

# ADVANCED COSPLAY PAINTING

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## AIRBRUSH AND WEATHERING



BY SVETLANA QUINDT

# HAVE FUN CRAFTING!

Please visit my website and check out my other books and patterns:

[www.kamucosplay.com/store](http://www.kamucosplay.com/store)



If you've read my previous book '**The Book of Cosplay Painting**' you're probably already a pro with brushes and acrylics. In this first painting volume I introduced you to my favorite primers, colors and varnishes. Since painting a newly finished costume piece is always intimidating, I tried to give you some super simple techniques to help you turn a boring piece of foam or Worbla into an awesome bloody steel axe. It's all super fun and if you've not read that one I definitely recommend starting there.

Being able to quickly paint your finished pieces with acrylics is super awesome and all - but I am sure by now you've noticed that these simple dry-brushing

techniques always look a bit cartoonish. If you're going for that look - perfect! But sometimes you may want to give your prop or armor a more realistic paint job. This is what this new book is all about! On the following pages I'll introduce you to the wonderful world of airbrushes and we'll also swing a few cans of spray paint. You will learn how to paint with no brush strokes and fake realistic materials like metal, wood and even bone. We will also look into different techniques for weathering and aging like creating rust or chipping paint. This will give your costume that extra bit of realism. Sounds exciting right? So be prepared! This book will be dirty, messy and a lot of fun!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



## KAMUI COSPLAY

Hello there! We are Svetlana, Benni and Zelda. Most of you probably know us as **Kamui Cosplay**. We live in Germany and create costumes and props for many years. We make these instructional books to support you in building awesome things. It's great fun and an amazing way to express your fandom and creativity.

**Thank you** for your support by buying this book! Hopefully you will find it helpful and inspirational! You enable us to do what we love.

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# Handy tools and beautiful colors

As always you're going to need a few shiny new things to use some of the techniques in this book. But don't worry - we'll also work with stuff you probably already have. Like old socks! *Never* throw away old socks!



## 1 Airbrush Set

An airbrush pistol is a super useful tool for every cosplayer or prop maker. Many of the techniques in this book can also be used without it but I still highly recommend buying an affordable starter kit. You can get a pretty good set for around 80\$ on ebay or Amazon and it's well worth the investment!

## 2 Your old socks

Old socks don't belong in the waste! Use them for painting! They are perfect for all kinds of natural looking paint jobs and weathering effects. Regular fabric is fine as well, but why throw away your socks when you can still use them to create amazing art?

## 3 Assorted brushes

You probably already have a ton of brushes. Use the big, bristly ones for dry-brushing, splatters and messy stuff. The flat ones are for covering big areas and your tiny, expensive ones for fine and delicate details. A broad selection is always good to have. Also be prepared to replace them often as they will no doubt be worn out quickly.

## 4 Glues, latex and gels

Creating fancy textures is a lot of fun. All you need is something sticky! This can be latex, latex caulk, artist gel, white glue, super glue or even Puffy Paint. Every product can be used to achieve many different texture effects ranging from hammered metal to wood. Check out page 13 for more info!

## SAFETY NOTE

Glues, spray varnishes and spray paints are really bad for your lungs, so don't forget your respiratory protection. A simple dust mask won't do the job! It's also never a bad idea to wear some rubber gloves. Even simple super glue can be really nasty, so don't underestimate the danger. Professional equipment is a must-have for this book!



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## 5 Airbrush colors

There are a ton of different airbrush color brands. From those that I've tried, I like **Vallejo** the most. They offer a wide range of colors, primers and special effects. I can also recommend **Alclad** for amazing metallics and **Createx** airbrush colors. In general they come in pretty small bottles but last a long time - especially when thinned down. More on that later though. Check out Amazon or ebay and you will find most of them in no time.

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## 6 Spray paints

It's pretty hard to recommend you something good, since every country has its own local brands. In general there is not much you can do wrong though. Most colors come in matte, satin and gloss. Use them for a quick and easy base layer. You can also find cans for metallic chrome, sparkling special effects or even 3D textures. Always check out your local crafting supplier or the automotive departments in your hardware store to find good quality products.

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## 7 Oils, washes and special effect colors

If you want to create realistic metallic effects try out **Rub'n'Buff** from Amaco! It's a wax based paint with a very high amount of metallic pigments. It also comes in many different shades. There are also similar products from **Gilders Paste** or **Pebeo**. It'll also work a little bit with basic oil colors, raw color pigments and premixed washes from Vallejo but you don't necessarily need any of those. More info on the following pages!

8



## 8 Clear coat

Varnishes are a whole different topic. Every product has its own formula and reacts differently with your paint. Always experiment before you use it on your armor or props! I mainly use water based and acrylic based varnishes but there are many more out there. When used correctly it will protect your paint job from scratches and getting rubbed off. Always use a sealer when you work with thin airbrush colors or weathering effects!



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## Your friendly neighborhood airbrush

A few cheap brushes and some supermarket acrylics were everything you needed for my last painting book. This time it's a little bit more fancy. No worries though, I will still keep it as simple and affordable as possible.

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If you were able to follow my last books, this one will be no problem for you. I want everyone to be able to use my techniques. For this book, all you might want to get is a cheap airbrush set, a couple of new colors, and some household items that you can find in most hardware or hobby stores.

Getting into airbrushing is not as expensive as many people might think. It's true that you can spend an unholy amount of money on it, but that is only if you buy the best stuff on the market. You can achieve a ton of amazing things with a pretty affordable beginner set. To prove this I bought a no name product for around 80 Euros on Amazon.de. While this is still an investment, I promise it will open up many new painting opportunities.

For buying your own set, let me give you a few tips. A good starter pack usually consists of an airbrush pistol, an air tube and a compressor. It's not really necessary to check any specifications on the compressor but make sure it looks big enough. Sometimes they look like small square boxes or big air cans so try to avoid those. If you can, get one where you can check and change the air pressure and try to find one with a moisture filter. Additionally your airbrush pistol should come with a double/dual action function. More on that later. For most applications you can use pretty much every nozzle size but having a few to choose from is always a plus. And that's it! That's pretty much everything you need to know for now!

### THIS IS MY SET

- Double Action Airbrush Pistol
- Nozzles: 0,2 mm, 0,3 mm and 0,5 mm
- Single-cylinder piston compressor with 20-23 L/min, 1/5HP, max 4bar (60psi)
- Pressure gauge, pressure regulator
- Moisture filter
- Some cleaning equipment

### NOTE

A moisture filter is not a must, but pretty helpful if you live in a humid environment. The compressor sucks in air that also contains a little bit of water. This water might collect in your pistol and mess up your color application with ugly splatters. A moisture filter prevents that from happening.

1



Working with an airbrush is super straightforward. You push a button and compressed air starts to transport tiny paint pigments through the nozzle of your pistol. It allows you to create a thin and even color application without any distracting brush strokes, dabs or water drops. There is no better way to quickly cover big areas, apply smooth color gradients and add cool special effects. You can paint a whole armor set in a single evening! Sounds perfect for cosplay, right? Well, it IS perfect for cosplay!

Like I mentioned the airbrush works by using compressed air to transport paint out of your bucket and through the nozzle of the pistol. If you have a double action pistol you're able to regulate the air pressure and the amount of color that comes through at the same time. This allows you to draw thin, fine lines as well as large, even gradients. A pistol without this feature behaves pretty much like a normal spray can - always full power and no way to control the flow.

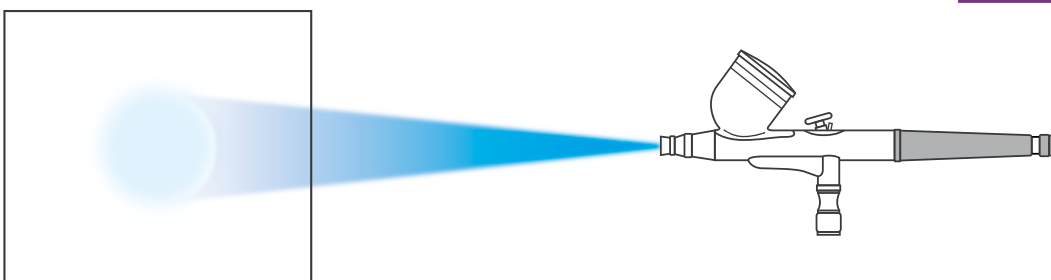
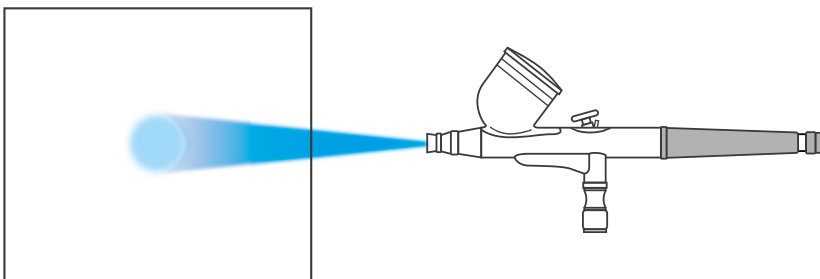
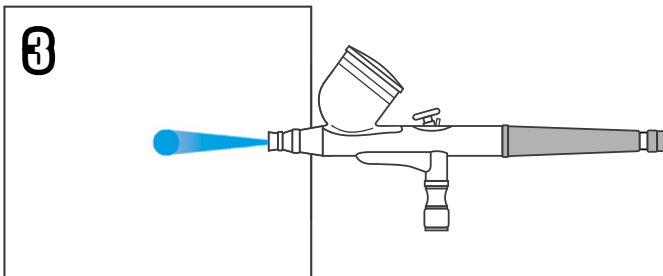
Handling your airbrush needs a little bit of practice though. First, try to find a good grip. I usually hold the pistol between my thumb, middle and ring finger. You need one free finger to control the trigger **[1]**. By pressing this piece on top you can increase the paint application. It's a little bit like eating with chop sticks - everybody holds them a little bit differently but it's all good as long as you can get that delicious Nigiri in your face.

