AirSick PRESENTS

CUSTOM PAINTING A KILLER AX

FROM PREP TO FINISH

PAINTED BY SEAN CAHILL

What's more awesome than a custom painted guitar? Nothing, that's what! And that is exactly why we put together this tutorial for you guys.

Over the next 18 pages we will take you through the entire process of turning a worn out, boring guitar into a true work of art. Custom painted guitars can be good money makers, or just used as display pieces to hang on a wall and show off your skills.

So, grab some paint and an old guitar and lets get rockin!





PART 1
PREPPING A GUITAR FOR PAINT

STEP 1 - DISASSEMBLY



MATERIALS NEEDED

ASSORTED TOOLS
SCOTCH-BRITE PAD (MAROON)
WAX & GREASE REMOVER

For this tutorial, we are going to be prepping a guitar for paint. Keep in mind that this is a general overview of the prep process for a guitar that does not need any filling or major bodywork. Basically, this is the prep for a new guitar or a guitar in excellent condition

STEP 2



After carefully disassembling the guitar and removing the head-stock, we begin scuff-sanding the clearcoat, in a circular motion, using a red SCOTCH-BRITE pad

STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



By scuff-sanding the clear coat, you are giving the surface enough "tooth" for the new paint to stick to. It is easy to see the areas that have been sanded properly, as these areas turn from shiny to a dull, foggy look (STEPS 4 & 5). We are being careful to get inside of all of the cutouts and crevices of the guitar. Be sure to take a good overall look when you are finished, you should not see any sign of the origional clear-coat shine on any of the areas to be painted.

With the scuffing finished, we give the whole guitar a good wipedown with Wax & Grease Remover to remove any impurities, and grease from fingerprints (STEPS 7 & 8). This will ensure that the paint will properly bond without any issues.

STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



Just like we did with the sanding portion of the guitar body, we make sure to into all of the cutouts with the Wax & Grease Remover as well (STEP 9).

With the guitar body properly prepped and cleaned, we repeat the process with the plastic pick guard (STEP 11) since we wil be painting that as well.

STEP 10



STEP 11



STEP 12



Here, (STEPS 11 & 12) we scuff the pick guard, and then clean it off with Wax & Grease Remover. This step can be skipped if you wish to keep the original pick guard intact.

With our guitar body & pick guard properly prepped, we are ready to move on to spraying the base coat.

PART 2 BASE COATING A GUITAR



After properly scuff-sanding our guitar body, it's time to spray the base coat. In this section we will show you some tricks that will make the base-coating a quick and easy process.

Just like airbrushing, spraying a smooth base-coat requires practice and dedication, but in no time at all you will build the confidence and control to lay down a perfect base every time.

MATERIALS NEEDED

SPRAY GUN
TACK CLOTH
PAINT FILTER
PAINT

STEP 13



STEP 14



Be sure to carefully follow the manufactures recommendations for proper mixing ratios for the type of paint that you are using. Here we are using House of Kolor black, so we mix the paint and reducer to proper specs (STEPS 13 & 14).

With the proper amounts of paint and reducer mixed, we stir the paint (STEP 15) and then run it through a paint filter (STEP 16) to properly remove any larger particles or debris that could potentially give us problems by clogging our spray gun.

STEP 15



STEP 16



STEP 17



There are several methods that can be used to easily hang your guitar to apply your base coat. Here (STEP 17), we have decided to suspend the guitar body by 2 heavy wires. This will allow us to access all angles of the guitar, and the 2 wires can be held together (STEP 18), to prevent the guitar from spinning under the pressure of the spray gun.

STEP 18



STEP 19



Before beginning the painting, we want to once more ensure that all loose particles have been removed from the guitar body.

STEP 20



Skipping this final preparation step could lead to potential flaws in the final paint job, so we ensure that every inch of the guitar has been properly wiped down with a tack rag

STEP 21



With our guitar ready, and our paint mixed, we begin to spray the base coat (STEP 21). By working in long and smooth passes, we paint from the bottom of the guitar upward. We are keeping the passes of paint light. This will allow us to build up a nice even coat of paint over several layers, and reduce the risk of any paint drips. By overlapping the paint strokes by about 50%, you will achieve a smooth, even coat of paint.

STEP 22



STEP 23



STEP 24



By holding the 2 wires, the guitar remains very still during the painting process (STEP 22). After completeing the first coat to the front of the guitar, we move on to the first coat on the back (STEP 25). Once again, by keeping your passes smooth and consistent, you will achieve a smooth & solid base coat.

STEP 25



STEP 26



STEP 27



STEP 28



Be sure to inspect all angles of the guitar body, as it can be easy to miss spots along the way. Here we have finished our second coat of paint, and take some extra care with ensuring that the sides, top and bottom of the guitar body have consistent coverage (STEPS 23, 24 & 25).

