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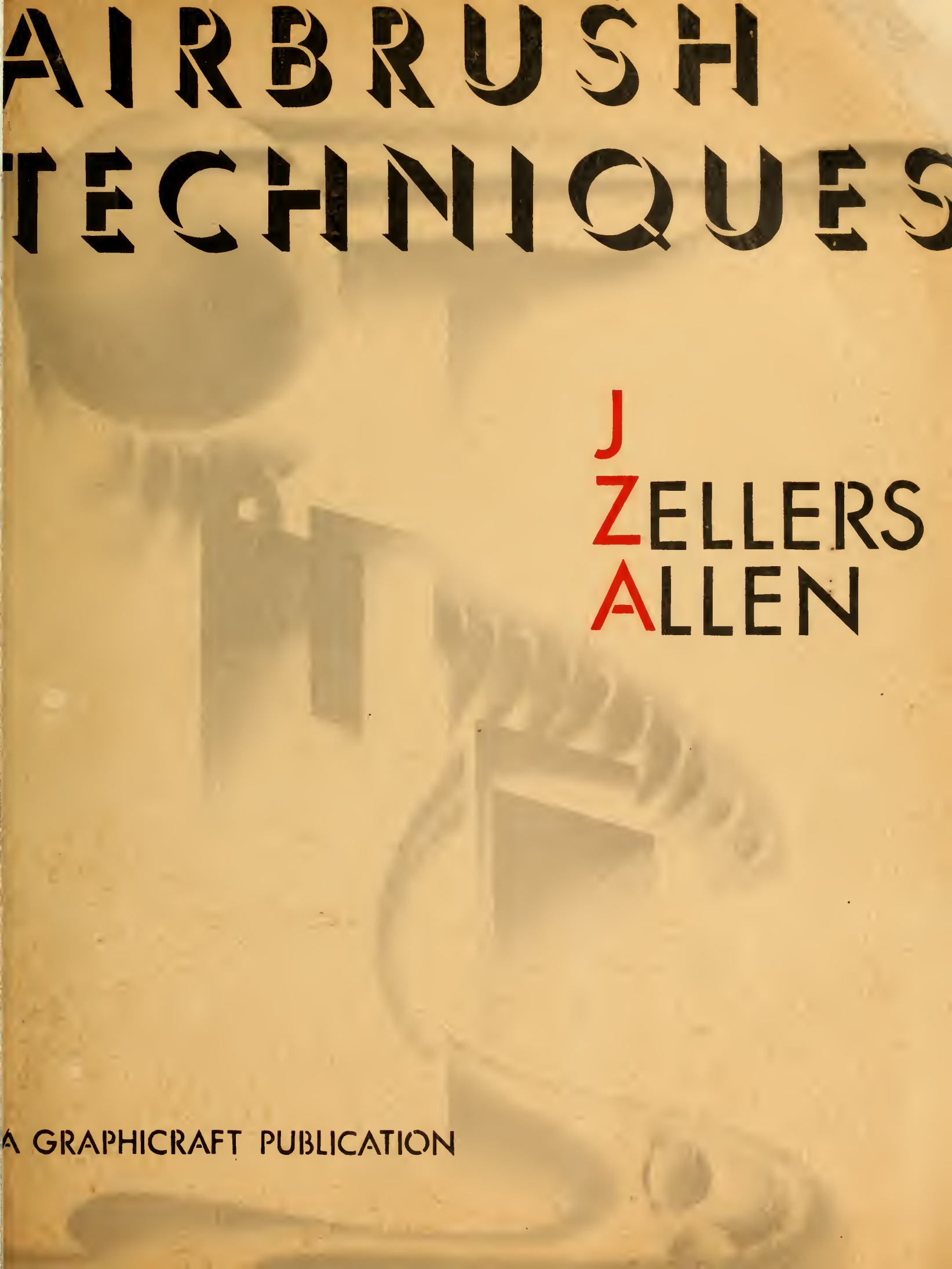
AIRBRUSH TECHNIQUES



J ZELLERS
A ALLEN

A GRAPHICRAFT PUBLICATION

To

BOB STACK

whose friendly
encouragement has
meant much to the
aspiring airbrush
user in general,
and to me in
particular,
this unorthodox
little volume
is dedicated.

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AIRBRUSH TECHNIQUES

J. ZELLERS ALLEN

GRAPHICRAFT PUBLICATIONS
Ferndale 20, Michigan.



J. Zellers Allen, Director, The Allen Airbrush Institute, Detroit, internationally recognized authority in the field of Airbrush Technique.

In addition to countless advertising illustrations and retouchings appearing in the nations magazines, Mr. Allen's work has appeared in the catalogs of the three major manufacturers of artists airbrushes: Paasche, Wold and Thayer & Chandler, all of whom recommend his instructional methods.

The Allen Airbrush Institute represents the culmination of years of experience at advertising art, designing, and instructing, during which it was Mr. Allen's privilege to direct the institution of and instruct in the first continuous school instructing in the use of the Airbrush.

His association with The Institute of Design, Chicago, served to emphasize an inherent belief in the necessity of a more complete integration of Art and Living,-a correlation of Aesthetics and Economics.

A 'practical' approach to the various problems of art has characterized Mr. Allen's many published articles and lectures. His teaching career has been distinguished principally by a determination to clarify the technical approach to graphic presentation to the extent that the creative impulse may be more completely realized.

A Dutch friend assures me that for some time after acquiring a working knowledge of English he continued to THINK in his native tongue, and effected a running translation into English. A practicing artist who takes up the airbrush reminds me very much of my Dutch friend: he continues to think in terms of more familiar media and translates into airbrush.

This approach will never result in anything of importance or value. In fact, it is directly responsible for a hybrid product that is more injurious to a general appreciation of the airbrush than any other one thing.

A rank beginner at art, upon being given an airbrush and plenty of time to experiment with it, is more likely to arrive at a satisfactory technique than the accomplished artist whose creative impulse is constrained to follow habitual thought patterns.

To create with the airbrush it is necessary to THINK in terms of airbrush. To 'think airbrush' it is necessary to be aware of the many ways in which the airbrush may be used.....indeed, it is necessary to be more than aware of them, you must be familiar with them.

Do not expect to find the possibilities exhausted in this slender volume. It would be impossible. It is hoped that the examples presented here will stimulate experimentation on the part of the reader, and if it does that it will have served its purpose.

It should be understood that while this book is directed at the person who owns an airbrush and has mastered the rudiments of its operation, it can be extremely helpful to one who has recently acquired a brush, or contemplates buying one. The instruction sheet enclosed with each new brush, and this volume, should put the beginner well along the road to accomplishment.

It will be noticed that specific recommendations as to equipment have been avoided. This is intentional. The three major manufacturers of airbrushes all produce a dependable brush.

It has been the privilege of the author to have worked for, and with the products of all three of them: Wold, Paasche, and Thayer & Chandler, which should give some authority to the assertion that the excellence of your airbrush work will depend on your ability exclusively, and not on which brush you buy.

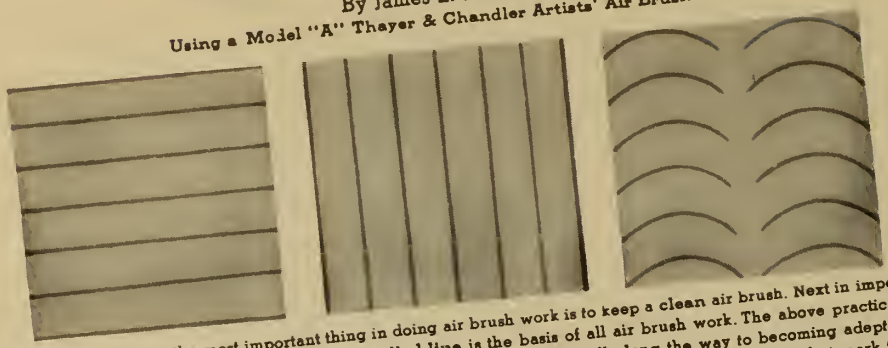
It may be of interest to the reader to know that 'AIRBRUSH TECHNIQUES' is the first of what is to be a series of small, moderately priced volumes, each dealing with a single phase of airbrush application.

Allen

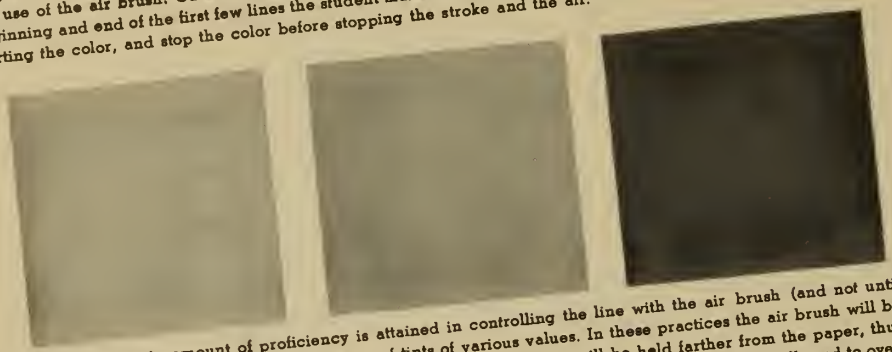
ELEMENTARY AIR BRUSH EXERCISES

By James Z. Allen

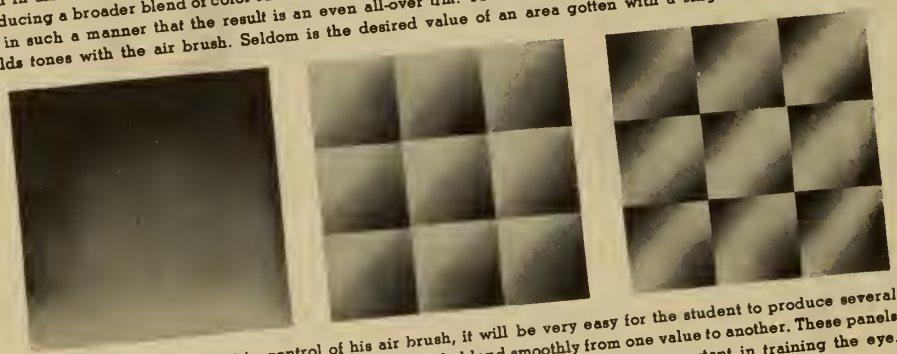
Using a Model "A" Thayer & Chandler Artists' Air Brush



Without a doubt the most important thing in doing air brush work is to keep a clean air brush. Next in importance is the controlled line. In fact, the controlled line is the basis of all air brush work. The above practices, simple as they appear, if practiced diligently, will put the beginner well along the way to becoming adept in the use of the air brush. Care should be taken to eliminate the small knobs or splashes of color that mark the beginning and end of the first few lines the student makes. To eliminate these, start the stroke and the air before starting the color, and stop the color before stopping the stroke and the air.



When a certain amount of proficiency is attained in controlling the line with the air brush (and not until then), the student should practice the casting of tints of various values. In these practices the air brush will be used in almost the identical way as in doing line work, except that it will be held farther from the paper, thus producing a broader blend of color rather than a definite line. These wide "blends" of color are allowed to overlap in such a manner that the result is an even all-over tint. To make the tint darker, repeat the process. One builds tones with the air brush. Seldom is the desired value of an area gotten with a single spraying.