The usual resting position of the trigger is at the front. By just pressing it down you will only activate the air flow. Pulling it back at the same time will add the paint **[2]**. As you can guess you'll get the strongest application by pulling the trigger completely to the back and pressing it in all the way. You can regulate the size of your 'brush' by moving it closer or farther away from your object **[3]**

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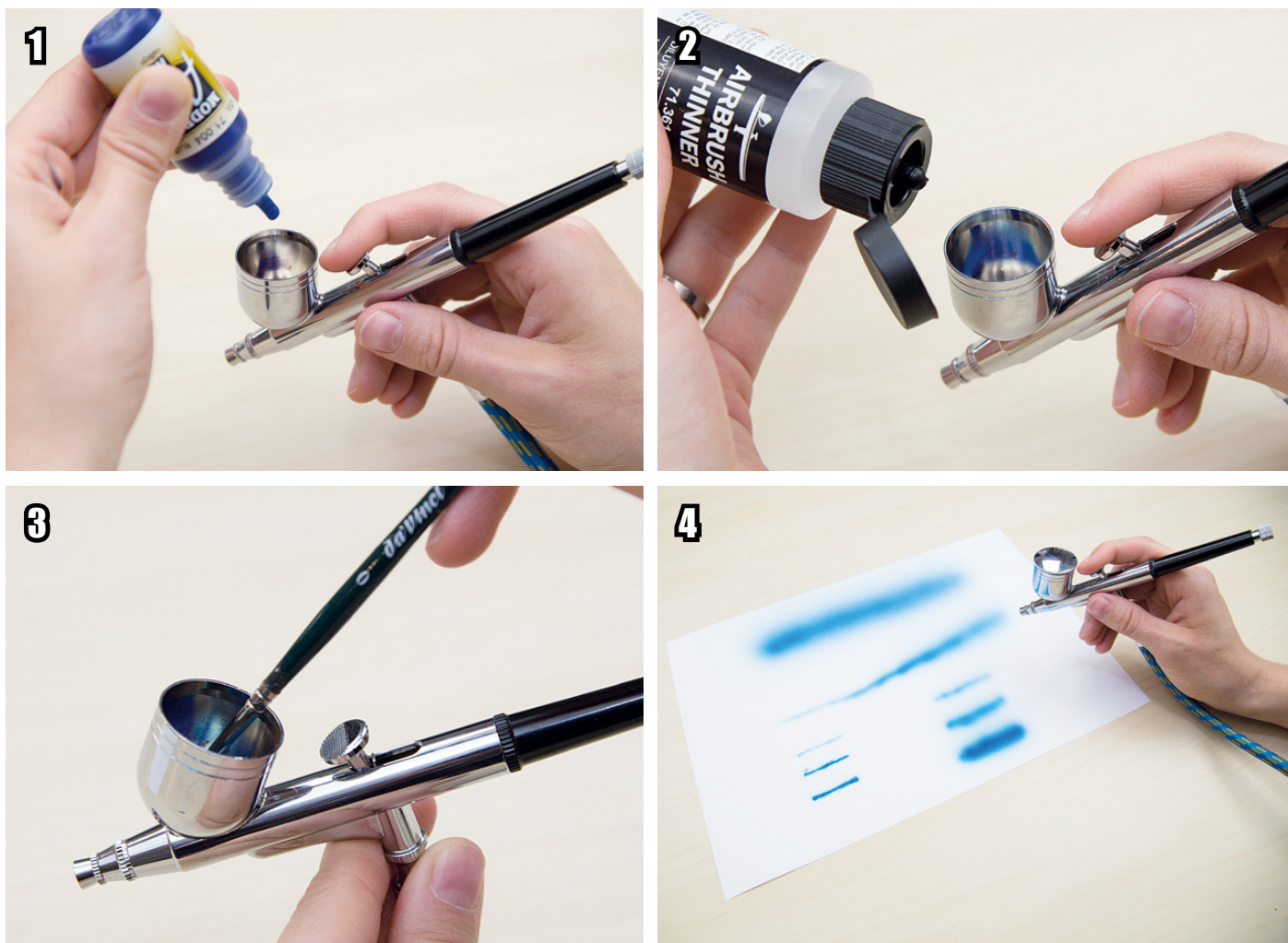


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## NOTE

By just pushing the trigger down, you'll get a nice air flow without any paint. You can use this for many different things: to help dry your paint but also to get rid of dust particles and dirt before you start working.



You can basically force any color through your airbrush as long as it is fluid enough. I tried everything from Copic re-fillers to liquid metal pigments. If you don't feel confident enough to mix and thin your own pigments though, it's perfectly fine to just stick to premixed airbrush colors. There are a ton of good brands out there that you can choose from, so it's not hard to find some good paints to work with.

After experimenting a bit, I fell in love with the products from Vallejo, a company that mainly produces colors for model kit builders and table top fans (hello my dry-brushing Warhammer friends!). Painting cosplay armor is basically the same as painting little table top warriors, except much bigger. Aside from providing a wide selection of colors and well covering pigments, you'll also find great metallic paints as well as some interesting special effect products. The best part is they are almost all acrylic based, so no terribly toxic solvents! A quick look at their website showed me those colors can be bought in most places in the world and are pretty affordable as well. I always check eBay for some good second hand shops and nice prices!

Now it's time to paint! Shake your bottle well and slowly pour some drops into the bucket of your airbrush pistol **[1]**. For small applications I usually use units of around 20 drops, for larger ones 60. No need to waste anything, right? Just refill if you run out. You can also thin them with special airbrush thinner, which gives you more liquid without losing any opacity. This works by adding around 20% of extra thinner. So if you use ten drops of paint, you can add two additional drops of thinner **[2]**. Just make sure to stir them properly with a small brush **[3]**. Once you're done with brushing **[4]**, you can of course let the leftover paint run back into the bottle **[5]**. This way you don't have to waste a single drop! How perfectly efficiently German, ha!





The biggest downside of working with an airbrush is that you have to clean it every time you change the color. The easiest way to do this is to first spray out any remaining paint [6] and then add some airbrush cleaner afterwards [7]. Now use a small brush and clean the inner part of the bucket. Blow the resulting paint/cleaner mixture through your pistol until no more color comes out [8]. Finally you are ready to add a new one!

If you're finished for the day it's important to disassemble and clean the entire pistol. Take it apart and try to remove all the color pigments to prevent your nozzle from clogging up and your needle from getting stuck. A clean airbrush is a healthy airbrush! Disassembling the entire thing sounds a lot more complicated than it actually is. Just remember the right order of the components (or take a video) and then screw everything back together in that reverse order [9]. You can always look up tutorials for this step online if you're having problems. Do this a couple of times and I promise you'll be able to do it with your eyes closed soon enough. I also store my airbrush in a disassembled state to make sure nothing gets stuck.

If you like experimenting and constantly fill your bucket with all kinds of weird paints and varnishes - be careful not to use anything that might attack the metal of your pistol! So no oxidizing solutions! ■



## NOTE

By blocking the nozzle with your finger and pushing and pulling the trigger at the same time, you'll get little air bubbles in your paint bucket. Use this to get rid of paint stuck inside the nozzle where you can't reach with your brush. Some airbrush sets also include little long cleaning brushes you can use to clean the entire inside of your pistol.



## NOTE

Applying paint with a normal brush always leaves some kind of texture, no matter how careful are. Using an airbrush however allows you to create perfectly smooth gradients. This is awesome for mechanical looking parts like this Star Wars inspired cybernetic arm! The paint job you see here was a black base color with some Vallejo gun metal silver on top. I actually had to weather the arm a bit to make it look more realistic and dirty again. The entire color was done in around one hour.



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So far so good - but enough with the boring theory!  
Let's have some fun!

To demonstrate my favorite techniques and effects,  
I built some fancy Vault-Tec badges from Fallout 4.  
You'll notice how different they can look in the end.  
I'll make them shiny and new, but also old, rusty  
and chipped.

We at Vault-Tec want you to be prepared for the  
future! No matter how you choose to paint!

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# Creating metal and textures

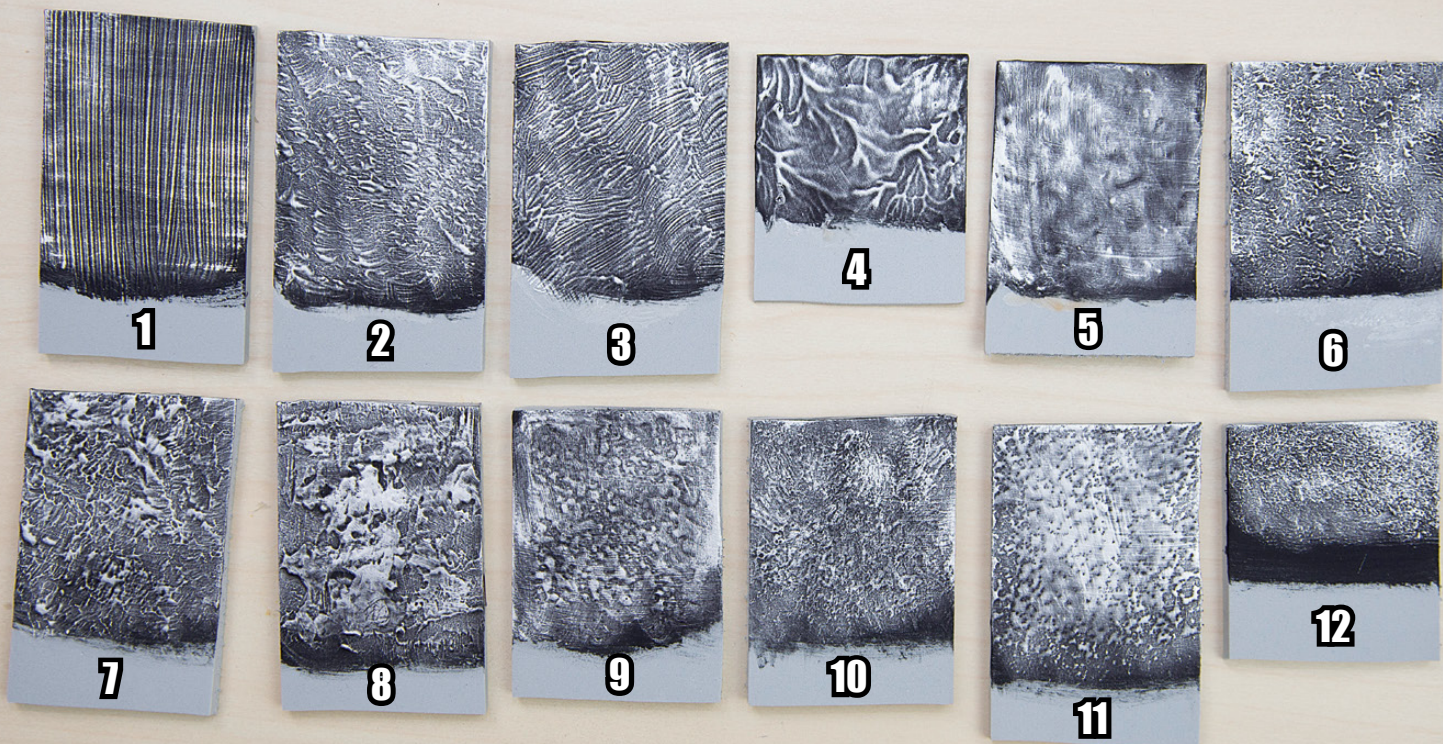
A realistic paint job often goes further than just adding colors. Crafting a rusty orc sword for example includes altering the surface in a way so that it looks like it was 100 years old. Same goes for stone, wood or bone. You can surely try to fake it just using paint, but by adding real three-dimensional textures to your surface you can give it that extra bit of realism.

