

Dry-brushing

A simple way to add highlights to your models

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Looking for that last bit of dimension and realism on your models? Try the dry-brushing technique. This technique brings out detail which might otherwise disappear on a model by highlighting the raised surfaces. It works by dipping a short, stiff brush in paint, then brushing off most of the paint and pigment from the bristles. Lightly dragging the brush over raised detail deposits a very small amount of the pigment, highlighting the raised sections only.

Dry-brushing is an effective technique for almost any kind of modeling, but giving some thought to what medium you'll use and where you'll apply it will help you to achieve maximum realism.

Ground bound. On model trucks, construction equipment, and especially armor models, dry-brushing works well on bolt heads and upper surface areas, where the real vehicle is weathered from wind and sun. Try dry-brushing with a bit of your AFV's base paint mixed with some

flat white, and watch how the subtle contrast in shades makes a startling difference.

On tracks, try dry-brushing some earth-colored paint. The effect tones down the "clean" look of treads. Tracks and drive sprockets also benefit from a dry-brushing of steel, silver, or rust paints, as their edges are constantly experiencing a wearing, paint-chipping motion.

Turret-mounted machine guns can have their detail highlighted by a dry-brushing of steel-colored paint, and the cannon barrels and exhaust mufflers can look extremely realistic if there's some dark colors dry-brushed on as soot.

Aircraft. Dry-brushing buttons and knobs in model aircraft cockpits is a lot easier than trying to paint them one by one. Try using silver, white, or light gray enamel paint to make the details on the consoles stand out. A few dozen passes with barely any paint on the brush will yield better results than just a few heavy passes, since that way paint won't bleed

With an old paintbrush and some enamel paints, you're ready to bring out fine detail you never knew was there.

onto the panel.

Wheel wells on aircraft can also benefit from highlights added by dry-brushing, as can leading wing edges and walkways where paint is frequently faded and worn. Model jets have afterburner cans that can be drybrushed with steel or aluminum paints for a nice effect, and a little black applied near gun ports looks great, too.

Figures. Take a photograph sometime and give the clothing a close examination. See how shadows depend on how the person's clothing hangs on them? Dry-brushing the clothing on your figures helps create the illusion of this shadowing, since the deep, recessed areas of the "fabric" folds won't get highlighted. Again, try a lighter shade of the base color, or even flat white, if you want to "pop" a highlight into view. FSM



Clip down an old brush, making the bristles short and stiff. Lightly dip it into the paint – you don't need much. Next, on a paper blotter, brush off almost all of the paint. You'll barely see anything at all on the paper when it's ready.



Lightly drag the brush over the detail you want to highlight. Don't try to leave a coat of the new color, just a trace of it. If you've correctly removed most of the paint in the first step, you'll get about 10 passes before you need to re-wet the brush.



This Black Box NACES ejection seat is going into a 1/48 scale F-18. Hornets on aircraft carriers see quite a bit of wear, so Chris added another application of dry-brushing. The trick is to go slowly. Better too little than too much.



A third round of dry-brushing passes leaves the NACES seat with a lot more dimension than it had with its initial flat black paint job. If you've drybrushed areas that you don't want highlighted, just go back and retouch with the original color.



Wooden truck beds become visibly worn as objects are loaded into them, and the sun and rain will bleach the upper surfaces of a hard-working truck. On this 1/35 scale Fort Zis 5, Terry Thompson simulated wear with a dry-brushing of lighter paint – even on the fender edges.