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15

Now that the decals are down, a uniform flat coat smooths things out.



16

You can use the airbrush to simulate dust and grime. Here it's a very thin coat of a lighter color, Tamiya Desert Yellow. Be careful with this effect; a little goes a long way.

and ready-made detailing from Tamiya's Detailing Master color sets.

After I applied some pastels and Detailing Master colors, I decided to make the dirty and slightly dusty appearance a bit more permanent. I mixed up a thin wash of Tamiya Desert Yellow acrylic, which is a lighter shade than all the previous colors and will appear as a light layer of dust or dirt over the entire surface. I mixed the wash with about two to three parts Tamiya thinner to one part paint, 16, and tested it first through the airbrush. It only took a few seconds of spraying the "dirty wash" over the entire model to further soften the finish with a uniform layer of dusty dirt, and make the weathering a bit more permanent. Don't overdo this step; maintain a light touch to keep the effect subtle.

The model is nearly finished at this point; all airbrushing is complete and now the model needs only a few other weathering techniques. For a beginner it looks pretty good at this point; the paint itself looks authentic.

I'm very satisfied with the appearance of the tank and the camouflage, 17. I'll probably further detail the tracks and wheels with more subtle washes and applications of pastels and dry-brushing. One would have a difficult time trying to replicate this type of camouflage and weathering without an airbrush.

An airbrush is essential for much of the fine-pattern camouflage you see on this classic Panzer, and you could detail and weather it even more with washes, dry-brushing, and by picking out details with appropriate colors.



17



'63 Chevy IMPALA

Adding dirt and rust for that lived-in look

The following exercise will show you how easy it is to add realistic weathering to models with your airbrush. There are a number of techniques you can use to achieve weathered finishes, including the use of pastels and real dirt.

However, you can apply a more permanent dirty, weathered finish with your airbrush. You control the amount of "dirt" by controlling the paint colors, mixtures, and amounts applied to the surfaces. It is relatively easy and a lot of fun to do.

Don't worry about precise application or color match. Just get close, stay "loose," and have fun.

4

Rust, grime, and dirt



1

Here's the basic chassis detail, painted before adding any weathering. The weathering will cover up a lot of fine paint details, so your colors and finishes need not be exact or precise.



2

Lightly spray a fine mist of Model Master Rust acrylic paint onto the chassis as the first step toward a weathered airbrush finish.



3

Follow up the first layer of rust by spraying a light coat of an earth-tone "dirt" color. Any earth-tone color that simulates dirt will work.

Painting the model. Paint the body on this '63 Impala using a combination of flat acrylics: a rust-colored primer overall, highlighted with a few areas of light gray primer for touch-ups. First paint the chassis with flat black, and then detail it with brush-painted engine, transmission, and exhaust details, 1. You can be as exacting as you want with the colors. But realisti-

cally, once the model has been "dirtied," all the colors blend together, so your chassis detail colors don't need to be especially precise before you apply the weathering.

Add the rust. The first step in weathering the chassis is to add a fine mist of Model Master Rust acrylic paint to the chassis, 2. I gave a light, general application of the

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Model Master Acryl Rust
- Tamiya Neutral Gray
- Polly S Rust
- Testors Transparent Blue and Transparent Green spray paints

paint. You can use a medium or heavy tip on the airbrush.

You want to mist the paint on rather "dry," so don't hold the airbrush too close. Start at about a foot away, and adjust the distance until you are happy with the results. This step will go quickly, and the rust color dries rapidly as well.

You may not need to thin the paint for this detail. But if the unthinned paint does not flow from your airbrush, thin it just enough for it to flow out in a grainy pattern.

Add the dirt. The next step is to add the dirt color to the chassis. Use any acrylic flat color in the tan range. Some colors are actually made to resemble earth; just choose your favorite. The color shown in 3 is Polly S Rust, which is actually a good earth tone.

Apply this color using the same method as the rust. You may want to direct the dirt rearward, however, giving more of the paint buildup to the front-facing surfaces of the chassis and wheel wells, to simulate the motion and direction of dirt being sprayed onto the chassis. Just focus on aiming your airbrush as you apply paint toward the rear of the car in general.