Seeing that the guitar has sufficient paint coverage, we leave it to dry, and move on to painting the pick guard

STEP 29



STEP 30



STEP 31



If you decide that you wish to paint the pick guard as well, here is a great system that makes the painting process quick and easy. We hang the pick guard though the two top holes with wire, and attach a wire through the two opposite side holes at the bottom (STEP 23). This will allow us to pull down on the bottom wire, and the tension will keep the pick guard from moving while the paint is sprayed.

STEP 32



STEP 33



STEP 34



The pick guard is painted in the same steps as the guitar body, with smooth and even paint strokes. Be sure to check the paint coverage on the edges as you go (STEP 27). With the pick guard finished, we leave it hanging to dry, and get ready to move on to the really fun stuff!

STEP 35



STEP 36



PART 3
PLANNING & AIRBRUSHING THE DESIGN

We always try to really emphasize the need for proper planning in our tutorials. Spending the necessary time in the planning and development stage of a project will not only make the process much smoother, but it will eliminate frustration and headasches along the way. By resolving all of your design problems at the begining, you can proceed with confidence and create a much more enjoyable experience for yourself in the airbrushing stages.

To create the tribal-like graphic on the front of the guitar was simply a process of sketching and refining. We went online and grabbed a template image of the shape of the guitar, and then did some simple sketches to see what kinds of shapes worked well with the contours. Dont lock yourself into the first sketch, keep refining it until you know you have exactly the look that you want.



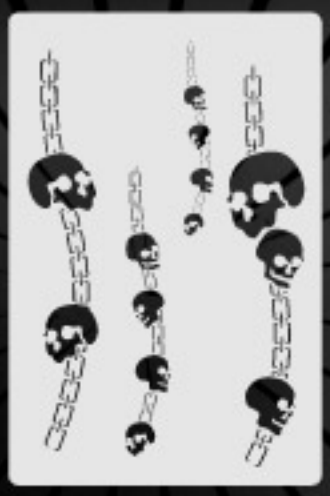


AirSickStencils 2012

STEP 37



With our basic design worked out, and taped off (with fine-line, and masking tape) (STEP 29), we choose a couple stencils, and begin our composition. We will be using the larger skull from the AirSick "Skull 11b) series, as well as AirSick's "Skull Chains 2".





STEP 38



STEP 39



We lay the stencils over the guitar to get an idea of where the elements would look best placed (STEP 30). In order to begin, we spray a light dusting of "Chrome Yellow" (SG102) very lightly over the guitar (STEP 31). This will give us a more neutral background on which to build our composition.

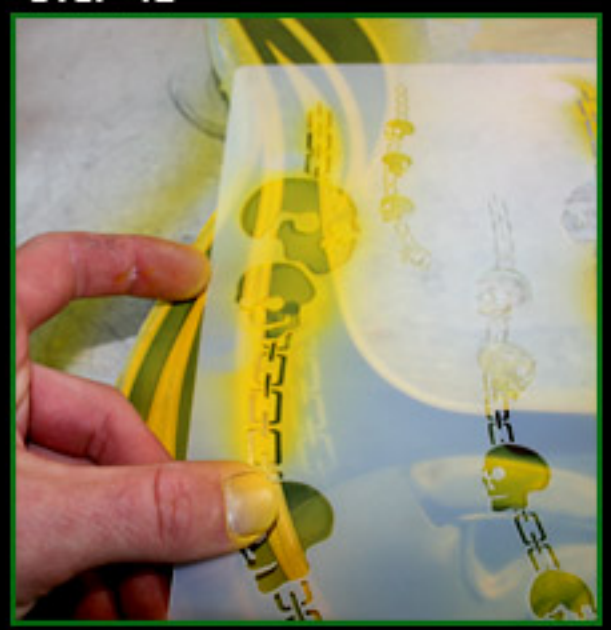
STEP 40



STEP 41



STEP 42



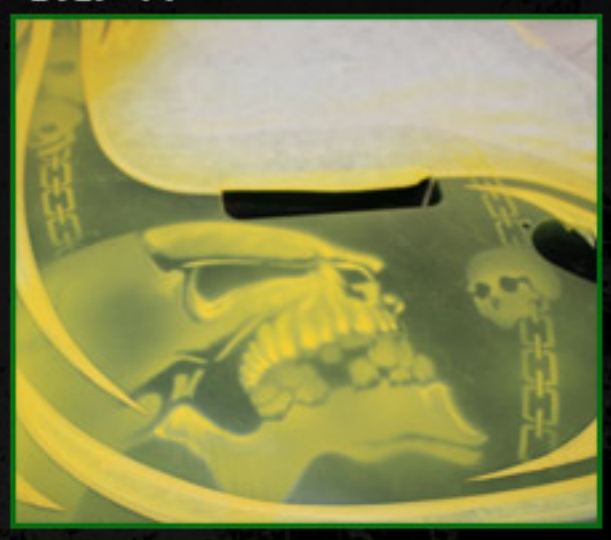
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STEP 43



With the final skull chain added (STEP 35), and the composition looking good (STEP 36), we are now ready to begin with the rendering process

STEP 44



STEP 45



We decide that this scene needs some fire! We begin to add some flame licks coming off of the skulls (STEP 37). Check out our “FLAME” tutorials for some awesome tips on creating fire. We also begin to add some drips coming off of our skulls (STEP 38). The great thing about using these stencils is the ability to add your own finishing touches. This helps lose the “stenciled” look, as well as creating your own personal look in the artwork.

