standothek

Paint and Design.
Beauty on four wheels.

The work of a refinisher has a lot to do with creativity. It is his imagination and creative skills which make the dream of beauty on four wheels come true. He has it in his hands to transform an ordinary standard car into a unique model with an unmistakable character – thanks to a skilfully designed custom look.

This issue of Standothek tells you all you need to know about custom paintwork. We will begin with a brief review of the history of paint, which is followed by a presentation of Standox’s comprehensive range of special-effect products. After an excursion into the world of colours, we will get back to practice – we will take a close look at the practical art of refinishing, inform you about different techniques and present examples of successful design projects.

Incidentally, custom refinishing is becoming an increasingly important key to success in the professional refinishing sector. Needless to say, to be successful you need to keep abreast of the latest developments in this area. Standox’s comprehensive training programme offers you everything you need to effectively expand your refinishing skills.

We hope you will enjoy studying this latest addition to our Standothek series and trust you will find “Paint and Design” informative reading.
All you need to know:

- It all started with lacquer  
- The vehicle as a personal trademark  
- Special-effect paints  
- Airbrush et al.  
- Creative refinishing techniques  
- Colours and shapes  
- Digital printing, film plotting and similar techniques  
- Software and accessories  
- Improving your competitiveness  
- References
It all started with lacquer.

A splendid history.

The history of paint began quite humbly with a tiny insect which, at the time, was very widespread in northern India. The pigment of this so-called lac insect (tachardia lacca) was called “laksha” in Sanskrit, meaning “red tree lacquer”. In Roman literature, it can be found as “lacca”.

Lacquer had its first heyday in ancient China, however, where bronze cult objects were decorated with lacquer inlays as early as 1300 BC; over the centuries, using lacquer for decorative design became a fine art in Asia. In the 17th century, East Asian lacquers found their way to Europe, where demand soon boomed. Lacquer and similar words derived from the same root continue to be used in many languages spoken around the globe.

Two properties quickly made lacquer popular with artisans and their customers alike, namely the ability to protect surfaces and the ability to change their colour. Given that lacquers have an excellent capacity to bind colour pigments, they opened up undreamed-of possibilities. They made musical instruments look more brilliant, turned furniture into shining objects and even transformed simple snuffboxes made from papier-mâché into precious little gems.

It is therefore not surprising to see that lacquers began to play an important, innovative role again at the beginning of the automobile era. Even though the first cars were nothing more than carriages that were driven by a combustion engine instead of being pulled by a horse, lacquers and paints were part of the game from the very beginning.
Whether it was Maybach, Daimler or Benz, all car makers of the time used wood to build the bodies of their vehicles. The superstructure of a car from 1893, for instance, consisted of a wooden skeleton covered with a sailcloth or wooden planks. A coating of resin, asphalt and oil gave this new-fangled mode of transport its sombre black look. The advent of mass production was still a long way off, and those carriage paints needed some four weeks to dry. But the coatings picked up speed, with fast nitro-cellulose paints revolutionising assembly line production in the 1920s.

**A sigh of relief for people and the environment.**

The development of reactive drying, 2-pack products on an acrylic resin basis represented another milestone in the history of paints and lacquers. But while 2-pack technology was still the be-all and end-all in automotive mass production and the refinishing sector, paint researchers were already working on new ambitious projects. They wanted to launch particularly environmentally friendly materials in the market.

The experiments in the paint labs were successful. High-solid paints added a whole new dimension of quality to automotive (re)finishing. The real breakthrough came, however, with the development of waterborne coating systems, whose content of hazardous organic solvents has been reduced to a minimum. Today, waterborne paints are increasingly being used both in automotive production and in the refinishing sector.
In a world full of interchangeable products, individuality plays an increasingly important role. Individuals want to stand out from the crowd and demonstrate their social status. In their quest for originality, the mobile generation have found an object that is eminently suitable for being transformed into something truly unique – the car or motorbike they are using everyday.

Whether it’s a sports convertible, a family sedan, a company car or a custom motorbike – the vehicle becomes the personal trademark of its owner. With the help of creative painting techniques and some imaginative ideas, virtually all design dreams can be put into practice.

