



Book Review: Illusion & Friends step-by-step Guide to Face Painting Book 1. 2008

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The UK magazine Illusions brought to us by Julie Oliver and Claire Pick highlights 24 international artists including the Bay Area's own face painting gentlewoman, Jodi Carr. The slim volume provides 30 original designs intended to give the novice to the professional a new vision and a basis to create their own one-of-a-kind face from. In the cover notes the editors claim many of the faces are in the target range of 3-5 minutes while some others are more involved. And while the designs are presented in easy to follow pictures unfortunately the artists don't give a 'time to completion' marker so you're left guessing if 7 minute cheetah is really a 5 minute face you need to 'tighten up' or if this is one of the designs even the seasoned professionals go over 5 minutes to complete.

The volume starts out with a Jodi Carr original of 'royal puppy' which shows a cute and fairly fast way to give a puppy muzzle and ears the 'royal treatment.' Claire Pick shows a basic three-color cheetah with basic shapes which are easy for even beginners to follow. The design takes on an added dimension with gold lipstick and the subtle addition of orange just at the end of the nose.

Nick Wolfe's white tiger is deceptively simple in just black and white, but this I suspect will be one of the designs that actually take longer than you expect. Because the tiger is 'just' in black, white and shades of grey all the movement and 'pop' of this design happen by the shading of the tiger face. This design is one where you want to keep the book close by until you've done it several times so you know where to add your shading and shadows.

Christina Davidson painted a Mardi Gras face in shades of purple and while this one is rather free-form and the individual artist is able to take it in her own direction, that alone can be a challenge. Christina suggests 'strategically place tear-drops' and 'use the shape of your models face and clothing for inspiration' in her four part caption. My most important suggestion when you tackle this design is to loosen up. This isn't the white tiger where things need to be just so, symmetry isn't what you're looking for here, just 'go with it' and trust your innate artist. Christina's second offering on page 48 is a ¾ horse face. This piece really shows what a talent Christina is but it can be a challenge for a beginner to

attempt. Three-quarter faces only 'read' if the models head is just at the right angle, and as such to paint it you have to 'see' it before you can paint it. If this is your first time with a three-quarters face you'll want to take it slow.

Glyn Goodwin supplies a butterfly that many face painters now use. The most important point with this is to really shade the outside of the wing and then add your white dots to make it 'pop'. It is a mantra you will hear from many that you should always use white and black together – and this is a great example of why.

The tiger Tiana Tong has on page 26 is in many ways similar to the cheetah except the added 'wow' of a stippled yellow over the top of the orange base. The first time I did this face I was happily surprised at how well this yellow stipple not only blended with the look as a whole but created an entire extra dimension. This is an excellent easy tiger for all levels of face painter. Tiana also has a masquerade design at the back of the book. In my opinion this is an overlooked gem. This design relies quite a bit on blending but she has done a fabulous job and shows you what a really nice mask can look like with a simple color palette as well as simple shapes.

The last face we'll look at is called 'barbed beauty' by Cree Dykins. This face is perfect for the teen girl in your line who thinks she's too cool for a girly butterfly or for younger ones at Halloween. It's simple and has a big impact. Sparkle white covers the face and there is only a slight amount of black shading (warning: a little black goes a long way) the centerpiece is a red heart outlined in black with white highlight. Ironically the barbed wire is painted in the same general direction and placement as the 'too girly' butterfly wing. Use the outside corner of the eye as your starting point, curve one line up onto the temple and the other around the outside of the cheekbone. The final touch is barbed wire 'wrapped' around the heart, blood red lipstick and a dusting of glitter.

This is a good all-round book with a variety of design...a little something for everyone.

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