

Air Sick **DEATH VALLEY**

BY JOHN SEATON

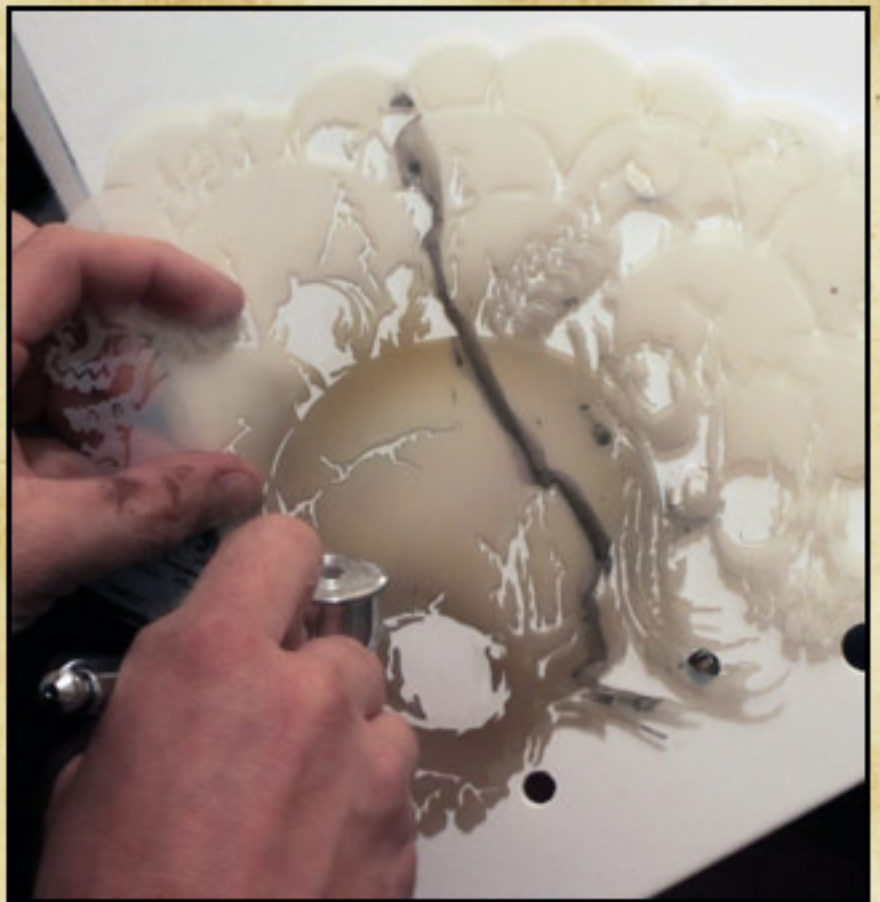
For this step by step, I wanted to show the versatility of the newly released Air Sick Skull Background stencils. These stencils allow you to quickly fill up large areas with highly detailed skull & bone piles, or give you the freedom to choose specific, individual elements to add to your compositions. I have my guitar prepped and ready, so lets get started.

STEP 1



In the beginning...there was prep. The key to any project is to start off right. After cleaning and scuffing the surface, I coated the guitar with Auto Air white sealer which will help protect the guitar and improve coverage of color.

STEP 2



With the new range of AirSick's skull background stencils I began placing various skulls on the guitar and lightly dusting a brown semi opaque mixture through them purely to give me a light image to detail later.

STEP 3



You can see here how light I am spraying at this stage. This first light layer is going to help me create a full composition that I can alter and detail as the project progresses.

STEP 4



One of the benefits of lightly spraying through these stencils is that it can be changed at any time later on if the scene doesn't work.

STEP 5



Here I am using the ribcage from this stencil to add to the pile of skulls I just painted (STEP 5). The nice thing about these stencils is that they all work together so you can literally paint a hundred different projects and never have the same look twice.

I am always conscious of perspective, so I used the larger stencils for the foreground and the smaller ones for the background (STEP 6).

