

MAKING A SIGNBRELLA





Choosing an Umbrella:

mini, compact, regular, golf?

Consider size, weight, color, and material and **where/how** you plan to use it.

Size: the larger the umbrella the more surface area for your messaging, but also reflect upon your comfort and need.

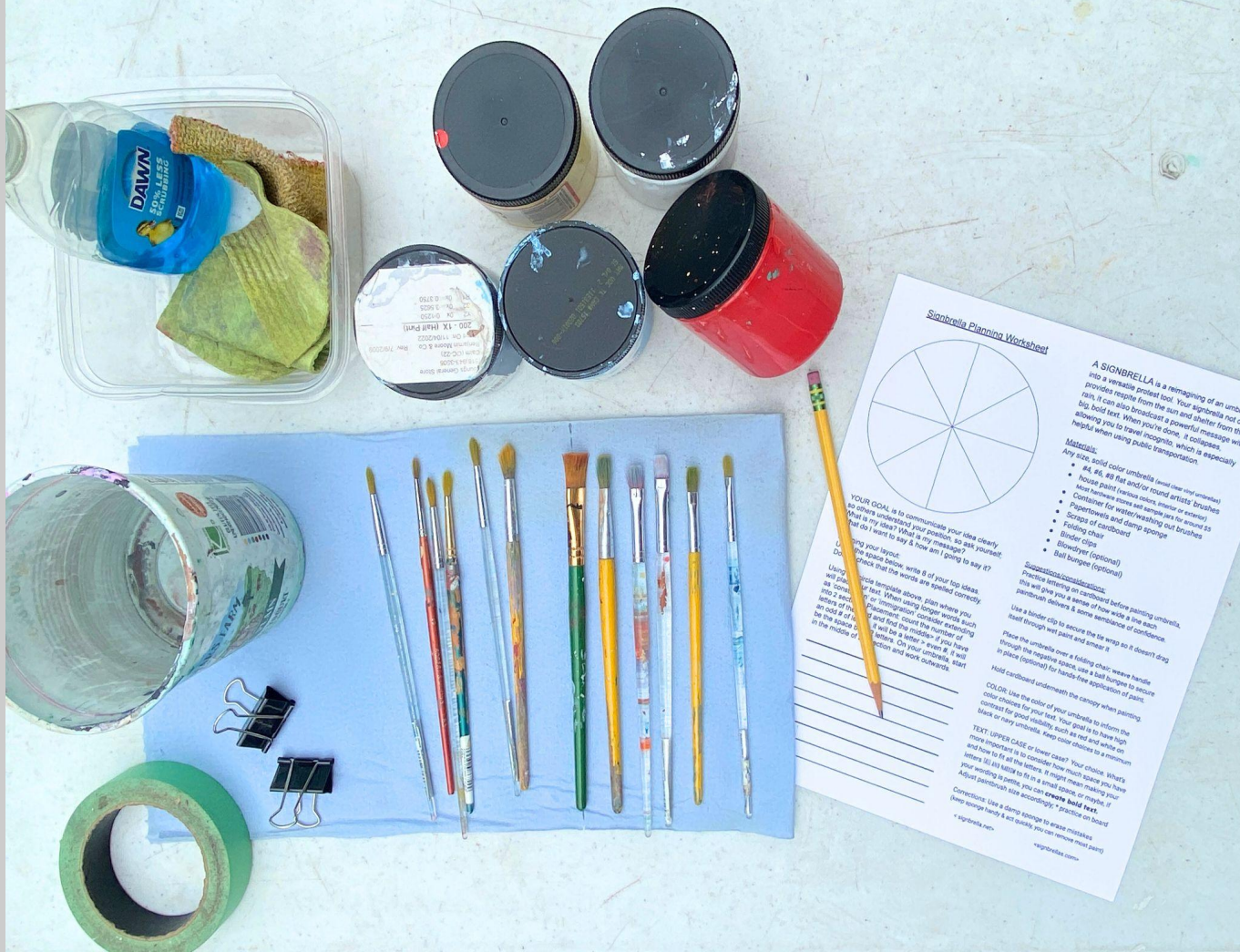
A **Larger umbrellas** also **weighs** more, is that a dealbreaker for you?