A new look from the computer. Many motorists would like to customise their vehicles with an individual finish. In the past, however, they lacked the possibility to get a realistic idea of what the finished vehicle would really look like. Nowadays professional design drafts can be produced on high-powered personal computers. Computer technology and the appropriate know-how make the design proposals look so realistic that they can be used both as sales arguments in customer presentations and as models to copy by the refinisher in the bodyshop.

First of all, it is important, however, to "connect" with the customer and find out what they really want. Once you know, your creative skills come into play. Propose a solution which meets the customer’s expectations not only visually but also technically and quality-wise. Demonstrate your professionalism to the customer by offering them sound advice and persuasive solutions.

Your customer wants to get a more realistic idea of what their vehicle will look like? No problem with the latest computer software!
Standing out from the crowd. While individuals normally want unusual, emotional custom looks for their vehicles, companies have different priorities. Commercial vehicles primarily serve as carriers of advertising and information. Entrepreneurs want their fleet to attract attention to their company, to differentiate themselves from their competitors. They therefore need an attention-grabbing look that stands out from the competition. At the same time, all relevant information must be visible and understandable at first sight. Needless to say, the type of company also plays an important role for your proposed design. For instance, the truck of a local brewery should look different from the van of a small florist’s shop, while the car of a nursing care service does not really have a lot in common with the bus of a tour operator.

To meet all these different requirements, you should put yourself in the position of your customer. Any sales activity therefore starts with thorough research during your talks with your customer. Get an idea of your customer’s market situation. Once you know how their competitors advertise their business, you can more easily come up with a better solution. This way, your know-how will make a significant contribution to your customer’s business success. Which, in turn, is good for your business too.
Special-effect paints.

Individuality plays a special role in the Standox product range, as most customers wish to give their cars that certain something to make them stand out from the crowd. This is why Standox has developed and produced a very special series of premium paints – Exclusive Line, special-effect paints for creative custom finishes.

With their exciting flair, creations of the new “Exclusive Line” generation such as “Miami Mint” and “Red Rocket” have added a whole new dimension to innovative refinishing. The latest addition to the range, “Atlantis Blue”, is an innovative waterborne paint that has set new standards in terms of looks and effects. Even if the sky is overcast, the marine colors maintain their changing effect.

Available in limited quantities only, this color collection is based on an innovative generation of pigments that change within a certain color spectrum depending on the incidence of light, creating fascinating effects.

Highly effective. The Standox Exclusive Line.

This premium paint is really up to its famous name. Changing from dark black-blue via a sparkling emerald green up to a lively aquamarine, its colors seem to emerge directly from the sea – an intriguing reminiscence of the long-lost legend of Atlantis.

Strikingly beautiful and beautifully different, each vehicle that leaves the bodyshop with an Exclusive Line finish will be sure to attract attention on the streets.

Atlantis Blue: Exciting and mysterious.

Miami Mint: Young, fashionable and fresh like a summer breeze.

The flair of the popular destination in the south of Florida is captured in this paint – a cocktail of fun and freshness in a myriad of green and blue shades – from gently shining turquoise to the cool and fresh blue of the Atlantic Ocean.

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Science fiction.
This innovative Exclusive Line paint offers a fascinating spectrum of colors in a spectacularly dynamic 3D look.

Red Rocket: A firework in Red.

A spectacular color experience in red, gold and bronze. Depending on the angle of light, the unique effect paint changes from fiery orange via a blazing vermillion to a dark, passionate red.
Flame designs are shown off to advantage on the fuel tanks of big motorbikes. The flame pattern is applied with a stencil.

Airbrush et al.

The art of creative illustration.

Airbrush is a painting technique that utilises a precision spray to apply paint. Airbrush has existed in one form or another since the days of the caveman. In modern times, the airbrush is a sophisticated instrument that allows gifted professionals to achieve very complex paintings in rapid succession.

The range of creative possibilities is almost unlimited. The best results are obtained with realistic images since the airbrush device is capable of details as fine as a strand of hair or as broad as a basketball in the blink of an eye.
Well-equipped for the job at hand.

