

STENCILLING

A Design and Source Book



Edited by BRIDGET FRASER Introduction by ADELE BISHOP

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ARKY AND OTHERS

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY, NEW YORK

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The Miller Press and Jane Ross Associates would like to express their immense gratitude to the following people for their help in bringing this book into being:

To Adele Bishop and Cile Lord who shared their discoveries of using fast-drying japan paints and transparent stencil material in their book, *The Art of Decorative Stenciling*, and who have consulted with us at every step. To Cile Lord for taking the trouble to read and check the entire text.

To Lynn Goodpasture and Kate Williams who, having learned from Adele and Cile's authority, have become professional stencillers and have devised more ideas and shortcuts of their own, which they have generously shared with us throughout the progress of the book. To Kate we would like to express our appreciation for her help with the material on color and design; her expertise has added substantially to our text, and her studio has been a constant source of ideas. To Lynn again, for sharing her expertise and ideas, for opening up her home for many of our shoots, and for her great patience while we took over. We'd also like to thank Lynn and Kate for making available photographs from their portfolios.

To Virginia Teichner for introducing us to her clients and arranging for us to invade their homes and take pictures of unique work which they commissioned. We are indebted to Vera Goldman, Linda Donn, and Trish Mendenhall for allowing us to photograph Virginia's stencilling. Thanks also to Virginia for letting us photograph the samples of her portfolio.

To Kari McCabe of McBride & Associates (New York) and Vincent P. De Luca for allowing us to stencil and photograph the floor in Mr. De Luca's apartment, which forms part of Kari's design for the whole apartment.

To Tom Burgio for sharing with us tricks of the trade that he developed over the years. To Kathie Marron-Wall for producing beautiful work from a distance. To Mary MacCarthy over in England who worked at an even greater distance and who shared her home and work with us. To Carolyn Warrender, also in England, who shared so many decorating ideas with us.

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To Ellen Garbarino at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities for showing us Moses Eaton's work and equipment and for lending us transparencies.

To Pat Thayer at Stencil-Ease and Bob Paul at Adele Bishop Inc.; to Arthur Brown & Brothers artists' materials stores and Laura Ashley Inc., who all supplied us with props for the photographs.

To Virginia Croft for her painstaking work on our manuscript.

To Sallie Baldwin and her team at Antler & Baldwin Design Group, especially Lisa Greenfield and Hugo Sarago, for their design and wonderful "touches."

To Meryl Henderson who expertly drew the instructional diagrams for the projects.

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And to those too numerous to mention who helped.

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An antique stencilled quilt dating back to 1867. Strong colors were applied to a white cotton background to produce an extraordinarily sophisticated effect. *Courtesy America Hurrah, New York.*



Introduction



If you have glanced through the pages of this book and it has captured your imagination, you are probably eager to undertake one of its projects. Unlike many artistic mediums, stencilling does not require countless hours of training before you will be able to create lovely things. This, in part, accounts for its enormous popularity today, for both the hobbyist and the professional decorator. By mastering a few basic techniques, you will find that triumphs in stencilling are possible and you may discover creative abilities you did not realize you possessed.

There are many historical examples of stencilling used for a variety of purposes by civilizations having little in common other than a need to create pattern. In ancient China, for instance, a system of stencilling was used for the purpose of printing countless images of the Buddha. The more replicas of this holy being a Buddhist monk could produce in a lifetime, the holier he believed himself to be. In Peru, exotic designs on ritualistic robes found buried in the Nazca Desert were actually stencilled on the fabric. Ancient Japanese artisans elevated stencilling to an art form. Their sensitivity to beauty and exquisite detail is unparalleled in history. In Europe, before the advent of the printing press, the illustrations for books and playing cards were reproduced by stencilling, with fine detail added by hand afterward.

