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1500 E. 4th Street
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Featured How-to August 2008

Designer: Kevin Nakagawa

Stampbord Block - Celestial Dreamer 1

List of Materials:

- Stampbord™ 6x12 BLOCK
- Stampbord™ Scratch Knife set
- Stampscapes® Stamps
 - Cloud Cumulus
 - Saturn
 - Small/Full Gibbous Moon
 - Medium/Full Gibbous Moon
 - Large/Full Gibbous Moon
 - Crescent Moon
 - Fish Eye
 - Sun Face
 - Woman Face
 - Hot Sun
- Krylon® UV Resistant Clear Gloss spray
- Marvy® Inks
- ColorBox® Stylus Tool
- Ranger Distress™ Inks



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Before you begin:

With large designs on the Stampbord Block™, I am very careful to apply ample pressure to the center of the stamp to make sure I get a complete impression. Stampbord is a rigid surface and will not conform to the bottom of a stamp, so be sure that the rubber makes enough contact to prevent missed areas in the middle of the stamp. Also, support the block from underneath with another block or something rigid to give it extra support while stamping.



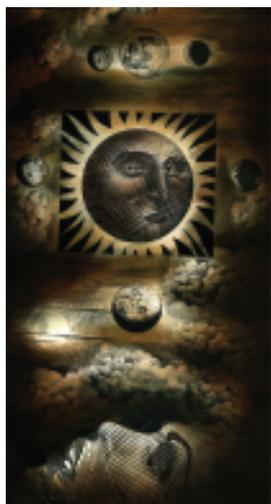
Step 1:

I stamped all the images using Marvy® #1 Black, saving the “Cloud Space” stamp to use last.



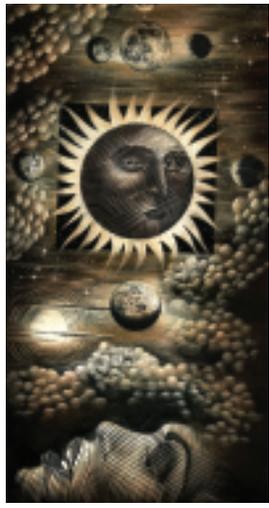
Step 2:

After stamping the “Cloud Space” images, I used the ColorBox® Stylus tool to apply the Marvy #1 Black over and around the images to create the dark nighttime effects. I achieved a full tonal range of values from grey to black using the single pad. In the darker areas, I layered on extra layers of ink to get a more concentrated black. Where the values are lighter grey, I used a drier version of the ink called dry brush. Important: To achieve these subtle variations with the inks you’re using, you’ll want to do this “dry brush” application of ink on your Stampbord or paper. Build your values through repetitive tapping. The mistake is to re-ink your Stylus Tips too often resulting in potential “edges” of the tips showing on the scenes (oval shapes everywhere). Don’t be afraid to tap ten times before you even start seeing some of the lightest values of the color you’re using.



Step 3:

Using the Stylus Tool again, I applied about 6 values of Ranger Distress inks and a Marvy #18 “Dark Brown” to the scene starting with the lightest values first. In this step, I had already set up my overall lighting scheme for the scene. Knowing that I was going to apply texture and highlighting in the next step, I wasn’t terribly careful where I applied the colors. I was careful, however, not to take things too far in toning things that I planned on being either a light source or an object reflecting light. For example, I put some tones on the moons so they wouldn’t be stark white, but I didn’t darken them with the darkest of my ink values. The same goes for the clouds. I wanted my clouds to reflect light, so I was careful not to apply too much of the darker tones to the sides of the clouds closest to the light sources (sun and moons).



Step 4:

Using the two blades from the Ampersand Scratch Knife set, I added highlights, lighting, and texture by removing ink in areas throughout the scene. I scratched highlights into each billow of the clouds. I added stars to the sky and texture into the deep space portion of the background. The contours of the engraved-style images were scratched into in the lightest areas of the objects in order to push the volumes. This means that you want to make the lightest areas seem lighter by carving out some of the ink that was applied. Use the “spoon” or rounded shape scratch knife nib to scratch wide and soft removals of ink and the pointed “spear” shaped scratch knife nib to scratch thin uniform lines throughout the scene. I used both equally.



Step 5:

I thought I was done on the last step, but I let it set overnight and looked at it more over the next day. I decided that I wanted to add more definition to the borders on the cloud edges and to increase the amount of texture. To tighten the visual relationship between the sun and the moons, I carved concentric circles around and through the orbiting moons. I put a scratch knife into a compass. With the point in the center of the sun, I drew the circles carefully through each orbiting moon. Then, I added another circle to connect the larger moons.

To finish:

I sealed the surface of the finished Block with Krylon® UV Resistant Clear Coating in Gloss. This coating brings the whole piece together and enhances the colors and overall three-dimensionality of the artwork. The Stampbord Block is nice because it has a built in frame that you can stain, paint, collage or embellish with odds and ends. Experiment with the edges of the block and see what you come up with. For example: collage old maps or pictures onto the sides or paint the edges black to make the front more dramatic. It was a fun scene for me to work on and I hope you enjoy making your own Celestial Dreamer Stampbord Block!