



How to become a better Miniature Figure painter

Part 1

What Makes A Well Painted Miniature?

- Visually interesting
- Believable - not necessarily realistic
- High Contrast
- Accurate highlight and shadow placement
- Separation of elements
- Clean execution
- Accurate depiction of different materials

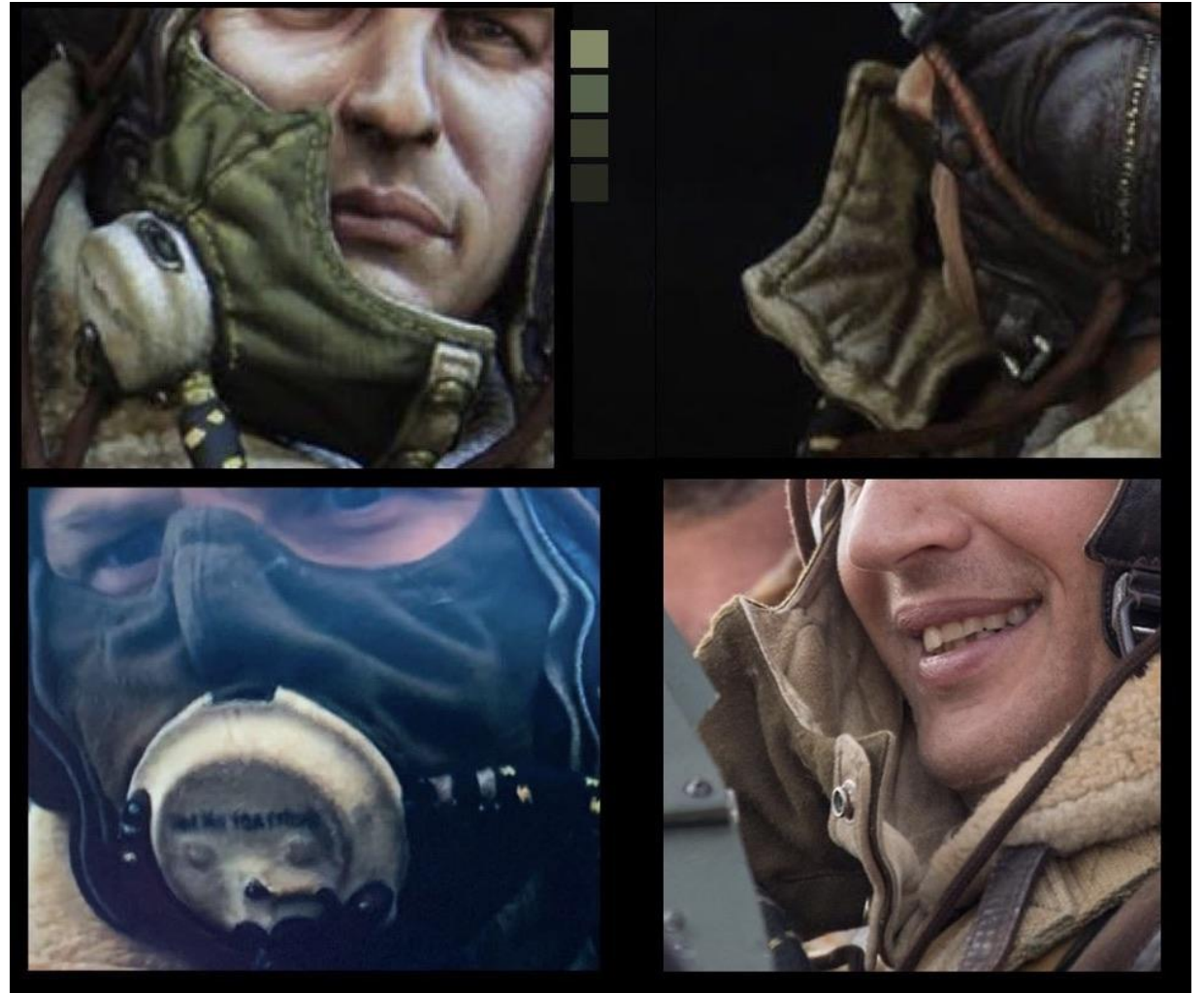
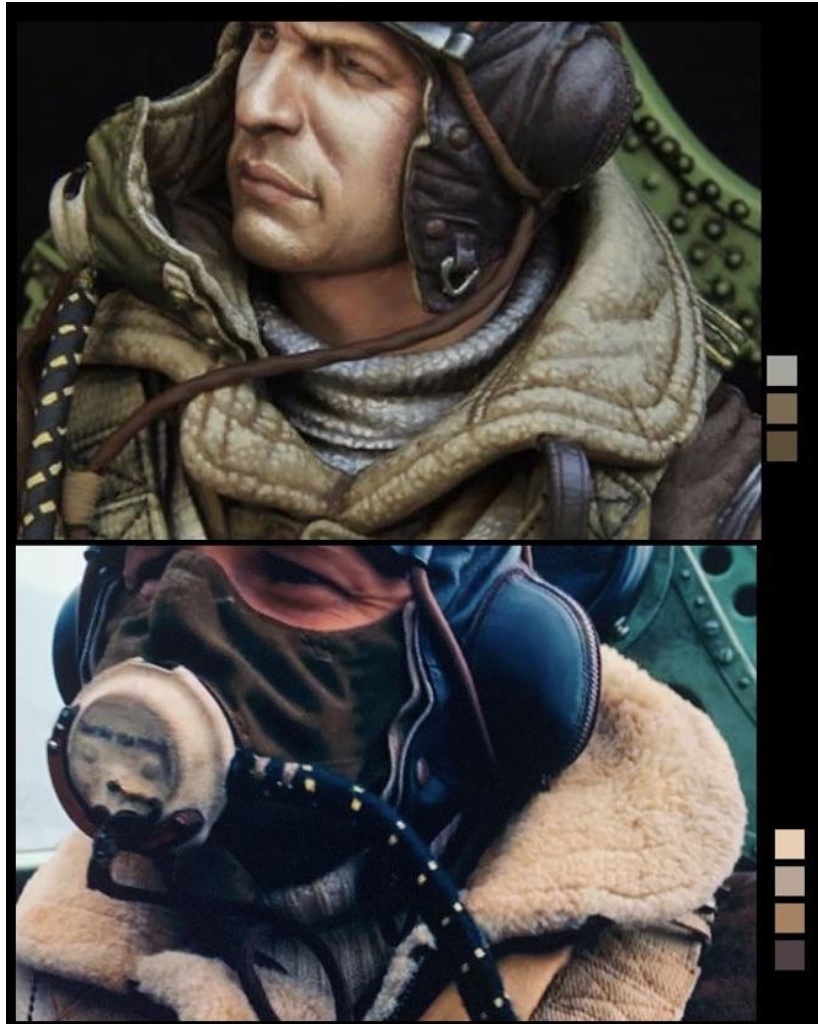