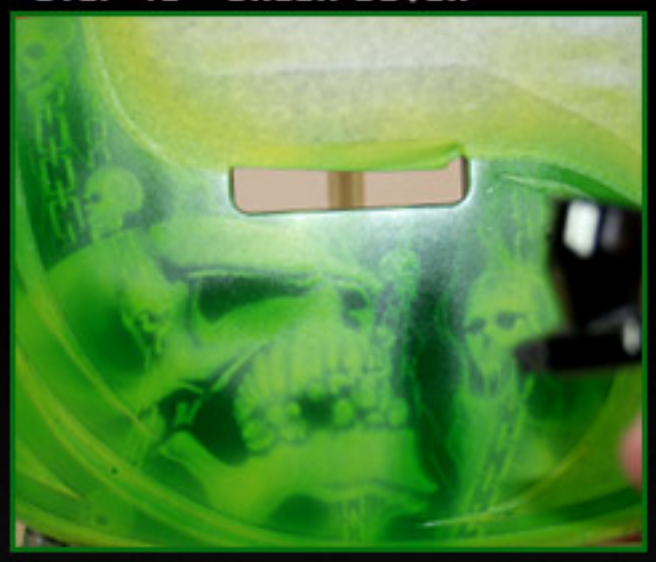
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STEP 47



STEP 48 - GREEN COVER



Here you can see the resul of our dripping skulls and fire additions (STEP 39).

With the underpainting completed, we add a layer of “Candy Organic Green” (KK09) to the entire front of the guitar. (STEP 40)

(We added a couple drops of black to get a slightly deeper green).

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We are using yellow again to go over the top of our green, this will create the bright portions of our artwork. The high contrast between the green and yellow will cause the yellow areas to come forward, and create the illusion of depth. We emphasize the roundness of the skulls (STEP 41), as well as the intensity of the flame licks (STEP 42).

STEP 50



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Here we render the skull. It is important to think about your light source during this process. A good reference image of a skull will really help during this step.

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Here we have rendered the smaller skulls near the top of the guitar. You can see that the highlights really add to the dimension and roundness of the skulls.

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These next few steps really bring everything together. Here we are adding our shadows and darkest areas. Keep in mind that we are not covering up the brighter yellow areas that we just painted, we are filling in the negative spaces in between them.

Note the differences between STEP 54 & STEP 55. The black is not only used to create shadows, it is being used to soften the harsh lines left by the stencil. This creates a much more natural look, and you can hardly tell that stencils were used.

STEP 54



STEP 55



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If you are following along directly with this tutorial, STEP 55 is a great reference shot to aid you in rendering your "SKULL 11b". You can see in STEP 56, that the smaller skulls are rendered much more simply. They are so small that you do not need to add a large amount of detail to make them look great.

STEP 57



We have come a long way in this tutorial, but its time for the best part... The unmasking! We carefully pull away our masking material and tape, and get our first good look at out completed layout.

For the final step, we add a few quick pinstripes around the contour of our graphic, and re-assemble the guitar. The final guitar looks absolutely amazing! In just a few short hours (ok... more like 10) we have transformed an old guitar into killer work of art. Be sure to check out the last page for the full finished photo.



STEP 58



The final guitar might look a little overwhelming, but when you break down the project into manageable steps, you can see that its all just a matter of good prep and planning. We hope that you enjoyed this tutorial, and were able get some good info and ideas from it. As always, feel free to contact us with any questions, comments or feedback you may have.