Having reached this point in control of his air brush, it will be very easy for the student to produce several panels of the above type. With the air brush he can easily blend smoothly from one value to another. These panels might very well be classified as exercises in controlled tint, but they are also important in training the eye. Care should be taken to keep each of the small squares in harmony as to tone value with its neighbors.

The air brush is a tool of the greatest possible utility to the photographer, the photoengraver, the designer, the sign writer and the commercial artist. It is a necessary instrument in a hundred industries. The technique of its use is simple and can be acquired by any person who is willing to devote to it the requisite amount of practice.









After mastering the controlled line, and the casting of tints and blends, the student is ready to start work on an actual job. It is best to subdue the natural desire to do "something big" until the simple geometric shapes have been completely mastered. As the geometric shapes are basic, mastering their reproduction from various points of view will be a firm foundation upon which to build future air brush work. Particularly will this be true in the retouching of photographs.

The Knife



You will have noticed as you thumbed through the pages that follow this one that much of the work depended upon using a knife with some dexterity. As a matter of fact, the two most prevalent causes of poor airbrush work are unskillful knife work, and hurrying.

This being the case, it's a neat trick to spot up your cuttin' technique and give it a thorough examination.

The thing of first importance in this examination is, somewhat naturally, the knife itself. Is your knife the proper shape, with the blade at the proper angle? Can you sharpen it easily and quickly Do you get plenty of practice with it?

If the answer to all these questions is 'yes', pass up the rest of this article-your knife work should be okay. If the answer is 'no', keep readin'.

Let me preface my description of the ideal knife by telling you that I've bought at least one of every kind of frisket, mat, stencil, and hobby knife that's ever hit the art, dime, novelty, photographic, or hardware stores, and with only one exception they were all a complete failure, and I knew it. Those last four words are important. I've met people who used knives long and laboriously and didn't know they were using a poor substitute for a good knife!

A knife is not a chisel, and to use one that looks and must be handled like a chisel is ridiculous. A knife, for accurate cutting, must be pulled, not pushed. It must be sharp. Most of the knives I've purchased were...at least, they were for the first few minutes I used them. After that it was a never ending struggle between Allen and a stubborn piece of carborundum, with the blade always winning!

The illustration above shows a very good example of what I consider the best possible knife. The blade is a safety razor blade. Can you sharpen any of your stencil knives to the sharpness of a safety razor blade....even one that you've used? If you can, you should have stopped reading several paragraphs back, too, Gunga Din!

It's a good wager, however, that most people will admit to the same feeling of frustration that I feel when faced with a dull blade and a rock. Even if you're good at the hone and whet business, there's still the time involved. I can grab the pincers and nip an eighth of an inch off the end of a razor blade while you're finding the hone. And, incidently, that's just how simple and easy it is to sharpen a knife like this....just nipping off a bit with the pincers.

A knife with the blade at the angle shown above 'follows'. You can pull it more accurately with one finger than you can guide any other kind of knife with your whole hand.

Various kinds of blades may be used in a knife like this. For general work the single edge variety is most valuable, but even the very thin double-edge blades may be used. Their resilient quality makes them particularly useful in cutting very thin sheet celluloid or frisket paper. You can literally 'bend' them around a curve.

Spend a little time thinking about your knife technique. It can very definitely influence your ability as an airbrush artist.

MASKS

To mask an area means to protect it with something to keep the pigment from hitting it.

One of the most generally useful materials is scotch tape. If you are not familiar with scotch tape in its many forms ask your dealer to show you what he has in stock.

Another indispensable material is frisket paper. This is a thin, non-porous, waxed paper that is stuck to the job with rubber cement. It is properly prepared by giving it several coats of thin frisket cement, allowing it to "dry" between coats.

Actually, the value of rubber cement for this use lies in the fact that it does not dry. It "sets" so that when touched it feels tacky yet does not come away on your fingers. That is the way to test frisket to determine if it is ready for use.

For use on high or glossy surfaces one coat of cement is usually sufficient. For rough illustration boards and papers three or four coats may be needed.

After it is prepared, pieces of the required size are cut from it, laid on the job, and rubbed down. Rub it out from the center using firm strokes, yet not hard enough to stretch the paper. A few tries will enable you to "lay" a piece of frisket without wrinkles.

Cutting consists literally of cutting around and removing the frisket from the area that is to be airbrushed. If the rubber cement was too thick, or if the knife used was not sharp, small "beads" of rubber cement may form around the edge of the cut. These may be removed by rubbing them with your finger.

Try not to cut too deeply into the photo or illustration board. Practice will help you develop a really astounding ability to cut the frisket without cutting the job. And a sharp, thin blade in your knife will keep slight cuts into your surface from being too objectionable.

Any masking material that is stuck to your board should be removed as soon as possible. If left too long, almost any of them will bring some of the paper surface with it when removed. Never, under any circumstances, leave Scotch Tape or frisket on a job overnight Plan your work so that it will be unnecessary.

Remove frisket and tape slowly from a job. Jerking it off will bring some of the surface along, too.

The 'dry frisket' or stencil may be anything from an uncemented piece of tissue to your hand. About the most valuable stencil material is celluloid or similiar sheet plastic because of its transparency. Due to this feature all of the individual stencils of a set consisting of several pieces may be cut from one master sketch. This is a valuable aid in obtaining registration.

Sheet plastic need not be cut through. It may be scored or scratched deeply with a knife or point and then cracked out by bending the cut in both directions. Thus, almost perfect circles may be 'cut' with dividers. Should any rough edges result from this method they are easily taken care of by sanding or scraping the reverse side of the cut with your knife. This is unlikely to happen, however, unless you use exceptionally heavy material, or something with an emulsion or other coating, such as photographic film etc.

Most waxed stencil papers and boards are anything but satisfactory. Their opacity in most cases requires that any design to be cut must be traced upon its surface, thereby adding to the difficulty of obtaining registration in a stencil of several parts, and the wax or oil used in their manufacture will sometimes cause your working surface to become water repellant in spots.

If you can avoid it, never buy stencil material of any kind from a roll. It is enough to maintain contact between flat stencil material and your working surface without having to struggle with 'curl'

There are a number of ways to hold a stencil in place while it is being airbrushed. Holding with the free hand is the most common and useful method. However, there are times when a third or fourth hand would be very useful. A trick that does not seem to be very well known, and that will sometimes take the place of those extra hands, is to cut a hole through a portion of the stencil that is large enough to permit it and cover the hole with a slightly larger piece of scotch tape. Thus, it will stick to the top side of the stencil sealing the hole and preventing the passage of color, and to the working surface through the hole. This is particularly helpful with centers that would otherwise drop out, or with long almost severed fingers of stencil.



This photograph demonstrates a basic stencil principle. Perfect contact between the mask and the receiving surface results in a sharp definite line; Raising the mask off the receiving surface and airbrushing along its edge results in a soft edge. The softness of the edge can, to a great extent, be controlled by the distance between the mask and the surface. A piece of paper, light cardboard, or celluloid held in the manner shown with one end in contact, and the other raised, when airbrushed, will result in a sharp to soft line or edge that can be very helpful. This technique is particularly applicable to the rendering of cast shadows. A shadow cast from any object by an unfocused light source has just this sharp to soft character. Put your pencil point against a piece of paper and examine the shadow.

A NOTE ON MOIST WATER COLOR HANDLING

Never leave moist water color exposed to collect dust and then expect it to flow properly through your airbrush. Tube colors of a standard brand and good quality are the most practical water colors for airbrush use because no more need be exposed to dust and hardening than is required for use at a single sitting.

The pigment itself can impede or prevent the proper flow of color from your airbrush unless it is thoroughly mixed.

There is a very definite method to thinning tube colors for airbrush use: Squeeze a small quantity of color from the tube into a clean mixing dish. Place several drops of water on it. Six or seven drops will be sufficient for half an inch of color as it comes from the tube. Mix the pigment and water very thoroughly. Add a few more drops of water and continue to mix, and so on, until you have a definitely liquid mixture.

To demonstrate the logic of this proceedure, let us suppose that you place half an inch of lampblack in the dish and cover it with as much water as you will eventually need to thin it to the proper working consistency, and you begin to stir. About twice around the dish with your bristle brush and enough of the color has been released from the pigment to color the water to such opacity that you cannot see whether or not you have broken up the entire glob of color. Then, when you start to use it in your airbrush, if you have missed several small blobs of pigment, they can, and probably will, put your airbrush out of use long enough for you to do a very thorough cleaning job on it.

Always use a bristle brush of good quality for an airbrush filling, mixing, and cleaning brush. The saving involved in using a cheap brush is lost in the time it will take to locate one lost bristle in the mechanism of your airbrush.

The PAPER

Unlike other art processes, the airbrush applies pigment to a surface without any actual contact between the tool and the surface. As a consequence of this, it is possible to use the airbrush on surfaces that would not be practical for other methods of pigment application. Roughness, or abrasive qualities that would prohibit the use of a bristle brush would not greatly influence the results produced with airbrush.

While almost any surface may be used for airbrush, there are factors involved that recommend certain materials for specific purposes. A "high" or super calendered surface, for instance, while excellent for receiving fine detail and to reproduce from, is very suceptible to surface damage, and any change in the surface of such stock will be emphasized by airbrushing. Even a fingerprint which you could not see on the unpainted surface will be brought out by the application of airbrushed pigment. Due to this it is more practical to use one of the finer tooth illustration boards or papers for fine detail rather than a really high surface stock.

