

## Airbrushing for the Craftsperson

Despite today's economic climate, the craft industry has seen an uptick of activity according to a recent interesting article in *The New York Times*. Some craft retailers reported that more people were making crafts for gifts over the holidays and others were making crafts for sale at craft fairs, flea markets and online to supplement their income.

Within the field of crafts, there is no better tool for applying paint, stains or varnishes than the airbrush. The airbrush can quickly and easily spray all liquefied materials in an application that results in no brush strokes. Paint that is applied appears smooth and professional, as if it were done in a factory setting. Because the airbrush can spray any materials that have the viscosity of milk or below, with or without thinning, there are few surfaces on which airbrush technique cannot be used for base painting or decorative purposes.

A short list of objects where the airbrush is used for paint application includes wooden items (from furniture and signs to duck decoys and carvings), paper items (from scrapbook pages to hand-crafted jewelry), metal crafted items (on aluminum, steel, copper, brass, etc.,—jewelry to sculptures), wall decorations (from murals to borders), and ceramics (from basic craft clay items to kitchen tiles to professional pottery). In all cases, you must consider the compatibility of the material sprayed (enamel on metal, watercolor on paper, acrylic on walls, etc.) and the preparation of the surface to be airbrushed. Some surfaces must be cleaned, some must be scuffed up or primed for paint adhesion and others must be clear coated after painting for permanency.

So if you're creating arts/crafts and you want a smoother and perhaps more professional appearance than brush strokes, reach for an airbrush. Remember that you don't need to "break the bank" to outfit yourself with an airbrush setup specific to your requirements, as there are many choices. Airbrushes range from the inexpensive external mix, single action style to the more expensive internal mix, dual action style that provides the softest spray. They can be propelled by compressors that range from those that are less expensive but a little bit noisier and usually diaphragm in style to those that are more expensive, piston-operated and silent. You can also supply air to the airbrush via inexpensive propellant cans or a refillable CO<sub>2</sub> tank. The choice is yours, depending on the amount of spraying you intend to do and convenience desired.

Ask your arts/crafts retailer to aid you in the selection that best meets your particular needs. To familiarize yourself with what equipment/supplies are available, visit [www.sparmax.com.tw](http://www.sparmax.com.tw), [www.iwata-medea.com](http://www.iwata-medea.com), and [www.silentaire.com](http://www.silentaire.com).