

Things You Always Wanted to Know About Spray Cans

by George White

In a recent article by Gene Wilkinson published in the New England Flying Aces News & Journal, Mike Nassise editor, he described how to solve the problem of having what would appear to be a perfectly good can of spray paint sputter and fizzle like it's just no good anymore. Gene sent a steaming letter to the manufacture of a spray paint after having just that happen to him. The manufacturer sent him a nice letter back, with the following instructions:

1. Pound a small nail (2d or smaller) through a board so that the nail protrudes about 1/2" on the other side.
2. Remove the spray button from the can, then place the top of the can over the nail exactly where the spray button would go. The can is now inverted with the spray valve resting on the nail.
3. Wrap a rag around the top of the can so that it is pretty well sealed around the board to prevent paint from spraying out all over the place (an apron might be a good addition, ed.).
4. While tightly holding the rag around the can, push the can down on the nail several times which should clear out any undispersed pigment (hopefully into the rag, ed.).

This technique will work only if the undispersed pigment is at the top end of the pickup tube. If the clog is at the bottom of the pick up tube, break out some of your lunch money and head to the store.

Then — while we're on the subject of spray cans, Glenn Bearry of Austin, Texas put me onto a source of spray can tips which work much better than the stock ones which come with the paint cans. Go to <http://www.artprimo.com/> and click on "Spray Can Caps." You'll find all sorts of spray can tips used by artists at dirt cheap prices. For those who use Krylon and want to avoid a heavy coat, two caps which Glenn has recommended are the German Outline and the Blue Dot. Both of them say they are useful for spraying a fine line, but that's only applicable if you holding the can close. Back off 12-18" and you get a beautiful fine mist. You get a bit more paint using the Blue Dot than the German Outline. Do not order the German Outline 2 — it does not work with Krylon. There are other caps which allegedly work well with Krylon, but I haven't tried them, so I can't vouch for exactly how they work. They are cheap enough to give a try though.