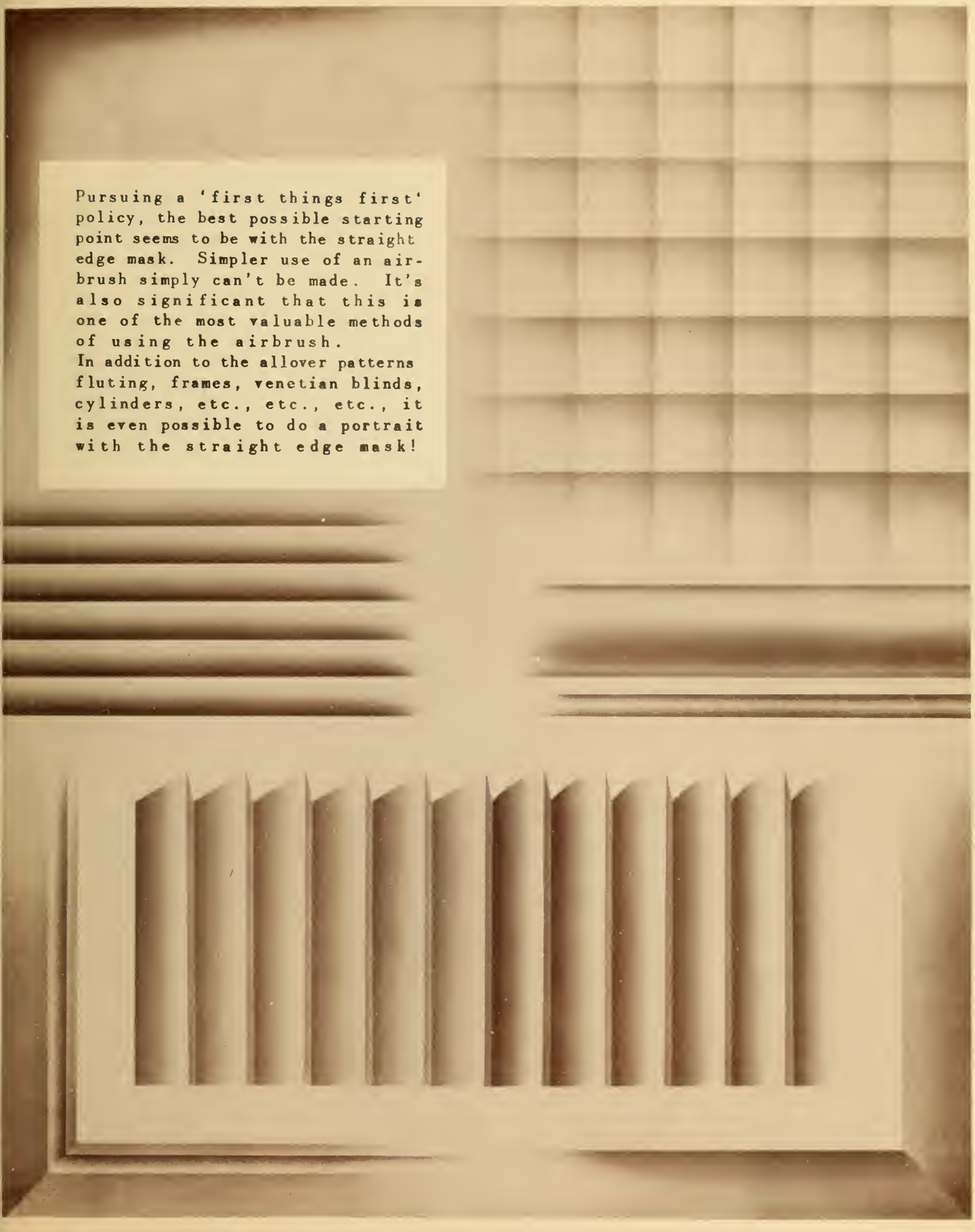
In the other direction, the quite rough surfaces, while aesthetically satisfying, are not the best choice for finely airbrushed detail,- particularly detail of a "hard" or mechanical nature. However, although it would not be satisfactory for a stainless steel lawnmower, it is preferable for portraits or other "soft" subject matter in free hand airbrush.

Probably the most generally useful surface will be found in the "medium" boards and papers such as, Whatman's Hot Pressed, Strathmore Regular, Crescent No. 300, or similiar surfaces.

One thing that the airbrush user must demand in an illustration board is that it be of such quality, and hard enough, to permit the use of scotch tapes, frisket, and other masking materials without sustaining damage. Nothing can be more irritating than the laborous task of having to repair and burnish a spot, in an otherwise satisfactory rendering, where the surface has been lifted by the removal of a bit of scotch tape. In general, the higher the rag content of a board, the less likely it is to pick up with tape or frisket. Obviously, in the selection of papers and boards for airbrush use is no spot to exercise a too stringent economy. The best, to use a bromide, is none too good!

In those instances where the airbrush is to be used in combination with other media, it is safe to let the other medium determine the surface.

You will have noticed that this book is printed on a laid finish stock similiar to charcoal paper. In any case permitting the use of a lightweight stock, charcoal paper may be used for airbrush. It is extremely useful and pleasing when a tinted stock is indicated because of the wide and subtle range of colors and tints obtainable.



Pursuing a 'first things first' policy, the best possible starting point seems to be with the straight edge mask. Simpler use of an airbrush simply can't be made. It's also significant that this is one of the most valuable methods of using the airbrush.
In addition to the allover patterns fluting, frames, venetian blinds, cylinders, etc., etc., etc., it is even possible to do a portrait with the straight edge mask!

The CIRCLE

It is possible that the circle stencil, than which nothing could be easier to make and use, is exceeded in value only by the straight edge.

A set of circle stencils is practically a necessity to the airbrush user, and requires little effort to make if sheet celluloid and a pair of dividers are used. Circles of the required size may be 'scratched' deeply in the plastic with a point of the dividers and the centers 'cracked' out almost perfectly. If any rough edges should remain, they can be smoothed out with a piece of fine sandpaper rolled into a cylinder.

The simplest possible rendition, of course, is the flat spraying of the area. Next would be 'burning' the edge, as in the illustration left below.

Rounding up a sphere makes something of a point about airbrush: There isn't another method of doing it that even approaches the ease with which it can be done in this medium.

In the preparation of circle stencils always preserve the centers, too, because they are as important as the outside piece. You will notice that in the renditions on the opposite page, the center or 'positive' part of the stencil was of as much value as the outside or 'negative' stencil.

The same methods used with the circle stencil will give some very remarkable results when used with elipses, or any other simple shape. Irregular curves are especially valuable in rendering the black line scroll, or spencerian effect.







Torn Paper



Here are just a few of the effects it is possible to get with torn paper. Experimentation will reveal how each was done, if it is not obvious at first glance.

Several things to remember in connection with this: Paper has grain; it will tear fairly straight with the grain, less straight across the grain. Different kinds of paper, and different weights, tear differently. Save both pieces. Both are necessary for some of these effects.

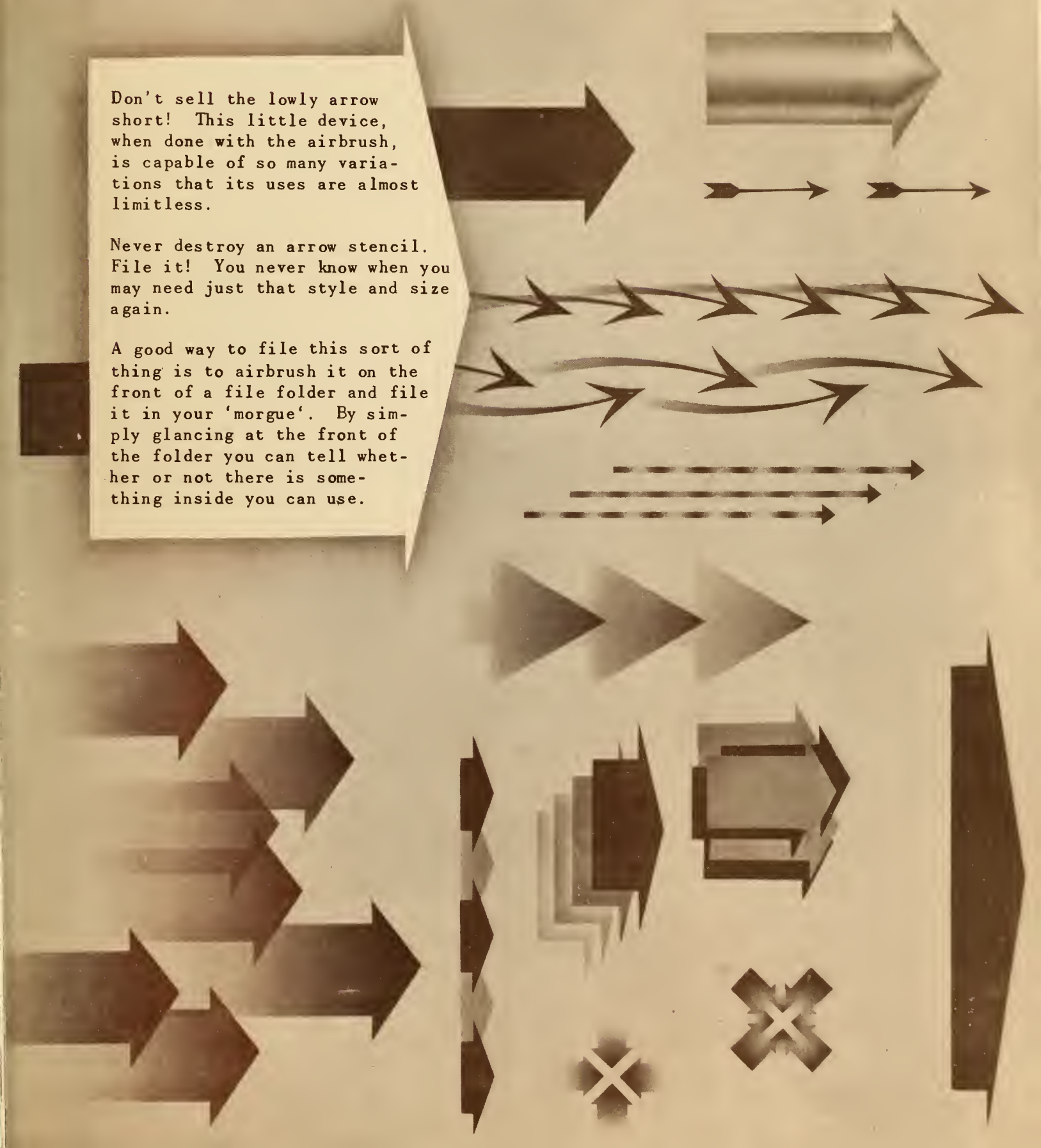
Try celluloid on this, too.

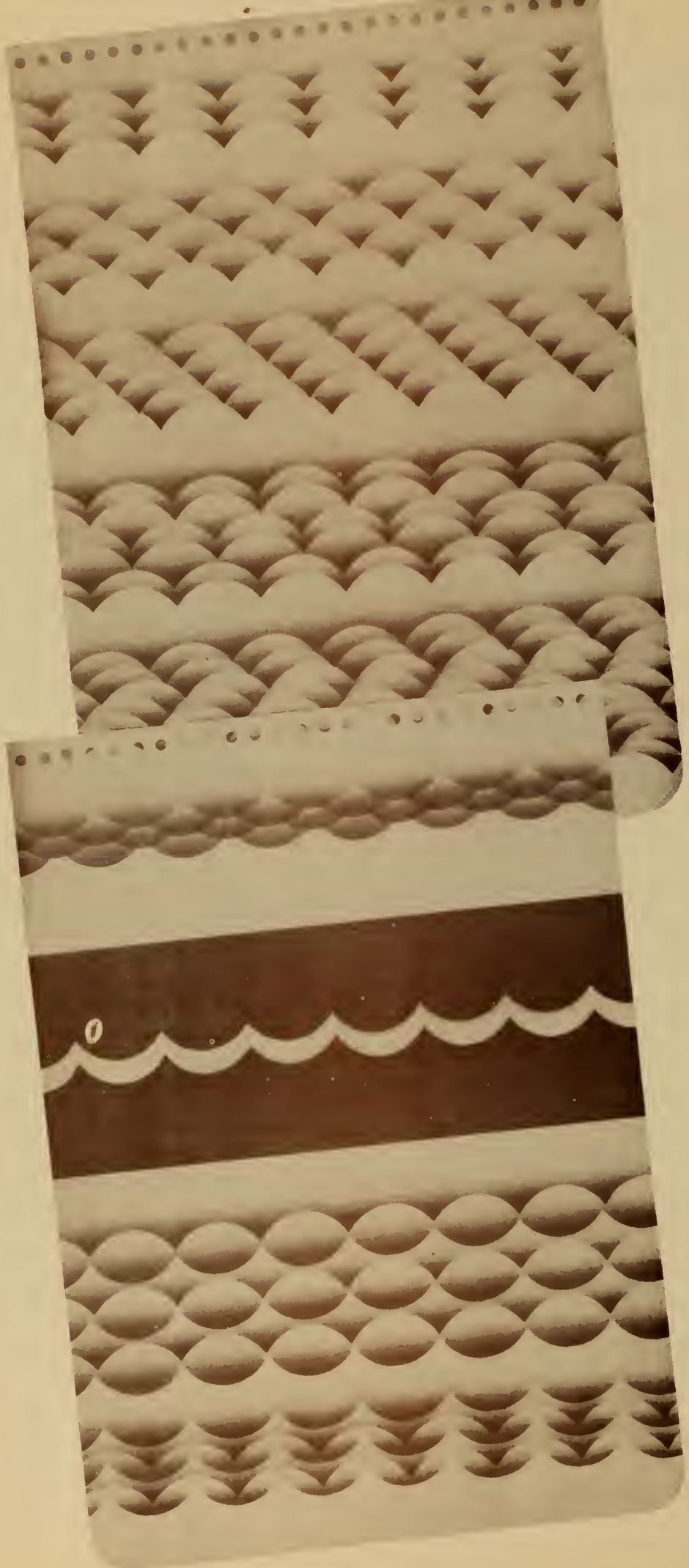
Arrows!