STEP 6

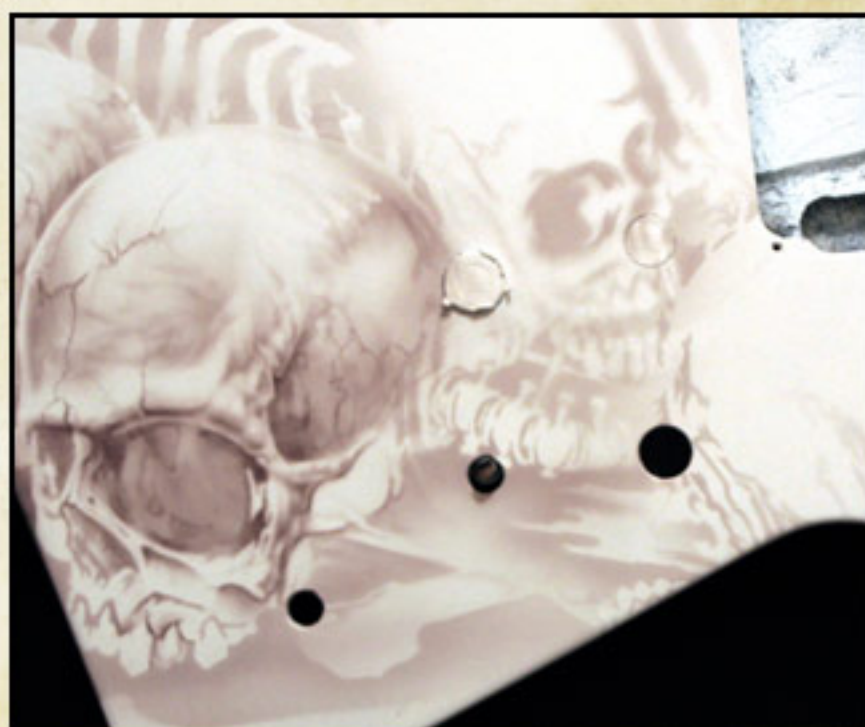


STEP 7



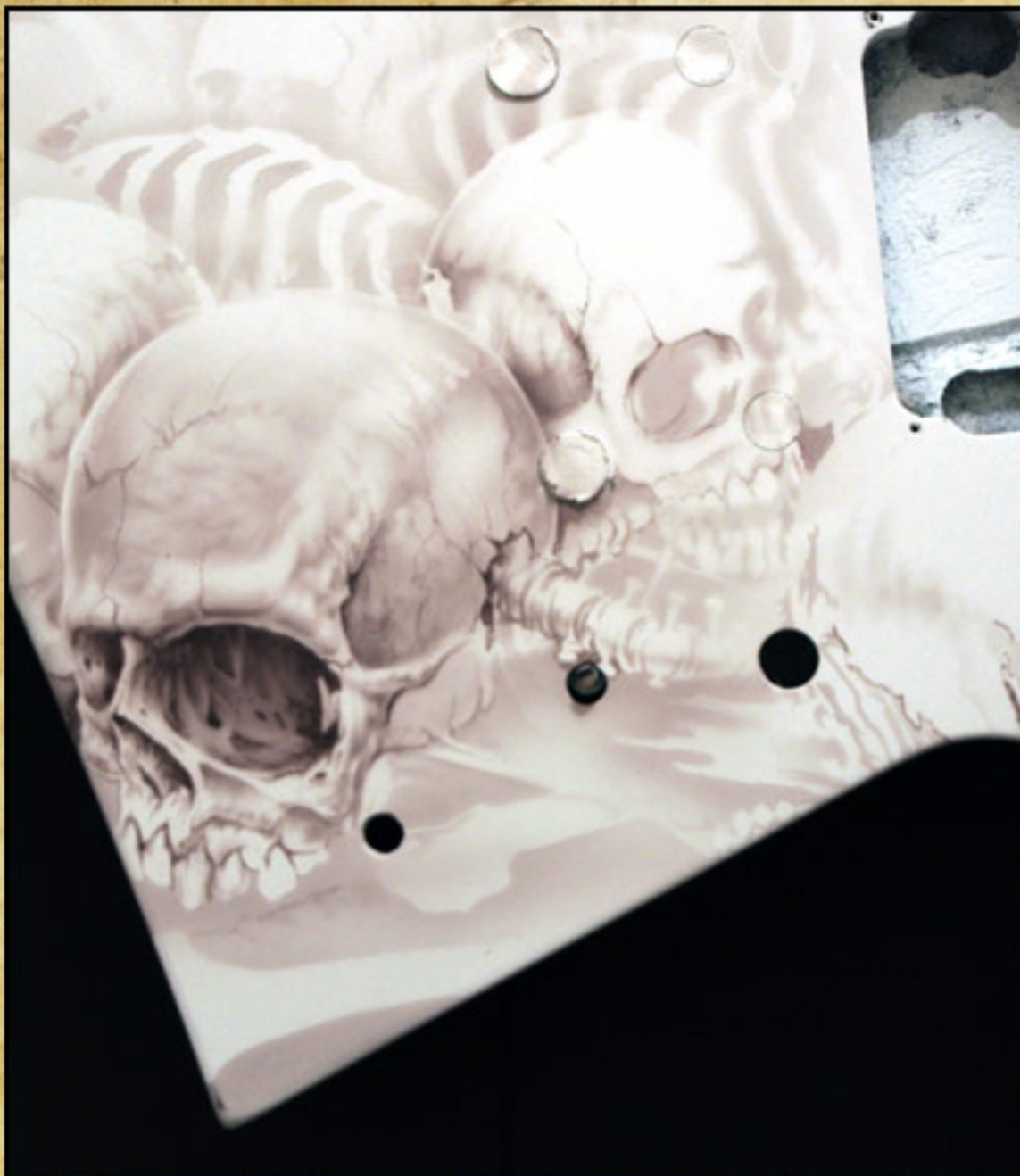
I used bits of each stencil for a unique look and to create a flow for the image I have in mind. Even the head stock had the same treatment for continuity.

STEP 8



Now that I have most of the scene laid out I can now work on adding detail and shading to the whole piece using the same semi opaque brown.

STEP 9



STEP 10



STEP 11



I slowly started building up tones with my brown over reduced, again taking note of where my light source will be coming from (STEP 9). I move around the piece quite a lot instead of working too long in one area so that the whole piece is uniform. Every now and then I switch to the electric eraser to add highlights where needed (STEP 10). Because of my white base and the use of the eraser, I won't have to use white again at all during the rest of this project. The eraser can also be used to sharpen areas up and create texture effects.

STEP 12



I continue to use the stencils to sharpen up areas and block areas out (STEP 12).

STEP 13



STEP 14



I continue switching between the electric eraser and airbrush to add small details and texture.

STEP 15



I am still using the stencils to add detail in between the skulls. There are so many cool little bones and fragments in these stencils so make the most of them. I also make up another mix of my brown with black added to add darker shading and details such as cracks.

STEP 16



I continue to switch back and forth between the lighter and darker mixes as I progress through the piece. Doing this helps me to see where this piece is going and to break up the monotony of shading. Stand back and view the piece constantly to make sure the shading and perspective works.

STEP 17



I use my hands as a template to create soft edges on the skulls. This is a great technique for smoothing and softening lines that came out too sharp with the stencil.

STEP 18



Using the edge of my finger allows me to create the softer shadows around the brow of the skulls. The over spray falls in a soft line and creates a light gradual shading.

STEP 19



I like to go back and forth a lot between the airbrush and the electric eraser. I can shade an area and then come back in with the eraser and lighten up some spots and add highlights, and push it back again with some dark brown. You can really achieve a lot of depth this way.