Today we are experiencing what some people like to call "the great stencilling revival." I believe that stencilling emerges in response to changes in fashions and lifestyles. The voluptuous clutter of Victorian stencilling gave way to

the more graceful, flowing style of Art Nouveau and Art Deco. Today stencilling is re-emerging as we pursue yet another very different style known as the "country look." Could its guileless, down-to-earth, often whimsical qualities be an antidote to the awesome complexity of today's lifestyles?

More than fifty years ago a remarkable woman named Janet Waring stumbled on an art form that lay virtually buried and ignored. Her years of diligent research into stencilling resulted in a book published in the 1930s on early American wall stencils. It was appreciated by a handful of scholars, at best. Many years later, long after the book was out of print, a well-known photographer, Ernst Beadle, loaned me his precious copy of Janet Waring's book. From the moment I opened the pages, I knew the direction my life would take. Convinced these designs were what the world needed, I set out to "spread the word," but the timing was not right. The decorating world was not ready. Unfazed, I looked for another way to promote interest in stencilled decorative patterns. After experimenting with new materials and methods for creating intricate, non-stencil-like designs, I invited Cile Lord to join forces with me.

We formed a partnership in 1963 in what was to become the most imaginative, marvelously creative adventure anyone could hope to have. We began a custom stencilling business known as Bishop & Lord. It was exhilarating to have the field all to ourselves! The more intricate and lavish our designs, the greater was the challenge. To the media, we were irresistible, and

they launched our new creative venture with headlines such as "Bishop & Lord . . . are a team of stencilers whose devotion to decorated surface is only slightly less than was Michelangelo's" (*Newsday*).

Suddenly something happened we were not prepared for. In 1966 *House and Garden* magazine invited us to execute a project with "how-to" instructions for their readers. Until this time we had kept the materials and techniques we used a closely guarded secret. (Cile and I didn't want anyone to know how we performed our magic!) Because the publicity would be sensational, however, we went ahead with the project and, soon after, began to receive inquiries about where these wonderful materials might be located. In the early 1970s the allure of stencilling prompted Cile and me to write a book on our stencilling methods. It took us two years to prepare and was held by the publisher two more years to await the Bicentennial of 1976. Our book, *The Art of Decorative Stenciling* (New York, Viking Press, 1976), for the first time disclosed the methods and materials we had so closely guarded during the wonderful years that we had worked together.

Meanwhile, I had moved to Vermont to live, while Cile continued with the custom stencilling business in New York. During the years in Vermont, my involvement with stencilling took another direction. My husband and I wanted to make stencilling accessible to everyone who wanted to learn. We started a small mail-order business to make the proper materials available. I created a teaching program to train serious students who wanted to stencil beautifully and who

would, in turn, go out and teach others. My husband and I consolidated the mail-order business with the training program to reinforce our original goals. Many students graduated to begin stencilling careers for themselves.

Popular interest in stencilling was mushrooming, and other companies began to offer stencil materials. Cile and I saw many of our standards modified in order to reach a wider audience. Precut stencils were promoted. Less emphasis was placed on the quality of brushes and paints, and more "gimmicky" materials were introduced. The accessibility of stencilling had grown by leaps and bounds and reached thousands who enjoyed it as a hobby.

Fortunately, there continued to be a few stencil artists who contributed in a beautiful and creative way to the world of stencilling. Because of their generous talents and persevering efforts, stencilling has continued to flower in the home-decorating field as well as the craft and hobby field, not only in America but also in Europe. It is becoming one of the most fashionable ways of introducing pattern to our homes. This new breadth of application allows stencilling to encompass much more as an artistic expression.

I am greatly pleased the publisher and editors have made this book a reality. Each of the eight stencil artists herein has made a special contribution to his or her field of stencilling. The reader is sure to be inspired by the selection of stencil projects, which serve as excellent examples of good design. This book deserves recognition for presenting stencilling at its best.