A very simple, but effective technique is using glue. Just squeeze out a few drops, grab a bristle brush and dab all over your desired area. With a fast drying glue you instantly create a rough distinctive texture on the surface. Just continue dabbing to increase the effect even further **[1]**:

Depending on the size of your drops you'll need to wait a few moments before your piece is ready to be painted. If you want to create silver metal, add a black or dark gray base coat and if you want it golden use black or a dark brown **[2]**. Instead of working with an airbrush, this time I used a wax based paint called Rub'n'Buff. It has a high amount of metal pigments, so handle it with care. As an alternative, you can also use any other kind of densely pigmented metal color.

Covering the entire thing in silver or gold would destroy the texture you've created. The plan is to only get color on the top of those little bumps, just like the snow tips on real mountains! Instead of dipping a normal brush into the gold however, try using an old sock or a piece of cloth. Simply stick your finger into the sock, get a tiny bit of color on it, and carefully rub it over your piece **[3]**. It's called RUB and buff for a reason! Work your way over the surface and add more if necessary. To reach narrow areas grab a small brush or a Q-tip. As you see, this technique turns a new and shiny object into something that looks like Jack Sparrow just found it at the bottom of the sea **[4]**. It's also great for everything else that needs to look old and worn out like ancient gold, rusted iron, aged stone and much more.





## NOTE

I used super glue for the previous example but different products can create different textures! Above you see a few more examples. All of them were applied on a piece of foam with a simple bristle brush.

**1-4 LATEX**

**5 LATEX MILK**

**6-8 ARTIST GEL**

**9 ELMER'S GLUE**

**10 SUPER GLUE**

**11 REGULAR GLUE**

**12 WOOD FILLER**



Create cool effects and textures by simply gluing random stuff on! My steampunk gun was just a Nerf toy. I added a few elements like googly eyes, gears, clock pointers and other things. No idea what it's supposed to be, but it looks cool! Afterwards Benni spray painted the gun black and buffed it with bronze and silver. It maybe took us an hour to put it together. The result though was pretty awesome!

Rub'n'Buff is a super long lasting product! We use the same tiny tube for around two to three years already and it's not even half empty! ■

# Turn your foam into hammered steel

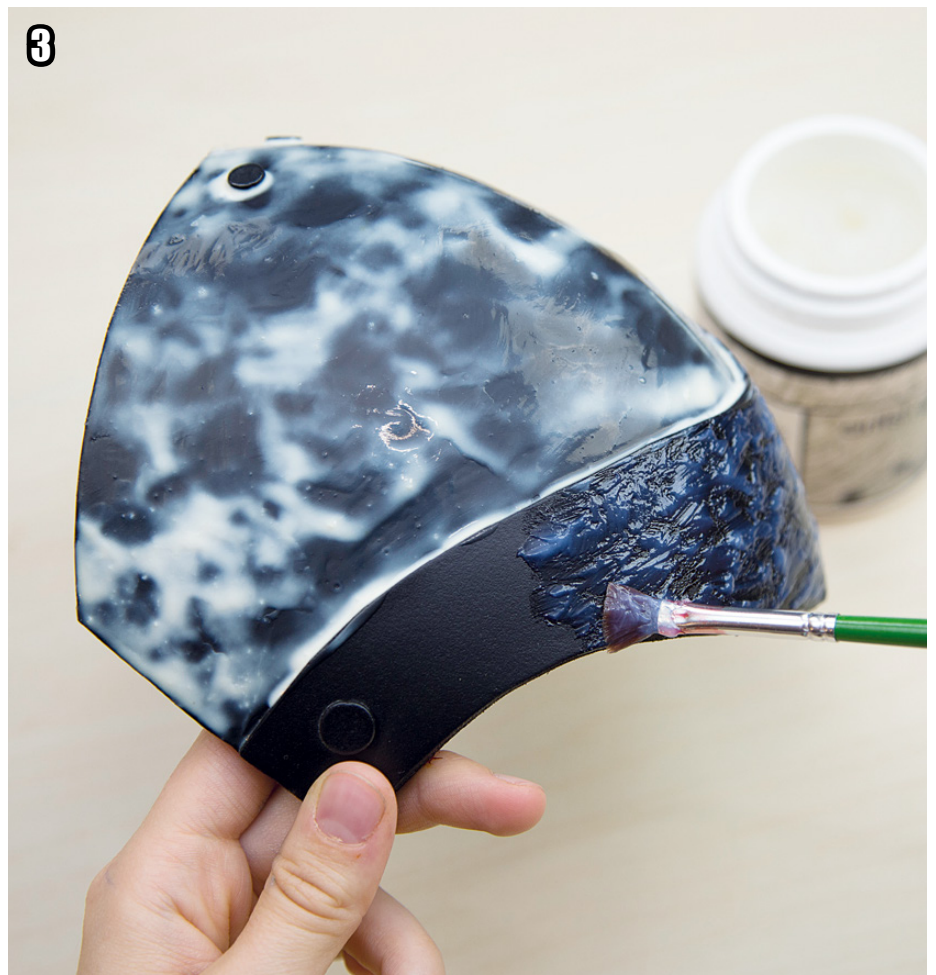
Creating a realistic metal effect is a common struggle for cosplayers all over the globe. There are countless potential products - from acrylics, spray paints, to wax colors and many more. Trying them all out isn't cheap so I did some research and here is my favorite technique!



Instead of using one of my badges, this time I built a small set of shoulder armor pieces. They are all made out of EVA foam primed with three coats of Plasti Dip **[1]**.

To turn the smooth foam surface into something more interesting, I decided to use two of my favorite texture products. The first one is regular latex milk, which you can buy on ebay or in many regular crafting stores. It's a little bit stinky, but 100% natural and therefore not toxic. I roughly applied the liquid all over my armor piece by letting my brush jump around. Up and down, up and down I spread larger drops of latex over the surface. It's important to create a bumpy texture. To get a good thickness and well visible hills I applied two layers **[2]**. I had to make sure my first coat was dry before moving on. Otherwise my brush would have gotten stuck and tear open huge holes.

Next I applied some artist gel on the lower area of the piece. This product should be easy to find in many crafting supplies and art stores - Vallejo also offers a similar gel. I took a good amount on a medium sized brush and started to spread it over the area **[3]**. It takes a little bit of experimentation to figure out what kind of brush strokes gives you which result though.





The textures turned out slightly bumpy at the top and pretty chaotic at the bottom [4]. Now the real fun could start! I airbrushed all pieces with black first. You can also use spray paint - just make sure you don't leave brush strokes. The surface still was a little bit shiny, but that's fine [5]. Afterwards I squeezed out a drop of Rub'n'Buff, covered my index finger in an old sock and dipped the fabric into the paint.

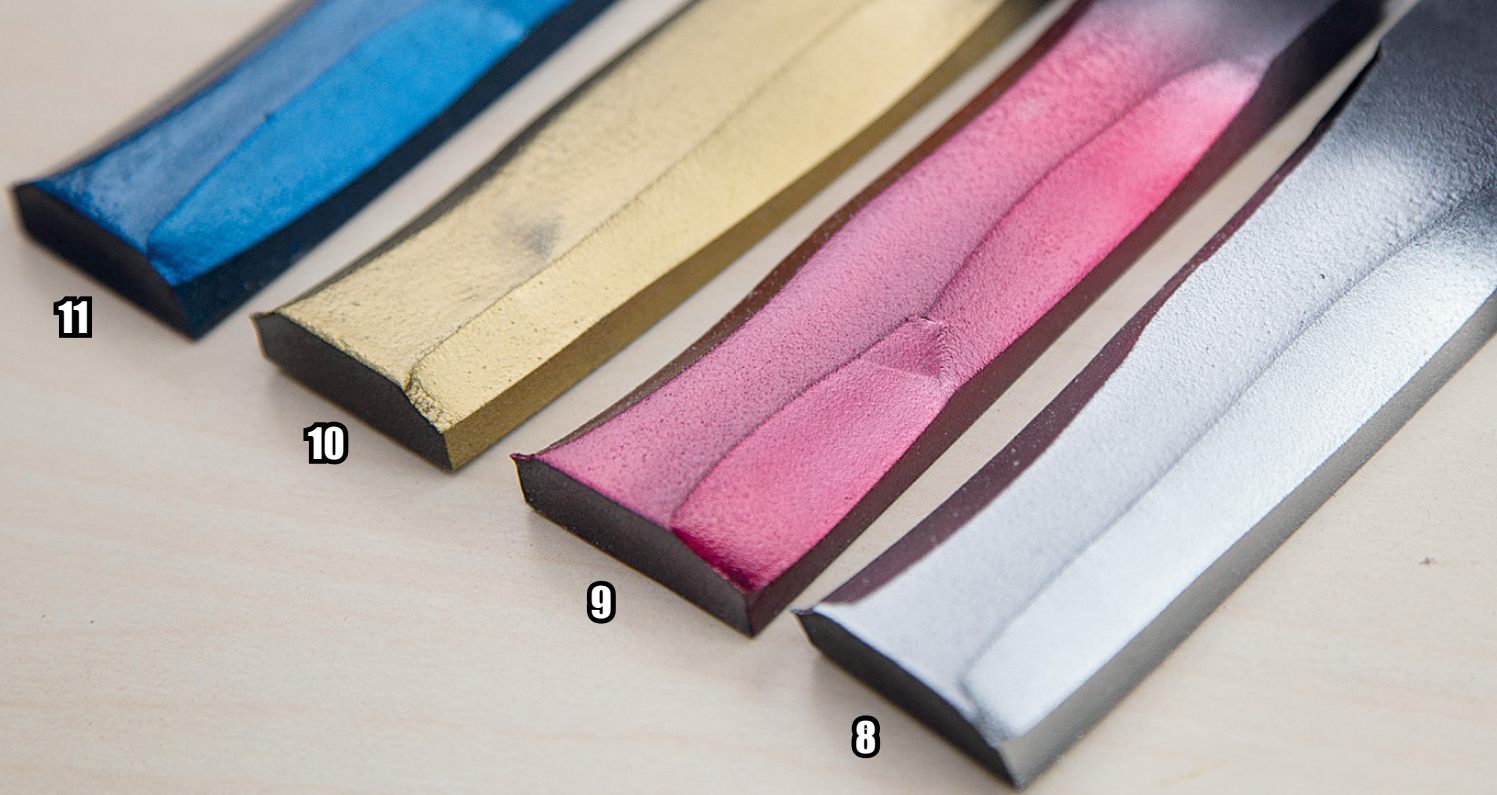
With just a little bit of silver on my finger tip, I simply rubbed the paint in circles over the foam [6]. The more I moved around, the more latex and gel got covered in silver. That way it was quite easy to add nice gradients. The applied texture was pretty uneven and so only the hills and bumps got painted, while the rest stayed black. This technique created an amazingly realistic look of old, hammered steel in just a few minutes [7]. Additionally Rub'n'Buff isn't just paint. This special wax carries a high amount of metal particles and reflects more than every other color I know.

