

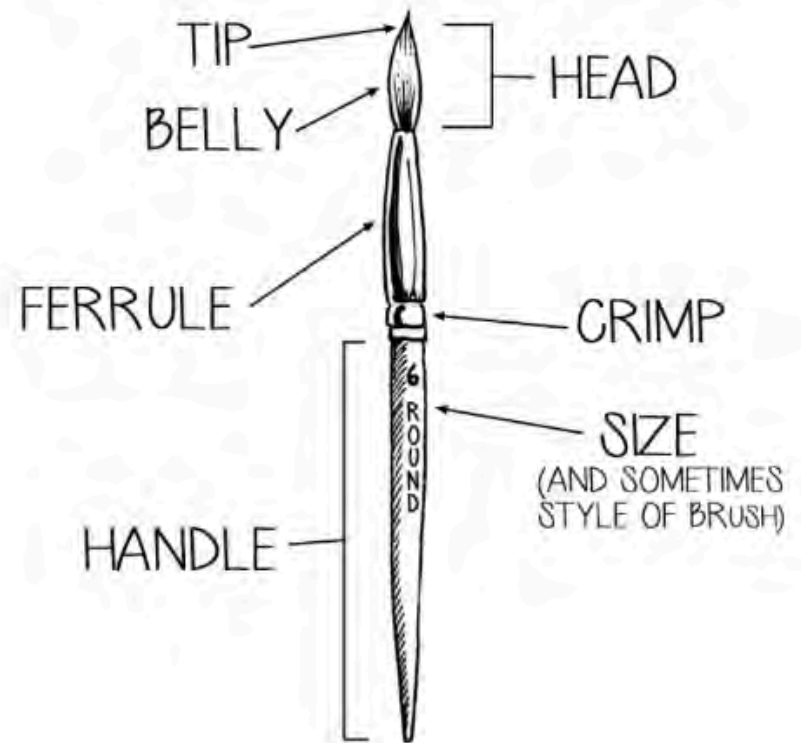
THE JOY OF PAINTING FIGURES

Also: Use a wet palette!

EQUIPMENT - BRUSHES

- Good brushes are key!
 - Kolinsky sable – W&N series 7 (regular, not miniature!), Raphael 8404, etc. are pricey but great
- Not too small – need a sharp tip for detail but also a big enough belly to hold paint
 - 00, 0, 1, 2 round, occasionally a small liner brush
- Brush care is important!
 - **Don't get paint in the ferrule**, don't let paint dry on the brush, don't use expensive sable brushes for metallic paints, dry brushing, etc., **do use Masters Brush Cleaner** from an art store

ANATOMY OF A BRUSH



EQUIPMENT – PAINT & ADDITIVES

- Many brands of acrylic miniature paint, all pretty similar
 - Reaper, Vallejo, P3, Citadel/GW, Army Painter, Scale75, etc.
 - Pots vs droppers
- Acrylic paint is slightly transparent (this can be good and bad)
- Dries quickly, can be thinned with water
- **Safety PSA: don't lick your brush if you use toxic paint or additives!**
- Additives can change properties of paint – flow improver/drying retarder helps extend dry time and get smooth blends, mediums can be used to make glazes



EQUIPMENT – WET PALETTE

- Wet palette is very important when working with acrylics!
- Can be bought at art store, gaming companies, or made at home
 - Take sandwich container, and add paper towels or sponge
 - Add water, enough to saturate sponge and a bit extra pooling at bottom
 - Cover sponge with baking parchment paper
 - Put drops of paint on parchment



EQUIPMENT – WET PALETTE (CONT'D)

- Water percolating through parchment will thin paint slightly & keep it hydrated
 - Thin paints are good – flow smoothly off brush
- Paint stays fresh throughout painting session & longer
- Can mix paints on palette, Bob Ross style
- Helps enable techniques like blending, freehand painting, etc. where you need thin paints that stay consistent
- **Takes <5 min to make and is basically free – why not?**



Photo taken at end of Feb. Build Day – paints from morning still wet & usable

CHALLENGES OF FLESH TONES

- Not everyone has the same skin colour
- Skin is not uniform
 - We are translucent sacks of meat, blood and bone
 - Lots of tonal variation!
 - Some colours you don't think of, like blues and greens
- Lighting is not uniform
 - Some parts of skin (bridge of nose, forehead, cheekbones, etc) are usually in direct light, others (eye sockets, parts of neck) are shadowed
- Goal is to replicate differences in skin tone & lighting so it looks right at scale



Girl in Yellow Sweater, Prudence Heward, 1936
On display at National Gallery of Canada

MY STRATEGY

- Colours used: dull blue, various flesh tones, possibly white and/or a flesh wash
- Use flow improver or drying retarder as additives
- Start by basecoating all the skin blue
- Then apply a dark flesh tone over most of the skin, allowing a hint of blue to show through in shadows, etc.
- Gradually work your way up with lighter skin tones to your highest highlight on bridge of nose, forehead, areas of body in direct light, etc.
- Use wet palette to mix skin tones
- Some people prefer to start at a midtone and then apply shadows & highlights, this works too, I just prefer working up from blue