Your basic equipment should consist of special airbrush guns with exchangeable glass cups, which allow you to change colours quickly without having to clean the cups in-between.

Depending on the job at hand, you need nozzles with a diameter between 0.1 and 0.5 mm. You also need a compressed air micrometer for the air hose (1 to 3 bar), commercial film cutters as well as infinitely adjustable double-line cutters and cutting compasses.

Useful accessories include fibreglass erasers, a rubber roller to apply films and adhesive tapes, a flexible measuring tape, various rulers as well as fine paint brushes for retouching.

Vignettes, tribals and symbols.

So-called vignettes, tribals and similar symbols are particularly elegant eye-catchers, attracting attention without appearing too bold. These fashionable ornamentations are the ideal solution for applications requiring style instead of dominance. They may be used individually or in attractive combinations. For perfect results, the individual templates must fit exactly and the colours need to be well matched.
The latest trend is to use graffiti-style designs, adding a strong urban flavour to cars which really stand out from the crowd.

In any case it is important to create a dynamic and expressive draft which makes a powerful statement.

Attractive variations of abstract forms.

What looks so easy and spontaneous is often the result of complex planning and great design skills. Needless to say, you also need creative imagination. Real masters of the art even use freehand technique to design a wide variety of different motifs – from bold to discreet, in all the colours of the rainbow or in subtle tone-in-tone arrangements.
**Figured motifs.**

Whether it’s a nature scene, an imaginative creature, a funny cartoon or two lovers set against the background of the setting sun – airbrush lets you create realistic images of extreme intensity.

By highlighting, leaving out or exaggerating certain aspects of the motif you can create unusual effects. Each scenario you transfer to the vehicle body is truly unique. Even complex 3D designs are possible, showing off the creative power of airbrush design in perfection.
Nothing is impossible! Modern paints and sophisticated techniques allow you to put even the most unusual design ideas into practice. The large number of different refinishing techniques offers a host of alternatives – from classical painter’s techniques to avant-garde methods for entirely new surface effects.

This variety of techniques allows you to offer your customers tailor-made design solutions. A parquet maker will certainly like the wood grain effect (see below) on his company car, while a beverages company will prefer the refreshing water drop effect (page 16).

The typical denim blue look would be a good fit for a jeans store, while a heating and air-conditioning manufacturer will quickly warm to the so-called “flow” technique, which perfectly visualises the change from cool blue to hot red.

This is how a creative refinisher gives a simple car a fashionable denim look.
Root wood effect created using the “spirit” technique.

Marbling: The “running” technique makes the vehicle body look almost like genuine marble.

Effect created by the “flow” technique.

“Windling” technique.

Wood effect created by graining the finish using rubber doctor blades and a brush.

“Inlay” technique.

“Sand-through” technique.

“Water drop” technique: Simply turn the page to see how this paint effect is created.
Creative refinishing ideas with water.

The right coating technique allows you to realise all wishes in perfect visual quality. So dare to take a new approach instead of staying in the same old groove. You will see that some of the old rules do not apply to custom refinishing – for instance that “water and paint don’t mix”. While this is true for “normal” refinishing, this incompatibility can be used in custom refinishing to create a remarkably realistic water drop effect. This is why we have chosen this particularly attractive example from the large spectrum of refinishing techniques to explain it in greater detail.

The real-life model.

Paint finish with water drop effect.

(1) How to produce a water drop effect: Apply filler to surface and sand with 800 sandpaper. Apply medium-light blue or turquoise as base colour. (2) Apply water drops in the desired size to the basecoat at low pressure (0.2 to 0.5 bar). The nozzle should have a diameter of 1.4 or 1.5 mm. (3) Spray dark blue topcoat at a sharp angle from one side and apply white or silver basecoat from the other side. (4) Allow water drops and paint to dry. Apply two coats of 2K Clear. Sand carefully after a few days and reapply clearcoat.
Water surface technique: Paint is applied onto water puddles, which are wiped off once the paint has dried and recoated with several layers of clearcoat.

Paste technique: In this case, viscous wallpaper paste is used as a release agent.