Don't sell the lowly arrow short! This little device, when done with the airbrush, is capable of so many variations that its uses are almost limitless.

Never destroy an arrow stencil. File it! You never know when you may need just that style and size again.

A good way to file this sort of thing is to airbrush it on the front of a file folder and file it in your 'morgue'. By simply glancing at the front of the folder you can tell whether or not there is something inside you can use.





I wouldn't know what to call this, but it's highly effective in full color.

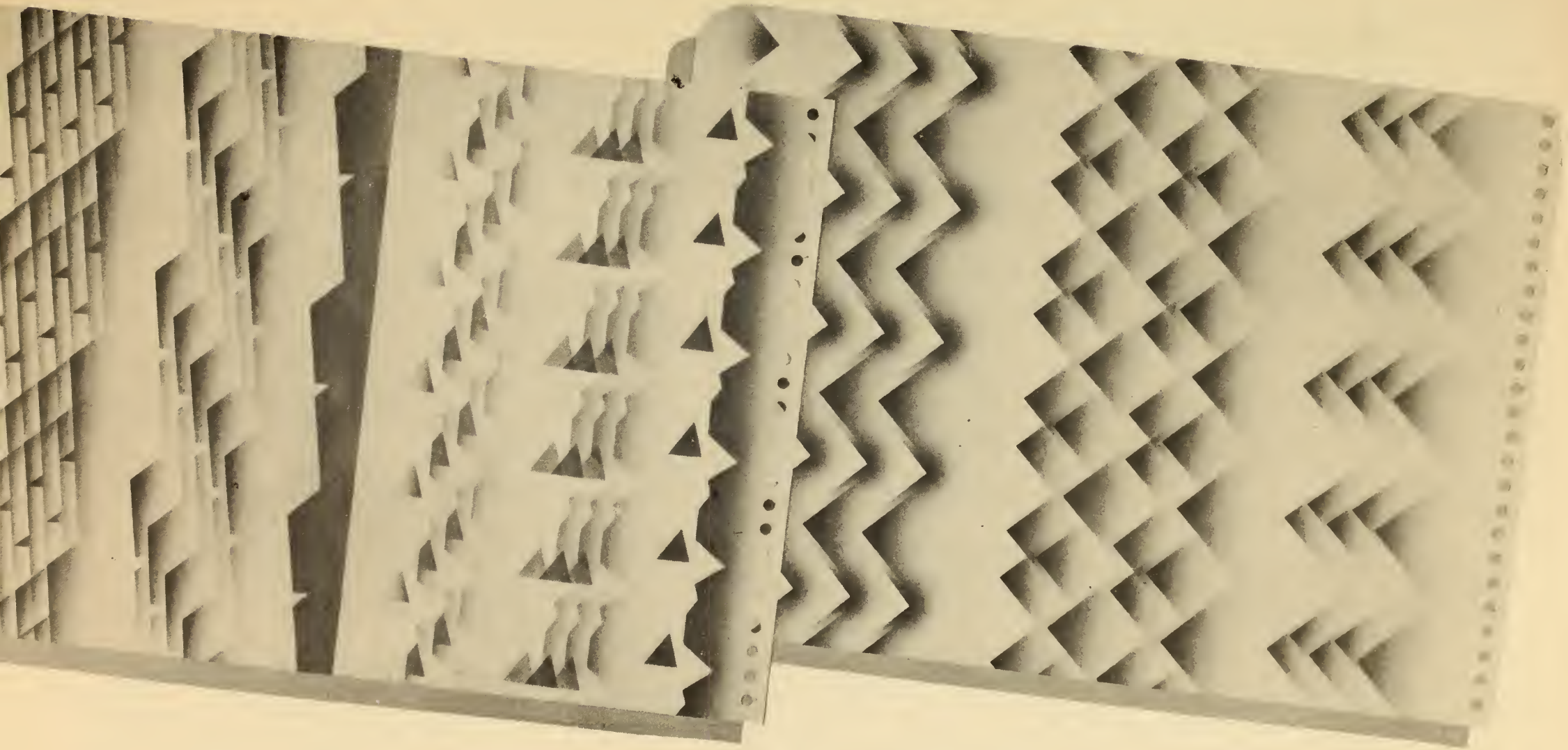
Trying to exhaust the possibilities of even a simple edge like the scallop shown at the left is practically a career.

The almost solid dark areas show the shape of the mask, negative and positive, used to do all the renditions on this page. ...And it would be possible to fill many more pages with additional variations on this same design. All those on the top notebook page were done with the positive mask alone. The one immediately above the mask pattern was done with the negative mask. The two below the pattern were rendered with the aid of both masks.

Any number of variations are possible on this same theme: The saw-tooth edge in any number of different rhythms, combinations of sawtooth and scallop, even piercing the edge in some manner as shown at the top of the bottom notebook page to the right.

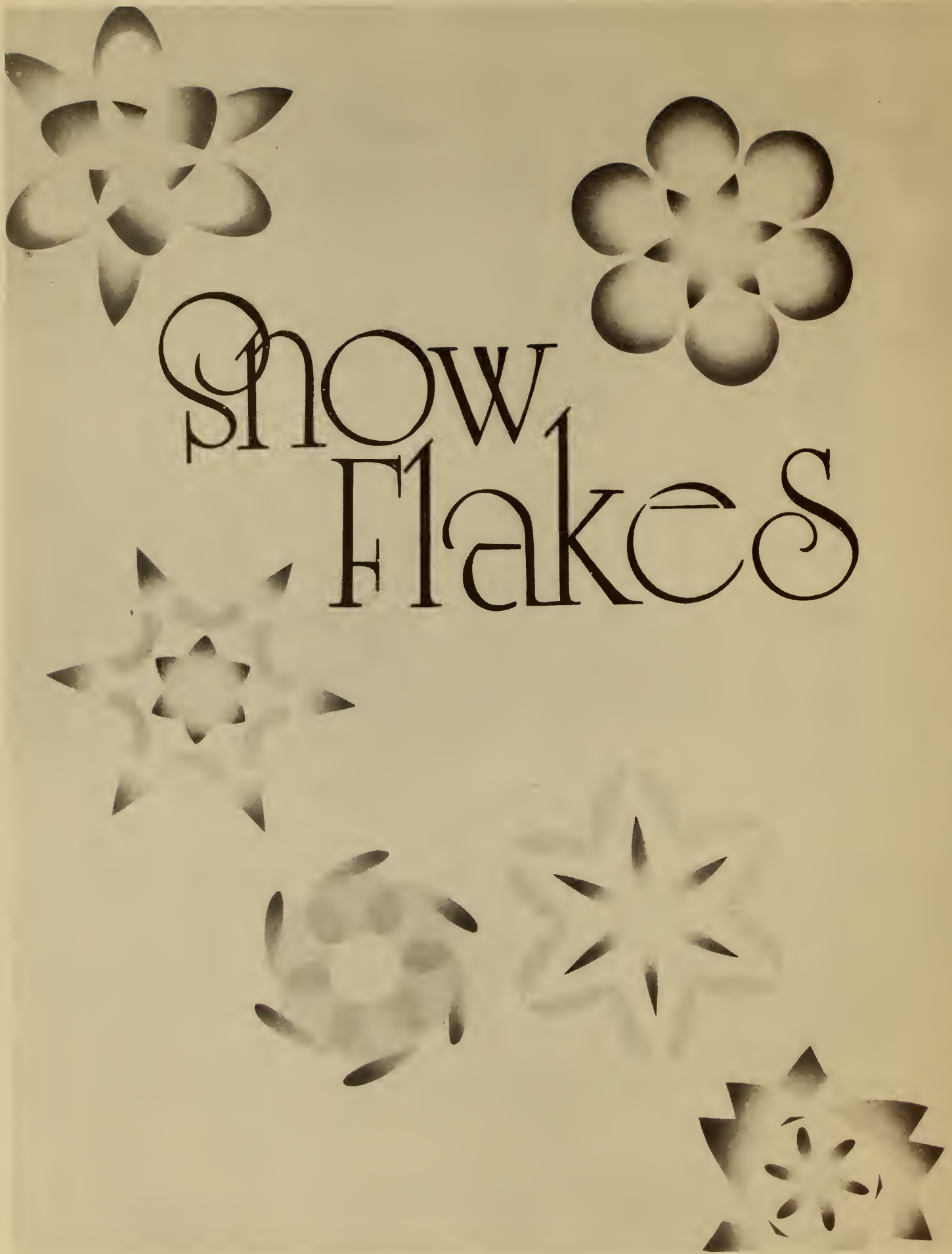
Combinations of two or more designs are sometimes very attractive.

sing colors especially prepared for such purposes these edges may be used for decorating articles of lothing - greeting cards - stationery - book jackets - wall decorations - lettering backgrounds - etc.



handkerchiefs - scarves - blouses - men's ties - dresses, especially children's - lamp shades - purse borders - allover designs - background effects - album page decorations - frames or mats for pictures

Snow Flakes



There are dozens of uses for these things, and you can't know how much fun they are, nor what a challenge to your ingenuity until you try them.

Almost anything will do for a starter in designing Snow Flakes, a compass, a set of elipses, a french curve, or what have you? The solids on this page are straight silhouette renditions of the stencils used for doing the designs across the gutter to the left, located in about the same relative position on the page.

You might even unlimber that stencil knife and use these..

The rendering of them requires no less ingenuity than their designing. Actually more, because of the variety of results that can be gotten with a single stencil, or a combination of two or more stencils.

