

Screen Printing on Fabric with Speedball®

LESSON PLAN

BY FRANZ SPOHN

DRAWING FLUID METHOD

Speedball Fabric Inks are vibrantly colored, easy to use, non-toxic and water-based for easy clean up. Once heat set on fabric with a household iron, they are permanent but are soft to the touch. Multiple, overlapping, transparent layers of color produce exciting results.

Materials:

Speedball® Screen	Speedball® Squeegee
Speedball® Drawing Fluid	Speedball® Screen Filler
Speedball® Fabric Ink	Masking tape
Craft knife	Soft pencil
Brushes	Sponge
Foamboard	Fabric (T-shirts, handkerchief, etc. 100% cotton works best, 50/50 blends work very well)

Optional Materials:

Speedball® Transparent Extender Base
Speedball® Ink Retarder – for slower drying time
Freezer wrap

Helpful Hints: Tape your screen before processing with either a good grade masking or duct tape. Seal the crack formed between the fabric and the wood frame

on the inside of the frame by folding the tape and placing 1/4" of it on the fabric and the rest on the wooden frame. On the back, place the tape so it also covers 1/4" on the fabric and the rest covering the corded groove on the wooden frame. Replace as necessary.

Work with deliberation; the inks will resist clean up if allowed to dry in the screen. A tablespoon of ink retarder can be mixed with the ink to extend drying time if extra time is necessary. In most cases this should not be an issue.

Step 1 - Create a design that is bold and simple. Size the image to fit the screen to allow for a 2 inch border on all sides. Printing an image that is too close to the inside edges of the screen presents many problems.

Center the screen over the design and lightly trace the image with a soft pencil. Draw the lines as lightly as possible, but still visible when the screen is flipped, back side up.



Step 2

Step 2 - Apply a generous layer of drawing fluid (the blue liquid) with a brush and paint the design using the traced lines as a guide. It is important to keep the fabric elevated above the table surface while applying and drying the drawing fluid. Apply enough material to fill the mesh, but not so much as to cause dripping underneath.

Step 3 - Once the drawing fluid design dries, apply a smooth, thin, even coat of screen filler (red oxide in color). Stir screen filler before use. Pour a ribbon of the screen filler along bottom edge of the back of screen and squeegee the filler across back of screen, over the dried drawing fluid design. Use a squeegee small enough so that it doesn't "ride" the wood frame of screen but large enough to completely cover design. Make sure design is covered in one thin coat; multiple or overlapping coats will make it difficult to wash out the drawing fluid design thoroughly.



Step 3



Allow the screen filler to dry completely. Once the filler is dry, rinse the screen in cold water. Use a sponge to softly massage stubborn areas to completely clear the screen in image area. When the screen is dried, apply screen filler with a brush to modify the design or to block out margin areas so that the screen is completely blocked in non-image area. The screen is ready to print once everything is dried.

Step 4 - To add color to the design or to print color shapes as additional decorative motifs, use a paper stencil. Freezer wrap has a plastic coating on a strong, stable paper that makes it ideal for this process. It will stand up to the water based inks for indefinite printings. Do **not** use wax paper.



Step 4



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Step 5 - Stretch a handkerchief, t-shirt or any other flat fabric over a piece of foamboard so there are no wrinkles; iron cloth if necessary before stretching. Secure in place with masking tape. For t-shirts insert the foamboard inside the shirt to prevent the ink from bleeding through to the other side. Do not use cardboard as evidence of the ribbing of the corrugation will appear as dark stripes on the finished piece.

Position your screen so that it lies flat on the fabric. Apply a ribbon of ink at the top of the image with a spoon and squeegee the ink through the screen. It is important that the screen does not move so find an extra pair of hands to hold the screen securely in place. Two pulls of the squeegee may be required to print a full image; have a piece of newsprint handy for testing first. Always squeegee in the same direction for multiple pulls.



Once all fabric is printed, remove excess ink from the screen with a scrap piece of card or spoon. Wash the remaining residue with warm water. To remove the screen filler stencil, apply Comet cleanser to both sides of the wet screen, scrub lightly with a soft bristle brush and allow to stand for several minutes. Scrub a bit more and rinse with a stream of hot water; repeat if necessary to remove heavier areas. Once dry, the screen is ready for another stencil.



Step 6 - Cut a piece of freezer wrap slightly larger than the size of your screen. It is important to keep the stencil flat and wrinkle free for best results. The screen will be placed on top of the stencil with the plastic coating against the back of the screen. Draw directly on the paper or place over a design on a light table. Keep paper stencil shapes simple; avoid severely angled or extremely pointy shapes as well as complicated and intricate shapes. On a mat or scrap piece of board, carefully cut the shape with a craft knife.

Tape the stencil to the back of the screen with masking tape. Take care not to wrinkle the stencil. If there are parts of the stencil that are curling, place a thin metal ruler on top of them and then slide away once the screen is placed on the stencil.

Step 7 - Position the screen over the fabric and add ink. To register a color with the main design, add extender or transparent base to a light colored ink. This enables you to visually line up the new color by looking through the screen. For adding additional shapes in the background, opaque colors may also be used.

For repetitive printing of a shape in the background, plan the sequence of printing so that the screen is not placed over freshly printed, wet ink. To change color, remove the excess ink from the screen and squeegee; then print on newsprint several times with the new color until traces of the old ink disappear.



Step 8 - After printing, remove excess ink from the screen, untape paper stencil and clean screen with warm water. Note: Some residual staining of screen mesh is normal.

Step 9 - It is important to **heat-set** the fabric ink after you finish printing to make the ink permanent. Iron the fabric on the highest setting for your particular fabric for 5 minutes. For thicker layers of color iron both sides of the fabric. You may use a scrap piece of 100% cotton over a 50/50 blended fabric for higher iron temperatures.