This coat covers quickly. You can apply a light coat to simulate a newer car, or a heavier coat as shown here to create an older car or truck. It's easy to overdo this weathering on a "newer" vehicle. To keep the dirty color from building up too rapidly, you can mix up to half of the color with acrylic flat clear. This will reduce the overall dirt-color saturation. With very little practice, you will easily master this effect with your airbrush.

Spraying the body. Save the remaining "dirt" mix to apply to the body – or mix your favorite acrylic dirt color for the body. If you haven't already, you'll want

to thin the paint a bit with some flat clear acrylic paint and test the pattern first. Generally, spray more heavily on the lower side panels, more lightly as you go over the top of the model.

I masked the windshield wiper paths, 4. After applying the "dirt," I removed the mask, resulting in a very accurate-looking dirty windshield with wiper marks in place.

Notice the windshield tint strip, 5, added with a fine-line detail airbrush. This little detail really sets a model apart, and is best replicated with an airbrush rather than decals or any other means. I like to use transparent blue and green enamel colors from spray cans for this, spraying the paint from the cans carefully into my airbrush jar. Then I apply this paint directly with the fine tip airbrush to the windshield. No thinning of the paint should be necessary, and the enamel "bites" into the clear plastic with ease.

Hold the airbrush nozzle quite close to the surface, and gently apply the paint in a side-to-side motion as if you are drawing the pattern onto the top of the windshield.

The finished effect is very realistic. To complete the tint strip, let the windshield dry thoroughly, and then remove any overspray with a soft cloth and plastic polish by buffing the surface.

I prefer to use Novus no. 2 to polish the windshield. This completely cleans and shines the windshield, leaving a perfect in-scale faded tint strip.

That's it! The photos show the body and chassis after the airbrushed weathering has been applied to both. The appearance

is quite realistic. You can stop at this point, or further detail your model with washes, pastels, or other finishes added on top of the paint, 6, 7).

Use your imagination when weathering vehicles. Remember, you can use the chassis weathering shown here for

all car and truck models. Once a car has been driven a few months, the chassis is covered in a uniform film of dirt and road grime.

Easily added to your models with an airbrush, this touch will make your models far more realistic.



4

Add an overall dirty appearance by lightly spraying the entire model with some of the "dirt" mixture used previously on the chassis. Mask the windshield first to simulate accurate wiper paths.



5

Painting the dark tint strip across the top of a windshield adds realism to any car model. It is easy to apply using an airbrush with a fine nozzle.



6

Add a drybrushed "oil" stain after the airbrushed dirt for extra realism. Even though this is only paint on plastic, it sure has the "feel" of grimy, greasy dirt, typical of almost every old car.



7

The finished model shows a lot of realism achieved with little effort, using an airbrush and flat-finish acrylic paints.



“METAL FINISH” MiG

A realistic “bare-metal” finish is not as hard as it looks

Anatural-metal finish on an aircraft model is a sight to behold – if it is finished properly. Sometimes a model builder pulls off such a feat and replicates the many variations of colors and finishes needed to accomplish this. I’m always impressed when I see a model like this at a show or hobby shop.

Because the builder must paint plastic to simulate unpainted metal, and because many aircraft are made from a number of differing metals, this is one of the most complicated types of paint jobs to accomplish faithfully.

Before tackling this model, I had never tried this type of finish before, but the challenge was enough to make me enthusiastic – and focused on taking the proper steps. If I can be successful, you can too. Plan ahead, think ahead, research the model you are building, and follow step-by-step instructions. Be prepared to practice any new techniques before trying them on your model. Try them out first on a scrap body or on plain pieces of styrene. Familiarize yourself with the techniques of spraying, polishing, masking, and overcoating the layers, and you can achieve a wonderful variety of metal finishes on your model’s surface.

The model seen here is an excellent subject for either beginners or seasoned modelers. It is a MiG 21 in 1/48 scale, made by Academy. The model is well-engineered, has clear assembly instructions, and goes together without particular problems. The parts fit very well and require only a minimum of filling and finishing prior to painting.



1

Here you see a variety of cockpit components, with the paints used to airbrush their details.