ADELE BISHOP 1986

About the Artists

Tom Burgio, who earned a bachelors degree in art education at Monmouth College, New Jersey, began stencilling professionally in 1976 when he joined Stencil Magic, originators of the first precut plastic stencils. There he was part of a three-man design team whose work appeared frequently in home and crafts magazines. Tom traveled widely on behalf of Stencil Magic, giving workshops to various groups such as craft retailers and cable TV viewers. Because many new manufacturers began to offer stencilling supplies, in 1984 Tom developed Stencil World, a unique mail-order catalog expressly devoted to the craft. He also designs in other crafts, notably lace panels, for which he created the mail-order company Chelsea Lace Place.

Lynn Goodpasture, whose early training was in pastel portraiture, sculpture, and drawing, has been stencilling professionally for ten years, designing and executing projects for designers, architects, and home owners. She works in all period styles of decor, as well as contemporary design. In addition to stencilling, Lynn executes marbled, gold leaf, and other painted finishes and handpaints on walls, floors, ceilings, furniture, fabric, and floorcloths. Her work appears in homes, office buildings, hotels, stores, and restaurants. On occasion Lynn teaches the craft of stencilling privately and at museums, most notably the Cooper Hewitt in New York. Her studio is located in New York City.

Cile Lord began her professional stencilling career in 1963, when she and Adele Bishop formed the partnership of Bishop & Lord in New York. She earned a masters degree in painting at the University of Iowa, after studying at Baylor University, the Hoffman School, and Prang Textile Studios. Co-author, with Adele Bishop, of *The Art of Decorative Stenciling*, today she continues to create and execute stencilled designs on commission in her studio in New York. A successful painter as well, she has been awarded a MacDowell Fellowship and exhibits in New York City and East Hampton, Long Island, where she makes her home.

Mary MacCarthy, after training in textile design at London's Camberwell School of Art, visited the United States for six months in 1972. Her encounter with American folk art, including stencilling, impressed her greatly, and on returning to England she set up her own stencilling business. Her many varied commissions have taken her to New York and Spain as well as throughout England, working both independently and in collaboration with some of Europe's top decorators. Her work has been featured in *House and Garden* in the United

States and *The World of Interiors* in England. Her home is in Stiffkey, on the north Norfolk coast.

Kathie Marron-Wall comes from an extensive art background in New York. She studied at Marymount College and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, before working in the art departments of several publishing houses and advertising firms. Sixteen years ago she moved to Dorset, Vermont, where she became Adele Bishop's assistant and her first master teacher. She has taught more than 1500 students throughout the United States, Canada, and England. Kathie has stencilled rooms throughout New England and has restored antique stencilled rooms, many of which have appeared in magazines. She also continues to teach in her studio in Dorset.

Virginia Teichner trained at the Art Students League in New York and shortly thereafter opened her own stencilling design firm, which is based in Connecticut. For the past twelve years she has worked extensively throughout New York and Connecticut. Although most of her work has been done in private homes, she also has carried out stencilling projects for Bloomingdale's, W&J Sloane's, and various other decorator show-cases. Recently she was involved in the restoration of the stencilling in Battell Chapel at Yale University. Traditional custom designs are her hallmark.

Carolyn Warrender started her career as an interior designer with the distinguished British interior design company, Colefax and Fowler. Her formal education in art, coupled with the influence of John Fowler's predilection for painted surfaces, led her to the idea of starting her own business specializing in decorating with stencils. Following an extensive study of American folk art in New England, Carolyn founded her now thriving Chelsea-based interior design company and shop, Stencil Designs Ltd., the first of its kind in England. Her clients can either create their own stencilled decorative schemes or have a professional do it for them, and in the shop they can purchase American stencilling materials.

Kate Williams is a prominent New York stencil artist, as well as a designer of wallpaper and textiles for several well-known manufacturers. After formal training at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the University of Pennsylvania, she came to New York to pursue a career as a painter. Her enthusiasm for stencilling led to her accepting design commissions a few years ago, and today she does a considerable amount of interior decoration involving original stencil designs for private clients. Her studio and home are located in Manhattan.