Marching in a parade? Just like being on a stage, everything needs to be exaggerated. A small umbrella will get lost, so go big!

Portability: want the flexibility to pack it into your backpack or pocket?

Color: go with solid colors, **avoid patterns** and designs which can be distracting

Avoid clear vinyl umbrellas unless you are using vinyl lettering (this tutorial does not cover).



Gather supplies:

Water container
for rinsing brushes:
old yogurt containers are
perfect (in group settings
I'd avoid using glass jars)

Clips and/or painter's
tape for securing tie wrap

Brushes; various sizes
flat and round

Worksheet & pencil

Paints: house paints in
assortment of colors

Cleaning agents, paper
towels and or sponge



ROUND

FLAT

A word about Artists Brushes

There are a wide variety of Artists Brushes; flat, round, filbert, angled, fan, and liner brushes, among others.

For this application, you'll focus on using round brushes (pointed tip) and flat brushes (rectangle with a flat edge).

Brushes also come in various sizes. The size of your umbrella canopy will dictate how large you can create your lettering.

#4, #6, #8 brushes are going to cover most of your needs unless you have a large/golf size umbrella and then a #10 flat might be applicable.

Whatever brush you have, practice using it on a piece of cardboard first.



If you don't have a large selection of brushes, that's ok, work with what you've got. What's more important is to get a little experience using them. Practice your lettering on a piece of cardboard. This will allow you to get a sense of how wide or narrow a line each brush delivers.

Be aware of how much pressure you are using, the more pressure on the brush the more the bristles will splay out creating a wider line. A lighter touch produces a finer line. Be aware of how deeply you dip your brush into the paint and avoid dipping it as far as the metal band.

Also give thought to your lettering style.

Are you going to write in *cursive*, all CAPS?

Make your letters TALL AND NARROW? or **short and wide** ?

Practice will develop skills and build some semblance of confidence. REMEMBER, it's okay to make mistakes



Preparing to paint:

Sharing minor details with you because it's what has given me consistently good results.

I've found it is helpful to secure the umbrella to a chair, stool or stand (your height will determine which is most comfortable).

When you don't have to figure out how you're going to hold the umbrella, your hands are free (& your mind) to focus on the work you need to do and not fumble with an umbrella that wants to roll away from you.

For best results I use 2 ball bungees, one at the top and one at the bottom.

* note this umbrella has nasty little metal tips that I have addressed by covering with duct tape, check your umbrella before taking it to a rally





Preparing to paint (part 2)

Sharing details that give me good results.

After you've had your tie wrap drag through wet paint, smearing it all over your umbrella, you'll understand WHY I've included this suggestion. Use painter's tape, a binder clip, or anything you've got to secure the tie wrap in place



When painting, I hold a piece of cardboard under the canopy so while I'm pushing down w/ my paintbrush, I have a firm surface to press against.

I also like to have a damp sponge at the ready in case I make a mistake. Don't wait till you make the mistake: being able to act quickly ensures best removal of paint.

Please note some fabrics might stain



With my umbrella firmly affixed to my chair, my practice strokes on cardboard completed, and a damp sponge at my ready, I begin painting on my umbrella.

Referencing my worksheet, I am ready to move onto the next section and write the message 'CHOOSE LOVE'. I begin in the middle of the word 'LOVE' with the letter 'O', just left of center.

My personal preference is to work from the middle outwards. This is especially helpful with large (10 letters or more) words.

Note: If your word has an odd number of letters you will obviously have a letter in the middle while an even number means it will be a space betw 2 letters. Either way it's good to have an idea of your space limitations so you don't run out of room.



Not happy with my first attempt at drawing a heart, I grab my trusty damp sponge and simply wipe it off the umbrella. Make sure the sponge is not overly wet as it could drip; run down onto the lettering you intend to keep.

Please note with some material/fabrics paint might stain and not completely wash off. I found this to be true of white fabric umbrellas (full disclosure they were cheap umbrellas).