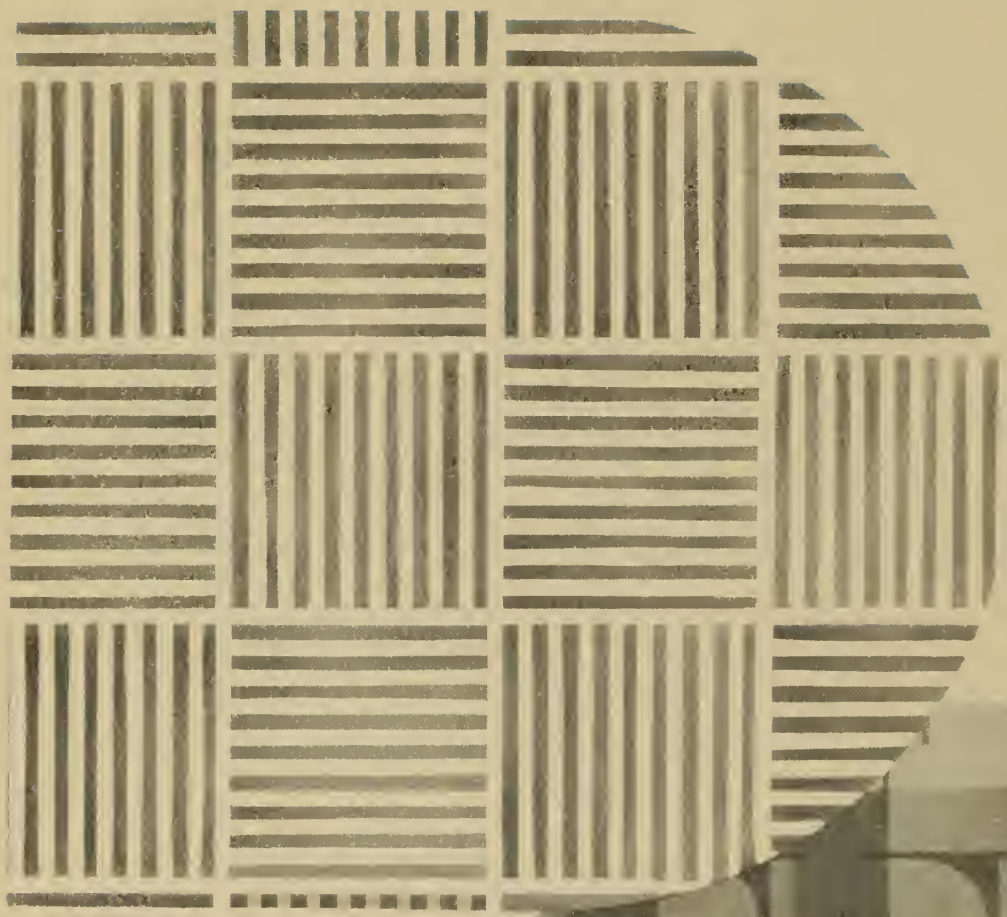
Most of those opposite are fairly simple in rendition. The possibilities become more apparent in the one in the upper left corner, which is a combination of the two designs at the top of this page, and the one lower left which makes use of shifting the same stencil for a second airbrushing.

Add color to this process and it becomes fascinating, believe me. And I can't think of a better way to study the effects of color mixing than to experiment with superimposing various tints and blends of basic hues in the production of these simple designs.

These things can be an important step in learning to 'THINK AIRBRUSH'.

ALLOVER Designs

Allover design is uncoubtedly one of the most interesting projects possible with the airbrush, and one of the most informative, because of the use that must be made of masking materials. You will also learn something about color and what may be expected of it when used in the airbrush.

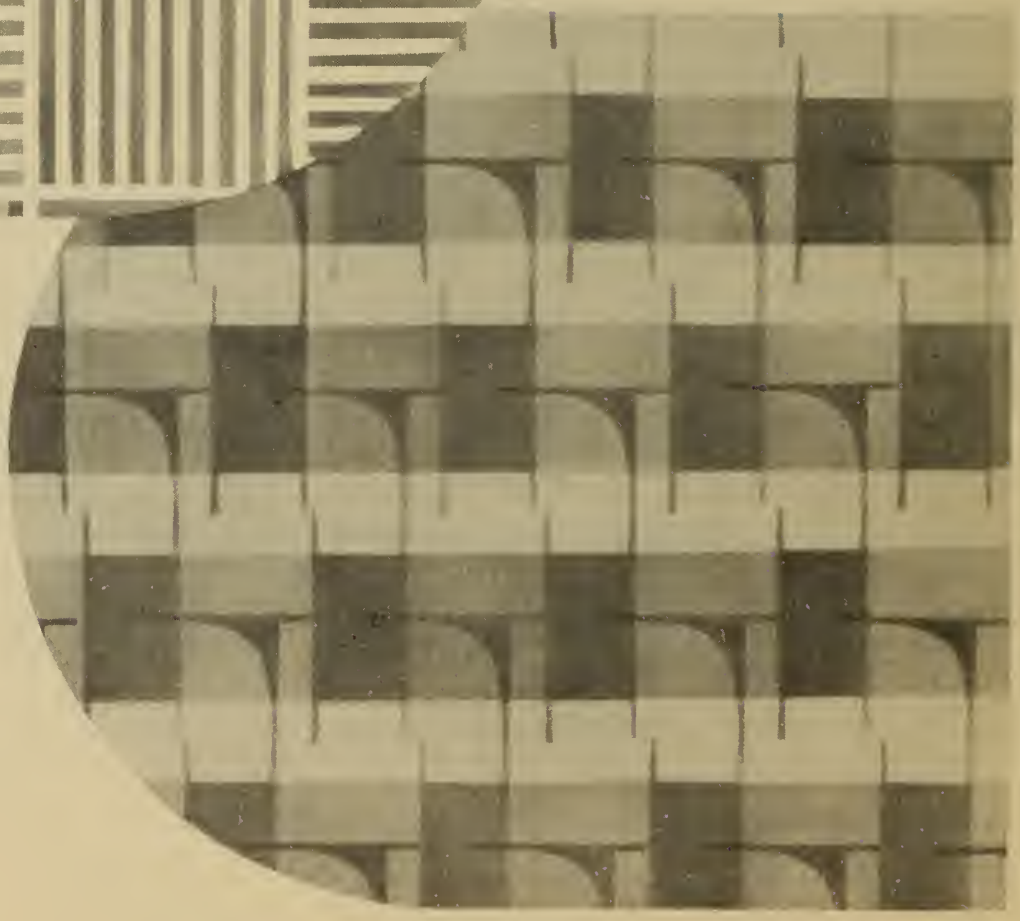


As a rule, the nature and size of the unit of design will determine the division of the area.

You may already have recognized the block of 'copy' from the page dealing with LAYOUT TYPE in the design at the left.

A letter 'L' from a fairly large set of Roman letters was responsible for the area below.

'Skyline' was prepared especially for the design on the next page just, to show the possibilities of almost any type of



su b ject matter.

The polka dot design below it was done with part of a monogram stencil for the letters JZA in Trafton type. The dots were supplied by an ordinary paper punch.

Y'see, almost any darn thing will do, if you use it right.

Simple material not too many elements will give the best results.

Actually these examples do very little to show the possibilities of allover design with the airbrush.

Imagine the results of these same stencils in various colors

Airbrushing various values of color, one over another, results in an optical admixture of the two. Thus if you airbrush yellow over blue you will get a green. Blue over yellow produces a different green than yellow over blue, and the particular green obtained will be further controlled by the amounts of blue and yellow used.

The hue resulting from this method method usually leans a bit in the direction of the "top" color





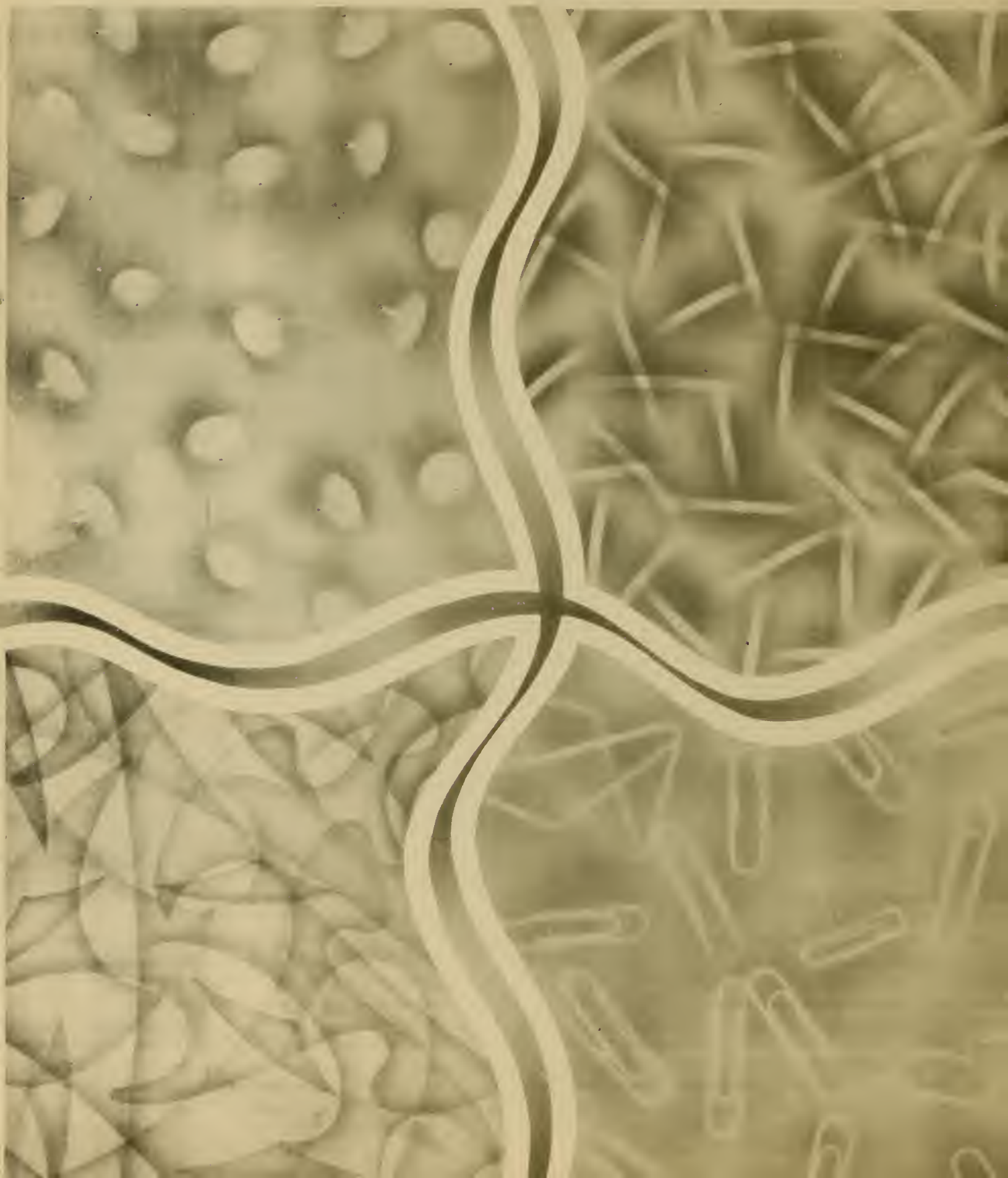
Completely transparent colors are likely to give the best results - or a combination of transparent and opaque.

Remember that even the most opaque pigments may be applied transparently with the airbrush.

A glance at some of the textiles being offered for sale at any yard goods counter will prove that really good surface design of this nature is sorely needed.

Odds & Ends

These effects fall somewhere between Allover Design and Texture. The same method can be used for either purpose. Paper clips, a french curve, a handfull of thumbtacks, and a dime store roll of wire solder were responsible for these.