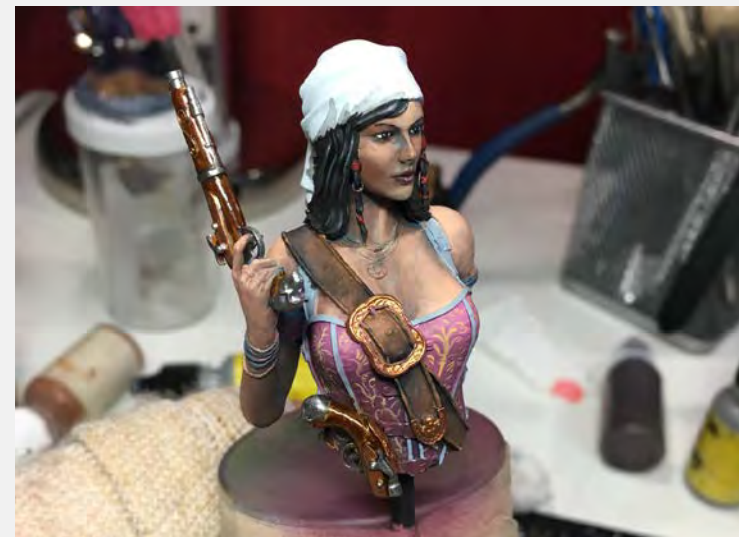
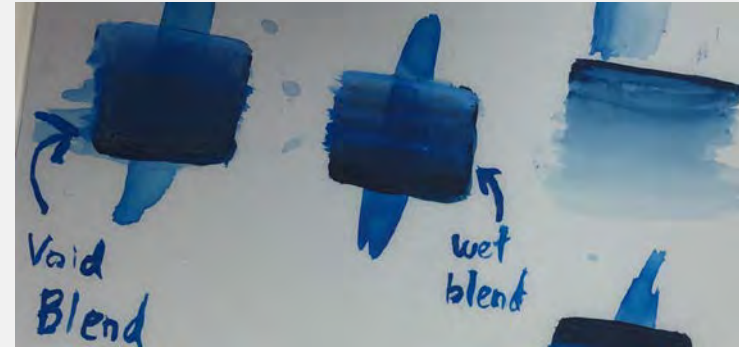
BLENDING & LAYERING

- Due to the nature of flesh tones & lighting, we often want smooth gradients
- There are a couple ways to get these gradients using a brush
- Layering – adding discrete layers of solid paint of varying color to create a gradient
 - Pros: relatively simple, looks ok at a distance on small parts
 - Cons: highlight is in discrete steps rather than one smooth gradient, can be time consuming, doesn't look good up close



BLENDING & LAYERING

- Blending is my preferred method
- Few different techniques for blending, including two-brush blending, void blending, wet blending, etc
- Placing paint down on the model, then use your brush to pull the paint out from the edge to create a smooth gradient
 - I usually void blend - lay down paint, quickly rinse the brush, lick it, and start moving the paint around
 - 2BB uses one brush to apply paint and another to push it around
- Wet blending - put two different colours on the model and blend them together in the middle (need additives to slow dry time!)
- Make sure layer below is dry – don't want to start pulling up partially dried layers of paint underneath!
 - Pros:
 - Can achieve very smooth gradients, especially if you don't try to do too big of a colour transition all at once
 - Cons:
 - Takes practice & often multiple layers, to get it really smooth
 - Even with additives to slow dry time, you have to work fast
 - Gets harder the larger and flatter the area is (at some point you just need to airbrush)
- **Wet palette is MANDATORY, additives also helpful!**



GLAZING

- A glaze is a thin, semi-transparent layer of paint that tints what's underneath
- Can make a quick glaze on your palette with a drop of paint & some medium
- Inks (high pigment density, very thin) can also be used for making glazes
- Glazes can also bring colours together & reduce unwanted contrast from blends that aren't completely smooth
- Can use glazes all over, or target areas and blend out edges
- Can also use glazes to add dirt, stubble, makeup, shadow, etc.
- Glazes should give smooth coverage instead of sinking into recesses like a wash (difference in surface tension) – **KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!**
- Can be applied with brush or airbrush



CASM Jan. 2018 build day - noticed skin was too pale – glazed with a pink skin tone after build day to bring a bit more life into it

OTHER TRICKS

- Look closely at pictures & paintings for reference
 - Knowing colour theory can help, especially for fantasy subjects
- Darker skin is usually smoother and oilier, thus more reflective & benefits from sharp highlights
- Eyeballs are not white!
- On small scales it can be easier to start with eyes and work out
- Eyes usually have a reflective dot of white light in them – very good to add if scale allows
- Can be tricky getting eyes pointed in same direction when starting out – practice!
- Don't overdo makeup on female figures (use thin glazes)
- Tattoos, scars, etc shouldn't look too fresh,
 - Paint on tattoos before glazing & don't use pure black



QUESTIONS?



RESOURCES

Wet Palettes:

Tabletop Minions - Wet Palette: What Is It? Make Your Own - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96mjmQWTPfM>

Blending:

Vince Venturella - Hobby Cheating 107 - How to Achieve Smooth Blends - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k84npvSDpsI>

Privateer Press - Formula P3 Presents: Two-Brush Blending - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7J9uHvdBXY>

Ghool's Painting Tips - Quick Tip - Wet Blending How-To - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7nOwzPUopc>

Glazing:

Vince Venturella - Hobby Cheating 122 - How to Glaze - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N88NtHNmzIQ>

Flesh Tones:

Ghool's Painting Tips – he has a few videos on painting skin & faces of different genders, ethnicities, etc <https://www.youtube.com/user/MiniGhool/videos>

Misc.:

On The Bench podcast – ep. 16 - Guest figure painter - <http://otbmodellerverspodcast.libsyn.com/otb-episode-16-podcast-about-scale-model-building>

My blog - <https://iceaxeminiatures.wordpress.com/>

Facebook: Figurinistes de l'Outaouais

Miniature painting day – monthly event @ Fandom II downtown

Book – Scale75 – Steampunk in Miniature

Sit next to me at a build day!