A stencilling kit that belonged to Moses Eaton, Jr. (1796–1886) of Hancock, New Hampshire, and an example of a wall stencil executed by him. *Courtesy Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Photo by J. David Bohl.*

Opposite page: The magical effect of this modern screen was created by stencilling over a sponged background. Courtesy Pavilion, Edinburgh, Scotland.

CHAPTER ONE

Materials & Techniques

Stencilling is a wonderfully versatile and accessible craft. Whether you are artistic or simply appreciate attractive and interesting decorative effects, you can easily learn this rewarding hobby. Once you are familiar with the materials and have practiced the techniques, you will be able to stencil almost anything you choose and achieve beautiful, long-lasting results.

In stencilling, as in any new craft or skill, you should begin by familiarizing yourself with the basic equipment required and learn how to use it. Take the time to acquaint yourself with all the materials and techniques of stencilling before undertaking any of the projects in this book. Even though stencilling is an almost foolproof art, your results will always be much better if you thoroughly understand what you are doing and why.

When you look at the picture at left of Moses Eaton's stencilling equipment, which dates back to the early eighteenth century, and compare it to the basic equipment used today, you might be surprised to see how little has changed. The brushes, the stencils, the cutting knife—all are virtually the same now as they were then.

In the past twenty years, however, with the

resurgence of interest in stencilling, several developments have contributed to a complete transformation of the craft, broadening its appeal and permitting an infinite number of design possibilities. The most important of these was

Adele Bishop's development of the use of Mylar®, a transparent acetate film, for making stencils. Acetate allows the stenciller to see not only the surface beneath the stencil but also previously stencilled forms. It also eliminates the need for painstaking registration marking, which used to be a major obstacle for the unskilled stenciller.

There have also been important developments in the manufacture of paint. Fast-drying japan and acrylic paints make the stenciller's job much easier, eliminating the danger of smudging and speeding up the process. Paints

have also been devised for a wider variety of surfaces. Fabric and ceramic stencilling are now simple tasks with long-lasting results.

Another modern miracle, the photocopier, has simplified the drawing of designs and stencil outlines and has eased the not-so-skilled draftsman's task dramatically. Now almost any outline or design is accessible to anyone. Photocopiers or photostat machines can enlarge or



reduce a design, eliminating inaccuracies and saving hours of time. Always remember, however, to respect the laws of copyright and do not duplicate another artist's or manufacturer's design for your own *commercial* benefit.

When undertaking almost any craft, you should buy the best equipment you can afford. You will never thoroughly enjoy a craft or discover its possibilities if you are limited by the scope and quality of your tools. A wide-ranging collection of brushes is essential for any stenciller. The number of brushes you own represents the number of colors you can use, and to economize on your brushes restricts your pattern possibilities. It is not really practical to use one brush for two colors, either; it takes time to remove all traces of paint from the bristles of a brush, and stencilling projects usually demand the consecutive use of different colors.

Your equipment must also be comfortable to use. Stencilling is a repetitive process, and you will be working for a long time with your equipment. When you cut stencils, you must constantly apply pressure through your knife, which should be easy to hold and should suit the size of your hand. Applying the paint requires a constant, and at first tiring, motion of your arm, and therefore your brushes should suit your action. You may prefer a thinner or a fatter handle, stiffer or softer bristles. Different artists develop preferences for different materials and equipment. Only by trial and error will you eventually learn what works best for you, but keep the requirements of the job in mind as you invest in your first set of equipment.

Basic Equipment

You will need the same basic materials and tools for the projects in this book and for all your stencilling projects. In lists of materials for each project, the following items have been grouped together and listed as "basic equipment":

tracing paper
graph paper

technical drawing pen
or felt-tip marker

pencils	masking tape, $\frac{3}{4}$ " and 1"
T-square and right angle	clear tape
rulers, 12" and 18"	kneaded eraser
tape measure	glass palette or saucers
drawing board (optional)	cookie sheet or tray
utility or mat knife	teaspoons
cutting mat	palette knife
	paper towels
	newspapers

The materials described in the following pages are listed as nearly as possible in the order in which you will use them and are grouped according to the job they perform.