Ingeniously simple – paint effects created with film.

Special effects are created by applying and/or removing paint using film.

The painting techniques presented in this Standothek can be found in the books "Kreative Lackiertechniken" and "Neue kreative Lackiertechniken" by Michael Rehm, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, München.
Colours and shapes.

Of mood makers and information carriers.

Our world is colourful. Very colourful, indeed. And the natural colourfulness can be enhanced even further. If the assumed 160 colours of the spectrum are mixed with black and white, we get some 100,000 shades that can still be perceived by the human eye – a truly unimaginable number.

Life without colours would be dull and boring. Each season has its own colours, which is reflected in the fashion and cosmetics sectors, for instance. Spring is associated with pastel shades such as apricot, camel, grey blue, salmon, beige and delicate blue. Typical summer colours include dark blue, deep brown, bluish reds, silver grey and lilac. Warm, rich colours such as rust-brown, khaki, petrol, tomato red, jade-green as well as copper and bronze shades are characteristic of autumn, whereas winter colours are cool, yet intense - like black, night blue, cherry and ruby red.

While each individual perceives colours differently, the effects of certain colours are undisputed. The following colours stand for the following effects:

- **Yellow** = extrovert, dominant, indicates change
- **Green** = love of life, close to nature
- **Turquoise** = tension, perseverance
- **Cyan** = concentration, sense of duty
- **Orange** = fantastic, exuberant
- **Red** = energy, excitement
- **Magenta** = individuality
- **Blue** = cool, soothing
- **Violet** = solemn, mystical
- **Brown** = earthy, healthy
- **Black** = serious, elegant
- **White** = cheerful, pure
- **Grey** = balancing, neutral
- **Gold** = majestic, brilliant
- **Silver** = light, shining

This combination of text and colour goes against our usual perception and experience.
Every time has its colours. This is particularly true of automotive engineering. In the golden fifties, pastel-coloured cars were all around. Ten years later, contrasting colours were in high demand. In the seventies, everybody wanted strong colours, while the eighties saw black and white take centre-stage. The nineties were very colourful, with a new trend to metallic shades later making for a more elegant look.

At the top of the worldwide popularity ranking, we have the so-called neutral colour shades such as grey, white, black, beige and, above all, silver. Silver has held the top position for new car registrations for several years. One in three newly registered cars in Europe has a silver finish. This leading position is being threatened only in Japan, where white has clearly been catching up.

Silver is likely to remain in favour for quite a while, benefiting from the introduction of imaginative surface effects with differently coloured glitter pigments. Refined compositions with changing effects ensure that the range of neutral colours never gets boring.

In our streets, other colours also play an important role, e.g. blue, which remains highly popular.

Up-and-coming colours include red, orange and green in attractive shades ranging from intense signal effects to discreet elegance. In the sports and compact car segment, these colourful trend-setters are already very much in evidence.

When it comes to design, colours are of major importance. Especially in the business segment, colours play an important role in a company’s identity and are an integral element of the corporate design. Characteristic examples include the Ferrari red, the silver of the Silver Arrows and the blue-white BMW logo. Could you imagine the Coca Cola logo in green or the Nivea tin in yellow? Not really!

It is therefore very important to offer your commercial customers a design whose colour(s) fully match their corporate identity.

Colour trends and zeitgeist.
Alert! Help! Caution!
Colours are information carriers.

Colours are not only a natural phenomenon. Colours trigger a whole variety of different emotions. They make us cheerful or sad, warn us, seduce us, frighten us, make us hungry, match or don’t match with other colours. But colours are also a question of personal taste.

This is why colours play a very important role in car design, because depending on which colour you use, you will achieve different effects. **Acceptance** if the colour chosen is generally perceived as matching the object – the sun has to be yellow and not blue. **Disapproval** if the colour is not in line with the material – snow is white and never red. **Curiosity** if the colour is used in a surprising context – Milka’s purple cow is a good example. You should therefore think very carefully about how to use colours.
Great symbolic power.