PRINTER FRIENDLY

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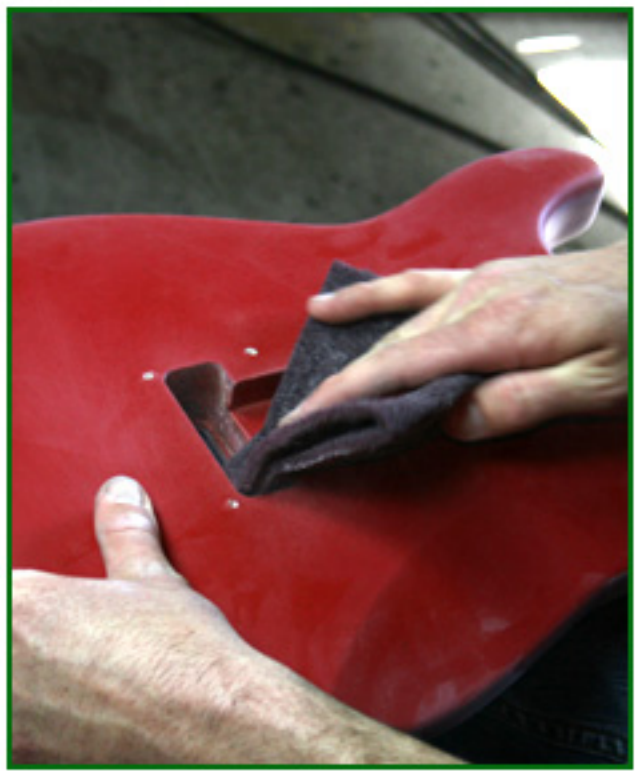
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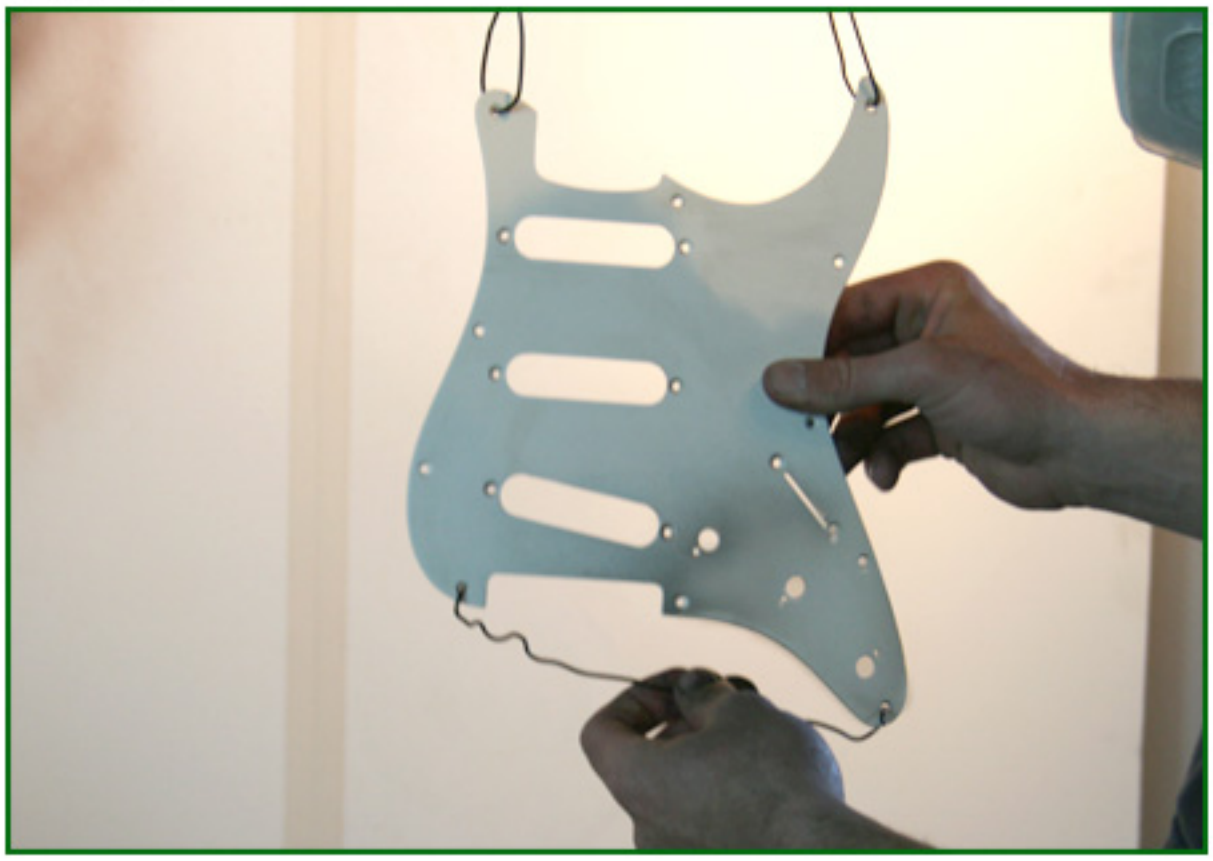
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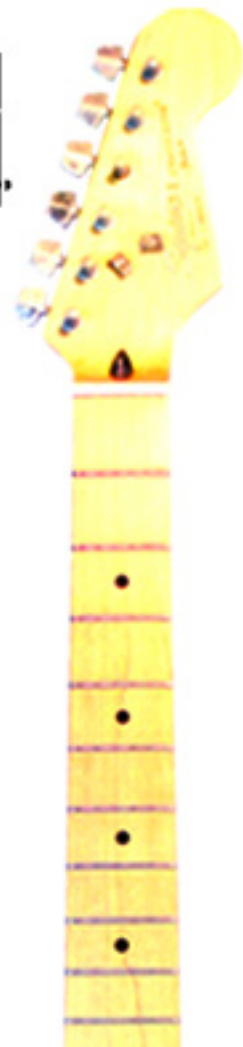
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PLANNING & DESIGN
AIRBRUSHING



