

using paint and a stencil brush

Stencilling with water-based paint is an easily acquired skill. The main way an artist can go wrong is to use too much paint - you need very little. I prefer to use a larger size of stencil brush, as it saves on effort, and I use a small brush size for details and edging. When planning your project, bear in mind that you will need a clean, dry stencil brush for every colour of paint that you are using.



1 Loading the brush (above) Either use the lid of the paint pot as a palette, or pour a little paint onto a plate. Dip a stencil brush into the surface of the paint, so that only the tips of the bristles become coated. Then rub the loaded brush firmly in a circular motion onto paper towel. This is to evenly distribute the colour throughout the bristles, but also to work the paint well into the brush. Find a clean patch of towel and work the paint a little more to dry the ends of the bristles. The paint should be damp not wet. Practice the following test until you are familiar with your chosen paint.

2 The dab test (right) Tap the brush onto scrap paper and run your finger over the mark that it leaves. If the imprint is clean and clear with no smudge you are ready to stencil. The top dab is too little paint, the bottom is too much and the middle one is just right.



3 Applying the paint (left) The paint is usually applied in one of two ways. Stippling is when the paint is applied through the stencil with a gentle tapping motion. Make sure that your brush is at right angles to the stencil. Another technique is swirling, in which the paint is 'tickled' onto the surface with a light circling motion of the brush. Add a second light layer for depth of colour or shading. A combination of both techniques can be used.



above Swirling
right Stippling

EXPERT'S TIP: CLEANING YOUR BRUSHES

Your brushes should clean easily with hot soapy water, but you can use a special brush scrubber to remove tougher or dried-on paint. Always make sure your brushes are completely dry before use.

