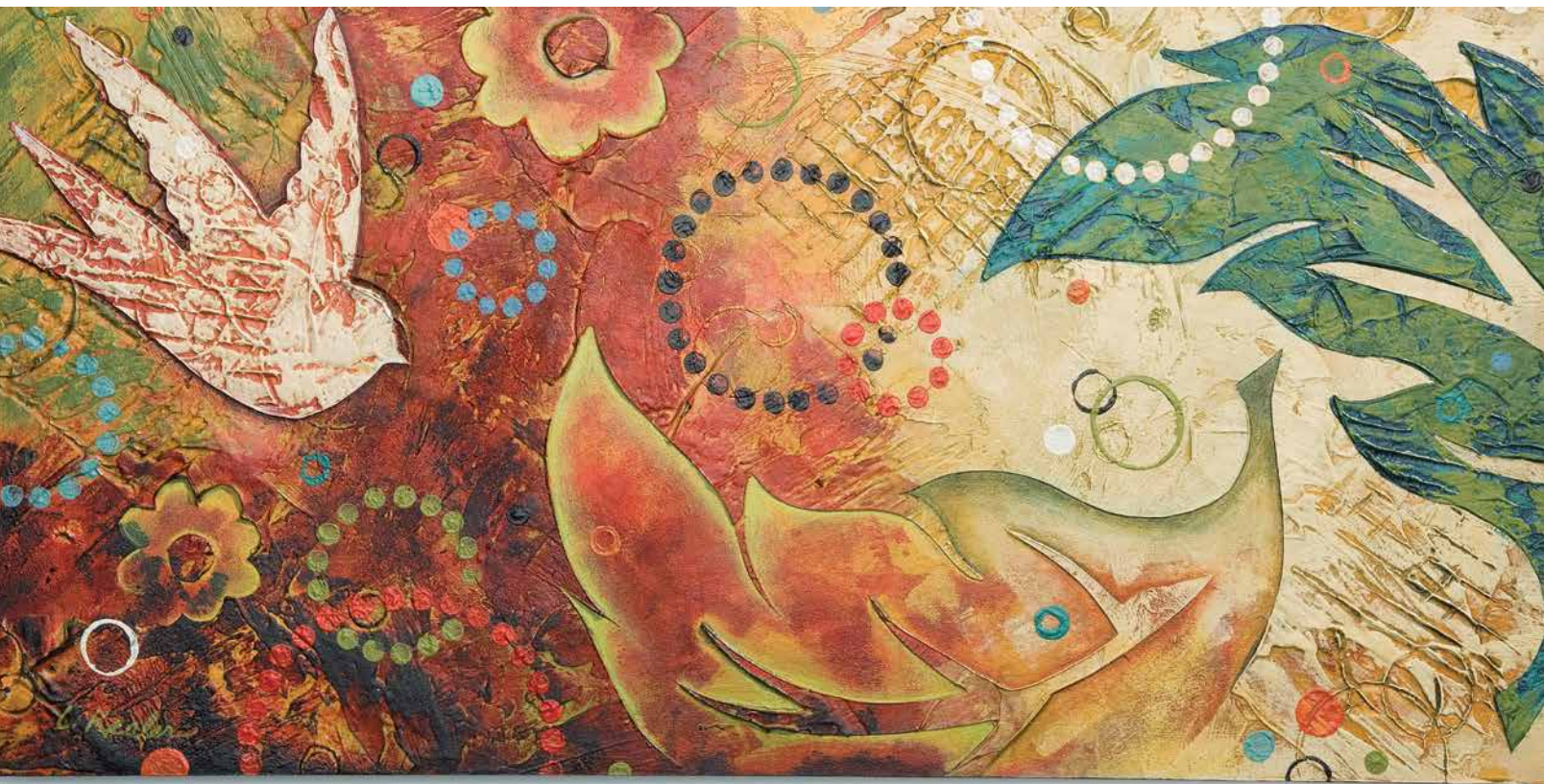
note: As I drag the scraper across the surface, I am careful to allow some unevenness to remain. I may even leave a few little areas uncoated.