Finding a varnish for Rub'n'Buff isn't easy. Acrylic sealers will dissolve it and turn your pretty, shiny metal into a soulless gray. Water based sealers are never really transparent enough and mostly leave a foggy film. The only product I can recommend is actually spray varnish from Vallejo. As an alternative you can keep it unsealed. After a few days of letting it set it barely rubs off anymore.



## NOTE

Depending on the quality of your latex milk, you might find a few or many little clumps in it. They can be nice highlights on your texture if you want to. In case they are just too large or if you dislike them, use a mesh to filter them out. Just let the latex run trough and use the clean milk afterwards.



Rub'n'Buff isn't the only product that works great for a nice metallic effect. If you are searching for something even more shiny, try checking your favorite airbrush paint shop. Vallejo offers a good variety of different metallic effects, which are far better than all spray paints I tried before. Regular metallic colors already give a good shine, while their Liquid Metal series provide a really nice reflection [8].

So called 'metalizers' are even able to create a realistic chrome effect - provided your underlying surface is smooth and glossy enough. The brand Alclad specializes on high reflective metallic ef-

fects and offer colors in different "shiny" levels. So aside from simple silver and gold, you can also find a vibrant blue, a flaming ruby and many more shades [9-11]. They also offer transparent colors, which can give your standard silver a fancy purple shimmer.

The easiest products to use though are simple chrome metallic spray paints [12]. You should be able to find those in pretty much every hardware store. The reflective quality is rarely as brilliant as promised but at least they aren't very expensive. Use them to get a nice and even metallic coat in just a few seconds. Be careful though as they

usually are quite toxic and flammable, so don't forget your respiratory protection!

All of these metallic colors are pretty tricky to seal. Acrylic based paints react with acrylic spray varnish and might dissolve the color or leave little dots. Some of them take away the shine and some are just doing pretty messed-up weird stuff. Products from the brand Plastikote gave a pretty good result, but other than that it was really hard to find anything that works. ■







## Master the masking tape

Getting the color right where you want it is pretty easy with a brush. Once you work with sprays or an airbrush however, it gets tricky. Masking tape is the perfect solution for this! It's a common technique in the airbrushing scene and a great way to get super clean edges or combine different colors and effects.

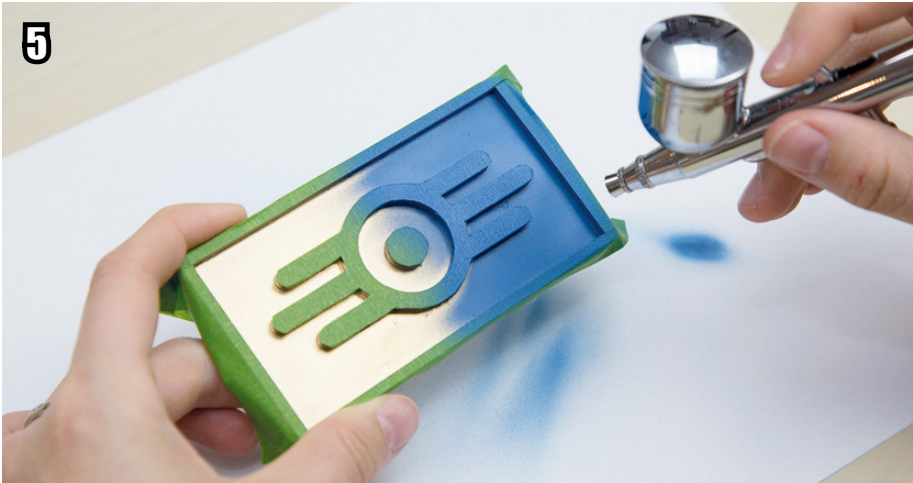
For this example I covered my Fallout badge in some golden chrome spray paint **[1]**. While the result is not nearly as shiny as the label promised, it still provides a nice metal looking finish. The color sticks very well to the surface and doesn't rub off which is great for masking. I want to keep the frame and the icon in the middle golden, so I placed green masking tape all over those parts. Simple stripes are pretty easy to cover but the round and more delicate shapes in the middle had to be cut out with a sharp scalpel **[2-3]**.

After a bit of work I was ready to move on to the next step **[4]**.

In general, make sure to test your masking tape before you apply it. There are a lot of different brands out there and you will have to find one that doesn't damage your colors. Standard painters tape is usually way too sticky for this technique. Make sure your paint is completely dry and consider protecting it with a layer of clear coat.

### NOTE

Always experiment with your paint and tape before you use them on your final piece. Place your masking tape on your skin or some fabric so it loses a little bit of its tackiness. Be extra careful not to damage the paint below your tape when cutting with a scalpel.



Next, I added a second blue color on top with my airbrush [5]. This also works with normal spray cans, but in this case I did not have the right color lying around. Make sure your application is covering enough and apply a second layer if that isn't the case. Many airbrush colors only are covering after a few layers [6]. After a few minutes of letting it set, my paint job was ready and I could start to pull off the tape again [7]. If you've worked precisely enough, no color should have gotten beneath it but you never know till you try! It's a bit like unpacking a Christmas present! You hope there will be something shiny inside! Or a puppy. I really want another puppy! Anyway, be extra careful when peeling the tape off and try not to damage your base color. Your result should now have super clean lines without a single brush stroke [8]. Yay! ■



## NOTE

The green tape you see is a product called **Frog Tape**. It's an awesome masking tape that doesn't even damage very thin color applications.

Additionally to regular masking tape there are also flexible ones from the model making industry (e.g. the small white roll above from Tamiya). You can use those to mask off round shapes but they are pretty expensive and only come with a maximum width of five millimeter.

# Hairspray and latex chipping

When you take a closer look at some old cars, metal containers, or aluminum cans, you will notice they all have something in common: their paint is chipped off revealing the bare metal beneath it. It's a really cool effect and quite useful for many different armor and prop pieces.

To achieve the chipping effect you need to choose two colors. First pick a basic paint - this will be the one that will shine through the top coat later. Chipping occurs mostly on metal so it's usually silver, gray or gold. The second color is the one you'll scratch off again later. Just try to find a nice combination or look at your reference for guidance. Try not to pick colors that are too similar - you might not see the effect at all! If one is too dark and the other too bright, it might look weird as well. As always try and experiment first.

After you've applied your first coat, seal it with a thin layer of hairspray and let it dry **[1]**. Now add the second color on top **[2]**. The spray will prevent it from sticking to the first layer. Depending on your brand, you may already be able to scratch off the top with a toothpick or a bristle brush **[3]**. If not, use a bit of warm water to loosen the color. Think about which areas stand out and are vulnerable. Don't rub off too much though - when it's gone, it's gone!

Once you are done with chipping, carefully blow away any remaining paint clumps or pick them up with a tweezer. Finally, apply a clear coat to seal your work and stop the top layer from peeling off. It's a lot of fun and the results look super cool **[4]**!



## NOTE

The more hairspray you apply, the less your top coat will stick. Spray too much and your paint might crack open by itself. Use a hair dryer in addition and you will get an interesting crackling effect!

I tried this technique only with water based acrylic airbrush colors. Be careful when using other types as this effect might no longer work. As always - do your own experiments first!



Another chipping method works with latex. Instead of covering the whole prop in hairspray, you only apply latex to those spots where you want the paint to be chipped [5]. A regular brush is enough for this. Once these spots have dried completely, apply the second color [6]. All the flakes will be slightly raised and easy to find now. Just use your thumb, rub over the surface and get rid of the latex [7]. Looks good [8]!

One disadvantage of this technique is that you are limited to those areas that you've marked before.

There are also other substitutes for latex like toothpaste or mustard but I have not tried them out for myself. As always, Google is your friend. ■

## NOTE

Latex is also a great substitute for masking tape. Sometimes you will have to mask off areas too small or complicated for tape. Latex is your friend! Just paint it on, apply your color on top and rub it off again!

# Creating real rust

Rusting is a pretty awesome effect, even if you can't use it for every costume. With it however, you'll surely be the star of the Wasteland! I won't explain much of the science and chemistry involved, but I am sure you won't mind much. While you can always paint fake rust, having the real thing is so much more awesome!



First, start with a black base coat and some metallic paint. I used gun metal from Vallejo, which I simply airbrush on **[1]**. I usually 'mark' the rusty areas with some brown. It's important to understand where real rust would appear. It develops in areas where water collects - like gaps, edges or around raised details. Considering this fact I applied some brown all around the Fallout

symbol as well as the frame **[2]**. Your paint job doesn't need to be perfect - it will get messy really quick anyway.

For the next step you'll need some good old white glue. Make sure it's the type that dries transparent. Mix it with a little bit of water and dab it over your fresh brown areas **[3]**. You need real iron

powder to create rust and the glue keeps it in place. Now, simply grab a fresh brush, dip it into your powder and spread it over the sticky parts **[4]**. The more iron you add, the more rust will appear, so use it with care. You can find metal powder all over the Internet but make sure it consists out of mostly iron (over 95%). Otherwise rusting it will be more difficult.



Don't be disappointed if nothing happens yet, we've just started! To achieve the oxidizing effect you need to add a chemical solution over the glued on iron. All you need is some salt, white vinegar and some 3% hydrogen peroxide. The latter you can buy in many drug stores and is usually used for throat gargling. Mix it together by volume with a ratio of around one part salt, three parts vinegar and five parts peroxide. Don't worry, you don't need to be very exact. Shake it thoroughly and fill the mixture into a spray bottle.

Put your prepared piece onto some cardboard or kitchen roll and spray your mixture on [5]. After a couple of minutes your iron powder might turn slightly brown [6]. The real magic happens as soon as you put some more pure 3% hydrogen peroxide over it [7]. Every drop of this solution will give your iron a little bit more color. It will take a while to dry completely but you can accelerate this with a hair dryer if you are careful. Add even more drops afterwards to turn your brown into a bright orange.

Your result will look like an old worn out piece of metal and nobody would guess as anything different [8]. To save these pretty colors from rubbing off again you just have to apply a coat of spray varnish. Be careful and test your sealers before. Some products might turn your work completely dark again and some of them will wash them out. I experimented with all 14 different varnish brands that I could find in my local stores and only three of them worked properly. My favorite was an acrylic-based matte clear coat from Amsterdam. ■

## NOTE

Some of the salt might appear again once the rust is dry. Use a piece of fabric and wipe it away carefully. Also only mix as much as you need of the solution. It will keep reacting in your bottle and might not be as effective next time you use it.

# Washing and creating bones

I could probably fill another book just with all kinds of different textures. However, I think it's far more fun just to give you a few ideas and let you experiment on your own! So, I made some boney stuff this time!