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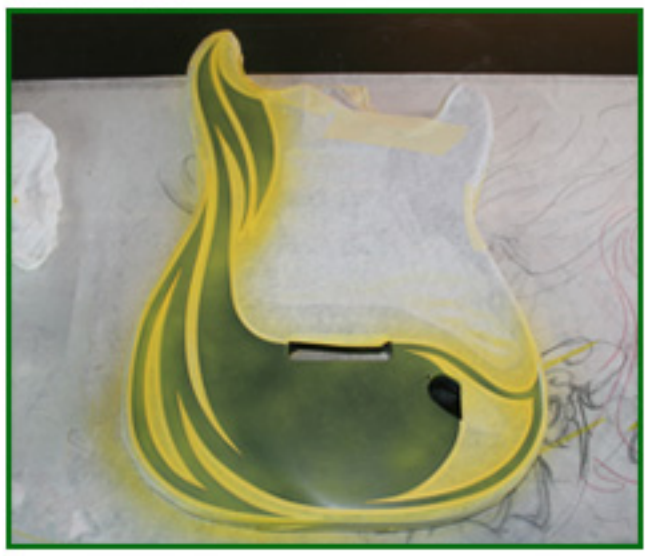




STEP 38



STEP 39

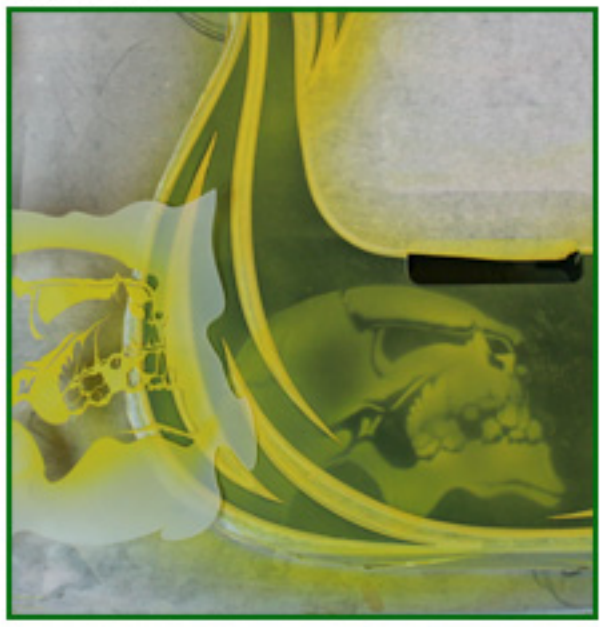


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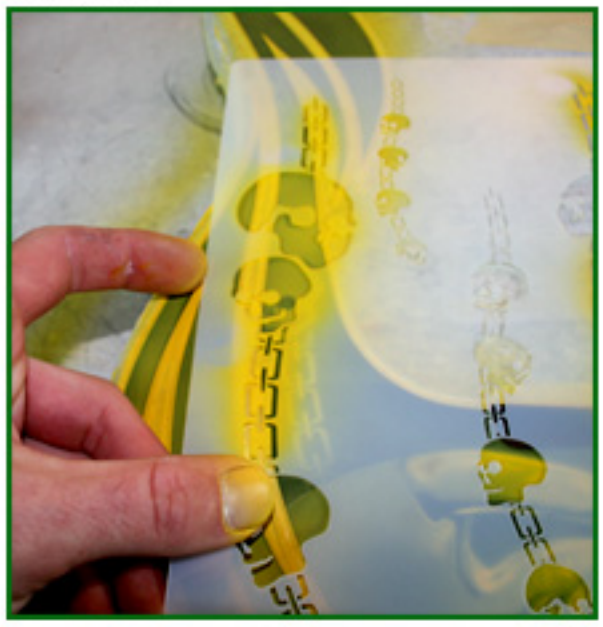
STEP 40