When speaking of colour, one should not forget the form. Both elements are inseparably linked – a fact you should take advantage of. In this context, it is helpful that many combinations of colours and forms will trigger specific associations. Just think of traffic signs and their specific colours – and the irritation one experiences when travelling abroad and being confronted with “strange” traffic signs.

So whenever colours and forms are used in the wrong context or with a wrong meaning, they will lead to confusion and, ultimately, disapproval and rejection.

If used properly, colours can also deceive the human eye. Skilful colour gradations, for instance, can produce a certain three-dimensional effect.

The surroundings also have an impact on the visual effect. The grey in the middle is the same in all three images. The difference is exclusively attributable to the different surrounding colour.

Another important aspect is the correlation between type and colour. Depending on which colours you choose for the background and the text, the legibility of the text is good or poor. Simply put your perception to the test. Our example highlights the different effects.
Digital printing, film plotting and similar techniques.

Reality in photo quality.

Direct from the computer onto the film – innovative techniques are making vehicle design even more dynamic. Digital printing is one of these techniques. This system is particularly effective in the production of photo-realistic designs. In combination with traditional refinishing techniques, absolutely stunning results can be created and executed to the very highest standards.

Digital printing obviously offers many advantages, not only in terms of speed. Unlike other printing techniques it also obviates the need for complex processes such as film exposure or the production of printing plates. Production is a single, uninterrupted process from the computer to the printer. Needless to say, you have the possibility to easily change the visual as desired and respond to customers’ requests until right before the visual is actually printed. Printouts are available on endless film which is suitable even for giant trucks. Nevertheless, digital printing alone is often insufficient for vehicle design. Custom refinished vehicles usually require a combination of different design techniques.

These include, for instance, traditional refinishing and airbrush for the background, digital printing for the photo and film plotting for the letters – between them, these techniques allow you to give free rein to your creativity.

A light in the dark.

Digital printing is possible on different materials such as film, tarpaulins, PVC or textile banners. Reflective film makes for a particularly attention-grabbing effect, as it makes the visual shine on the vehicle at night. This additional advertising effect will certainly be very much appreciated by your customers.
Precise plotting from A to Z.

Computer-cut texts and logos have become integral elements of modern vehicle design. Modern cutting plotters produce the desired fonts and graphics from the data or paper models with 100 percent precision – fast, flexibly and with remarkable versatility.

No matter whether you use opaque or transparent, printed or coated film material, glass decor, special-effect or reflective film – innovative film cutting technology offers virtually unlimited possibilities. The different techniques can also easily be varied; for instance, fine letters or textures can be cut out negatively from the film, which is then applied to the vehicle and painted over the traditional way.

Powerful equipment and know-how.

With a high-performance film plotter, digital printer and airbrush know-how you have everything you need to meet virtually all customer requirements.
Stripping, dipping, pasting.

Vehicle design and film have been inseparably linked for a long time. The advantage is plain to see: film is easy to use, versatile and will even forgive mistakes during application – if a surface doesn’t look as desired, it can easily be retouched or even moderately repaired at a later stage.

Applying adhesive film to the vehicle surface couldn’t be easier. In the meantime, new application possibilities have been developed, opening up additional, interesting design solutions.

How to use transfers.

After fine sanding, the wet visual including carrier paper is applied and aligned. After rubbing and wetting the carrier paper again, the latter is shifted – not lifted – off. Carefully remove residual water and air inclusions by working your way from the centre to the edges without applying pressure. Use hot water for more problematic shapes. After drying, carefully break off the edges. Subsequently apply 2 to 3 spray passes of clearcoat; sand between the spray passes.
A fresh design from the water bath.

While automotive film for external use is available in a wide variety of different designs, film for use in the interior is much harder to come by. Especially three-dimensional parts such as steering wheels or rims are difficult to decorate the conventional way.

Water transfer printing is the solution. In this case, a film is applied to the respective automotive part in a water bath. After approx. three minutes, the carrier material releases the ultra-thin film which then floats freely on the surface of the water. The vehicle part is then immersed into the bath where it is completely enveloped by the floating film. Paint residues are washed off in a subsequent special bath; application of the clearcoat is the final step.