The Fallout badge was a little too small to show this process properly so I 3D printed a skull mask from Game of Thrones. If you also want some cool 3D models check out [myminifactory.com](http://myminifactory.com). This model was made by Stefanos Anagnostopoulos - so thanks! Once it was printed out I covered it with spray primer and sanded it to get a smooth surface. Just like in my metal shoulder example I used artist gel for additional texture. I applied a good amount to get a bumpy and cracked

look **[1]**. Once the gel dried out (took around 20 minutes), I covered everything with an ivory airbrush color **[2]**. Afterwards I added some darker areas with a bit of brown **[3]**. It's amazing how quickly you can create professional gradients with an airbrush. The entire shading maybe took 5-10 minutes and I could have already have stopped with my paint job. The skull looked pretty nice at this point! You always have to decide for yourself when you want to stop and when you want to add

more. Especially when weathering it's difficult to say 'Okay, that's enough'. Always take a step back and look at your work.

For this example I wanted to add a bit of more dirt and weathering so I wasn't quite done yet. I sprayed on a layer of clear coat to protect everything I did so far **[4]**.



Finally it's time for washing! Vallejo and other companies offer premixed washes in different shades but it's nothing you can't do yourself with some basic oil paints. I simply mixed some dark brown and brushed it over parts of my skull (well, not MY skull) [5]. Washing means applying paint and wiping it off again. Oil colors dry out far

slower than regular acrylics, so you don't have to rush. I still only worked on small sections at once instead of the entire skull. This gave me enough time to get rid of most of the color without any problems [6]. I use an old cloth to wipe over the surface. Paint got stuck in the wrinkles and that's exactly what I wanted. The last step now was to

seal my work with another layer of spray varnish. The final result looks super legit, right? Just like North of the Wall [7]!

If your paint dries too quickly you can always use brush cleaner or turpentine to dissolve it again. ■

# Weathering fabric with tea and airbrush

Professional aging can make or break a costume. While armor and props often get that extra bit of weathering work, fabric parts are often forgotten. Here I will show you how to look like Rey from the desert planet Jakku compared to Rey straight out of planet Dry-Cleaning **[1]**.

One of the most useful techniques to give bright clothes a more worn out feel is to dye them in tea. For this example I bought a cheap white shirt and a pack of black English breakfast tea. I put around 10 bags into three liters of water and started to boil them **[2]**. Instead of just soaking the entire fabric into the tea however, I poured the fluid into a water sprayer. Now I could apply it directly where I want to! Totally not speaking from my own experience, I know that 'other' people usually sweat a lot around their neck, on their back and in the armpits. So I put the shirt into my bath tub and began covering only those areas in black tea **[3]**. I repeated this step on the back side and made sure to soak any pleats and hidden areas as well **[4]**. After letting it sit for a couple of minutes I washed the shirt with cold water. Hot water would have washed out more the tea. My fabric looked pretty dark while soaked, but dried out it turned out much brighter. I decided to add more tea to get it even more colorful.

Every fabric tells a story and even a simple shirt can show you if the person wearing it lived in the city, the desert or the jungle. Maybe this person was on a hunt or ran away from a gang of pirate treasure hunting thieves.

This - or maybe they just forgot to take a bath for a year...





The next steps are all optional and only lead to the shirt getting more messy. Just skip those, if you are already happy with a little bit of sweat. Now we're going to roll around in mud and dirt!

To add more contrast and filth to the seams, I grabbed my airbrush and filled it with a sand colored tone. I imagined someone on an off-road trip through the Sahara, so everything will be pretty yellow and brownish. Always think about where your character is coming from, to get the inspirations for your colors.

Dirt is a little bit like rust. It collects in areas where it does not get rubbed off again - places like buttons, pleats and seams. For that reason I added a little bit of sandy brown paint along the middle line, around the seams, the collar and front pockets [5]. It's important to only add a few accents and highlights instead of coloring the whole piece. It's recommended to use many different shades for even more realism. Think about earth. It's not just brown. It's black, gray, brown, orange, green and so much more. Luckily we're in the desert now, and that's mostly sand.

As a final touch, you can add more splatters [6] or rub pure colors pigments over the fabric [7]. All I did was dip my fingers in paint and spread on some more grays and browns. Just don't go too crazy and always take a step back and look at your work from a distance. Do you need more? Then go for it. If not, then you're done!

Never use pure colors. Instead always mix them together or use a washed out version. I hope my example shows how easy it is to add aging to a piece of fabric [8]. It also works for darker types of suits but more on that in my Fallout example! ■



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So far so good! I think I covered the most important techniques of airbrushing and weathering.

Just like in my last books I also want to show you a few of my own work examples. If you follow my work you might have noticed that I have not been putting out so many new costumes in such a short amount of time as I did in the past. I changed the way I approach costumes a lot. Building the same stuff over and over gets old quick and so I decided I only want to tackle projects where I can learn something new.

I also want to get better and learn new and exciting techniques! There is still so much out there!

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# Fallout 4 - Sole Survivor

My costume from Fallout 4 was pretty much the main reason why I made this book. I always only did a minimum of weathering for my previous costumes but this time we went all out. Both me and Benni learned a lot from this project and we wanted to share everything with you!

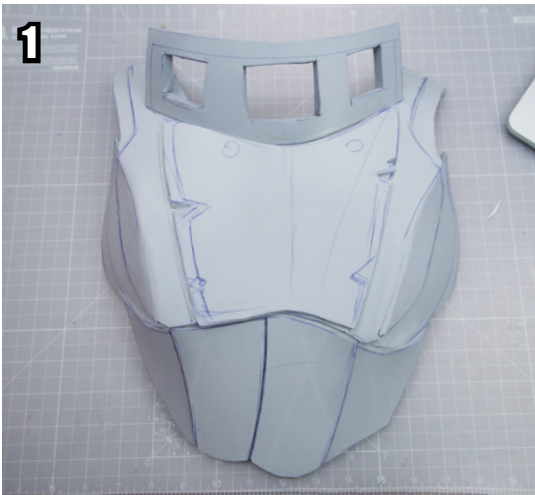
Let me set the stage: The Sole Survivor lives in the post-apocalyptic Wasteland - everything got destroyed. The environment got polluted by extreme radioactivity, is inhabited by mutated creatures and there are only a few people left desperately fighting for survival. It's a dirty, grimey, toxic desert, haunted by ghouls who roam freely through the rusting remains of civilization - basically a land where Trump got elected president. You see, a character coming from this world probably doesn't take many showers! No shiny armor or polished props, this time I had to be messy!

Different from all of my previous projects, the Sole Survivor was mainly just a foam armor on a store bought coverall. I wanted to let this cos-

tume look authentic and believable and tried to think how an armor made out of old rusty, metal pieces would look. So aside of building these parts quite unsymmetrical, I added a lot of 'battle damage' all over the foam with my dremel **[1]**. I carved deep scratches, holes and cracks. Afterwards I heated up the material, let the surface melt a little bit and smoothed it out that way. At this point I would like to give you a detailed explanation on how to create cool foam armor out of EVA foam, but that's a topic for another time.

All armor pieces were then primed with a few layers of black Plasti Dip to make them more durable and sturdy **[2]**. Afterwards I grabbed my trusty airbrush and applied some gradients with

gun metal silver. Just like the rust example before, I added some brown where I thought rust would set naturally: In gaps, along seam lines, around screws and surely inside the dremeled scars **[3]**. Deeper and wider areas got more paint, while small cracks got a little bit of attention. I didn't want to cover the whole armor in rust and still keep the look of actual metal. This lets the piece look more interesting and full of contrast. Furthermore, it also made it believable that it's still a protective piece of metal, instead of rotten piece of garbage.



4



Finally, I added wood glue and iron powder. I took my fancy oxidizing juice, just like I explained on page 23, and sprayed all over my armor pieces. As you can see, some areas were completely covered in rust, while other just turned out a little bit brownish. This happens when rusty fluid runs over a silver paint job. The result is a colorful shimmering metallic effect, which lets your work look even more authentic [4].

While this might sound pretty simple, creating a realistic weathering effect feels more like art

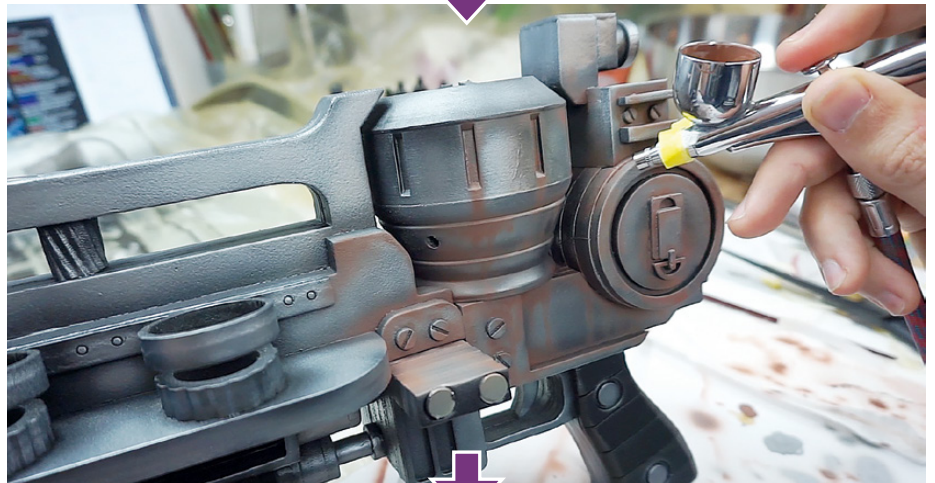
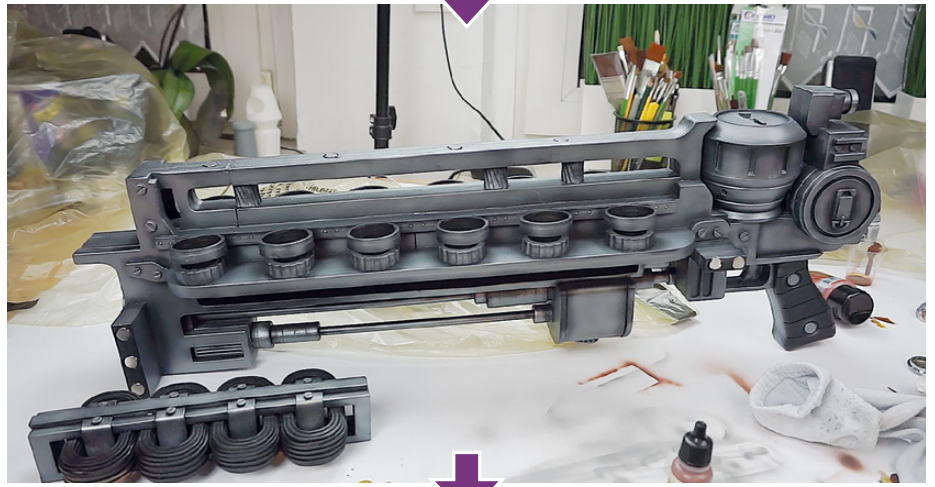
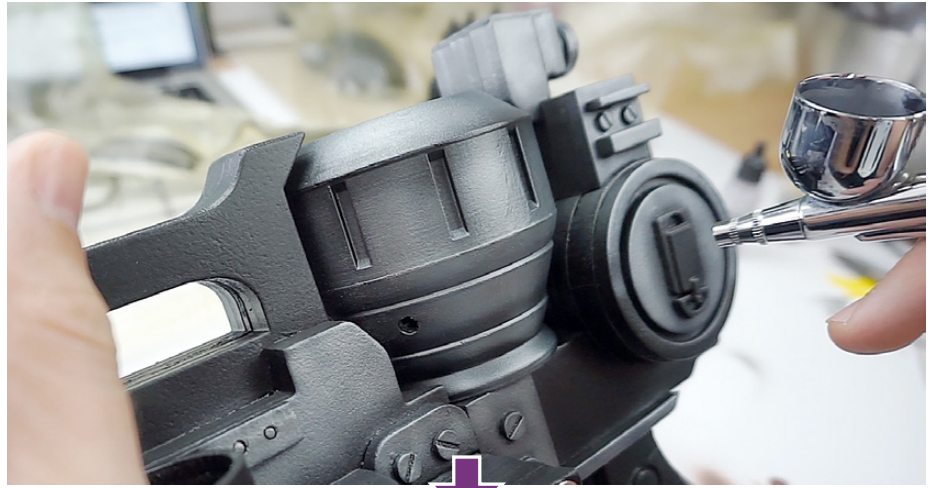
than chemistry. Try to set highlights and think about the contrast of your piece. Consider how it would age naturally, how weather and wind would treat it, and what kind of story it would tell if it could speak. It's not just about just splashing some paint, iron, and chemicals somewhere. Foresee what would happen! You need to be like Mama Murphy on Jet - a fortuneteller for armor and props!