STEP 41



STEP 42



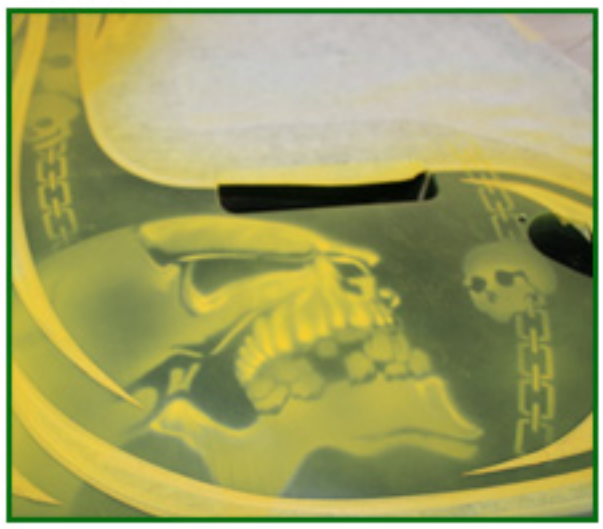
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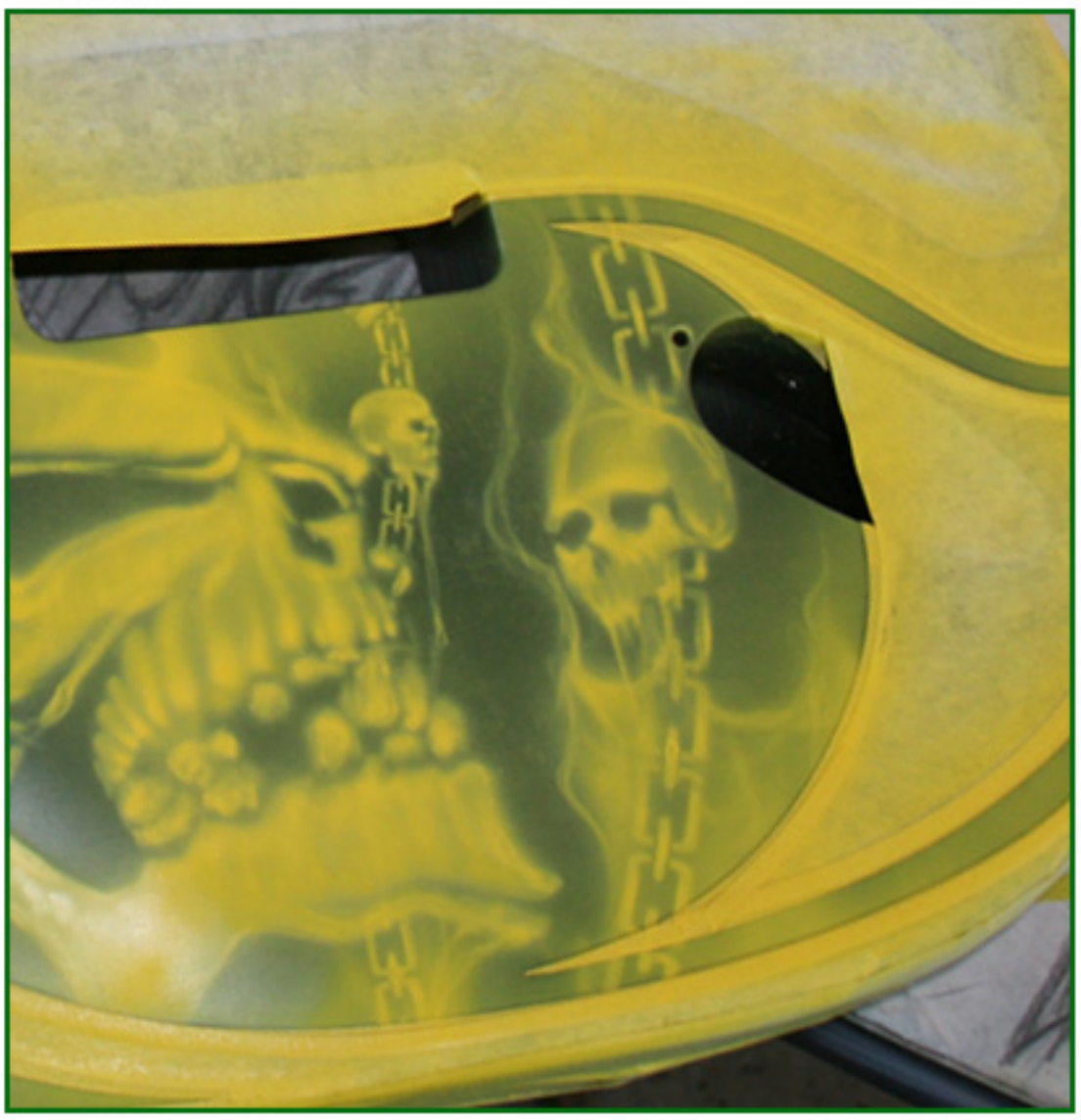