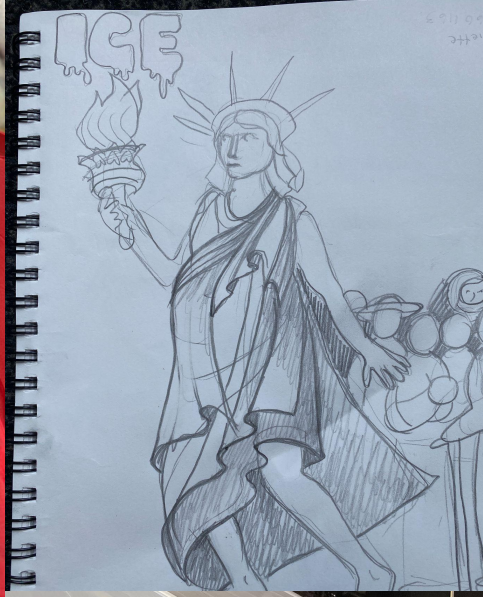
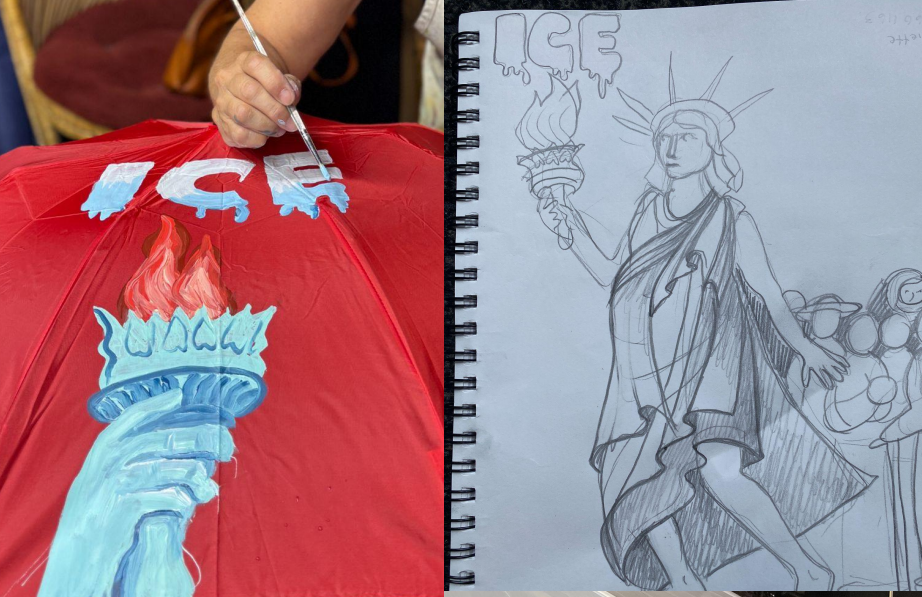
But here is an interesting aside about using white umbrellas, you can place a high contrast drawing underneath the umbrella and see through it. This can be helpful when attempting something complex.



You've finished your umbrella, now what?

Make sure your umbrella is completely dry before closing it, otherwise the panels might stick to each other. Drying times will vary greatly depending on the weather. If it's a hot, sunny day, it will dry in no time but on a rainy or humid day it might need a little help. A blowdryer can get the job done when the weather's not cooperating.

Then if possible, leave it sitting open overnight for the paint to cure



Advanced Signbrella making

After making several text signbrellas, I wanted to branch out into incorporating some imagery. I discovered this is more time consuming than just painting words. I found it both challenging and rewarding.

What started as an image of a torch on the red umbrella was developed into a full body image of the statue of liberty. First I sketched my idea out. Next I drew it on a white umbrella using posca paint pens. Then I filled the spaces in with house paint.

White fabric umbrellas are typically transparent so you might be able to place a drawing underneath.





Colorful and fun, a rainbow umbrella makes a bold statement.

Keep the messaging simple.

Suggestion: use only white paint to unify the panels.