TEXTURE

In view of the foregoing it is obvious that we need to be concerned with the methods and materials whereby it is possible to distinguish between the white sidewalls of a tire and the white leather upholstery inside the car.

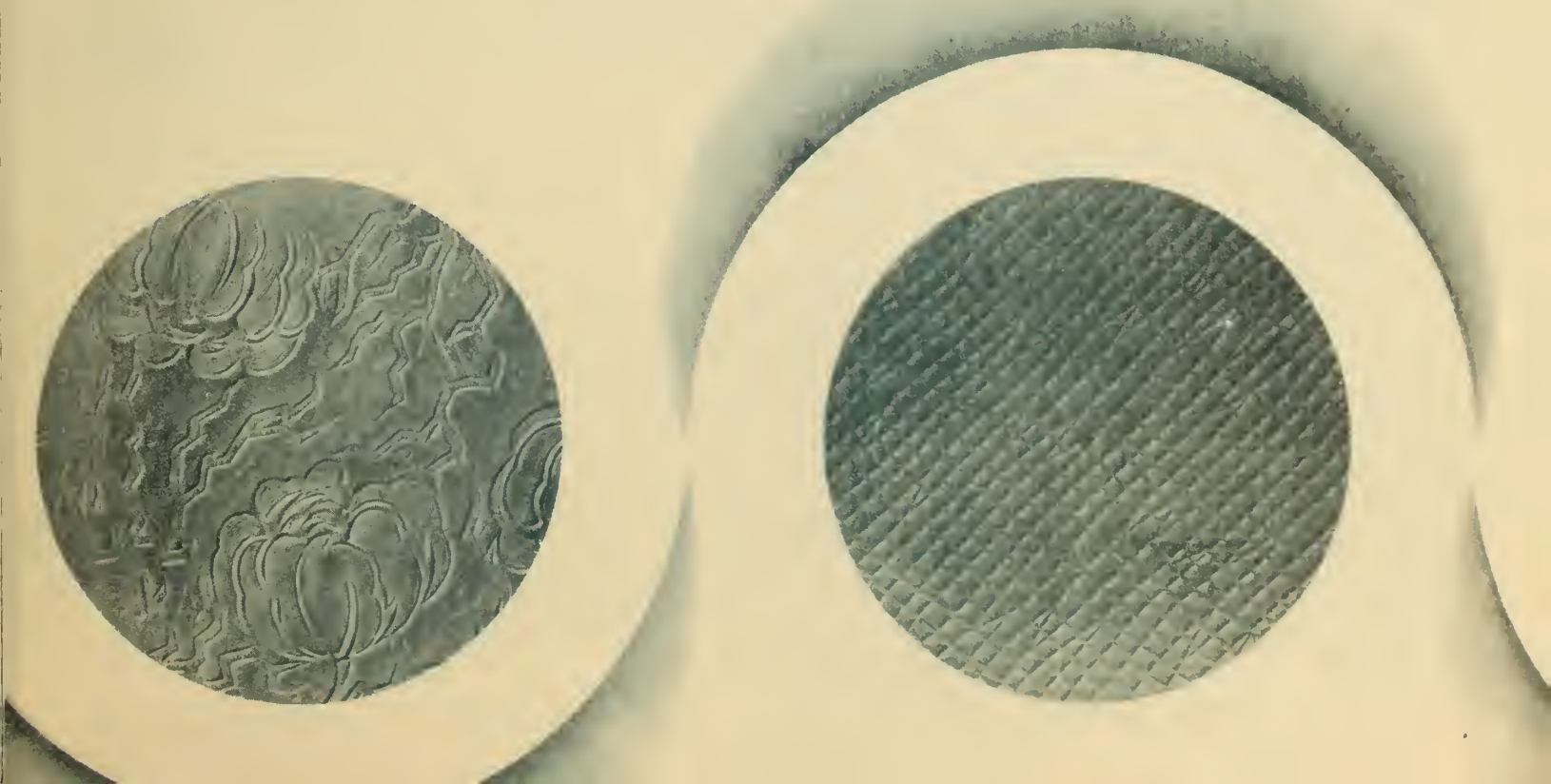
The round areas on these two pages are good examples of one of the easiest ways of creating texture with the airbrush. Perhaps creating is not exactly the proper word to use in this case, because it is actually a method of emphasizing texture that has already been created.

These effects were obtained by airbrushing across the grain of papers having an embossed design. Papers of this type are produced by a number of companys for an even greater number of purposes. Small scraps of unusual design, however obtained, should be filed until needed.

Explore the possibilities of using two colors for this. Holding the brush as low as the cup and hose will allow, spray across the grain in one direction with one color, then use the other for airbrushing across the grain in the opposite direction.

Cloth, leatherette papers, or even illustration board will give very pleasing results. The area at the top of the left page is Whatman's Rough water color paper.

While this technique can be turned to account, as it were, it is really using something that, unless controlled, is a blasted nuisance to airbrush users. To avoid emphasizing the grain of paper or illustration board in regular airbrush work, hold the airbrush as nearly perpendicular to the receiving surface as possible.





Raw Materials

Somewhat in the same manner as the examples on the preceeding two pages, these two items take full advantage of previously created texture. In this instance, however, it is printed instead of embossed.

The trick is extremely simple: a piece of paper with a printed texture approximating that of the object you are about to render is used for the rendering. Upon completion it is cut out carefully with the stencil knife and mounted on illustration board.

Naturally, this technique is of limited value. Textures must be chosen carefully, and you'll find that large and definite patterns will not lend themselves to this treatment as readily as smaller and more subtle designs.

Full color will give striking results if the print chosen is light enough in value to permit its use.

The memorial suggestion above was rendered with black and white on a piece of stock of the type used for photo mounts and folders. The book was done on a piece of linen textured cover stock.



Gift wrapping papers are an excellent source of printed textures. Special effects, leather, marble, cork, wood grains, etc., may be obtained from almost any paper house.

a Slick trick for cardwriters



This stylized and decorative little face on the left is literally the result of cutting up a photograph! The hair, eye and eyebrow, lips, and the small dark lines at the neck were cut out first. Then the photograph was used as a stencil and the areas airbrushed. The large dark areas at the collar came next, and the shadows for the ear. More airbrushing. You see, the stencil was airbrushed as it was cut. The last areas to be cut and rendered were the shoulders and the face. Notice that the face was not given a flat tint, it was modeled a bit.



The pieces of the same photograph were used to do this modern version.

This method of rendering the stencil piece by piece as it is cut can be a time saver of real importance at times. Give it a try, and don't limit it to faces. It will work with many types of subject matter.

A "telling" touch can sometimes be added with the regular brush, as the dark band at the nose andat the back of the head.

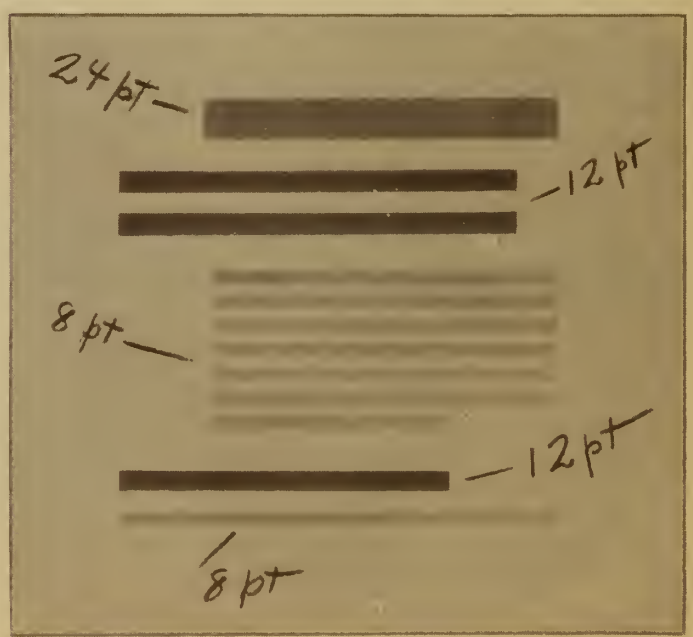
Layout TYPE







The above are display type sizes. It's a good idea, however, to pick up a type handbook of some kind for really authentic information. There's a lot to know about type and its proper use.



and PICTURES







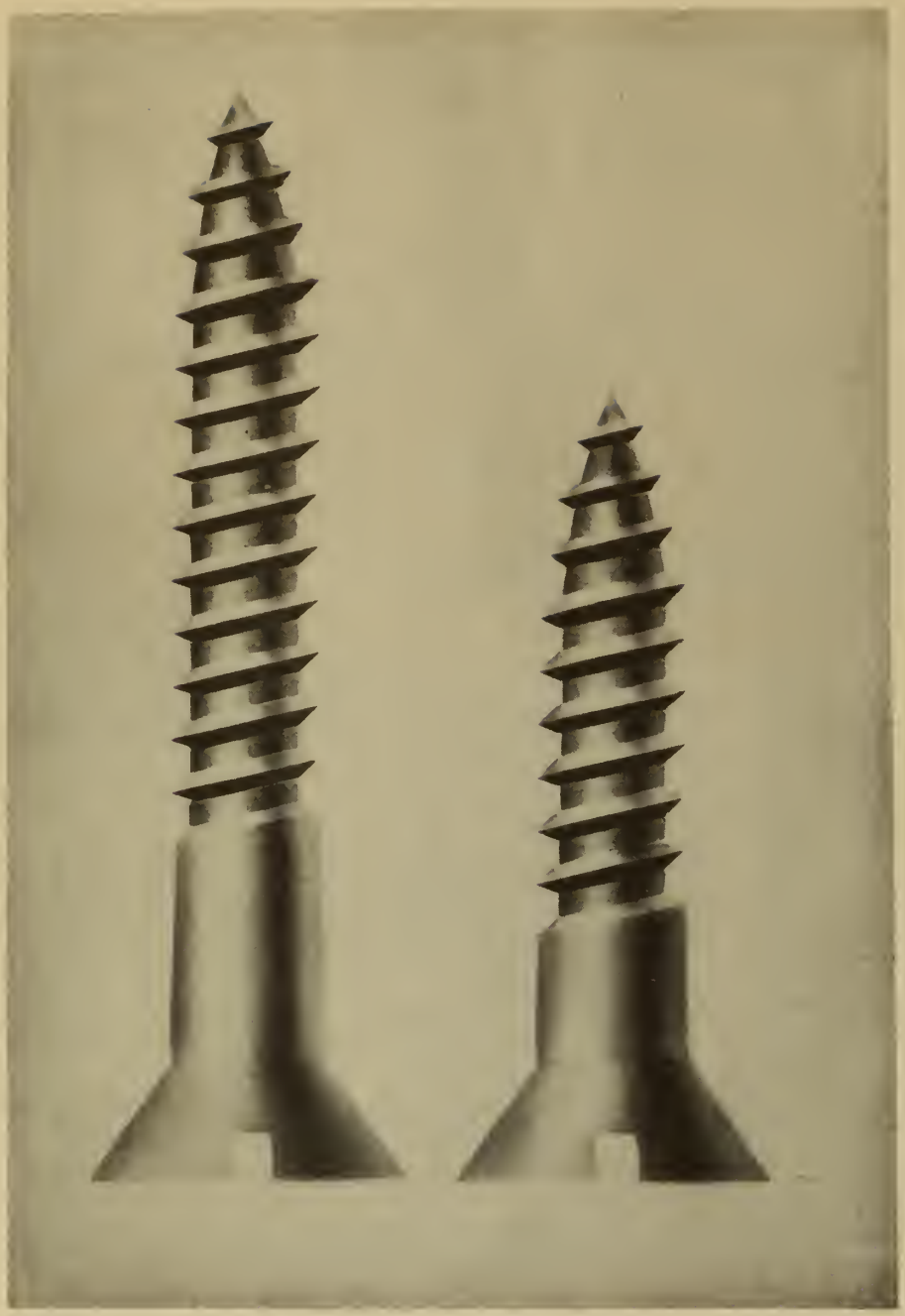
This is one of the many ways in which the layout man can make very practical use of the airbrush. A series of stencils of the various type sizes used regularly will save much more than the time required to prepare them, and will result in a much neater job of type indication.

