

# A Face Painter's Professional Tools and Tricks



By  
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Over 150 photos and Illustrations.

How To Bring Face Painting Skills to the Next Level  
Step by step instructions for specific techniques

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**On the next pages are  
various partial selections  
from each chapter of the  
book.**

Although all of my work is inspired by great face  
painters,  
I painted all of the faces in this book.  
– Lilly Walters



# Tools of the Professional Face Painter

## A Pretty, Professional Looking Set-Up

When people walk up to your area, they must immediately see you are a **pro**. That means many things. Your attire, your set-up, your mannerisms. Of those, the easiest to give a professional enhancement to is your workspace: your containers, brushes, paints and table should all be orderly and clean. As you reach for a tool, they should never see you hunting, fumbling and searching. You should be able to confidently and swiftly reach for what you want. Imagine if your surgeon kept looking at his tools muttering, "Hmmm, where the heck is that thingy I wanted? I am pretty sure I brought it." Not confidence inspiring.



To keep mine looking nice, every so often I ...

### Lilly's Set-Up

In my last book I told you about the various ways face artists like to use their tools. Some do one sponge per customer for cleanliness, others do one sponge per color for speed. Others hate sponges, and only use brushes. Everyone is different. I do a bit of each: sponges, brushes, smoothies, paints and pressed powders.

All of my materials, except my comfy chair, fit into the folding crate to the left. Notice I painted the top to make it more party friendly. If the venue is short on chairs, the box is strong enough that I can use it for my customers to sit on.

I have all of my supplies in 6 containers inside the crate: brushes, jewels, powders, paints, sponges, and the misc. stuff. In addition to those six containers I carry...



### Black Tablecloths and Washcloths

Using black looks classy, professional and appears more sanitary: it hides paint spills and smudges.

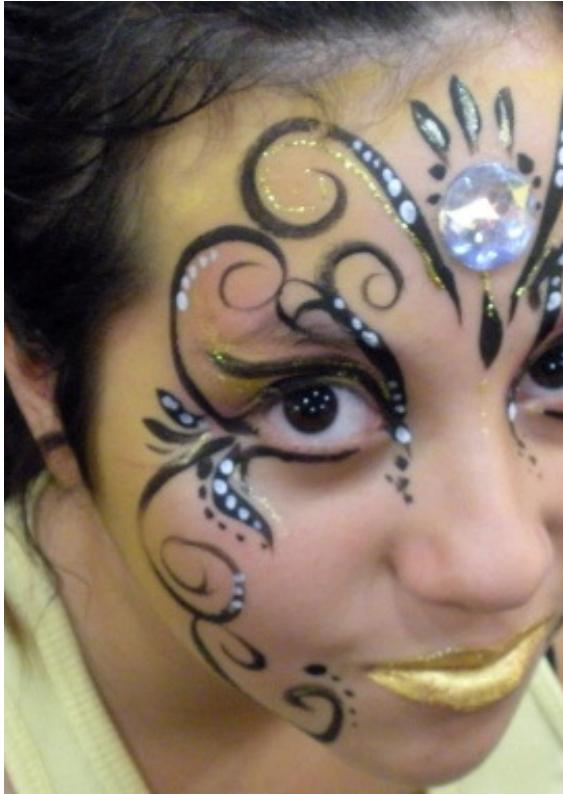
When I pack my set-up, the tablecloths are on top, as they need to go down first.

I use black wash cloth to pull excess water from the brushes and clean brushes if needed. They hide the dirt as well.

If I have three events in a day, I bring three sets of the table and washcloths, so I am starting clean each time.

When I go home, I wash them in warm water, and a cup of vinegar. Vinegar is an antibacterial and an antifungal. It helps keep fabric color fast, so it keeps my black items from fading. Also, vinegar is used as an agent to freshen the smell of fabric, carpets and clothing that has been 'stinky.' So, my fabrics smell very fresh and clean. I don't want to use any scented substances because of the allergic reaction some people have to them.

