

Wild about Wheels



As expectant parents, we like to imagine our children engaged in imaginative, creative pursuits—listening to music, collecting autumn leaves, modeling with clay, reading books. Then they're born, and start walking, and we discover what they really want to do is stand, mesmerized, in front of a construction site, watching the heavy machinery. Go figure.

If you have one of those kids who go wild for anything on wheels, here's the room for you. A big, blocky stretch of road, a traffic light, and an endless array of vehicles racing around right at eye-level. Let your child coordinate the traffic flow: are trucks a favorite?

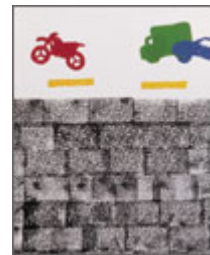
Buses? Race cars? Fire engines? Whatever gets his or her motor racing should be the design dictate. Even the roadway can be transformed into train tracks, if locomotives make their eyes light up.

Like any project for a child's room, the simpler, the better, so little hands can join in the fun. Store-bought stamps or stencils can streamline the process even further; though making your own is easy if your child has an extra-special request (a front-end loader, a garbage truck...). Pictured here is a stoplight, but other traffic signs could be added for children who want a realistic touch. Just load up the sponges and get to work.

What You'll Need

Supplies:

- Rollers
- Brushes
- Roller Tray
- Newspapers
- Plastic plates
- Several large kitchen sponges, and cellulose sponges to cut up
- Scissors or utility knife
- Low-tack painter's tape
- Carpenter's level



Paint:

- White background : Regal® Matte paint 01
- Roadway: Regal® Matte paint in black 2132-10
- Stamps: colors of choice

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prime the wall with Benjamin Moore Fresh Start® primer, if necessary, allow to dry, then roll on the white base coat of Regal ® Matte paint. Allow to dry overnight.

Step 2: Measure the area of the wall to be used as the roadway, and mark it off with a faint pencil line. Check with a carpenter's level to be sure this line is even, and apply a strip of low-tack painter's tape at the top edge (to protect the white base coat from the edge of the black roadway). Be sure to remove the tape immediately when you have finished stamping.



Step 3: Dampen a large kitchen sponge with water, and wring out thoroughly. Pour a moderate amount of Black 2132-10 paint into a plastic plate, and press the sponge into the paint.

Step 4: Stamp the sponge once or twice onto newspaper, to get rid of excess paint and avoid messy drips.

Step 5: Press the sponge firmly onto the wall, holding it horizontally. Repeat, overlapping slightly, until the “road” section of wall is covered, taking care not to smear. Note: don’t worry about uneven lines; the road should look textured and rough.

Step 6: With scissors or utility knife, cut a slice of sponge to size, dip in Golden Orchards 329 paint, and apply dotted lines above the road.

Step 7: If using store-bought stamps, dip in different colors of your choice, and stamp the vehicles above the dotted lines. Again, off-load excess paint first onto newspaper, and make sure not to smear the stamp on the wall. Wipe off any drips immediately with a damp rag.

For the Traffic Light

Step 1: Mask off a simple rectangular shape with low-tack painter’s tape.

Step 2: Paint the rectangle black, remove the tape and allow to dry.

Step 3: Using a circular sponge (cut one out if needed—diameter is about the size of the lid from a quart can of paint), stamp three circles in Poppy 1315, Golden Orchards 329 and Once Upon a Time 574.

To Make Stamps

Photocopy the design of your choice, reducing or enlarging to the size you want. Cut out the design, glue onto thin cardboard, then use the cardboard as a template to cut the shape out of foam or sponge. Alternatively, cut simple shapes (rectangles, circles, squares and triangles) out of cellulose sponges, and use them to “construct” more abstract vehicles.