## NOTE

Mixing iron powder, salt, vinegar and peroxide isn't actually the only way to achieve a cool rust effect. There are also special paints from different brands that do the same. We tried out Modern Options and Oxido but everything we tested reacted much slower. You'll definitely need a bit of patience.

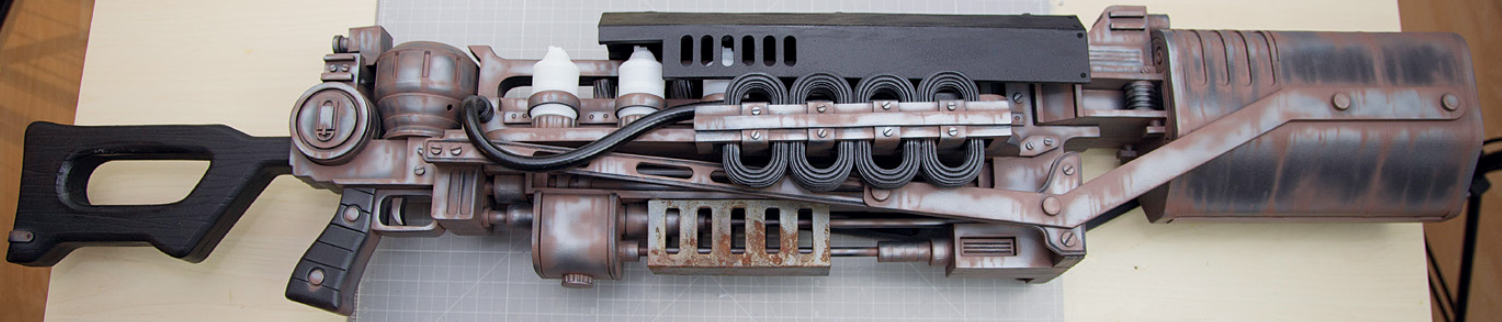
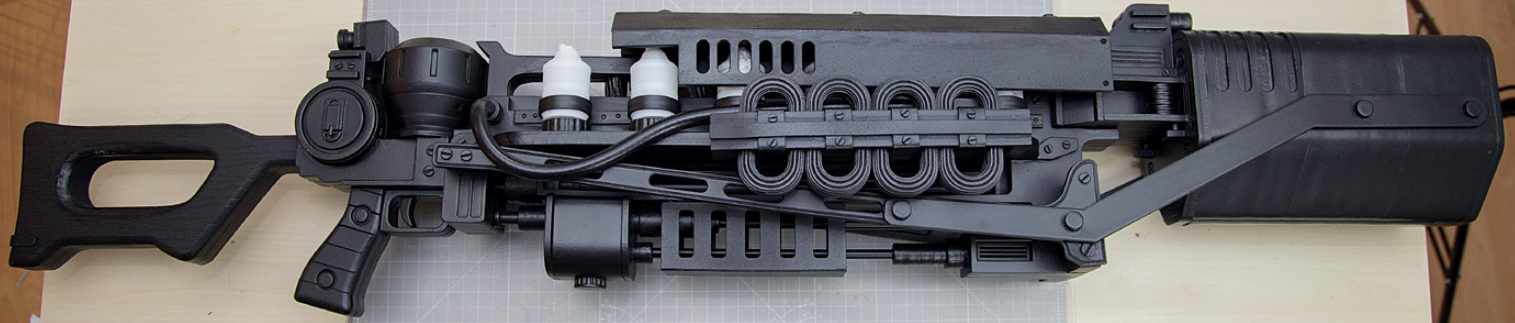
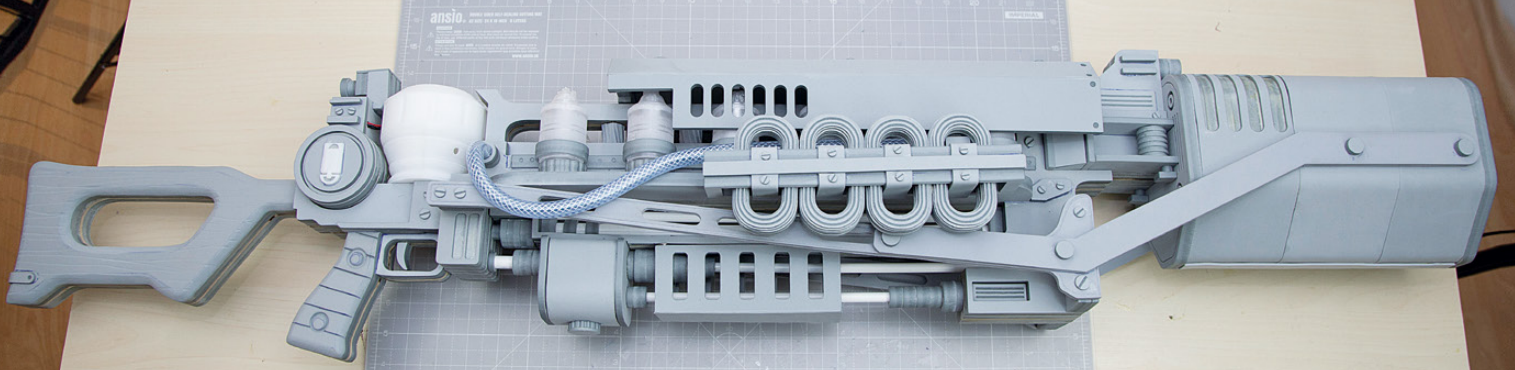
The best part about a good paint job is that it is able to turn every material into something completely different. It doesn't look like it, but my Gauss Rifle for the same costume was just plain EVA foam as well. Similar to the armor, every single piece of the rifle was primed with a few coats of Plasti Dip before it was airbrushed with gun metal silver. Afterwards my husband Benni, who did the whole paint job for this prop, added brown and covered everything in real rust. The rifle actually consists out of countless little details, gaps and hollow areas which made it impossible to paint it in one piece. To manage this and especially allow me to transport this baby with ease, we built the gun out of ten separate pieces. They were all held together only by neodymium magnets. Benni primed, airbrushed and weathered every single part separately and I put it all together afterwards.

The Gauss Rifle was basically a huge test project for a completely new painting and building technique. It took Benni and me a full week of research and experimentation. Based on our results and tips though, I was able to paint my full foam armor in only two days. ■



Check out the entire making-of video of the Gauss Rifle on our YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/vdgSBeRonbw>



# Summary: Basic painting rules

At this point you've already read a ton of info. No matter what techniques you use though, I think it's always important to remember a few basic painting rules! All of this is already written on the previous pages but I thought it would be a good idea to summarize what we have learned so far.

When running around at a convention, chances are high you will bump into something and scratch off the paint on your costume or prop. Maybe you decide to take a swim in your finished costume for a photo-shoot only to notice that your water based armor color said goodbye the moment you left the beach. There are many good reasons to plan ahead. Following some simple basic rules will help make your crafting life a lot easier:

**1. Try products out before you use them.** Not all paints are compatible. There are acrylic based, water based and lacquer based colors and some

of them don't really like each other. Same goes for varnishes. Using the wrong type might even dissolve your paint or crafting material! Definitely experiment with all of your products before you use them on your actual work. Document the process and write down your findings so you don't have to repeat the same research again only half a year later.

**2. Prime your raw material with a thick layer of base coat.** Even when you add clear coat on top, color might still chip off. A base coat is strong enough to withstand most impacts and will be the layer you see when all of the above have been

damaged. Note that not all colors work over black. Always try to find the right or at least a similar shade to what you need before you start applying your airbrush layers.

**3. Protect your work with clear coat.** Clear coat or varnish is like a save point for color. It's a lot easier to wipe away your washes if don't have to worry your airbrush will come off with it. Also you'll make your paint-job weather- and scratch proof.

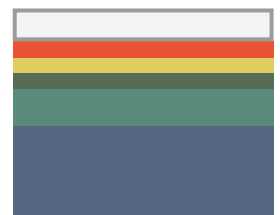


**RAW MATERIAL**

**BASE COAT**

**AIR BRUSH**

**CLEAR COAT**





## Painting the Pip-Boy

Together with his brother Jakob, Benni 3D printed, primed, painted and weathered a custom Pip-Boy Mark IV for me. He documented the entire process and every single work step of the paint job in a YouTube video. I highly recommend you check it out. It's always nice to actually see the process instead of just reading about it.

Check out the video here:

<https://youtu.be/CLPelldYTNS>

## Weathering the costume

While airbrush and rusting effects are cool, good old acrylic is just as great. They are just perfect to weather some brand new boots. By walking through the Wasteland, all kind of stuff would stick to my shoes like mud, dust and the innards of my fallen enemies. After hundreds and hundreds of miles (no taxi in the desert) they would probably be more earth brown than shiny like new leather.

Again it was important to consider how time would do the same job. Since most dirt comes from the ground, the shoes were more muddy at the bottom. Additionally sandy dust would probably stick at more to uneven stitchings instead of clean, slippery leather. The toe cap could have been cleaned a bit over time so not much paint there. Benni dabbed some brown acrylics all

over the shoe sole, seams, along the zipper and at the binding. It was important not to be limited to a single color and technique, but to be versatile. Benni used a mix of brown, red and orange shades and dabbed, brushed and splattered the paint on from many different angles.



Aside from weathering props and armor, you shouldn't forget about the fabric part of your costume. My Sole Survivor got a blue coverall from Amazon, which my husband Benni still had to adjust to the rest of the costume. I was busy with painting my armor pieces in the meantime.