## Dots, Strokes, Swirls and Curls



You can be a great hero at face painting if you can put a few curly lines, dots and a bit of glitter in the right place. The devil is in the details. Plunking down a dot, or a line does not seem that hard. Knowing when and where to put them, that is hard. More important, these simple strokes, when well done, are the difference in a good and great face painter.

I am not much of an artist. If I try to actually **draw** a face it is pretty sad. But, I can take the face God gave you and do some neat embellishments that make my customers think I am great *artiste!* The truth is it takes very little **skill** to be at the level of the faces on this page. But it does take **practice**. Once you get the hang of the strokes, you can ...

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## Exercises To Help Your Freehand Stroke Skills

In the next few pages are stroke exercises. I have suggested brushes to experiment with for each exercise. Print these out and bring them somewhere you can practice them.

Paper is easy to practice on, but the feel is much different than using living skin. Still, you will learn a great deal by doing several hours of practice on paper.

Later, try practice strokes on your arms or legs. Put lotion on your skin first, it makes the paint easier to remove. Use a light color to practice with. The metallics and dark colors stain your skin a bit, and take longer to remove.

### Loading Your Brush

The most common mistake in face painting is to not load your brush with enough paint. See in the photo how the paint color goes all the way up to the metal part of the brush? That is a brush that is fully loaded.



You load your brush by going back and forth in your paint. Do not make circles in the paint, or wiggle it around. Pull the brush back and forth, going with the direction of the bristles. Next ...

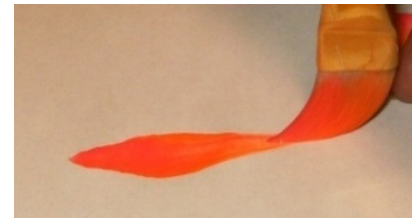
### Start With a Bumpy Straight Line

First, use a round brush. Start with a thin line, as thin as you can make. **Slowly** press down harder to see how wide you can make the line. Slowly let up on the pressure to see how gradually you can make the line thin again.

After you get a feel for it, try to duplicate the lines in the exercise below. Duplicate them only in that there are. For instance on the first line paint the thin part of the line, then wide, then thin, all in the span of the normal piece of paper. The second line to emulate has two thick spots, etc.



Repeat this exercise with a flat brush as well. Hold the brush sideways, so the skinny part of the brush is drawing the line.



The purpose of this exercise is to control the line. Once you can make the lines thin and thick when **you** want them to be, you can use bumpy haphazard looking lines to great effect.





Once you are comfortable, try combining all the strokes and dots you perfected with many drills you learned in this Chapter. Combine them in all kinds of creative ways.

See if you can duplicate the patterns here.



## Loading The Brush With Multiple Colors

There are basically two ways to load a brush with several colors of paint:

- 1) Loading a brush multiple times. and, 2) Split/multi cakes

### Loading a Brush Multiple Times.

One way to multi-load your brush is to load it with one color, then load it up even more with another color. I first loaded this brush with white, then with orange.



You don't need to carry as much paint if you use the multi-load technique. But, I don't like this method as much as split cakes. I get my paints dirty as I transfer the paint from one container to the next. When a paint cake is dirty with other paints, I get unwanted colors in my designs.

### Using Split Cakes

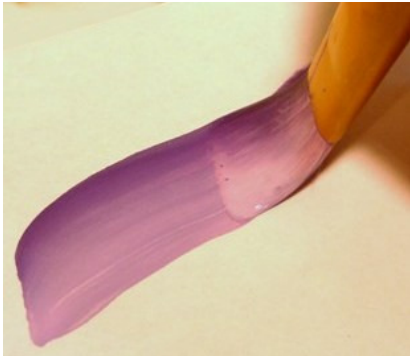
A paint cake that has many colors in it is called a split cake, or a rainbow cake. See the photo to the right where I have several of my split cakes shown as they sit in my kit. You pull a flat brush back and forth across the paint until it is loaded with all the colors.



