

Color Modulation

The color modulation style is a method of painting that adds volume to a model while drawing the viewers attention to the areas which you feel are important. Verlinden-era dry-brushing and even current post-shading trends dance around this same idea. The basic processes and techniques involved are designed to enhance the 3D volumes and details of a model by playing up the balance between dark vs. light, shadow vs. highlights and so forth. Executing this goal is accomplished by applying gradations of color to give the model more depth. This is then followed by brush painting smaller fittings in a contrasting color to illustrate their presence and enhance their appearance on the surface. To break it down even further, the fundamental theory of CM is based upon using a singular light source. One of the beauties of CM is that you can add a little, or a lot of it to your model.



1ST. Image one shows pre-shading. For this step, I choose to use a mixture of XF-64 Red Brown and our base color XF-59 Desert Yellow.

This mixture is applied to all recessed areas, lower hull, and the rear of all panel lines and distinguishing features of the vehicle. I choose not to use black in this step because I feel it saps life from the color. I will use black for pre-shading on a Panzer Grey finish -or- a bare metal finish.



2ND. Image two shows the application of our base color, XF-59 Desert Yellow darkened by XF-52 Flat Earth. This base coat is applied over the entire model. Take care not to completely cover the pre-shading. This base coat should blend the pre-shade into the base coat.



3RD. Image three shows an application of straight XF-59 Desert Yellow without any manipulation of color. At this stage, I begin to focus on the areas closer to the top and front of the vehicle. This is the point where I begin to exaggerate the natural light source. It is important to blend this color with the previously applied colors as much as possible without covering them completely. At this stage, I will begin to use a mask to protect areas that I do not intend lighten. I will use a simple post-it -or- small piece of cardboard to cover the adjoining panels.



4TH. The fourth step shows an application of XF-59 Desert Yellow Lightened with XF-2 White. At this stage I am bringing out the extreme top and forward edges of panels and distinguishing features of the vehicle with the lightest shade of the base color XF-59 Desert Yellow. In this stage I feel it is critical to use a mask to protect the adjoining panels from this step. This stage can be followed with a highly thinned coat of the base color or a similar color to blend all previous steps. For this base color I would use XF- Desert Yellow -or- XF-57 Buff. This application should be thinned 90/10 -or- 80/20, it is critical to thin this application heavily so as not to lose the contrast of the previous stages.

The stark contrast may be alarming but the subsequent application of filters, washes, chipping, dust, and mud will serve to further blend the base colors and tie them together. This technique will bring life and depth to your model and will help draw the viewers eye from one area of the model to the next as well as draw the viewers attention to areas of the model that you feel are important.

I would like to credit Marinj Van Gils for bringing various artistic concepts such as this one, to our hobby of painting scale replicas. I would also like to thank Adam Wilder for his help with this presentation. I would also like to thank Mig Jimenez, and Mike Rinaldi for presenting this technique in a way that makes it understandable to far less accomplished modelers such as myself.

More information about this technique can be found in the MIG Productions series of books and DVDs as well as on the MIG forum, Missing-Lynx forum, and Armorama forum.

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