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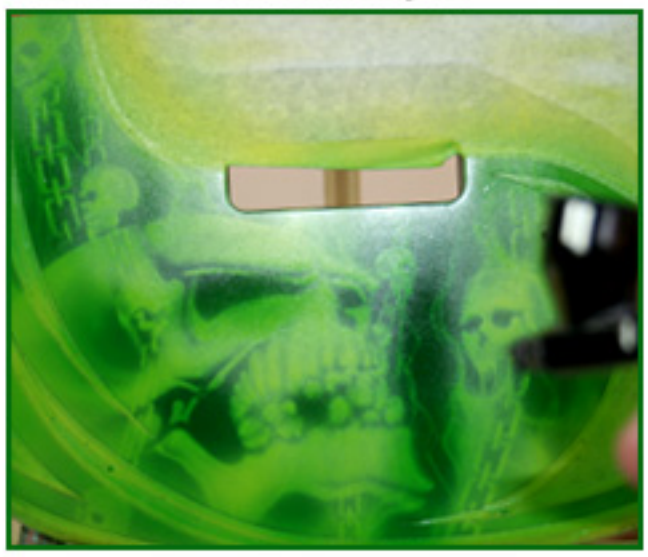
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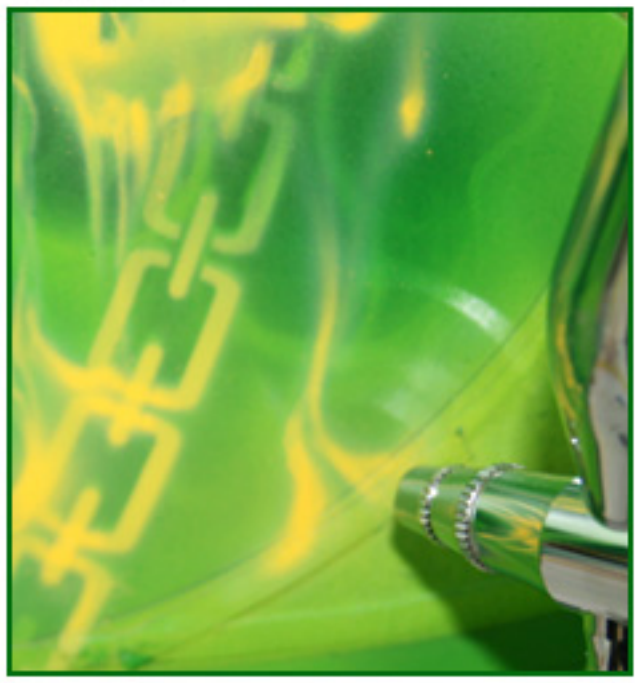
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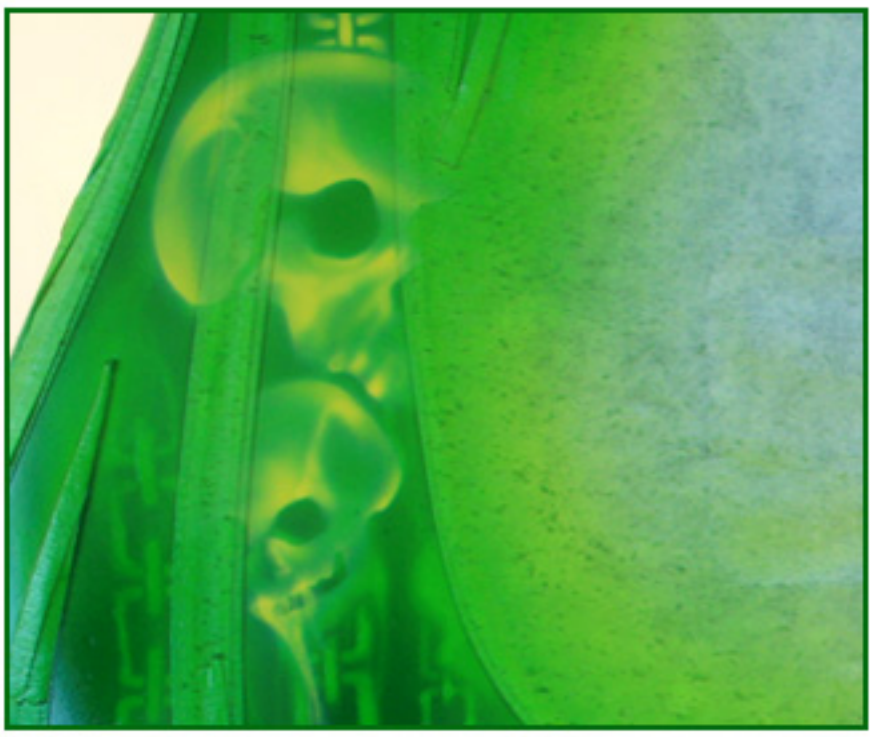


