QUICK START GUIDE

CREATING ARTWORK

There are a variety of programs available to create high quality artwork. We have a list of recommended programs for all skill levels on the Artwork FAQ page on our website.

www.ikonartstencil.com/artwork-faq/

PRINTING ARTWORK

High quality artwork that is printed 100% black with the right printer settings will give you a dark film positive to block out the UV light, which will make washing out your stencil much easier. Here are some tips to follow when printing.

- Artwork should be high quality and have crisp, clear edges; vector artwork is best (ex. SVG file)

- Artwork should be setup as 100% black

- When printing, adjust your printer settings to print at the highest quality possible, adjust ink setting to print in only black ink and adjust the paper setting to glossy (your printer options may vary)

- When you hold up your printed positive to the light, you should not be able to see through it

- Refer to the printed film positive sample in the Quick Start Packet to see an example of a high quality film positive

- Optional: Reflect (mirror) your artwork before printing for high detailed artwork and to make washout faster

INKJET PRINTER TIPS

When printing on our Inkjet Printer Film it is important that you print on the EMULSION side of the film. The emulsion side is the side that is NOT shiny (if you wet your finger and touch a corner, your finger will stick to the emulsion side). There is a special coating on the emulsion side of our Inkjet Printer Film to increase the density of your final artwork. Only put ONE sheet of Inkjet Printer Film in your printer at a time.

LASER PRINTER TIPS

When printing on our Laser Printer Film you can print on either side of the film. Laser printers do not print as dark as inkjet printers, so we recommend using our Toner Enhancement Spray to increase the density of your film positive.
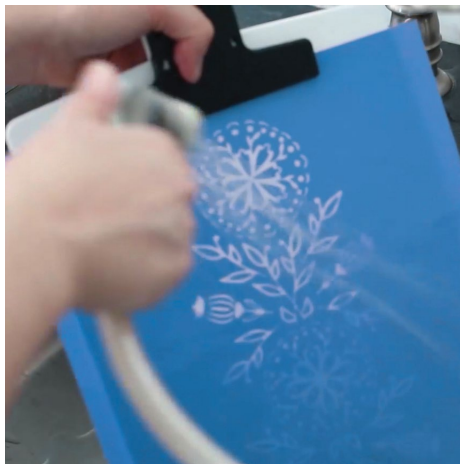
EXPOSE YOUR STENCIL

Place one sheet of the Ikonart Stencil Film (blue) or Ikonart Textile Film (purple) on the base of the exposure stand with the textured side facing up. Place your printed artwork transparency on top of the Ikonart Film the way you want your final stencil to look (for example, if there is text on your design you should be able to read it). Place a clear exposure sheet (included in the film pack) over the top of your artwork and rub down. You want your artwork to be sealed tight against your stencil film. Turn on the exposure light and expose for 35 seconds if you are using inkjet printer film or 30 seconds if you are using laser printer film.

Note: When making your first stencil, we recommend making a small stencil first to make sure your film positive printed dark enough.

WASHOUT YOUR STENCIL

After exposure you will not be able to see your image until you washout your film. Attach the exposed stencil film to the clipboard with the shiny side (carrier sheet) touching the clipboard and washout the textured side of the stencil film using warm water. Wash evenly until your mesh areas are completely clear. Refer to the finished stencil sample in the Quick Start Packet for an example of how the washed out stencil should look.

Note: Before washout you can soak your stencil for up to one minute in warm water to increase washout speed (soaking your stencil in water for longer can break down the stencil). Your stencil should washout in less than 3 minutes. If you are having issues with washout, please refer to the Troubleshooting Guide on the back.

DRY YOUR STENCIL

Blot excess water off the textured side of your stencil. Hang or lay flat to dry (about 45 minutes, depending on temperature and humidity; you should not see any water spots or discoloration). Stencil must be dry before using.

POST-EXPOSE YOUR STENCIL

IMPORTANT! Do not skip this step. Once the stencil is completely dry place the stencil back on the exposure stand with the textured side up and post-expose for at least 2 minutes. The clear cover sheet is not needed.

Note: Post-exposure increases the durability of the stencils and is very important.
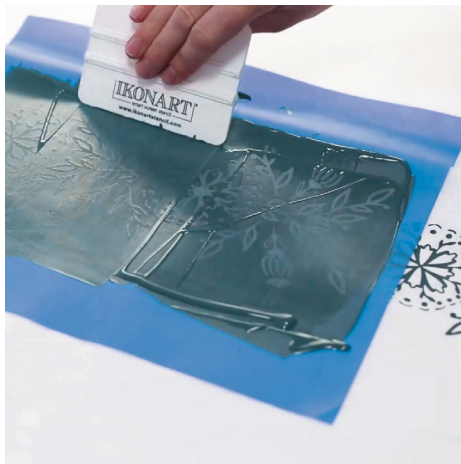
USE YOUR STENCIL

Write "BACK" on the clear carrier sheet (shiny side). **Remove the carrier sheet** (do not throw away). Place the stencil on your surface with the adhesive side down (textured side up). Rub down on the stencil and apply pressure to help the stencil stick to your surface.

NOTE: See the Troubleshooting Guide on the back if your stencil is not sticking.

Apply a water-based paint, ink or paste to your surface using a squeegee or brush. Cover all the open mesh areas of your stencil. Carefully remove the stencil.

NOTE: Refer to our Paint & Ink Selection Guide on our website for a list of recommended mediums based on the type of surface you are printing on.