Use actual blocks of copy in the size and spacing needed as guides in cutting 'layout type', and cut the blocks somewhat larger than usually needed. Limiting the amount of type indicated is very easily done by using a right angle mask as shown in the diagram.

Type 'color' in layout work is absolutely controlled with this method.

The method of indicating photographs used on this page can also be a very useful trick. There are times when indicating a photograph is in order and you don't know exactly what the subject matter will be. The top one of these three was done with torn and crumpled paper; the center one with odds and ends from my tab; and the third freehand.

Those things that might be mistaken for tree branches were made by blowing drops of liquid color across the opening in the rectangular mask with the air from the airbrush.





1.



2.





The two screws above are relatively unimportant as subject matter, unless you happen to be in the hardware business. They are shown more to demonstrate a method than for any other purpose.

To one unfamiliar with stencil airbrush method it seems inconceivable that such results can be obtained with a few holes in celluloid.

If you haven't tried anything of this sort, Slap a piece of celluloid of the right thickness over the solid black impressions down the right of this page and cut yourself a set of stencils that will be a pleasure to render..

Incidently, it won't be necessary to cut the one numbered 2. It's the nine bottom holes of number 1. turned upside down!



A Good Example

This is a good example of airbrushed layout.

It's a cut of the layout for the Wold Airbrush Catalog Cover. Everything in it was airbrushed except the script lettering.

Although this layout was done on thin "layout paper", it is much better to do airbrushed layouts on something heavier. The moisture causes thin paper to wrinkle. Two ply is ideal for the purpose.

Being somewhat in doubt as to the exact location for the large letters spelling WOLD and the airbrush, they were rendered on one ply, cut out and, when their proper location was determined by shifting them about, mounted into place. This cutting out a unit and shifting it about can be a very handy trick at times.

You might find it interesting to know that all the floating pages were rendered with the same intensity and contrast, then the lower ones were 'pushed' or subdued by fogging over them with black.

In the final art work the airbrush was moved forward so that it would not extend into the back cover as it is shown here. If you have a Wold catalog handy a comparison will reveal other slight changes.



The original of this, 40 inches in height and in full color, is in the permanent airpainting exhibit of the Paasche Airbrush Company, Chicago, Ill.

INTERPRETATION

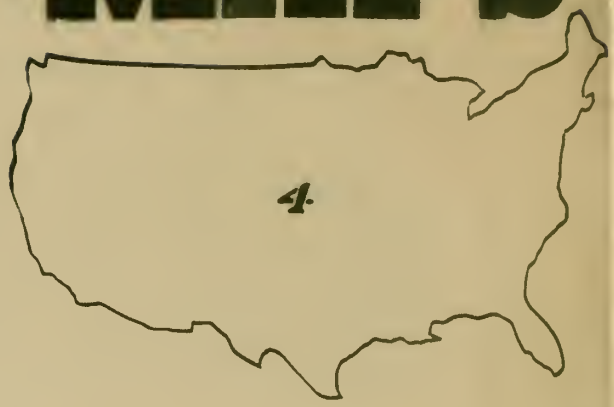


Wings for Art

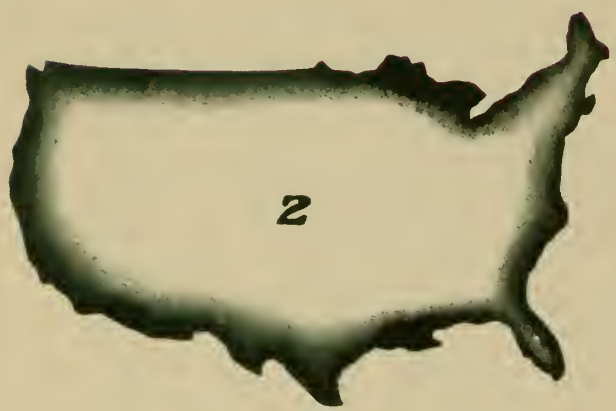
MAPS



This is the negative stencil

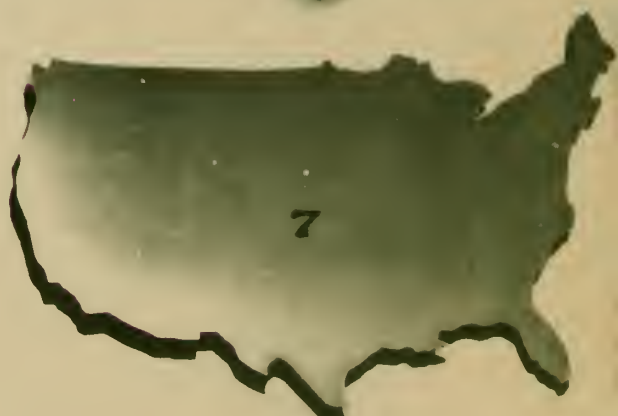








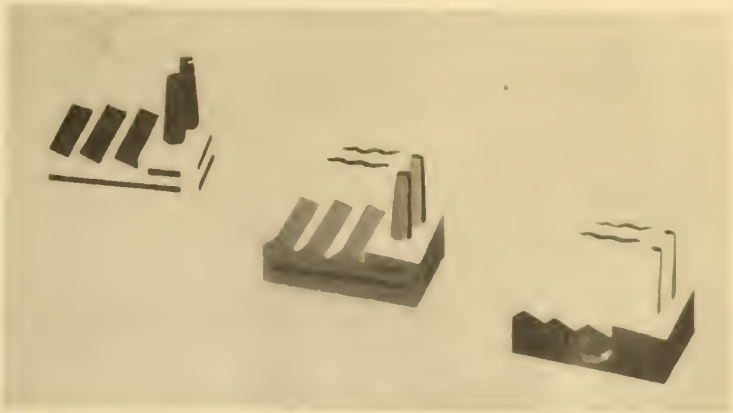




When a stencil is properly cut the result is really two stencils, or a set, negative, and positive. Using both pieces, all of these effects, and more, are possible. 'Burning the edge' of the negative stencil gives the result illustrated in 2. 3 is the result of the same handling with the positive stencil. In doing 4 the negative stencil (0) was taped down, the positive (1) was fitted into it, then offset just enough in each direction to airbrush the line. 5 is a double rendering of the negative stencil. 6 requires the use of both the negative and positive, and so does 7.

Cut a stencil like this and see how many additional interpretations you can work out.

map & chart Symbols





There are so many recognized symbols for so many different purposes that to attempt to list them would be ridiculous. Some, however, like those shown here: flags, stars, factories, cities, and the map compass are of such constant use that it is advisable to have them on file.

This is the type of thing that can be prepared ahead of time for use whenever needed.



To get the same effect shown here with the star you'll have to save both the negative and positive stencil.

Only one stencil is needed for the compass. The same stencil reversed may be used for the gray portion after blocking the letter N. The others, factory, city, and flag, are rendered in seperate impressions, and then incombination to show the method.



This stenciling of symbols can be indispensible in those instances where small figures of people are used to represent percentages in charts, --you know, those things where one housewife represents several million housewifes, and where one farmer and half of another represents a million and a half farmers. All you need do is cut one figure and repeat it as often as needed in the rendering.



LETTERING
Airbrushed



The stenciled letter as produced by various cutting machines in somewhat general use for shipping purposes, etc., is a horrible thing. Which may or may not have something to do with the fact that most airbrush users do not even consider the possibilities of stenciling letters.

It is, however, a very practical method of doing lettering.

Certain letter styles lend themselves readily to stencil interpretation; others are not so amenable to this treatment. This should be taken into consideration in planning a job where the lettering is to be done with this method.

The preparation of alphabets for lettering purposes is not particularly hard, and is excellent practice at using the knife Sheet celluloid or acetate should be used. The frosted one side is particularly good because a guide line for the bottoms of the letters may be penciled on the frosted side. Any clearly printed alphabet, large enough, can be utilized for cutting letter stencils by laying this material over it and cutting the letters that show through.

As a rule the letters of a printed alphabet are printed too close together to allow airbrushing one without "fogging" through those on either side. But, since it will be impossible to get the entire alphabet on one piece of material of a manageable size anyway, this is neatly solved by skipping every other letter, catching the ones skipped on the second piece. More space usually needsto be left between the linesof lettering, also, for the same reason.

The connectors, which shout STENCIL and spoil most stenciled letters, need not be as objectionable as they usually are They are usually too large and too numerous. Notice the small upper case "R" next to the large R in the upper left corner of the block opposite. One connector serves to hold the center, as compared with three in the large "R", and two in "R" in the heading.

In the word "--Rush!" another upper case "R" is handled in a still different manner with one connector. Notice that you aren't aware of connectors at all in "--Rush!". Informal script of this type lends itself very easily to stenciling.