There are many different tools to pick for weathering and aging fabric. We like to use wood files, steel brushes, scissors, colors and dirt **[1]**.

Benni tried to consider where the suit would be used the most and what could happen to it while I wear it in the Wasteland. First he grabbed a rough file and ripped the fabric apart at a few spots.

The elbows and knees especially got some rough love. Next, Benni started airbrushing the seams with a dirty brown color and gave the entire suit a more worn out look **[2]**. Afterwards he splattered additional paint on top with a rough bristle brush **[3]**. He did not simply turn the whole costume brown, but made it look old in all the right places. At some point though he had so much fun that

he kind of forgot everything around him. I had to go in and stop him. After checking his work, I saw that he went a little bit overboard, so we had to wash some of the color out again. In the end result was perfect though **[4]**!

Weathering fabric is always intimidating, especially if you put a lot of work into sewing it. You'll need to mess it up and can just hope the result will be worth it. It might be tough, but this final step can turn a costume into something truly 'real'. In case of my Fallout Vault Suit I honestly

was too bad at sewing to make one myself. Instead I bought and altered an existing blue work suit I found on Amazon. This allowed us to go all out on the weathering without holding anything back. I don't know if I could have done the same if I had made the suit by myself over count-

less hours. At the end you should be happy and proud of your work. I spent a few weeks on this project and absolutely love how it turned out. I know there are some flaws, but I enjoy wearing it every time. I look just as bad-ass as my own character in Fallout 4! ■



# Xena: Warrior Princess

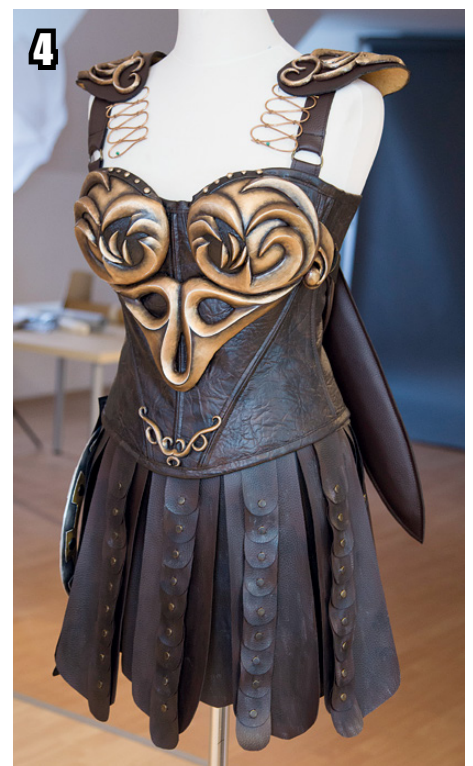
A good paint job does not only give a material some age, it can also transform it! In case of my Xena costume I had to turn plain furniture pleather into the iconic leather armor of the Warrior Princess herself.

I had a really hard time finding accurate materials for Xena. You need some experience to pick a real leather hide online and it's expensive and difficult to work with. The substitute I found was furniture pleather. It was not only cheap but also available in all kinds of colors. My sewing machine could easily sew a few layers together, so I made a corset as well the characteristic skirt in only a few hours. Using faux leather, the result sadly looked more like a cheap Halloween costume than something from an epic TV show **[1]**. Some weathering was necessary!

Just like always Benni came to my rescue, grabbed some black acrylics and took off his socks. He started dabbing paint all over the material **[2]**. Luckily my pleather came with a nice surface texture. This made it a lot easier to add a realistic shading, since the color would get stuck in it. In no time at all he transformed my fakey brown pleather into the right Warrior Princess material **[3-4]**.

The same technique also worked for the armor. Finishing the costume in pretty much a single rushed week, I simply made a bracer out of black Worbla and covered it with the same pleather. On top I directly sculpted on some details. Benni primed the material with two layers of wood glue and applied simple bronze acrylic paint on top using his other remaining sock **[5]**. Now he is completely out of socks. ■

Check out the entire Xena making-of video here: <https://youtu.be/CvTOZ3-guoc>





# Overwatch - Symmetra

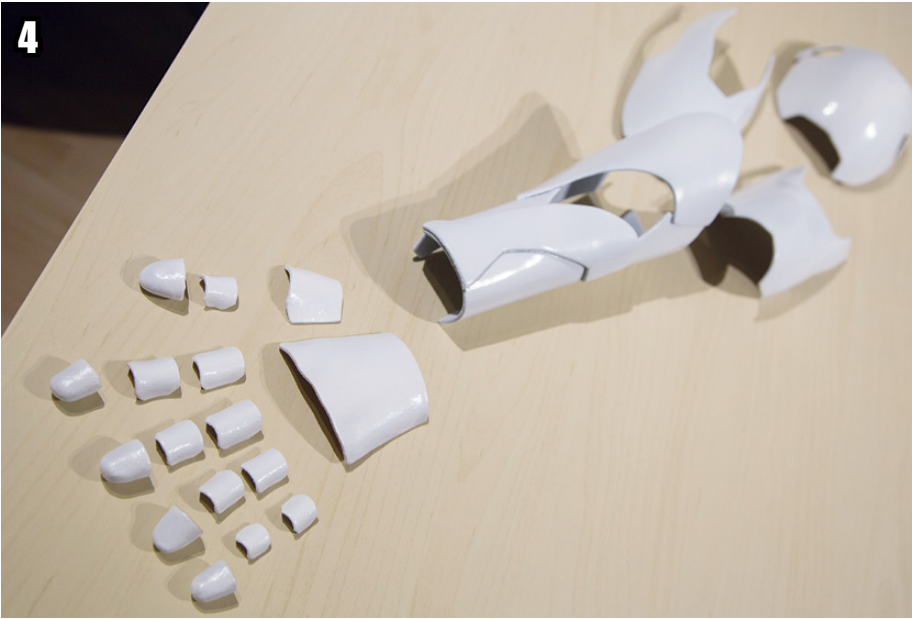
A professional paint job doesn't always need fancy special effects, textures or holographic shimmers. When you're used to building intricate and detailed costumes it can actually be harder to just impress with a perfectly smooth finish. Symmetra from Overwatch is a perfect example.

Symmetra's cybernetic arm is covered in sleek, glossy white and is her most prominent design element. Having to finish this costume in around a week, I didn't have much time for a fancy paint-job. Luckily her clean shapes allowed me to finish the mechanical parts quickly by using a few simple techniques. As you can see I decided to go with Worbla. Once all parts were built, I sanded the seams with sanding paper and my dremel **[1]**. Instead of using wood glue though, I chose automotive spray primer. After I applied a few layers of it **[2]**, I smoothed out the surface with some fine grit paper and repeated this process a few times until I was satisfied **[3]**.

Spray primer is an amazing product, but it doesn't work for everything. Symmetra's arm barely had any details. This made it a lot easier to sand. Pieces with many gaps or complicated shapes will give you a pretty hard time otherwise. Always consider which primer is best for your project.

Since it was super windy on my balcony, I decided to spray inside. To control the mess at least a bit, created a steady airflow by opening certain windows and used a large cardboard box as a temporary spray booth. For a single project and a little bit of spraying around it was okay. If you want to do this more often though, there is a better solution, which you will find at the end of this book. No matter what you do though, it's essential to wear professional respiratory protection. You don't want this stuff in your lungs, believe me! No shiny and chrome in Valhalla for you!





A perfectly smooth and dust free base is essential for a glossy paint job. Using spray paints will reveal every single bump and scratch you might have missed. Getting my surfaces up to this point took me a few hours. Afterwards though I was able to apply a shiny white automotive spray paint within seconds [4]! As I wrote, always check out the automotive department in your hardware store. Car freaks are the only other people I know that value a shiny clean finish as much as we cosplayers do. SHINY AND CHROME! Their products are usually very high quality and also a bit more pricey. The result will be worth it though. As always, experiment with your primers as well as with your spray paints before using them on your project. You only have one try to get it right, so it would be a shame if something goes wrong.

Finally Benni added a few more technical details with a thin brush and sealed our work with a glossy spray varnish [5]. The automotive paint actually doesn't really need any clear coat on top, though I like to have my costumes extra protected. ■



Check out the entire Symmetra video here:

<https://youtu.be/grMZXonzWBE>

## NOTE

Spray cans are very sensitive to humidity and the temperature of your environment. Depending on if you are working during winter or in the middle of summer, your products might behave very differently. When it's cold and wet, your primer or paint might take a pretty long time to dry. In summer it's quite the opposite. I always heat up my spray cans in a bit of hot water before using them when it's cold outside and try to heat up my room to a good temperature.

# League of Legends - Dark Valkyrie Diana

With Diana I can demonstrate the biggest argument for getting an airbrush: its speed! Like always I barely had any time to put this costume together - we had to paint the entire armor and prop in just one night. Our solution was a ton of energy drinks, spray paint and German efficiency!

No matter how you turn it, Diana is not a small costume. Just like many other of my armor projects it consists out of massive shoulder pieces, a 'breastplate', a helmet, bracers, hip plates and full leg and feet armor. That's a lot of individual parts that all had to be primed, painted and sealed in only a few hours under the shine of the moon. I barely remember this night but at least I was present enough to take plenty of progress pictures! Now I can prove I was there! It still seems weird and I have no idea how this was even possible. Without our trusty airbrush I think we would not have been able to make it happen!

**[1-2]** High speed priming with wood glue. This solution works pretty well, even though it's necessary to wait at least 10 minutes until a layer dried out properly and is ready for the next coat. Just like in a factory assembly line, Benni and I primed one piece after the other - starting with a new one while the old one was drying. Once we were done with the last armor part, the first one was ready to go. We did not waste a single second and were able to work straight forward without any distractions. Note that this was before there was any black Worbla. Not having to prime so much would have made this costume a lot easier!

**[3]** All the borders had to be golden so we decided to first spray all pieces completely with chrome golden spray paint.

**[4]** Masking off the golden borders. This part can be a bit tricky and probably takes the longest of all work steps. We used a scalpel and covered all areas that needed to stay golden until the end.





**[5]** Base coat! Again, we chose the fastest way and primed everything with matte black acrylic spray paint. Covering all pieces in color goes super quick. The only disadvantage is that it's really nasty to work with them inside. Go on a balcony or outside if you can.

