

A custom electric guitar with a blue and silver design. The body is painted with a dark blue base, overlaid with intricate silver filigree and lace patterns. The neck is made of wood with a light-colored fretboard. The guitar is set against a dark red background.

AirSick **SILVER & LACE**

In designing this particular guitar, we sought after a flashy look with a lot of style and a little bit of rock and roll. In the spirit of that classic hot rod style, the guitar was based entirely in silver leaf. The design is a mixture of stylized filigree, hard straight lines, and a soft lace snake skin pattern that gives this paint job that dark edge. A few coats of Cobalt Blue Kandy bring color and contrast to the design and play off the gold accented hardware perfectly.

PROJECT SUPPLIES

GUITAR
AIRBRUSH
MASKING TAPE
FINE LINE TAPE
ROLCO QUICK DRY GILDING SIZE
SILVER LEAF
PAINT BRUSH
LACE

PAINT (HOUSE OF KOLOR)
COBALT BLUE KANDY
BLACK



STEP 1



We are starting this project with an unfinished les Paul style guitar. The wood had been scuff sanded and clear coated.

STEP 2



We begin applying a thin layer of Rolco brand (quick dry) Gilding size to the back side of the guitar using a paintbrush.

STEP 3



Ensure the the entire coat is even, and that there are no gaps to ensure that the silver leaf adheres properly.

STEP 4



After waiting for the correct amount to pass (check the manufactures specifications) the Gilding size becomes tacky, and we begin to lay down the sheets of silver leaf.

STEP 5



We continue to apply the silver leaf sheets (slightly overlapping each sheet), and gently press them down using the protective paper backing. (STEPS 5,6).

STEP 6



STEP 7



Be sure to check that you have achieved full coverage, and there aren't any missing pieces or gaps in the leaf.

STEP 8



With the back of the guitar fully leafed, we pat down the leaf using cotton balls. This is done very gently just to ensure proper adhesion.

STEP 9



STEP 10



STEP 11



Once the back of the guitar has had an hour or so to set, we flip it over and repeat the process on the front portion of the guitar.

We are also leafing the sides of the guitar (STEP 12). We are being careful to overlap all of the leaf sheets to avoid any seams.

STEP 12



STEP 13



STEP 14



After all of the leaf has set, we clear coat the guitar. This locks in the leaf, and allows us to do quite a bit of taping and masking without the possibility of harming the leaf.

STEP 15



STEP 16



We wanted a 1/4" gap between the racing stripes, so we use a length of 1/4" fine line tape to properly space the lines (removing the template piece once finished).

STEP 17



This process gives us a perfectly laid out set of racing stripes, which are evenly spaced.

STEP 18



We used a plotter to cut an intricate filigree design out of paint mask. This design will be mirrored and applied to both sides of the guitar.

STEP 19



The filigree was designed to the exact size of the guitar, so the top portion thins out toward the front of the guitar, and slightly overlaps the racing stripes.

STEP 20



We are careful to check and measure that the two filigree designs are aligned and symmetrical.

STEP 21



We use the plotter to cut a small "Airsick" logo out of paint mask for the headstock of the guitar. All masked areas will show through with the silver leaf after the guitar is painted.

STEP 22



Here we are using a polyester snake skin lace to stretch over the guitar. The polyester lace works well, because we are able to pull it tightly over the entire body.

STEP 23



With a few light passes of black paint, the guitar is filled with a snakeskin pattern and the polyester lace is removed.