MATERIALS

- Hardboard panel, flat or cradled with sides (I use Ampersand™ Gessobord™; Masonite® sealed with gesso is another option.)
- 3"-wide masking tape
- Tracing paper
- Pencil
- Graphite stick or very thick, soft lead pencil
- Ballpoint pen
- Craft knife
- Acrylic Molding Paste by Golden Artist Colors®
- Plastic scrapers or small pieces of stiff cardboard
- Found objects: bits of corrugated cardboard, bottle caps, jar lids, etc.
- Assorted acrylic paints. (I use matte acrylics.)
- Paintbrushes: $\frac{1}{4}$ "–1" wide, flat
- Colored artist pencils (I use Prismacolor® pencils.)
- Liquitex® Satin Acrylic Varnish

optional

- Painter's masking tape
 - Palette
 - Brayer
7. Stamp a few of your found objects into the surface of the molding paste while it is still wet to add more interest and texture. I like to use a variety of items. These marks will show in the background of the finished painting.
 8. Peel up the remaining masking tape, revealing the recessed shapes. Allow this layer to dry completely, 3–8 hours, before proceeding.



Above: "Distant Flight" • 10" x 20"



Above: "White Leaves on Green" • 10" square

painting

1. Apply a wash of 3–4 colors of watered-down acrylic paint over the whole surface with a large brush. This paint layer can be very loose and even sloppy because most of it will be covered up with subsequent layers. Allow it to dry, which only takes about 20 minutes.
2. Choose the main paint color for your background and paint it on. I use a brayer for this step. I place a small dollop of acrylic paint on my palette and roll over it several times in each direction with a printmaking brayer until the brayer is evenly coated with paint. Using large strokes, I roll the brayer over the entire surface to apply an even coat of paint.
3. Reload the brayer (or brush) several times and continue applying paint until you are satisfied with the

appearance. This is my favorite step because the details of the texture gradually begin to emerge as I roll paint onto the surface. At this point, I can see little bits of the first wash of acrylic colors showing through the texture.

4. After the first color dries, roll on 1–2 more compatible colors. Each additional layer of color will add to the overall richness of the background. Allow the paint to dry.

more texturing

1. Cover the painting surface with strips of masking tape again, and transfer the rest of the shapes from your drawing onto the painting surface by tracing over the lines of your drawing as before. Cut these new shapes out with the craft knife, but this time peel up the shapes rather than peeling the tape surrounding the shape.
2. Apply molding paste to the new recessed shapes, being careful not to let the paste seep under the edge of the surrounding masking tape.
3. Peel up the background masking tape to reveal the raised, textured shapes. If any molding paste has seeped under the masking tape to cause irregular edges on these shapes, scrape it off while it is still wet with the tip of the craft knife. Allow the shapes to dry before proceeding.
4. Using a smaller paintbrush, carefully paint the raised shapes with a solid coat of acrylic paint. If I want the shapes to have the same layered appearance as the background, I mask around the shapes with more

tape and then roll on 1–2 additional colors of paint with a brayer in the same manner used to paint the background, removing the tape once the paint is dry.

finishing

1. When the paint is dry, shade and highlight the recessed shapes using colored pencils.
2. Apply a thin, even coat of satin acrylic varnish to the surface to seal and protect it.

Using texture and layers in your acrylic painting, you can create a surface rich with detail, color, and character that no other technique can duplicate. The process and materials become an integral part of the painting. Even with simple shapes and composition, your painting can become a complex brocade of rich surfaces and sumptuous fragments of color. ●

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Top: Texture applied with molding paste and a wash of acrylic paint colors.

Middle: The bird shapes were created using stencil shapes cut from masking tape and applying molding paste through the stencil.

Bottom: The bird shapes were painted with a brush and then, using another cut stencil, more paint was rolled on with the brayer.