

O to 000) I paint on tiny ridges of the paint across the model as closely to the way that real veins go as possible, especially the ones on the face, down the insides of the legs, across gaskins and forearms, and along the underside of the belly, all the places where a real horse's skin is thinnest and the veins show more. If you study some veterinary texts on the cardiovascular system it will help, but also looking at photos of real horses, especially after they have been working hard and popped the veins up to be seen more easily. You do not see veins extending over areas like the rump of the horse where the hide is thickest, so study a real pattern (or a few) to get a realistic effect on your model. I also like to spread some paint along the crest of the neck, then use a tiny brush to paint it downward, leaving a texture of wrinkled loose neck skin there.

When all this is done, I paint it!! If you have used the Martin-Carbonne epoxy bars and are afraid of a bleed-through on a light coloured horse, spray between gesso coats with Grumbacher matte acrylic varnish (make sure it is for acrylic at this point). Recoat with gesso. So far, that has sealed any of mine in and none have bled through, but it is something that bears watching for the future.

I prefer to use acrylic paints myself. If you are happier with oils, then use oils. I like acrylics because they dry faster and I think that they are somewhat stronger than oils in durability, as well as less likely to pick up 'fuzz' in the finish. I once saw a black oil-painted horse completely covered in grey table-fuzz that was MOST unattractive. A sealant probably would have helped it, but by that time it was too late.

Painting is where much of the originality and style of the individual artist occurs. Many people are now airbrushing horses, but this is not a required thing at all, indeed, most airbrushed horses lack individuality. Some are extremely well done, but it is yet another area to have to master another set of techniques. I paint by hand still and find it satisfactory, as well as easy to transport over the cumbersome air compressor equipment. I like to use fine-grained sponges for most the basic shading work, and then later use stiff white-bristled brushes to dry-brush in shadings paint on chestnuts, and do things like that. If you do decide to use airbrushes, I advocate that you go back later and do some dry-brush work to finish up, especially on the faces. The faces are the most important area as far as character of the horse goes, and a poorly painted one will not have the memorable character and show 'pizzazz' that a well painted one will.

What brands of paint you use will depend on what you can find. My own preference is for Liquitex brand, and I will go out of my way to find it and stockpile it so I don't run out. It seems to me that Liquitex tends to last longer in terms of shelf-life hardening, or separating than Hypolar colours do. Most colours CAN be mixed back together if they separate, but once they dry out, that's all she wrote. You can't reconstitute it and you can't remove it, so think about what you are doing. When working on a palette with colours, I keep a spray bottle of water handy to lightly mist the paints every now and then to keep them from drying out. If I am not finishing the job in one sitting, I cover the paints air-tight until ready to use again.

Acrylics are much less chemically active than most oil preparations and with a very few exceptions, acrylics are harmless colours. You have to watch out for some of the chemical reds, yellow and oranges (such as the Cadmiums) as they are poisonous, however, I can't think of a single horse colour that requires the use of these in creating the colour. By and large, I stick to earth-pigments, such as Titanium white, Mars black, Burnt and Raw sienna, Burnt Umber (to a lesser degree, Raw umber — it has a rather unpleasant green-brown undertone that I don't use often), and Yellow oxide. That and the metallics (with mica added) are almost all that I ever use. Those colours are based on earth and are non-toxic (altho it is not advocated that you paint tableware with it or eat it. My dog ate a tube of Cerulean blue one time and it didn't hurt her, but just avoid ingesting it).