STEP 20



I continue using the stencils for the skulls in the background. These skulls are going to be softer giving them the illusion of being out of focus and further away, so too much detail isn't really necessary here.

STEP 21



It's important to step back often and look at the piece as a whole. Right now I am checking my light source, making sure my shading is consistent, and making any small adjustments and tweaks necessary.

STEP 22



Moving on to the background, I am lightly free handing in some cobblestones and sky to fill out design. Remember to keep background images lighter and a bit fuzzy to give the appearance that they are further away.

Again I used the electric eraser to add detail to the background in the buildings and stones (STEP 23).

The eraser is great for adding the highlighted edges of the clouds and details in the sky (STEP 24).

STEP 23



STEP 24



STEP 25



Once the background is complete I come back in with my dark brown mix and really sharpen things up and finish areas that are still unfinished (STEP 25). Here is the front of the guitar completed. I take one last final look to check for inconsistencies before moving onto the back (STEP 26). I use the same layering techniques to add a few bone piles and skulls to the headstock of the guitar (STEP 27).

STEP 26



STEP 27

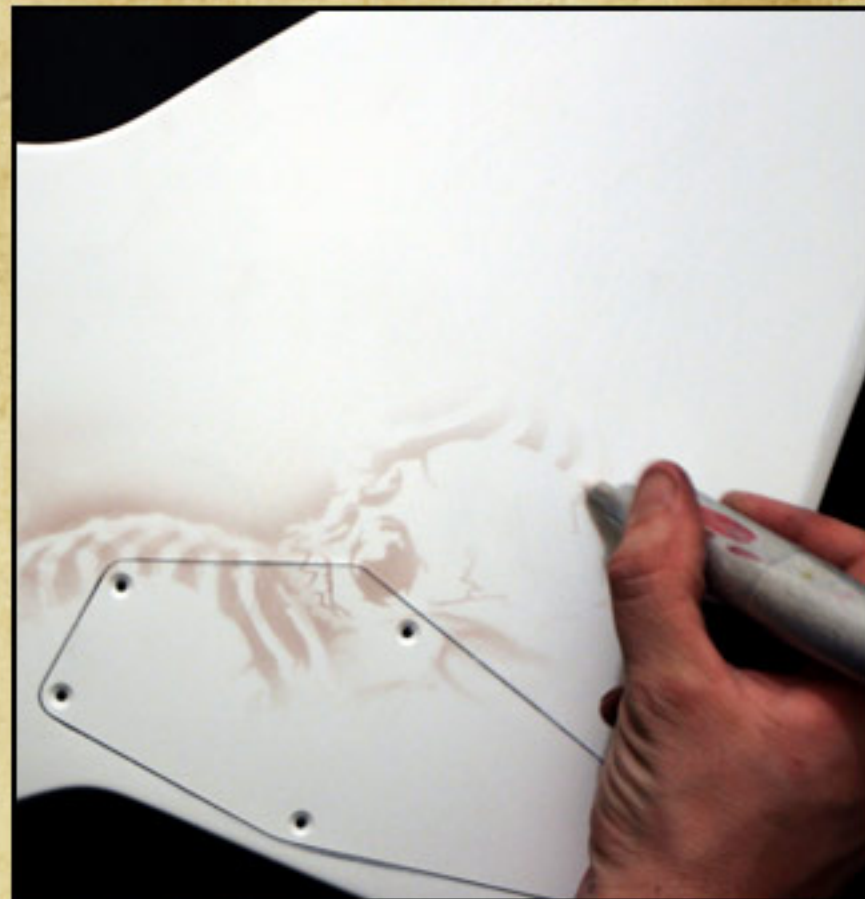


STEP 28



For the back I followed the same process but used the stencils to create a partially intact skeleton. These skull background stencils don't have to be used only for backgrounds.

STEP 29



With my design lightly sprayed, I can clean up some of the over spray with the eraser giving me a sharper image.

STEP 30



For the back I wanted to add some freehand work in addition to the stencils. Here I have added a crow picking at the bones and some far off crosses in the background.

