

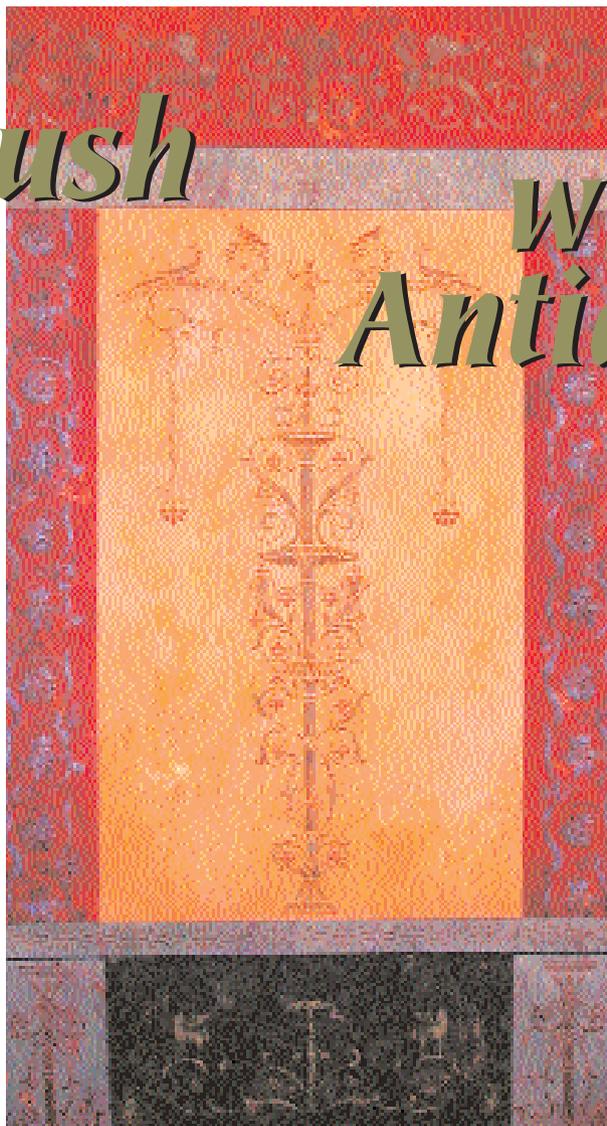
A Brush with Antiquity

In 79 A.D., the sudden eruption of Mount Vesuvius turned a bustling but otherwise insignificant Italian seaside port of 20,000 inhabitants into the most well-preserved and almost perfectly “intact” example of an ancient city that we have today.

A human disaster turned archeological treasure, Pompeii’s interior rooms now provide us with an incredibly accurate visual history of the development of the Roman style of wall painting from the 2nd Century B.C. through most of the 1st Century A.D.

Since its rediscovery in the mid-18th Century, this ill-fated city and its decorative art have had an enormous effect and influence on interior design and decoration that continues to this day. The “Pompeiiian” style of decoration, with its signature use of rich color and fanciful, elaborately painted images, has been revered and reinterpreted for centuries. Napoleon had an entire palace created and decorated with Pompeiiian-inspired art and famed British architect Robert Adam designed whole rooms around the style after visiting Pompeii himself shortly after it was rediscovered in 1755. Victorians found the style particularly suited to creating inviting grand entries to their homes.

Historians have identified four of what we now refer to as “Pompeiiian”



* Pompeii Mural Panel/Pompeiiian Collection Royal Design Studio.

and looking out over imaginary vistas providing the illusion of spatial penetration.

Third Style (ornamental) Late 1st Century B.C. to early 1st Century A.D. Painted vistas were closed up, and walls became more of a “picture gallery.” Common was a large central pictorial panel flanked on either

The Pompeiiian Style of Wall Decoration

styles of wall decoration that appeared throughout all of Italy and the Roman Empire. Very briefly, they are:

First Style (incrustation), 2nd Century B.C. This style featured large, painted “slabs” of faux marble.

Second Style (architectonic), 1st Century B.C. Now, walls were visually expanded with trompe l’oeil architectural renderings of windows and porticos framed by columns

side by smaller panels. Distinctly decorative rather than architectural, surfaces were divided by little columns and slender pillars decorated with botanical motifs. Symmetrical, vertical candelabra designs were commonly used within the panels.