This signbrella was designed to be a tribute to the FLAG of the United States of America.

The artist chose to display words that had very specific meaning to them, their beliefs and relationship to the flag.

This was a repossessing of something that they felt was stolen from them.

Creating art can be cathartic and therapeutic!



Have fun with your lettering!

This adorable daisy design
blasts a powerful message
while being easy on the eyes



Having a theme for your signbrella helps to create cohesive messaging.

This signbrella was created for a specific rally; Unite for Veterans. Therefore the artist wanted to focus on issues that were specifically related to veterans. See filled out worksheet (planning stage) on next slide.

It became apparent that this was a rather large umbrella allowing the artist to add an unplanned 2nd row of messages. Only green was used on 2nd row, intentionally, so it wouldn't get tangled with other text.

Always use your colors strategically to make it easier for the viewer to read.

Choose color scheme of no more than 4 colors: repeat.

Signbrella Planning Worksheet



YOUR GOAL is to communicate your idea clearly so others understand your position, so ask yourself: What is my idea? What is my message? What do I want to say & how am I going to say it?

Planning your layout:

Using the space below, write 8 of your top ideas. Double-check that the words are spelled correctly.

Using the circle template above, plan where you will place your text. When using longer words such as 'constitution' or 'immigration' consider extending into 2 sections. Placement: count the number of letters of the word and find the middle> if you have an odd # of letters, it will be a letter > even #, it will be the space betw 2 letters. On your umbrella, start in the middle of the section and work outwards.

Restore the VA
FIGHT FASCISM
END AGGRESSION
STRONG DEFENSE
Honor the Fallen
Respect Veterans
Hold onto DEMOCRACY
The military is a political tool

A SIGNBRELLA is a reimagining of an umbrella into a versatile protest tool. Your signbrella not only provides respite from the sun and shelter from the rain, it can also broadcast a powerful message with big, bold text. When you're done, it collapses, allowing you to travel incognito, which is especially helpful when using public transportation.

Materials:

Any size, solid color umbrella (avoid clear vinyl umbrellas)

- #4, #6, #8 flat and/or round artists' brushes
- house paint (various colors, interior or exterior)
- Most hardware stores sell sample jars for around \$5
- Container for water/washing out brushes
- Papertowels and damp sponge
- Scraps of cardboard
- Folding chair
- Binder clips
- Blowdryer (optional)
- Ball bungee (optional)

Suggestions/considerations:

Practice lettering on cardboard before painting umbrella, this will give you a sense of how wide a line each paintbrush delivers & some semblance of confidence.

Use a binder clip to secure the tie wrap so it doesn't drag itself through wet paint and smear it

Place the umbrella over a folding chair; weave handle through the negative space, use a ball bungee to secure in place (optional) for hands-free application of paint.

Hold cardboard underneath the canopy when painting.

COLOR: Use the color of your umbrella to inform the color choices for your text. Your goal is to have high contrast for good visibility, such as red and white on black or navy umbrella. Keep color choices to a minimum

TEXT: UPPER CASE or lower case? Your choice. What's more important is to consider how much space you have and how to fit all the letters. It might mean making your letters TALL AND NARROW to fit in a small space, or maybe, if your wording is petite, you can **create bold text**. Adjust paintbrush size accordingly; * practice on board

Corrections: Use a damp sponge to erase mistakes (keep sponge handy & act quickly, you can remove most paint)





I'm going to end it here with the signbrella that started it all. I made this for the "Hands Off" Rally (April 5th). My friend called a couple of days earlier, "Hey, you know it's going to rain Saturday. I saw a post on facebook about painting umbrellas, do you think we can do that?" The answer of course was YES! So, 5 of us got together in my basement. We threw a dropcloth over my husband's pool table and got to work. 3 months later and this signbrella is still in the rotation!

Thanks for your interest in making a Signbrella.

On the website you can find:

Photos of signbrellas made by participants from various workshops.

Information on how to host a workshop of your own

Contact info if you are interested in co-hosting a workshop with us.

Best of luck and have fun!
The team @ Signbrellas.com