FOR MAKING THE STENCIL OUTLINES

TRACING PAPER You can use this paper to trace stencil outlines and designs from a book or other source. It can be bought in pads or on rolls from most art-supply and stationery stores. Buy a strong grade of paper; you can also use it for sketching your outlines if you choose to draw them yourself.

DRAWING PAPER You can sketch out designs and enlarge or reduce them on drawing paper if you don't use graph paper or a photostat. It is available in pads or on rolls from art-supply stores.

GRAPH OR CROSS-SECTION PAPER You can enlarge or reduce designs on graph paper, which is usually marked off in 1-inch grids with smaller subdivisions and comes in pads or rolls from stationery or art stores. If you are using it to enlarge a design, be sure that the size you buy will accommodate your enlargement. Graph paper is also useful for working out the arrangement of repeats in a stencil pattern.

PENCILS You will use pencils during all stages of stencilling. For drawing or tracing your stencil outline, you will want a soft pencil (no. 2 or 3B) with a sharp point. Always sketch first in pencil.

TECHNICAL DRAWING PENS Although expensive, a technical drawing pen, such as a Koh-i-Noor Rapidograph® or a Rotring®, is a worth-



Clockwise from bottom left: Graph paper in two sizes, permanent marker pen, technical drawing pen, an acetate stencil, an oaktag stencil, transparent ruler, metal ruler, tracing paper (at top), kneaded eraser, permanent ink, clear tape, X-acto knife, utility knife, tape measure, Mylar (beneath masking tape), masking tape, waxed stencil paper (rolled), scissors, metal tape measure, T-square, right angle, pencils, compass. Photo by David Arky.

while investment if you are going to be doing a lot of stencilling. These professional drawing pens use permanent ink, which is ideal for drawing on acetate as well as for marking out stencil outlines on paper. Use a fine to medium nib.

FELT-TIP MARKER PEN If you do not have a Rapidograph, you can use felt-tip marker pens. Choose permanent black ink and a fine nib. (For

drawing stencils on paper, the ink need not be permanent.)

T-SQUARE AND RIGHT ANGLE Either or both of these tools are essential when you are drawing your stencil outlines and indicating registration marks (see page 20). You can also use a T-square to rule off a sheet of plain paper for enlarging designs if you do not have graph paper. Both tools will be helpful in checking precision while stencilling.

RULER A straightedge is essential during all stages of stencilling. Ideally you should have a selection of rulers: a clear plastic 12-inch ruler for measuring when you need to see the surface underneath, a metal 12-inch nonslip ruler for drawing and cutting stencils, and an 18-inch metal ruler for measuring surfaces to be stencilled.

COMPASS When you want to draw perfect circles for your stencil outlines, use a compass. (Or you can use a plastic circle template of the type sold at stationery stores.)

DRAWING BOARD If you can afford it, set yourself up with a professional drawing board. If not, make sure you have a good, clean space to work on, with a flat surface and lots of light. Your efforts will only be hindered if you do not give yourself the right space to work in and a good source of light.

FOR DRAWING AND CUTTING THE STENCILS

The actual material you use for your stencils is a matter of personal choice, but for the majority of projects you will find a clear acetate stencil the most practical and versatile. With the exception of Tom Burgio's projects in Chapter 4, we advise you to use acetate for the stencilling projects in this book.

ACETATE Clear acetate, a thin transparent plastic sheet, comes in a range of grades. For most projects we recommend .0075 gauge for making your stencils. If you want to use strips of acetate for making straight lines and stripes, a stronger grade, .010, is better. Clear acetate works well with both japan and acrylic paints and is suitable for all stencilling projects, from