Fourth Style (combination) 62 A.D. and beyond. A melding of all the previous styles, combining the decorative with more fully developed

by MELANIE ROYALS, Royal Design Studio



* This Swan Panel Stencil from the Nicola Vigni Collection was indicative of the Third Style (ornamental) panels favored in the late 1st Century B.C. to early 1st Century A.D.

architectural elements—and the inspiration for the Grottesca style of the Renaissance with the discovery and excavation in Rome of Nero’s Domus Aurea in the late 1500s.

Ancient domestic interiors were, in reality, small, windowless and dark, so people of all classes hired local artists to visually “open up” and lighten their living spaces. Pompeian artists merged a taste and appreciation of nature with a sense of controlled space, covering large areas of walls, ceilings and floors with painted decoration. Some of the most well-preserved and extravagant wall paintings can now be found in the homes of the wealthy businessmen of the times, such as the famous House of Vetti, which reflect the wealth and



* Royal Recipes are step-by-step, illustrated instructions for creating distressed plaster wall treatments

with stenciled decoration: Pompeian Red Plaster and Antiquity Wall Finish.

status of the occupants as well as the styles of the times.

The classic Pompeian color palette consisted primarily of reds, blues, greens, yellows and black. Black was used extensively in the best rooms of the house as it was easily polished to a lustrous tone that was further enhanced by waxing.

Decorative artisans in both ancient and Renaissance times faced many of the challenges that we face today. As artists for hire who painted to make a living, they needed to be able to execute their artwork in a timely and profitable manner. Many of the patterns used were required to be repeated, and so tracing “stock” designs and even cutting stencils of popular patterns were utilized.

Two new stencil collections from Royal Design Studio allow decorative artisans of today to continue to honor and replicate the art of the past with new adaptations of the classic Pompeian and Renaissance Grottesca styles of decoration. The Pompeian Collection features a selection of single-overlay candelabra, column, botanical and border designs that can be mixed and matched for any number of large or small panel effects. The Nicola Vigni Collection by the renowned Roman artist features Nicola’s original grottesca patterns translated into stencil designs. These elegant stencils are intricately detailed and can also be used alone or in combination to create grand panel treatments. Whether stenciled simply or given added detail with hand painting, they can be used to add a touch of class to walls, cabinetry, furniture and hanging tapestries. Be-

cause both collections are based on ancient patterns, they also can be used together very effectively.

Also available, Royal Recipes are step-by-step, illustrated instructions for creating distressed plaster wall treatments with stenciled decoration: Pompeian Red Plaster and Antiquity Wall Finish. **TFF**

Suggested further reading:

“The Lost World of Pompeii” by Colin Amery: A non-fiction book rich with historical fact and photographs.

“Pompeii” by Robert Harris: An excellent historical, fictional novel set in the final days of Pompeii. Currently on The New York Times’ Best-Seller list.



Melanie Royals is the creative force behind Royal Design Studio, an industry leader in the art of stenciling. Melanie continues to pursue the advancement of stenciling with the decorative painting industry by offering sophistication, inspiration and education to decorative paint professionals. For more information, call (800) 747-9767 or visit online at www.royaldesignstudio.com.



* Cherub Grottesca Panel for Furniture/Nicola Vigni Collection.

by **Melanie Royals**

Make an Impression

Turning Decorative Art Inside Out

The ongoing evolution of decorative art has continued at a steady pace throughout the ages, but the last 12 years have seen a veritable explosion of new products, techniques and, thank goodness, an increased appreciation and desire for the beauty and intrinsic value of custom-painted decoration. Sponge painting has given way to whole walls of “marbleizing,” which have given way to stenciled garden rooms which have been replaced by classical decorative patterns and texture, metallic gilt and gleam and, oh yeah, more texture. What’s next? Is there life beyond embossing?

The answer is a resounding yes, thanks to Modello Designs Decorative Masking Patterns. These one-time-use patterns are cut from adhesive vinyl and offer the unique option of using the pattern “in reverse.” Once cut, areas of the design are removed, or “weeded out” so that the desired decorative treatment can be applied. If the positive design areas are removed, it is referred to as a positive pattern or a positive weed—much like a traditional stencil.

