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Introduction

Inside the most conservative person, a hidden wild child is wanting to come out to play. Being painted as a wild green tiger, a fantasy Amazon princess or a fanciful fairy, gives us permission to let the serious adult in us take a nap for a few hours and let the child out! Then, we wash it off and happily go back to our normal lives.

For thousand of years people have loved the idea of using something on their face or body to make a statement of love, war, joy, or to just enhance their beauty. Cosmetics were used by the Ancient Egyptians around 4000 BC. In the Old Testament—Ezekiel 23:40 it says, “... and when they arrived you bathed yourself for them, painted your eyes and put on your jewelry.” Chinese and other Asian cultures have been using heavy stage make-up to create the look of masks for centuries. Japanese Geisha’s developed that interesting white face painted look long, long ago. Since at least the era of Greek theatre, clowns have been enhancing their features with whiteface and other colored paints to compliment their craft.

Wikipedia.org, in their article on face and body painting, says:

Body painting with clay and other natural pigments existed in most, if not all, tribalist cultures. Often worn during ceremonies, it still survives in this ancient form among the indigenous people of Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific islands and parts of Africa. A semi-permanent form of body painting known as Mehndi, using dyes made of henna (hence also known rather erroneously as “henna tattoo”), was and is still practiced in India and the Middle East, especially on brides.

Our sports fanatics do it, soldiers need it for safety.

Yes, face painting is ingrained in humans.

Unlike other art canvases, face painters need to first find a canvas willing to sit still for us. We must resign our selves to painting a beautiful piece of art, knowing it will be washed away in a few hours. Like sand castle artists, we can only preserve our work with photographs.

This book is filled with photos of my work. These are not the ideal, they are just a place to start. I have selected photos from when I just started, to my more advanced work. Take the parts that inspire you, and create your own ideas and styles. Enjoy.

My advice here is for the amateur face painter who dreams of going professional.
I knew for years that I HAD NO ARTISTIC ABILITY. I knew it for a fact. Then I got married in 1998. My husband is a serious kind of guy, a retired cop, now a polygraph lie detector expert. Talk about "un-likely," he loves those tacky painted yard signs. Go figure. Anyway, I said, "No, way! Not at my house!" In 1998 he talked me into allowing one tiny sign in our yard. He said he would do all of the work. So, we went together and picked out a Christmas pattern that I didn't find too objectionable. Just one! I was not going to have more than that.

As he was sitting in the workshop painting, I went to check it out. "How do you do that?"

"I just put paint between the lines. Want to try?"

I did. It opened the floodgates! Now we have one of those tacky homes with a zillion painted yards signs for every holiday (see videos of our house at Christmas). The more I painted, the more I loved it. Next, I tried stencils and other types of patterns. Finally I tried a few simple things freehand. This lead to my first art book, Cobblestone Cottages From Junk Jars, then an eBook, Paint A Cobblestone Courtyard On Your Cement Floor. Now I have all kinds of paint patterns for sale on-line and a book on how to paint on fabric.

One day my church asked me to help at a Festival painting faces. "Oh, I can't do that!" They insisted, and here I am. It is the most fun of any art project I have ever done. There are few pleasures as gratifying as the wonderful magic moment when you hold the mirror up in front of them to reveal their painted face. They smile from ear to ear and life is just a very wonderful place to be.

I am best known as an expert on the world of professional speaking. I have written several books on that subject and others.

This led me to the famous baseball pitcher, turned motivational speaker, Jim Abbott.

Now I book Jim Abbott's calendar as a motivational speaker and I paint stuff! My favorite is painting these wonderful faces.
20 Top Tips Found in This Book

Even if you don’t get paid, you can have a terrific professional quality to your work. The following are an overview of some of the ideas covered in greater detail in this book.

1. Use cosmetic paints, products specific to be used on faces and skin. Get face paints, and powders approved by the FDA.
2. Use only cosmetic grade glitters, those found in the make-up section of the store.
3. The most popular face paints are “cakes.” They are very hard, then feel like soft butter when you get them loosened up with water.
4. Get a variety of cosmetic sponges and paint brushes, from #2 sizes to at least 3/4 inch wide. Those little brushes that come with the inexpensive face painting kits are useless. The bigger brushes and sponges will put the paint on fast and easily. At a minimum you will use: 2 sponges (one for black), a wide brush, a medium round brush (size 3 or 4), and a tiny detailing brush. Professionals carry 10 – 40 brushes and a variety of sponges with them.
5. Remember where the bangs went and plan your design around that.
6. Use fresh, clean rinse water.
7. Bring a roll of paper towels. Remember, if the brush is too wet, the paint will run. Use the paper towels to pull excess water out of the brush.
8. Keep unscented high quality baby wipes at your table. Use these to clean those faces that are dirty, and then wipe off your paint cakes when they get dirty.
9. After each child, clean your hands so you don’t spread germs. You can use antibacterial wipes or gel.
10. Bring hair bands to pull their hair away from the face when you paint.
11. Before you pull the hair away from the face, see where bangs fall and create your design with them in mind.
12. If you are new to face painting, avoid the eyes and the lips. These areas are the most delicate, prone to infection and allergies. You can create great designs, and not touch these spots.
13. Put the background colors on first, then finish with the outlines and details.
14. Have cheat sheets, photos or sketches of what you want to create. Put about 6 ideas up where people can see them and choose what they want before they get to your work area.
15. Always obtain the parents consent before you do face painting or any type of work on children.
16. Make sure to bring a mirror, so they can see your finished work.
17. Always carry your camera. Take photos of them, and of you painting.
18. Paint! Do it all the time, ask for volunteers from you neighbors.
19. If you want to go professional, paint for free whenever you can, until your calendar is full of paid dates. It is better to something for nothing, than nothing for nothing.
20. Buy liability insurance.
The best idea I can give you to get **really** good at face painting is ... do it! Do it every time and every where you can. Keep your face paints close by and paint everybody! Volunteer for every community function in your home town. Are you having a party at your house? Get you’re your kit out! Paint, paint, paint. Take different brushes, and practice making lines, teardrops, and swirls: all of the things you see in the photos here.