STEP 31



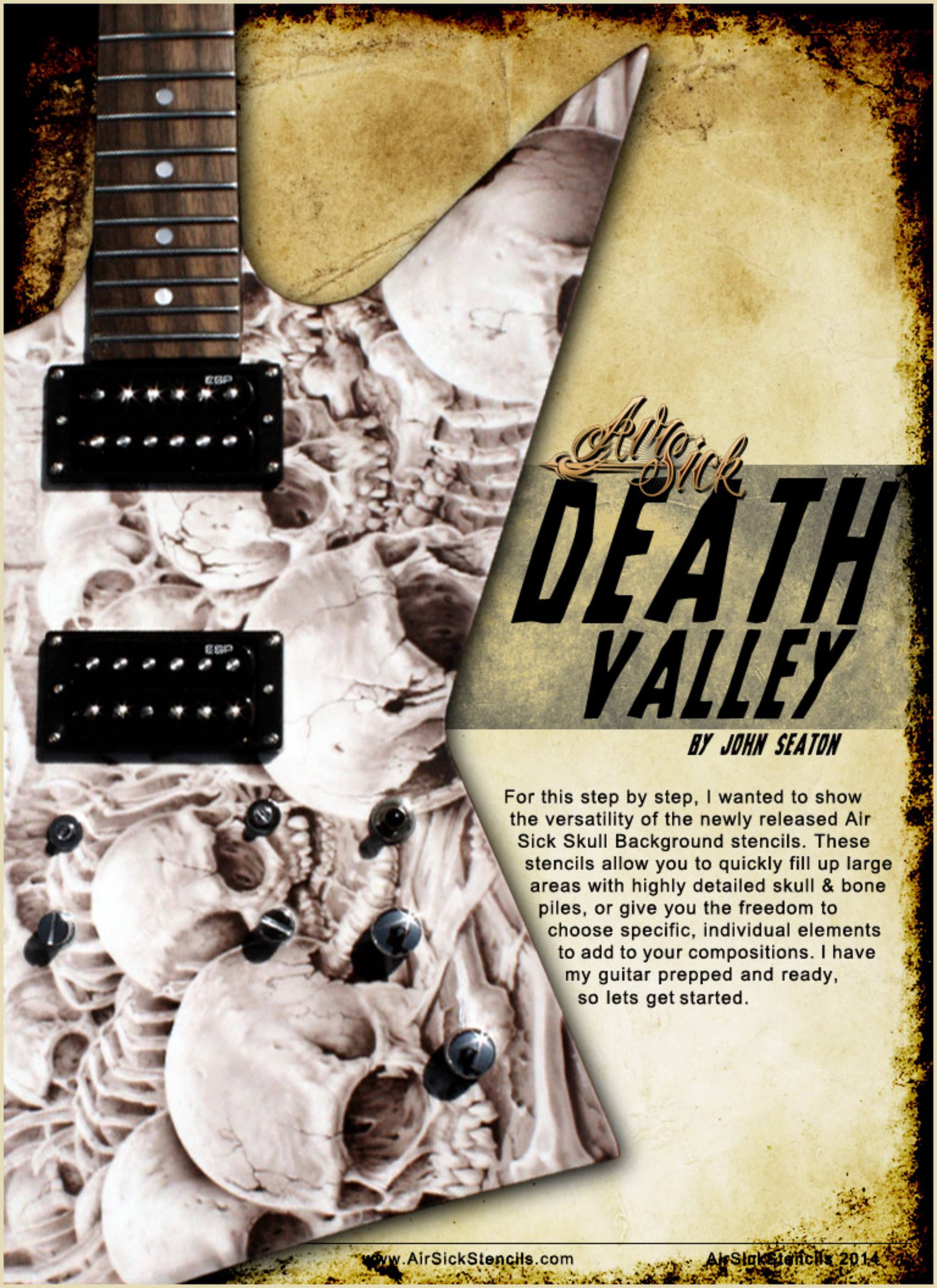
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AirSick