This coating technique allows you to embellish even highly complex shapes that used to be difficult or even impossible to process with conventional printing techniques.

It is good to know that the water transfer technology is suitable for both metal and plastic surfaces. This means that you cannot only decorate your customers’ cars but also their mobile phone holders, lamps, switches and sockets, sports equipment and much more.

Why not surprise your customers with an attractive offer?
Software and accessories.

The tools of the trade.

Many of the creative techniques described in this Standothek have more to do with the job of a graphic designer than with the work of a vehicle refinisher. This is why you will first of all need the right tools to do a good job as a vehicle designer.

To get the right tools, it is advisable to consult retailers specialising in designer and artist supplies. You will find them in any major city. The Yellow Pages or the ad section of your local newspaper will help you find the right store.

There is such a wide range of tools and equipment for professionals that you should definitely seek competent advice before making a purchase. Or do you think you can easily pick the best airbrush gun for your needs from among 43 different types? Do you know which small compressor is best for you simply by looking at it? Or which plotter offers the best value for money? As you see, it is definitely worthwhile to obtain detailed information.

Incidentally, your Standox retail partner will be pleased to offer you competent advice at any time. Why not ask him about the right tools next time you talk to him?
Excellent tools for perfect work.

Professional refinishers need professional equipment. This is why Standox gives you a complete range of smart Color Tools to help you find the right color shade quickly and safely.

The proven Standox Color Box should be to hand in every bodyshop. This basic tool provides an overview of all current OEM coatings including variants used by European and Asian auto makers. Housed in a stable metal box, the oversize samples are coated with original Standox products and indicate the color shade code on the reverse side. A comparable Color Box is also offered for truck color shades and fleet colors specified by global companies.

Do you often look for information on the Internet? Then why not search for color shade formulas online, too? One click on your national Standox website is enough to access the latest color shade news.

Another convenient tool to identify color shades is Genius*, an electronic, battery-operated measuring system with incredible skills. This compact three-angle colorimeter is placed directly on the car body where it identifies the right color shade reliably. The formula can be determined in next to no time even if the paint coat has aged due to strong weathering. The Standowin software converts all data measured by Genius* into perfect mixing formulas on your PC. This way, you quickly receive all the information you need from more than 200,000 formulas available.

Specific color-related questions can also be directed to the color service provided by your Standox distributor. The experts on the hotline will be happy to provide you with professional support any time.
Improving your competitiveness.

Effective support for your business success.

Holding one’s ground in today’s highly competitive market is a major challenge to any bodyshop operator. Standox wants to support you in this difficult task. This is why we have developed the “Standox Consulting” service program, which offers you effective assistance in different fields of activity. Whatever you need to make your business even more successful in future, Standox Consulting helps you to operate more efficiently and profitably.

Standox Consulting covers all aspects of your business activity – from practice-oriented product training to technical service and environmental advice to general business management issues. The service package consists of six different modules for individual use in line with your specific requirements. This enables you to use exactly the kind of know-how to operate successfully in your local market.

The contents of the individual Standox Consulting modules are geared to the specific requirements of the refinishing sector, which means you can be sure that all laws and regulations are complied with.

Contact your local Standox representative to learn more about Standox Consulting. As your competent partner, he will offer you competent advice to choose exactly the right service modules for your needs and assist you in their practical implementation.
State-of-the-art training.

In the long term, you will be able to expand your market position only if you remain at the forefront of the latest technologies and management requirements. This calls for constant training to ensure you always stay up to date.

Standox makes you fit for the future. We offer a large range of seminars and training activities covering a wide variety of different topics. Imparting expert knowledge is one of our main objectives. At the Standox Centre in Wuppertal, you have the opportunity to perfect your skills and knowledge through practical work. We tell you everything you need to know about state-of-the-art refinishing, offer special commercial vehicle seminars and perfect your tinting skills in dedicated coloristics workshops.

In addition, we contribute to your success in business through specific management assistance; for instance, we organise presentations and lectures on topics such as diversification, marketing and pricing. These are only some examples of our wide range of services. Don’t miss out on your chance to expand your expertise and performance with the help of Standox.
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