Always using Reference is key

- There are 3 types of reference you can use in order of ease of use:
 1. Other miniatures: The same model or similar
 2. Traditional Illustration
 3. Real life photographs

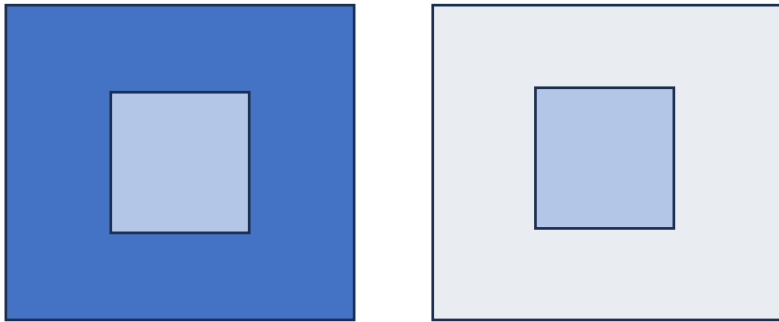


Collect a series of references for each project. I use  VizRef on my iPad to view them.



Learn to see colour

- Learning to see individual colours takes practice. Things can be deceiving



- Use a colour picker to select the colours from your references.



Paint little and often

- It is better to paint 15 – 45 minutes 3 to 4 times a week than one long session every week or two.
- Work on the most difficult areas at the start of the session. Your ability really concentrate will decrease with time, especially when first learning.





Take progress pictures and study when away from your painting desk

Good lighting is important

- Having a good painting lamp is important
- Ideally, one that has variable brightness settings
- Try not to paint all the time under very bright light
 - This can lead to models that look very dull under normal light
 - If you don't have an adjustable light, check regularly under day light conditions
 - If you want to enter competitions, check under poor light and adjust accordingly



Magnification is Essential

- Using magnifiers will significantly improve the quality of your painting.
- I don't like most magnifiers as they are uncomfortable, too heavy and you can't see far away.
- I recommend MagEyes or something similar. They are very light and you can see above/below when looking at references or your palette.
- I wear these and reading glasses together.





Quality brushes make a difference

- I highly recommend quality kolinsky sable brushes in the following sizes
 - Size 2 (base coats)
 - Size 1 (detail)
 - Size 00 or 000 (fine detail)
 - Dry brush
- Good brands include:
 - Da Vinci Maestro Series 10
 - Raphael 8408
- I highly recommend using a wet palette
 - Mine is made from a Ferrero Rocher box, a cleaning sponge and parchment paper used for baking



Brush Grip

- Brush grip is key to accuracy
 - Touch hands together
 - Support arms on desk
 - Use finger movement for most accuracy, don't move your whole hand
 - Always move the model to get the best position to paint, not your hands
- You don't need fancy handles to hold the model. I made mine from round wood bought from home depot and paper clips straightened.
- Drill a hole in the figure that is a push fit on the paper clip or use a small amount of CA glue to hold.

You only need a few basic techniques to produce really good results

A) Layering

B) Edge highlighting



The following more advanced techniques can add additional refinement

C) Stippling

D) Blending

1. Glazing
2. Wet blending with acrylics
3. Feathering
4. Stipple blending
5. Oil paints



C



D

Tutorial Videos



- Layering
 - [LAYERING explained in 5 minutes](#)
- Edge Highlighting
 - [Edge highlighting in 5 minutes](#)
- Stippling
 - [Stippling explained](#)
- Glazing
 - [Ultimate guide to glazing](#)
- Wet Blending
 - [Wet blending explained](#)