

Introduction

This guide is intended to help you with the basics of painting your wargames figures. It won't turn you into a competition winning painter overnight - like all things figure painting takes practice. However here are a few basic points to get you started.

Materials

Brushes

It is best to get several sizes. 00 for fine detail and 0 - 2 for other work. The quality of brushes varies a great deal so always examine them in the shop before buying. A brush should naturally come to a point and the bristles should be protected with a plastic sleeve.



Keep older brushes after they are worn as they are useful for glueing and drybrushing (which wears brushes very quickly)

Thinners

You will need to get the correct thinners for the type of paint you are using. Enamals need spirit thinners whereas acrylic paint can be thinned with water.

Palette

You can buy a purpose made palette from an art shop or use an old saucer. You can get cheap plastic palettes from art shops but I find they move around and a heavier china palette/saucer is better.

Paint

This has to be one of the most controversial subjects in figure painting! There are three main types of paint - enamel, acrylic and oil. They differ in the medium that holds the pigment (the wet part of the paint).

Enamel

These paints have a reasonable drying time, cover well and have been traditionally the main paint used by modellers. They do require spirit thinners for diluting and washing brushes. You can get enamals from model shops and there is a very good range of colours.

Oils

Oil paints take a very long time to dry. They are not used much these days but some figure painters swear by them. The earthy colours are very good for horses.

Acrylics

These paints have the great advantage that they can be thinned using water. They are available either in artists

tubes or in small tubs (like enamals) from model shops. Acrylics dry very quickly so you can work very quickly. This does mean, however that the paint tends to dry on the palette. Some acrylics do not seem to dilute down well with plain water. You can get acrylic flow enhancer from art shops which can help with this.

Paint can be expensive so choose your colours wisely. Oils and acrylics can be purchased in artists tube form. The paint in tube is much thicker than in the modelling pots - it does, however have a number of advantages. I find that artists acrylics does not dry on the palette as fast as modelling paint and although the initial cost is higher tube paint lasts a long long time (its more concentrated). If there are colours you use a lot then it is worth investing in a tube.

The quality of paint varies a lot (even from the same manufacturer) from colour to colour so try different suppliers if you can.

Preparation

Preparation is the key to great looking figures. When figures are made the plastic or metal is formed in a mold. The mold is made in two parts. When these two parts don't quite meet properly a ridge line of thin metal/plastic forms on the figure. Use knife or needle file to remove this. Its worth spending some time over this as defects really show up badly after you have painted.

Plastic figures should be washed using warm soapy water and an old tooth brush. This is to remove the greasy mold release agent that is used for plastic figures. If you don't do this paint will not stick very well.



Undercoat

ALWAYS undercoat your figures to provide a clean surface for the main colours. I use car spray paint (matt white, black or grey). Using a spray can saves your brushes and gives a nice even finish. I always spray outside (to avoid the fumes) and use several thin coats rather than saturating

the figure with paint.

Undercoat colour is a difficult question and is very much a matter of personal preference. Black undercoat leads to a slightly darker figure that is more grungy. If you use black the shadows are taken care of. White produces a much cleaner look with bolder richer colours. I personally use black for smaller figure and white for 25mm. Some fantasy figures look really good with black (orcs etc).

Planning

It is important to plan out how you are going to paint your figure. obviously you will have to research uniforms etc. For barbarian types try to think of the basic colours you are going to use for each figure.

Base Colours

The next task is to paint on the base colours. Start with the colours that are naturally on the 'inside' of the model and work outwards. This usually means starting with the flesh and then working on the clothing.



Colour Washes

Once you have finished the base colour you will need to add the shadow effect. This can be achieved using a wash. Find a colour that is slightly darker than the base colour you are using. For example on flesh use a light brown. Thin the colour down so that is more runny than the paint you normally use. Run the brush over the base colour. The wash paint will tend to run into the folds in the model and being a darker colour will give a good shadow effect.

Dry Brushing

Dry brushing is the opposite of washing. The idea is to create paint the highlights on the figures. This is done by using a colour that is slightly lighter than the base colour. Take some onto an old brush and wipe it with a tissue until there is very little paint on the brush. Gently run this over the raised points of the model. This will pick out the details.

Colours

Which wash and dry brush colours to use? This is a tricky question because its a matter of taste. One style is to use different colours for the wash and dry brush. This tends to give a deeper richer style of painting that often works well with fantasy style figures. Alternatively you can mix the base colour with white and black/brown to give a flatter grungier figure. I personally prefer the latter technique as I feel it gives a more realistic look.

The current fashion is to really emphasise the washes so that the flesh has dark brown lines on it. This really stands out. I personally prefer more a more subtle approach.

Instead of using paint try experimenting with ink for your washes. This gives a really rich colour to the figure - again often works well with fantasy type figures where you want an exaggerated qual-

ity to the colour.

Some useful colours:

- Black
- White
- Flesh
- Raw Sienna - Nice light brown which makes a good wash mix for flesh.
- Yellow Ochre - Yellowy brown
- Burnt Umber - A really lovely rich dark brown which is really useful for horses.
- Sap green - Light green
- Hookers green - nice dark green colour
- Pewter or Silver - For armour.

Obviously this is not a comprehensive list. These are colours that I think it is worth buying as artists tubes instead of model paint pots.

Basing

Nice basing really finishes off a figure.

1. Glue figure to card or plastic base.
2. Use filler to blend the model base to your plastic base.
3. Spread glue (PVA white glue) on the base and sprinkle sand on. Shake off residue (Builders sharp sand is best because it is very gritty)
4. Undercoat as normal.
5. After painting splodge glue on parts of the base and sprinkle with flock and static grass.

Hints and Tips

1. Arrange your figures to do all of the same colour at once if possible. This saves on paint and time.
2. Wash your brush out regulaly.
3. Sort out your figures and start with the average looking ones first. When you get onto the good looking figures you will have had a bit of a practice so you will produce stunning results.
4. Practice techniques such as washes and dry brushes on old figures. (I started out practicing on plastic figures first as they are much cheaper).

Effect	Base	Wash	Highlight
Flesh	Flesh	Flesh +Raw Sienna	Flesh + White
Chain Mail	Black		Silver or Pewter
Plate Armour	Pewter	Black ink	Silver
Grainy Wood	Raw Sienna	Burnt Umber	White + Raw Sienna
Gold	Gold	Peat Brown Ink	