CLEAN YOUR STENCIL

To clean your stencil first get the clipboard wet so your stencil does not stick to it. Place the stencil on the clipboard with the textured side up. Lightly rub the stencil to remove all the paint/ink. Do not rub or scrub the adhesive side of the stencil.

Place the stencil with the adhesive side up on a smooth, flat surface and re-apply the carrier sheet (make sure to apply the correct side of the carrier sheet to the stencil; you should be able to read the word "BACK" that you wrote earlier). **Always apply the stencil to the carrier sheet while the stencil is still wet.** Allow to dry completely before reusing the stencil.

NOTE: Do not use any chemicals (such as cleaning wipes) when washing paint off your stencils, as these chemicals will break down the emulsion and adhesive. Soaking your stencils in water for extended periods of time can break down the stencil.

STORING YOUR STENCILS

Ikonart Stencil Film is photosensitive and should remain in the packaging it comes in until you are ready to expose it. The unexposed film has a shelf life of at least one year from the date of manufacture if stored and handled properly.

For storage of the Ikonart Stencil Film before it is exposed, we recommend storing in a cool, dry place. Temperatures should not be below freezing or above 85°F. After the film is exposed, your finished stencils should be stored flat in a dry area.

WHY IS IT TAKING SO LONG TO WASHOUT MY STENCIL?

It should only take 2-3 minutes to washout your entire stencil. Here are some things to check if it is taking longer.

1. Artwork density: A low quality film positive is the number one cause of washout issues. Your film positive needs to be dark enough to block the UV light. When you hold up your positive to a window, you should not be able to see light through it. If your printer is not printing dark enough, try adjusting the settings. Use genuine inks made for your printer.

2. Exposure time: If you expose the stencil for too long the UV light can penetrate through the artwork on your film positive and start to semi-harden or cure the stencil film underneath the artwork, which will make washing out the stencil take longer.

3. Sunlight: Our stencil films expose very quickly in sunlight. Do not expose or washout your stencils in front of an open window or in direct sunlight. This can expose (harden) the areas of your film that you want to wash away, which will make washout very difficult.

4. Water pressure: Your water pressure makes a big difference in how long it takes to washout your stencil. If you do not have a kitchen sink sprayer with good pressure, we recommend getting our Trigger Jet Nozzle (which can be hooked up to a laundry sink) or getting a sprayer that has better pressure. You can also try using your shower sprayer or a dental water pick.

WHY DID MY STENCIL BREAK DOWN?

Our stencils are designed to be used 12-15 times before the emulsion starts to break down during washout. If your stencil is breaking down after just one or two uses, here are some things to check.

1. Oversaturation: Soaking your stencils in water for extended periods of time can cause oversaturation and break down your stencil.

2. Aggressive washout: When you are washing out your stencil for the first time (before post-exposing) you want to avoid oversaturating the stencil. Do not use too much pressure at a close distance and do not spray one spot for a long period of time. Continuously move your sprayer around the stencil until the image starts to appear.

3. Not dried completely: Your stencil should be completely dry before you apply it to your surface. If you apply a wet stencil to your surface the stencil can fall apart when you try to remove it.

4. Aggressive cleaning: You should be able to clean your stencils with just your hands. If there is still paint on your stencil we recommend using a foam brush to lightly clean your stencils. Do not use a hard bristled brush. You can rinse the adhesive side of the stencil with water but do not scrub or brush the adhesive side. Do not use any harsh chemicals when cleaning the stencils.

HOW CAN I STOP MY INKJET PRINTER FILM FROM STICKING TO MY STENCIL FILM?

The Ikonart Stencil Films and Ikonart Inkjet Printer Film are sensitive to humidity. In high humidity situations you may find that they stick together during exposure. Here are some things to try:

1. Storage: Keep your stencil film and printer film stored in a cool, dry place.

2. Barrier: Put one of the clear cover sheets (included in the stencil film pack) between your stencil film and your inkjet film when exposing your stencil.

3. Flip it: Print your artwork so you can put the shiny side of your printer film on the textured side of the stencil film when exposing. Usually, we layer it so the coated side of the inkjet film (the side your finger sticks to) is touching the stencil film, but in high humidity it works better if the shiny side is touching instead.

MY STENCILS AREN'T STICKY ENOUGH. WHAT CAN I DO?

Our blue stencils have a light pressure-sensitive adhesive designed to be used on mirrors, glass, chalkboards, and other smooth flat surfaces. Our purple stencils have a more aggressive adhesive and were designed to be used on textiles. If you over wash your stencil and they do not seem sticky enough, try one of these tips to make them stickier:

1. Moisten: Use a damp paper towel or fine mister to lightly moisten the back of your stencil and increase the stickiness.

2. Huff: Huff on the adhesive side to make it stickier.

3. Pressure: Rub down the stencil really well before you apply your paint/paste/ink.

4. Spray adhesive: You can use a spray adhesive to make the stencils stickier.

5. Tacky Textile Mat or Speedball frame: If you are trying to use the blue stencils on fabric, we recommend using a Tacky Textile Mat to hold your fabric in place. You can also mount the blue stencils in a Speedball screen printing frame.

6. Let them sit: You may notice that if you let your stencil sit for a while after drying that it will get stickier. The adhesive pulls in moisture from the air and gets slightly stickier over time.

CAN I SUBSTITUTE OTHER PRINTER FILMS?

Our Ikonart Inkjet Printer Film has a special coating on it to increase the density of your printed artwork. We do not recommend substituting transparencies for our inkjet film.

Our Ikonart Laser Printer Film is a high quality laser film. We do not recommend substituting vellum for our laser film.