STEP 24



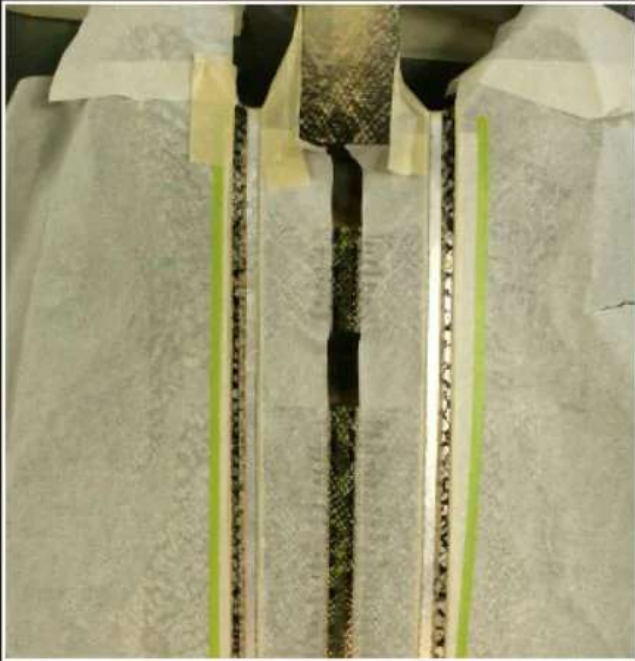
Airbrushing around the filigree masking adds a drop shadow, and will make the designs stand out a bit more when finished.

STEP 25



We remove the fine line tape in order to paint the inside of the racing stripes black.

STEP 26



Here we have removed the fine line tape from our three main stripes.

STEP 27



We fill in the stripes with black. We build up the layers slowly to avoid any future problems when the rest of the masking and tape is removed.

STEP 28



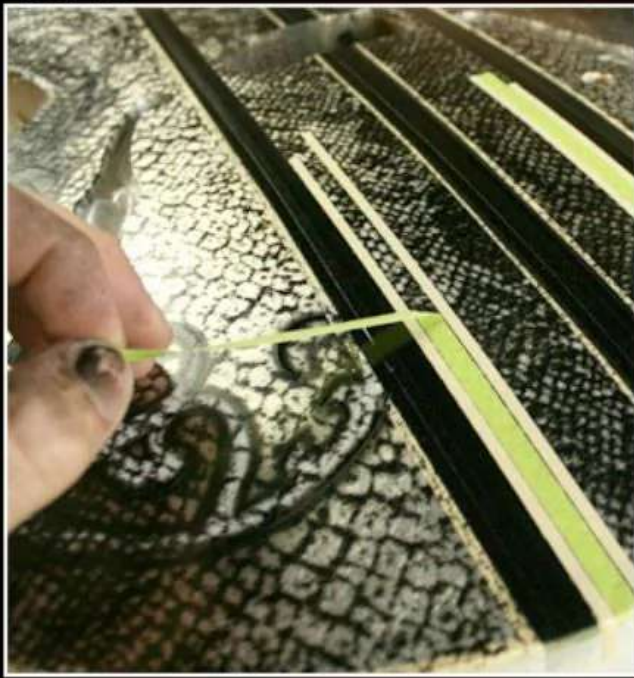
We take a final look at the overall guitar before getting ready apply our main blue color.

STEP 29



We fill the guitar's F-holes with plastic to ensure that the inside of the guitar stays clean of any overspray during painting.