However, when the negative areas surrounding the design are removed, it is referred to as a negative pattern or negative weed. In this case, the design itself is used as a mask. Because the design is in the form of a mask, it can be used to shield the base coat or color while the “negative” areas surrounding the design are then painted, stained or troweled with the desired decorative treatment—leaving the design itself as a resist pattern in the paint or stain, or an impression in a plaster.

Unique new looks can be created with these “negative” patterns by simply approaching the design from

the “inside out”—like painting in reverse. Interesting combinations and layers of materials such as gilding,



metallic burnishing plasters, waxes and Venetian polishing plasters can yield exciting new finishes with subtle impressions or dramatic contrasts. Some ideas...

Polished Venetian Plaster

Apply a thin, smooth base layer of plaster. When dry, apply a “negative” Modello and

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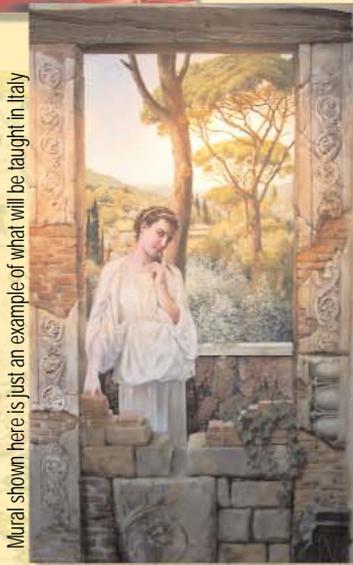
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trowel one or two more layers. Remove and apply another layer to backfill slightly. Burnishing and a silver, metallic wax highlight the design, which is now a subtle impression in the polished surface.

Faux Marquetry



Water-based gel stains, such as Stain and Seal from Faux Effects International, are ideal for creating intricate inlaid pattern effects in wood. Here, the negative Modello pattern is used as a resist to protect the lighter background from the darker stain colors that are applied. The adhesive masking material provides a perfectly crisp, clean edge for the design on a smooth wood surface.



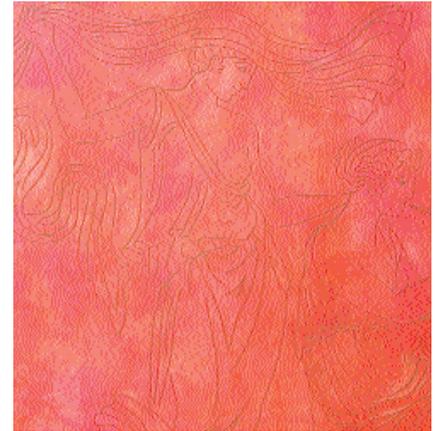
Inlaid Gold

Here, broken gold leaf was applied as a base over a black background.

After allowing the size and gilding to dry for a day, a negative Modello design was applied and multiple lay-

ers of Lusterstone were troweled on to raise and fill the negative areas around the design. The plaster was purposely applied to leave some open areas, and tinted Liberon wax completes the distressed look.

Incised Art



Adhesive Modellos allow for intricate, continuous lines. Here, the outlines of the women were the negative mask over a plain black surface. After several layers and colors of plaster and wax, the negative Modello was removed to reveal the dramatic black lines that define the design.

These examples represent just a few of the potentially limitless new looks that can be created with “negative” masking patterns. The evolution of decorative art continues...

For more information, call (800) 663-3860, or visit online at www.modello designs.com.

Modello Designs Decorative Masking Patterns™ are now available in elegant precut designs in standard sizes through the Modello Impressions™ and Modello Dimensions™ lines. A variety of different motifs for creating random wall patterns are available in economically priced sets of 12 (each package averages 100 square feet).

Modello Impressions are “negative” patterns that allow you to easily create new and exciting inlaid pattern effects with lime-based and synthetic plasters, metallic plasters, gel stains, glaze and more. Use them to create the unique effects shown here.

Modello Dimensions are traditional “positive” patterns that offer an easier and more efficient means to creating embossed designs with smooth plasters and metallic textural mediums. The adhesive patterns allow for creating quick and clean embossed prints, along with the ability to now add textural treatments within the design.