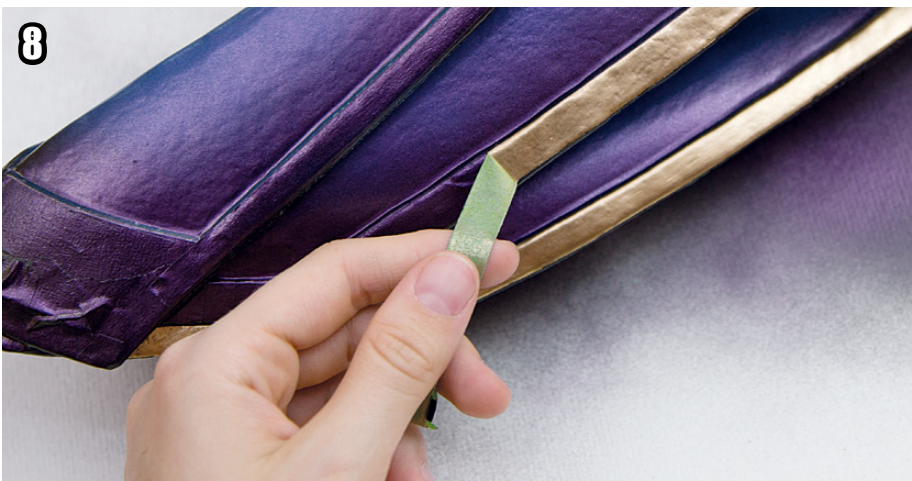


**[6]** Gradients. Following the techniques from my last book, I would now dab my way to paradise. Doing this for so many parts however would still take up a lot of time. The solution - as promised - was airbrushing. Benni filled his bucket with some marine blue and brushed some gradients on in no time!



**[7]** Adding a fancy shimmer effect. Once the blue color was dry I covered everything with a vibrant, shimmering purple effect spray that I found in my local hardware store. The color was translucent, but if you look at it from a certain angle it suddenly turns purple! Isn't that neat?

**[8]** Getting rid of the masking tape. Using a tweezer and my fingernails we got rid of all the tape. Underneath were our perfectly protected golden chrome borders. It's always a relief when you pull the tape away and everything turns out just as you hoped. Nothing is more frustrating then noticing that the tape wasn't on properly. If color would have gotten below our protected areas our whole preparation would have been for nothing.





10



**[9]** Fixing a few things. A little bit of black color got under the border of our masking tape leaving a couple of dark spots. Benni fixed that by spraying the chrome golden paint into a mixing cup and then using this as his paint to fix those areas.

You can actually use most spray colors also with a brush if you just spray them into a cup. Be careful not to breathe in the fumes though.

And that's all! With this we were able to finish all the pieces in time **[10-11]**. I am pretty sure this would not have been possible with regular acrylics! Also the shimmering effect turned out really awesome! ■

11



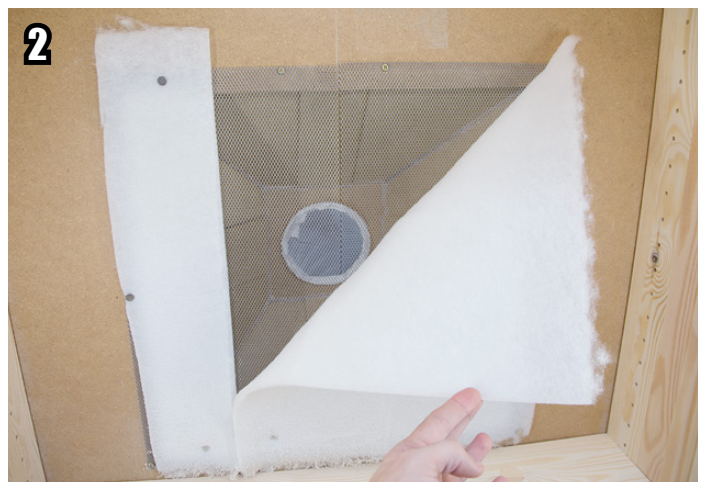
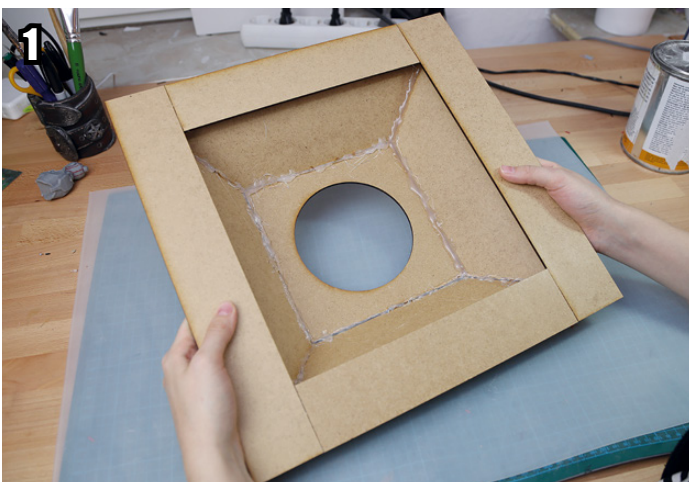
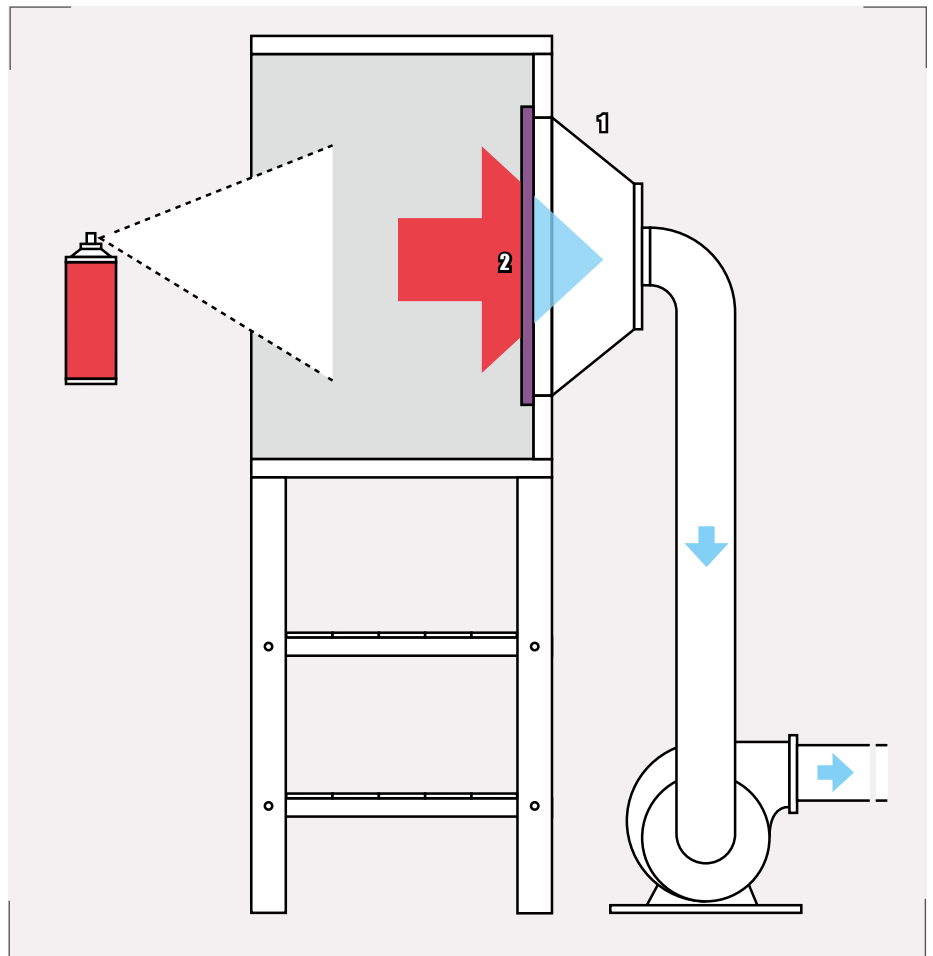


# How to build a simple spray booth

Working with spray paints, PlastiDip, varnishes and all that other nasty but awesome stuff will definitely mess up your workshop. It's also pretty bad for your health. Professional respiratory protection and a well ventilated area are a start but you have to consider going one step further. Working with these kind of products on a daily basis, I highly recommend preparing a special place in your home for this kind of thing. My solution: a simple home made spray-booth out of a pretty cheap IKEA closet!

A spray booth is basically a fancy magic box that sucks in all your nasty fumes and blows them through a filter and out of the window. It keeps your work area clean and just looks like a regular cupboard when closed. Sounds pretty dope, right? The best thing is, that it's quite easy to put together! I just bought a cheap wooden shelf from IKEA (it was the IVAR shelf with an additional closet and doors) but you can basically use any type of big box. Benni and I put the whole thing together, but cut out a big rectangle from the rear panel. Since I had to place a ventilating hose there, I just hot glued a pyramid shape out of a few wooden boards **[1]** and attached the hose at the end. Afterwards I also hot glued the whole thing to the back of the closet. Screws would probably have worked too, but we're super lazy.

Next I had to get a filter to collect all those flying paint particles. To prevent it from being sucked right into the hose, I screwed a metallic mesh directly over the hole in the rear panel **[2]**. My dust filter could now be attached right over the mesh just by using some magnets. I tried to find some professional paint air filters with no luck, but those used in extractor fans in the kitchen do pretty much the same job. You can get all of those things in your local hardware store. Easy peasy.

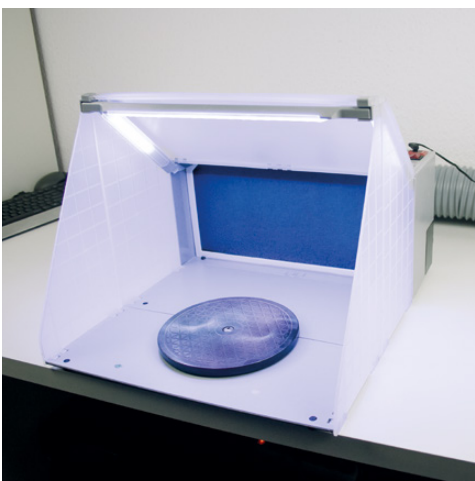




The most annoying part is definitely getting a good radial fan. Your vacuum cleaner sadly won't be enough for this. You need something that creates a wide air flow and draws all those fumes out of the closet. It took me some time to find one with enough power, but I then stumbled upon this baby on Amazon: It's a RV 250 F Bernardo radial fan with 2950 R/min and an engine power of 0,75 KW (1,0 HP).



There are many products to choose from, so make sure to get one that is powerful enough. A good rule of thumb is to hold a piece of paper in front of your filter. If it gets sucked right into it, that means your fan is strong enough. This piece of equipment was definitely the biggest investment at about 220€. That's a pretty hefty price you will have to consider. I was pretty scared to mess this up but together with Benni, I figured it out in the end. Now this is definitely one of the most useful things I have in my workshop! Looking back, I would miss not having it, which is why I decided to include it into this book as well. ■



## NOTE

There are also ready to go spray booth systems that you can find on eBay and Amazon for around 120€. They are only useful for small airbrush projects though and you'll probably have trouble to fit larger costume or prop pieces inside.

This was book number seven, wow!

Thanks so much for supporting us for such a long time! You rock! Please leave me a message if you have more questions or ideas for my next books!

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If you ever need more help come check out my website for more tutorials, write-ups and videos.

[kamuicosplay.com](http://kamuicosplay.com)

Also, if you already made a costume or prop using my techniques, I would love to share your work in my gallery!

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