

SNAPSHOT

USE LIGHT MAPPING TO ESTABLISH CONTRAST ON FIGURES

LIGHT AND SHADOW are some of the most important elements in figure painting. The depiction of light is essential to establishing contrast, which makes a appear figure more realistic and visually interesting.

By Robert Raver



1 I primed this 3D-printed figure with Krylon Camouflage Brown. To determine the best direction of light, shine a small flashlight on your model from various angles.



2 Next, spray a highlighting mix of Tamiya Deck Tan (No. XF-55) and Flat White (No. XF-2). The contrast creates a guide for where the light hits the subject — a light map.



3 I started by airbrushing the coat and vest with a first-color pass. I masked the areas I didn't want the jacket color with Ammo Camouflage Masking Putty (No. A.MIG-8012).



4 I used mixes of Vallejo Dark Blue Grey (No. 70.867), Dark Prussian Blue (No. 70.899), and Field Blue (No. 70.964) with Thinner Medium (No. 70.524) to paint the jacket and vest at 10:1 thinner to paint. I set my air pressure to 5 psi to keep the paint from spidering. The idea is to apply translucent color layers using the existing light map to determine where the darker and lighter color mixes should be applied. Notice the differences between the front, left, and right sides.



5 I mixed warm gray shades on a wet palette with Scalecolor Artist Art White (No. SART-01), Art Black (No. SART-02), and Yellow Ochre (No. SART-20). I used those colors ...



6 ... to better define the figure's face following the light map as a guide. The grays blocked in and refined the light and shadow areas. Then I followed up with a thin layer of Burnt Sienna (No. SART-42) for an overall tanned tone. Even though it's dark, keeping the mix thin, almost like a wash, lets the mapping show through.





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Next, I made more mixes using white, black, yellow ochre, and burnt sienna to refine the areas of light and shadow and work the transitions in between. Here you can see the progression of color mixes and the result of applying thin color layers.



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I deepened shadows with Burnt Umber (No. SART-06) and then turned to painting the eyes and applied a white catch light with paint on the tip of a pin chucked in a pin vise.



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Adding Golden Flesh (No. SART-08) to my mixes to create some final highlights finished the initial painting of the face.



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As you can see, although there's a lot of work to do before getting to the end of any figure, initial light mapping can allow you to focus on color and detail while having a guide for a consistent light source. The work at the beginning can help chart your way to the end. **FSM**