STEP 30

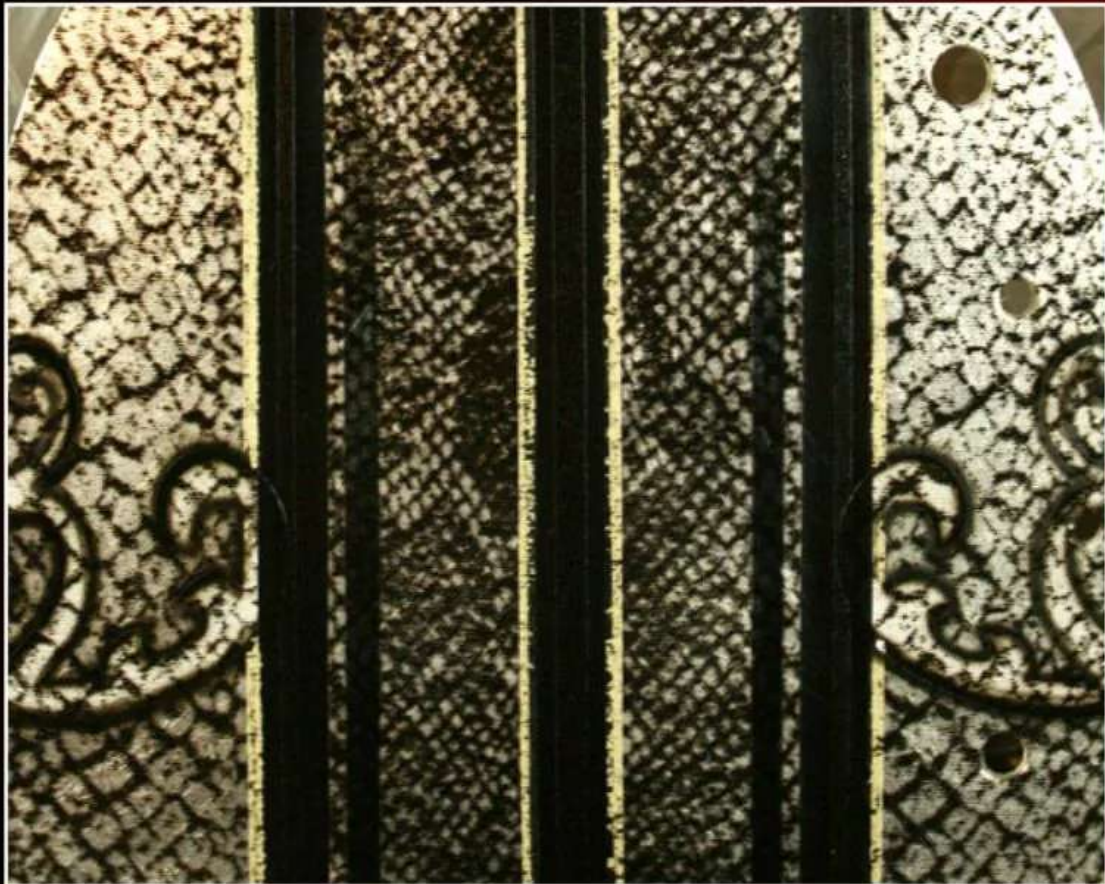


STEP 31



We want to add two more racing stripes which will fade off. we remove the fine line tape, and mask around the entire area to avoid overspray (STEP 31). We paint these lines black, but begin to fade them out before they reach the top of the tape line.

STEP 32



STEP 33



After masking the entire front of the guitar, we rub a colored pencil around the filigree masking. This lets us know exactly where we need to cut.

STEP 34



We only want to expose the center portion of the guitar, so we use a razor blade to carefully cut and remove the center portion of the masking. By using minimal pressure, we ensure that we are only cutting through the top masking, and not all the way through the filigree masking.

STEP 35



With the cutting finished, we remove the center portion of the masking.

STEP 36



Using light passes of Cobalt Blue Kandy, we build up to the desired blue color tone.

STEP 37



After reaching the desired color, we remove the masking on one side of the guitar. We check the contrast to ensure that we are happy with the color.

STEP 38



STEP 39



STEP 40



We now begin to remove the remaining paint mask and fine line tape. This reveals the silver leaf below, and the contrast of silver and blue is a perfect balance. We double check the entire guitar to ensure that the color is consistent, and that no touch-ups are necessary before moving on to the final steps.

With the painting finished, the guitar is clear coated, sanded and buffed. The final step is assembly of the electronics and testing.

The process of creating this guitar was quite technical, and required many complex techniques, but the end result is an incredible one-of-a-kind guitar that not only looks great, but plays great as well!

Thanks for checking out this how-to, and as always, feel free to drop us a line with any questions or comments you may have.

AirSick Stencils
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STEP 41



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