**PRINTER
FRIENDLY**





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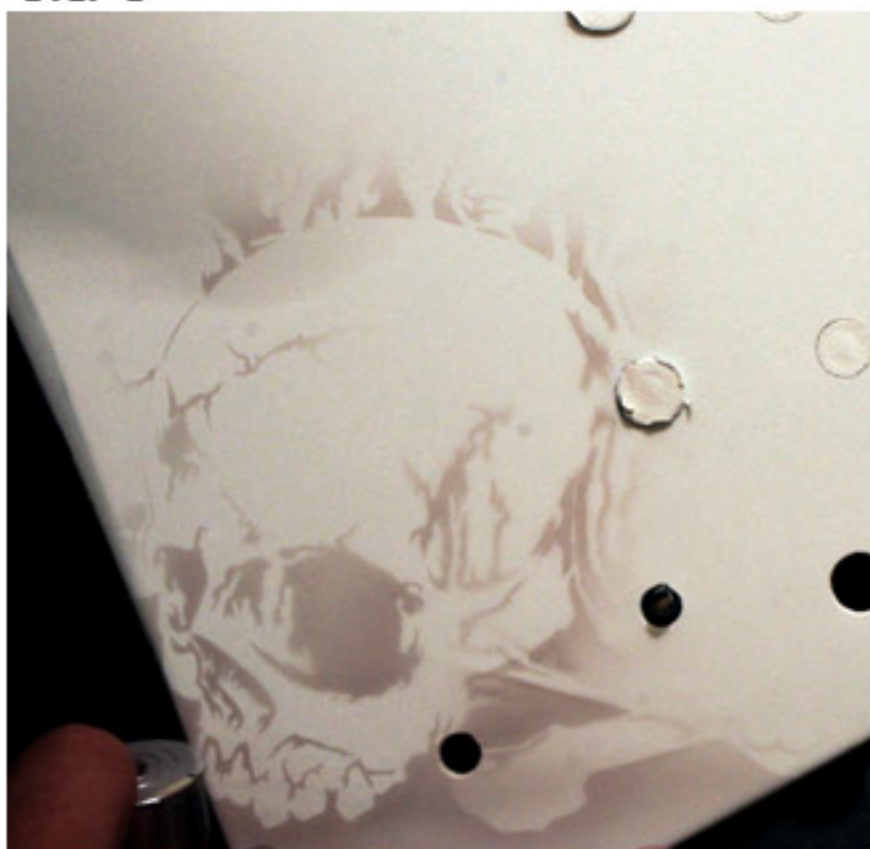
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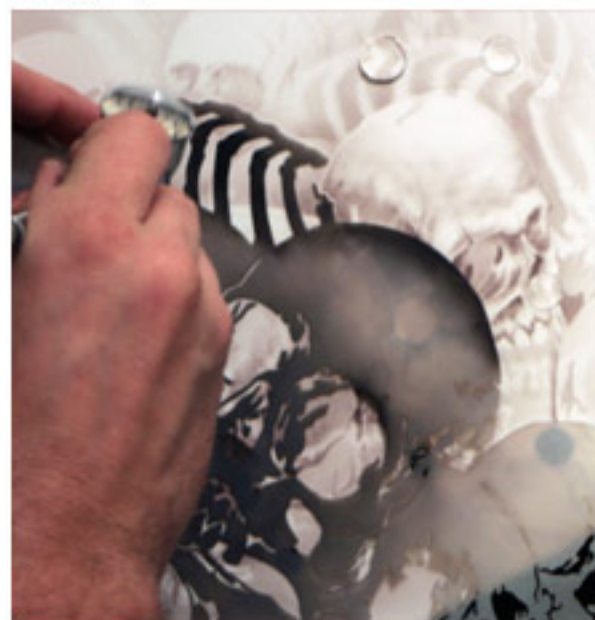
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