With one stroke you can make all kinds of pretty colors - see the orange flower petals to the left. Besides, ....



## Strokes With Split Cakes

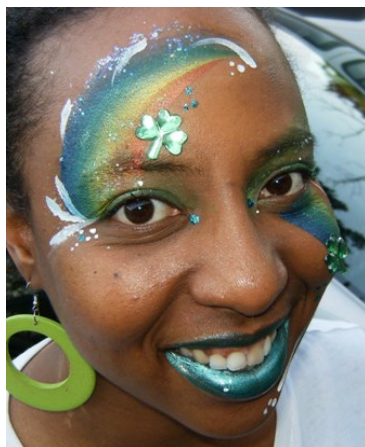


The easiest stroke is to lay the brush or sponge down flat, pull it along. This creates a fat line with lots of pretty blended colors. This can create a great Princess Crown, and be used for much more.

You can turn it sideways to lift it off and finish the line.



Look at the gold part of the brush in the photo to see the twist I am talking about.



This how I make my rainbow faces using a split cake and a single stroke. Add a few stars or teardrops, and glitter, DONE! Very fast and easy



## Techniques & Design Creation Tips

### What Goes On First?

I put all the white on first that I can. White does not go on well over a color. Black, and other dark colors do.



For instance, in this little pink tiger, I take a brush and paint in the fangs and whiskers with white paint.

Next, I take a smoothie and white powder and do the eyes.



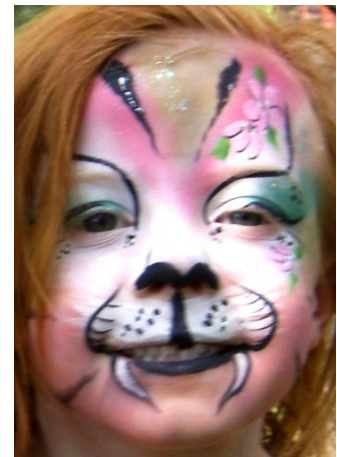
Then, I apply color with a smoothie and pressed powders.

Next, I put the loose glitter on with a lip gloss applicator.



Finally, I can start applying the dark lines and dots.

I normally finish by adding some glitter gel to the lines as well.



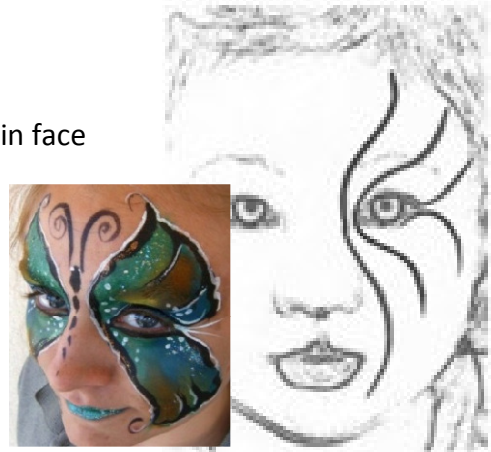
### Base Lines and Focal Points

I feel one of the most valuable things I have learned in face painting was how to place a few very specific base lines. Once I understood where these lines most complimented the face, I could embellish them to create masks, butterflies, or just abstract designs. I still change where the perfect spot is for these base lines by a ¼ inch or so.