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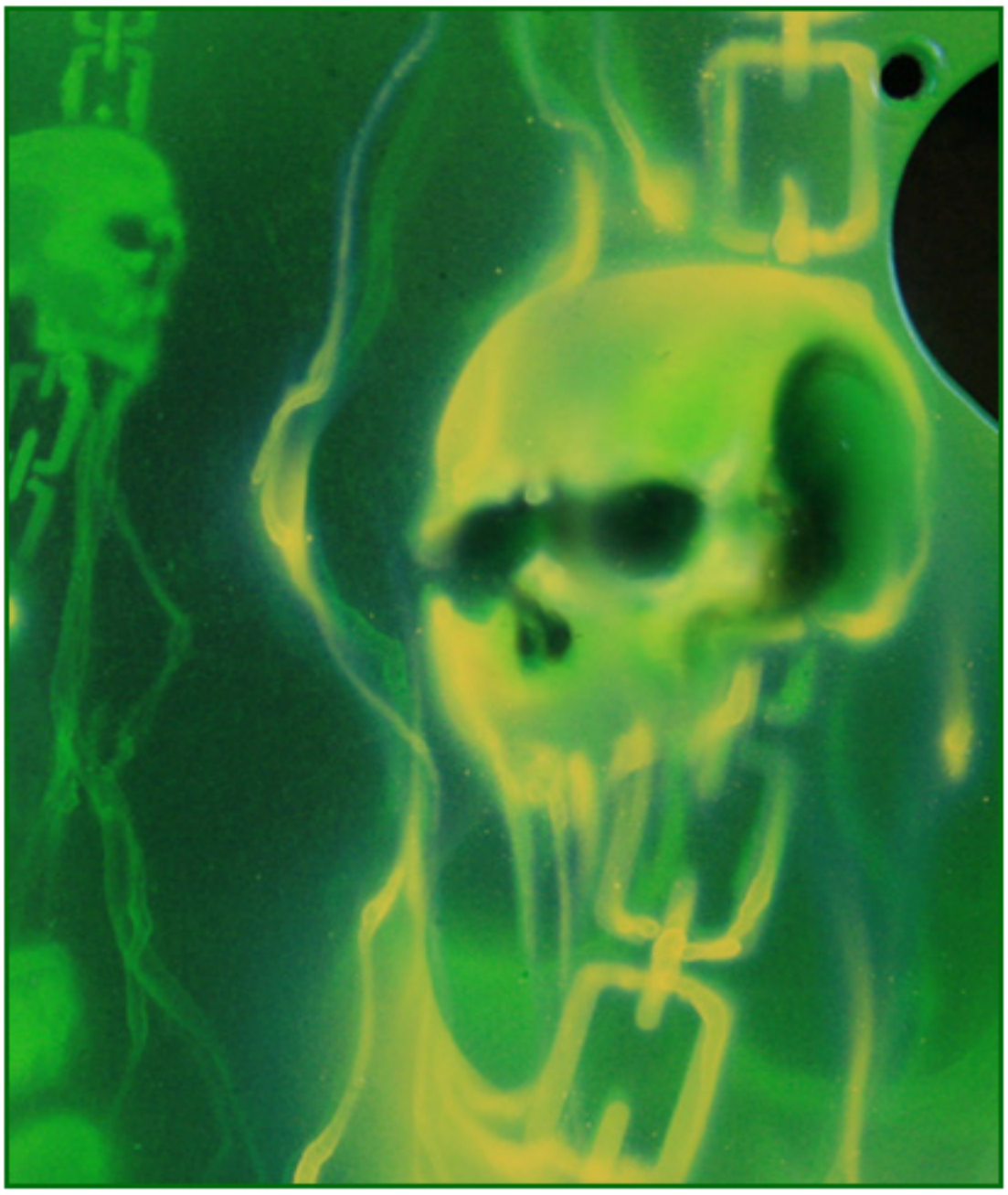
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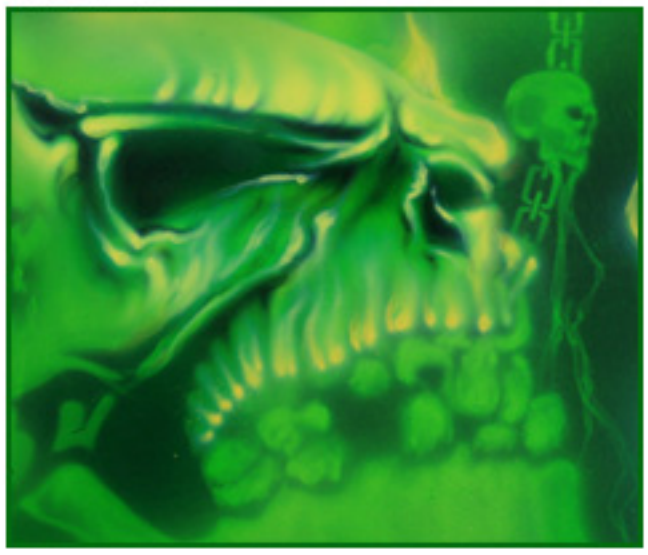
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