Every expert you talk to is going to tell you **their** way is the best. Nonsense. **Your** way is going to be the best, as soon as you get good at it. Just keep at it.

There are great face painting workshops all around the world, if you can, go. But just doing painting, and painting over and over will be the best thing you can do.

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**What Goes In Your Kit – Materials List**

If you plan to paint only at Halloween, just buy the type of inexpensive kit you can get at Wal-mart. You will need a new one each year, but they are inexpensive.

If you plan to paint more often, or even to step into the world of professional face painting, you will need more items.

**Face paints:** *at least* black, white, blue, red and yellow. In addition, I like to have a metallic palette, and a neon palette. Most professionals have over 30 colors of paints and powders.

**Face powders:** not mandatory, but wonderful if you can afford them. These are specific to face painting. See any face painting supplier. They come in pressed and loose powders. I like the pressed.

**Glitter Powders and Gels:** Use only *cosmetic* grade glitters. They come in eye-lines, gels, and powders.

**Brushes in various sizes and types:** If possible, get 3 sets of brushes. Use one set for black, one for white, one for all of the other colors. For each set at least a few round sizes, #1, #3, #7, and two sizes of filberts.

**Sponge Smoothie Brushes:** each smoothie can do two colors, so you will need at least 3, I have 6.
Chair for you: I like my own comfy chair. Once I sit down and start, it is a rare day I ever have time to stand up again. Four hours on a hard folding chair is not fun! I bring a light weight folding camping chair that is easy to carry, and fits my posterior nicely.

Chair for them: Use a chair without arms for them so they can get out easier. When possible, I have young children sit backwards, with their legs hanging through the open back of the chair. They can hang onto the back of the chair this way. To keep bigger people leaning towards me, I have them to grab the arms of my chair.

Tool Carrier: I have gone through several tool/supply carriers. My favorite is a crate on wheels with a canvas bag and a lid. The children can sit on it. I painted it with roses and butterflies to make it more fun. I have tried several others, more and less expensive, but this one is my favorite. Inside the crate I have a small tool organizer with drawers for all of my glitters, hair bands, etc.

Table: Something to set your materials on. I carry a 4 ft. light weight camping table. I ask my customers to have a table for me when possible.

Containers for rinse water: any kind of container to clean your brushes between customers. Some painters use three. Some use tiny toy buckets. See more in Sanitary Safety Musts.

Containers for pre-rinse: If I need to clean a brush, to get a new color, I do it in a pre-rinse first in a separate container, and then swish it in clean water.

Gallon water jug for extra rinse water: Your rinse water will get dirty, carry a jug to replace it with clean water

Paper towels: Take a roll. Also, pull off and a long section, about 6 squares folded into a 6” to 8” mound of paper towels. Use these to clean the brushes when you switch paint colors and to pull excess moisture from the brushes.

Cotton swabs: For sanitary reasons, a fresh one can be used to put make-up on the lips, then thrown away.

Antibacterial hand sanitizer: Use between each customer to help you and them stay healthy.

Non-scented baby wipes: Ask the parents to clean the faces of the kids waiting in line. This helps with germs. The perfume in the scented wipes can cause their skin to react, use the unscented ones. Also use the wipes to clean your paint cakes and paint area to keep your station looking nice.

Vinegar: I use it in my pre-rinse to help sanitize my brushes
Dirty water bucket: When your rinse water gets too dirty, and you have a line of 20 children, you don’t want to run to a sink.

Trash bag: I tie a plastic shopping bag to my tool box or to the side of the table. You need someplace to throw the cotton swabs and dirty wipes.

Hand Held Mirrors: Take two! One to reveal the art to your customer, the second for those many times they want to come back to check out their neat face art. You don’t want them taking your main mirror away while you need it.

**Sponges, Brushes, Smoothies and Wands**

Every artist will fight to explain their tools are best. Some only use sponges, some only brushes. Even the very best in our industry do not agree. Try them all. Find which you can use to make pretty designs. If it works for you, go with it. Here are the tools I like to use:

**Dotter Wands**

Dotter wands are great for making a row of same sized dots.

**Smoothie**

Smoothies are used to apply paint, or powder. I personally use them to apply just the powders.