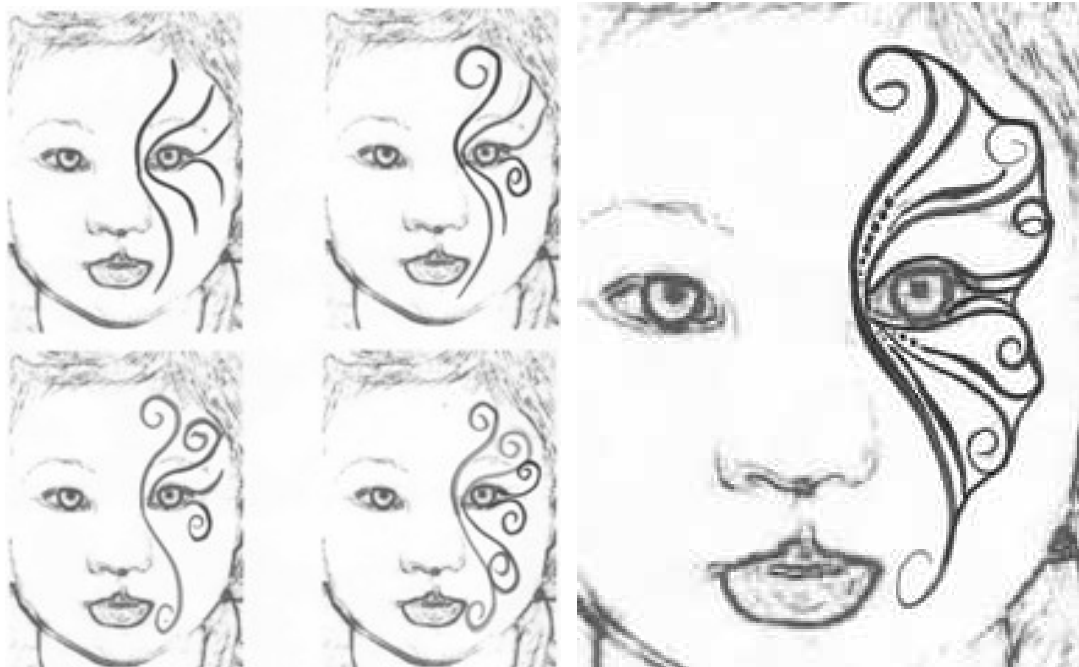
Sometimes I get going too fast and just get off the mark. But I find when

I get them "right," I am happiest with the finished product. See the practice face to the right, the first line closest to the nose is how I start a butterfly, using a brush, sponge or smoothie full of color. See the green butterfly is sneaking up the nose a bit, just above the eye. I feel it would have been prettier if I had it closer to my base line.



I often don't use all of the base lines, perhaps only those on top, or the side. See the tiger. The muzzle is defined with only part of one, the eyes have parts of a few more.

Notice how the ...



## Shading and Highlights



Adding details, like highlights and shading makes them seem 3-D instead of flat.

Compare the pink dragon girl to the grey and yellow. There are more shadows in the grey design.

Unfortunately, we don't normally have the luxury of time to put in detailed

shadows and highlights when we are painting at events. But, knowing how it should work will help you add at least a few quick moments of 3-D flair.

Think of where the light might be coming from. Put a ...



## Professionalism Tips For Face Painters

So much goes into your image: Your business cards, website, emails, station set up (see the chapter on "Tools of the Professional Face Painter"), how fast and smoothly you set-up, your attire, and more.

I think the most important is the *ease* with which you operate. How easy is it for them to see things on your website? How easy is it to pay you a deposit? How easy is it for you set up at their site? How easy is it for people to watch you work? ...

### Keep The Line Moving!

This is the headache of face painting. If you can do 30 faces in two hours, they have hired you for just 2 hours, and they have 30 faces waiting to be done, then time is going to be very important! You can't waste even a minute. You don't want down time trying to find the next person whose turn it is.

My favorite solution is to have an assistant to help those waiting in line decide what they want, and make sure the next two people are standing there ready to go. Here are more ways to keep the line moving.

- Marcela Murad gave me this great idea. I set up quickly, fill a brush with paint and ask, "Who is the birthday person?" Who ever raises their hand gets a quick 1 drawn on their forearm or hand. "Who is the brother or sister of the birthday person?" Those get 2, and 3. Then, I randomly put numbers on the all rest. Then I say, "Do you see the mirror I put over there? That is where you can come and see the magic faces I will create for you very soon! Come back early, because if you are not here when we call your number, you will need to go to the end of the line. Number 1, 2, 3 and 4 stay here, all the rest of you can go play! Listen when we call for you!"
- I am very fast, so I like two people waiting, with one ...

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