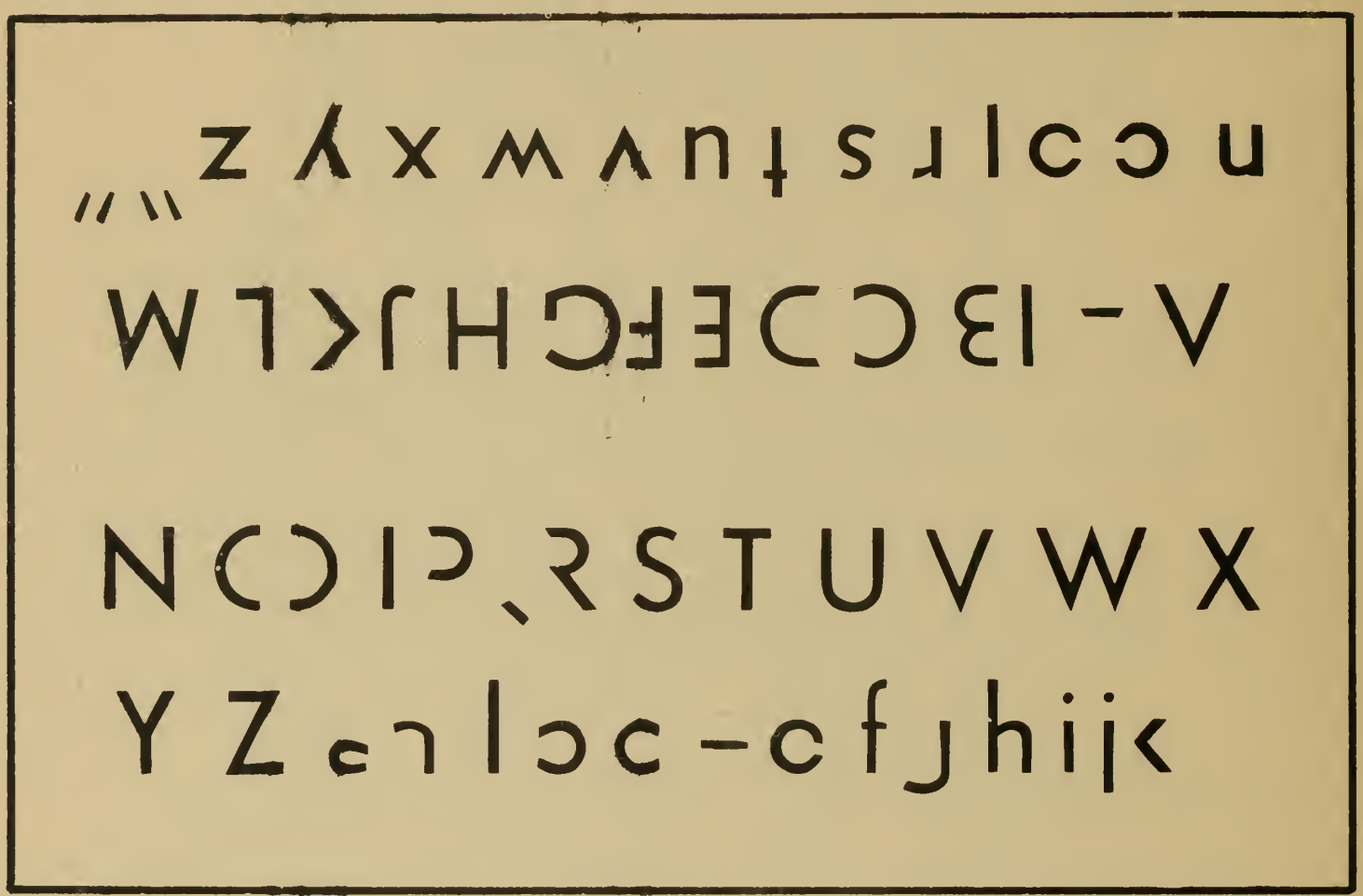
Even the more formal scripts like "Van Heusen" may be handled without too much trouble simply by letting the thin parts of each letter fade out entirely here and there where connectors are needed. Also works with most Roman letters.

Connectors can actually be a decorative feature of the stenciled letter. The method used in the heading gives a feeling of solidity & structural quality. In the small "photo" two different methods of connecting the center of the "O" are shown.

Although complicated and of limited use, Text letters are almost ideal for stenciling.

Some of the more obvious airbrush letter handlings have been deliberately omitted here because of their familiarity. Headings throughout the book have in most cases been stenciled.

LETTERING WITH



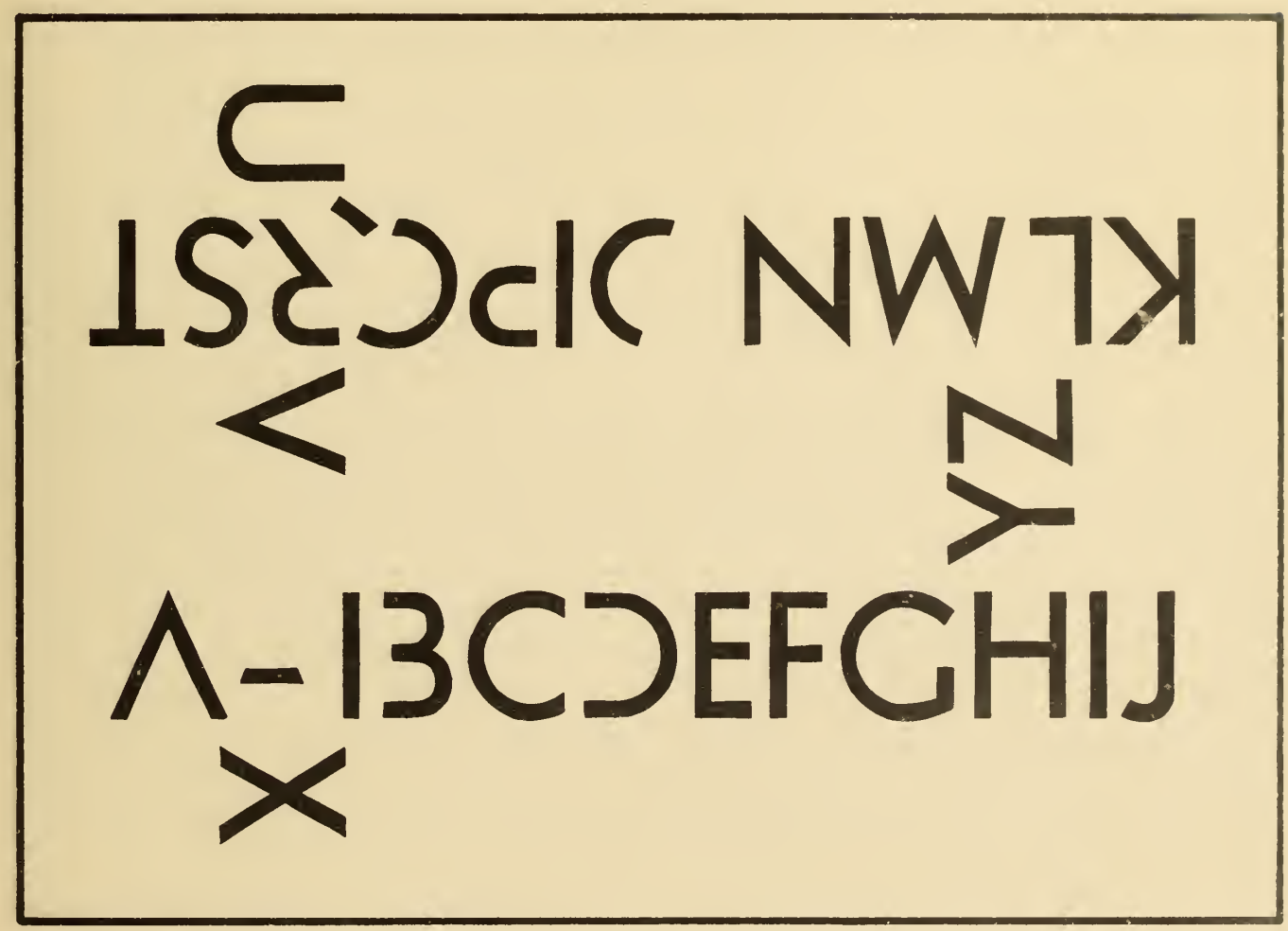
Another approach to lettering with the airbrush is the "letter element" approach. The alphabet is composed of comparatively few elements, or strokes, sometimes as few as a dozen, and while it is seldom advisable to reduce an alphabet to these few basic lines, this approach does lead to simplification that can be a great time saver.

For instance, notice that in the upper and lower case letters above the same upright serves for the B D and K, and that the lower case c is needed to complete the g.

This may not be possible with some alphabets, but it will work with most Gothic sans serif alphabets.

Examine the above impressions carefully. Better yet, cut copies of them and experiment with combining the various elements into letters.

the Airbrush



One of the immediately obvious advantages of this method of letter stenciling is that there need be no connectors left to hold centers in place.

Notice also that in the above stencil all the letters are the same distance from the edge of the stencil. This makes possible sliding the stencil along the edge of a T square or straight edge with the assurance that all the letters will be perfectly in line.

It is advisable to use seperate pieces of stencil material for the upper and lower case letters in order to maintain this equal distance from the edge rather than to combine them on the same piece as at the left above. It is necessary to cut this kind of stencil from transparent material, also, so that you can judge the distance between letters. Sheet celluloid, because of its transparency, and because it will stand repeated washings is about the most practical.

The amount of space left around each letter will be determined by your control of the airbrush.



These two pages are a demonstration of illustrative photo retouching. This use of the airbrush can mean additional dollars in the till for photographers. Only a portion of the negative was used in making this print. The entire negative shows a third person whose shoulder can be seen in the unretouched version above. The shoulder was removed by the simple expedient of darkening the background. In retouching faces of feminine subjects it is always safe



'play up' the eyes and hair. It would have been possible to have done much more in retouching this photograph than is shown here, but it is advisable to stop somewhat short of the limit. Remember, retouching is the 'lost art', if it is noticable, as such, it is not good. In a job like this, if you've done as much as you think you should, you've done too much probably!



These photographs used with the permission of Barth's Studio, Ferndale, Mich.

An examination of these two photographs will reveal some slight but important differences. The building has been made lighter, the sky darker. The sign has been removed from the curb at the left, and a shrub substituted for the white truck on the right. Curtains have been hung at the windows, and the shadow cast on the building by the trees made lighter.

This sort of retouching is very easily accomplished with the airbrush. As in portrait retouching, do too little rather than too much. Make any area that is to be radically changed considerably lighter than you think it should be, then 'build it up' with dark color. The term 'dark color' is used rather than the word 'black' because it is necessary to match the color of the photograph, most of which are slightly 'off black'. Most of this retouching was done freehand, that is, without masking. Masking was used only in doing the curtains, and for the building when the sky was darkened.





Quite the most practical and beautiful technique of all is here demonstrated on the above features. There is no substitute for a sound free-hand airbrush technique. And no other media can excel the pleasing effects achieved.

Although requiring masking to accomplish, the basic exercises explained in the reproduced Thayer & Chandler Catalog page in the beginning of the book are the foundation for a good free-hand technique.

You should, with plenty of practice, be able to handle your airbrush with the same facility that you would use a sketching pencil. The controlled line must be mastered to do the type of work shown above and on the pages that follow.

Using diluted color and "building the tones" will give the best results.

Faces are very good subject matter for practice. The eyes especially are worthy of much experimentation. The character of a face is usually found in the eyes. The mood, or "feeling of the moment" will be shown in the mouth.

That ever present knife is used to etch the catch lights in the eyes, and don't fail to exploit the possibilities of regular erasers of various kinds for snapping soft highlights here and there on a free hand job.



In the original of the above reproduction the figure is rendered in the same colors used for the sky, blending from warm yellow at the horizon to deep blue gray at the top, thus the figure is even more 'lost' than in this reproduction. Since this figure is symbolical of the manpower necessary to the building and flying of a large plane, this 'must be looked for' effect is desirable.



These reproductions convey little of the delicacy and appeal of an original well executed free hand airpainting. If they inspire you to try your hand at it, if they are instrumental in causing you to 'burn the midnight oil' they will have served the 'airbrush cause' nobly.

No one can hand you the ability to use that airbrush you own. You have to dig, and dig hard, but it's worth the effort. When you are no longer concerned with the technical manipulation of the brush, and it becomes as it were, a part of your hand, and when it obeys the intelligence behind it, without mental hazards or reservations; in short, when your ability at using the airbrush is equal to your creative quantity as an artist, then, and not until then, will you enjoy to the full the instrument about which this book has been written.



In this illustration the map is actually a piece of a road map mounted into place and shaded with airbrush to carry out the lighting effect.



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