

MeepleForge

Beginner Painting tips for Everdell Critters

I'm not a great painter, so the paint job on the critters I did for Everdell are an attempt to capture some of the colours and effects that I had in mind when I designed the custom pieces.

In this guide I will show how to paint the Squirrels, but you can use the same techniques on any of the critters I have designed. You just need to use different colours.

There are lots of paint ranges made specifically for painting miniatures but they are basically acrylic paints. I used some old citadel paints.

The basic steps are as follows

- 1- Grey, Black or White Primer
- 2- Plan your colours
- 3- Base coat (main colours of the parts of the model)
- 4- Ink Wash (to add the shadows)
- 5- Highlight (Dry brush raised areas)



If you would like further inspiration then you can find many other examples of painted models on our website — <https://www.meepleforge.com/gallery-index/>

Also there are other paint guides available here — <https://www.meepleforge.com/painting-guides/>

1 – Primer

I prime my models using a black automotive spray primer which you can pick up from most car parts shops. Black is good as it can stay black primer in hard to reach areas and it just looks like shadows on the final paint job. A full can will be enough to spray maybe 50 models. When using a spray primer like this don't do it indoors as you should not be breathing in the fumes/paint from the paint can.

2 – Plan your colours

Before you start painting it helps to have an example of what you are painting to help plan your colours.

For the Squirrels have a look at the computer render that I did to see what colours I have used there.



You can see the basic colours are as follows (my paint choices are in brackets)

- Orange (not sure the name of this one but its a nice reddy orange) for the Squirrels fur
- Brown (Swamp Brown) for sticks, crates, Leather Satchels, Acorn Hat and Tree Stump.
- Light brown (Snake Bite Leather) for the Acorn nut section and for the string around the bundle of sticks
- Yellow (Badmoon Yellow) for the chunks of resin in the crate
- White (White Scar) for the envelopes, scroll and the book pages
- Red (Evil Suns Scarlet) for the book cover.
- Turquoise (Hawk Turquoise) for all the clothing including the hooded cloak
- Silver (runefang Steel) for the Sawblade and Double base strings



I used only 2 brush sizes for this a brush size 3 for the large areas and a brush size 0.5 for the stamp on the parcel and also the pupils on the glasses.

I also use a plastic takeaway lid to mix my paints on when I want a lighter or darker version of the colour. I also use the pallet to thin my paint before applying. I will usually load the brush with 2 or 3 dips of paint and paste these onto the pallet. Then I will wipe the excess paint off using a paper towel. And finally dip the brush into the water jar and then mix the water into the paint blob that I have on my pallet. It can be a bit of trial and error before you know how much water to add, but I will sometimes only want a little water and will shake most of it off the brush onto the paper towel before I use the wet brush to thin the paint.

2 – Base Coat

Here's my photo after applying the base coat



Applying the base coat is probably the hardest bit. As you are trying to stick within the edges of the items you are painting.

I suggest starting with the largest areas and using a medium brush (maybe a 2 or 3 brush) – so for these squirrels I started painting using the orange and painted all the fur and the base trying not to get any paint on the other areas. Sometimes the lighter colours like the yellow might need a lighter undercoat. So if the paint isn't colouring over the primer coat easily then you should paint these areas white first and then the colour on top of that. So for the yellow Resin I first painted them white and then once that was dry I painted them yellow.

For the Eyes I made a mistake as I'm just not good enough to put white eyes and then add a black pupil which is what I started to do and that's why these eyes are white at this base coat stage. When I try this each eye ends up looking in opposite directions and just look odd. So a trick here is to just paint straight over the eyes with the orange colour and then later the ink wash will give them a black shadow.

Another tip is because the orange is top to bottom on most of the models I paint the orange in 2 passes. I will paint bottom to about waist height on each critter and then by the time I get to the last one the first one is just about dry and I can then paint the remaining orange that I missed on each critter. The other popular way to paint the whole thing at once is to use blue tack to stick the critter to the top of a paint pot that you won't be using during this session and then you hold the paint pot and not the critter so it doesn't matter that the paint is wet.

Repeat the base coat technique for the other main colours. If you accidentally get colour on the wrong part then you can try wiping it off with a paper towel while it's still wet, or more likely just over paint it with the correct colour once it's dried.

The picture on the right shows what it should look like after the base coat. See where I have got some turquoise on the belly of the squirrel and also some light brown from the satchel strap onto the turquoise shirt. These don't matter at all as we are not trying to obtain perfection here only trying to do as good a job as we can. Things like this will improve with experience.



3 – Ink Wash

The ink wash is the part of the process that adds shadows and depth to the base coat. Its so easy to do and gives great results on these critters. Before you do the ink wash you should let your base coat dry for a couple of hours (if you don't let it dry thoroughly you might find that the ink wash mixes with the base coat below and simply merges into a dark version of the underlying colour which will then spread across the model as you move the brush).



This is what I refer to as an ink wash. Its like very thinned down paint that you use to add shadows and pick out detail on your models.



The Ink wash that I have used is called Nuln Oil and is part of the Citadel paints.

To add your ink wash just grab a brush 2 or 3 size and apply the wash liberally to over all parts of the base coat. Put plenty on, it should run off the highest parts of the models and run into the lower parts of the model. Have a look at the face – you will see that the Cheeks are fairly light colour and the Eyes and Mouth are dark. Look also at the stick bundle and acorn hat – you can clearly see the effect on these areas.

Then let this dry for a few hours.

Again I originally planned to have white eyes, but then changed my mind – so after I did the ink wash I used a black paint to cover the eyes where the ink wash had left any trace of white. There's one exception to this – the glasses on the librarian squirrel, I left those white and painted on 2 black dots for pupils. This was still tricky but as it was a much larger than normal area it can be done with a bit of practice. (for the pupils you will need a 0.5 or 0.3 brush size)

The picture on the right shows how the ink wash creates the shadows and draws the eye away from those minor paint slips during the base coat.



4 – Highlight

Then the final job is to highlight the raised parts of the model. This will then give you 3 versions of each colour which range from dark in the lower sections to a mid range colour in the d sections and a light version of the colour on the highest areas of the model.



To highlight I use a technique called Dry Brushing. To Dry Brush you need an old brush (as this process will damage your brush over time). The technique is to load the brush with a little bit of paint and then to wipe off the paint onto the paper towel until hardly any paint is left on the brush. Until the brush is almost dry. Then you drag the brush across the raised areas of the model that you want to highlight.

So to highlight the orange fur I found a lighter shade of orange (although I often just add white to the original colour on my mixing pallet). The colour I used to highlight was Hobgoblin Orange shown here.



I loaded the brush and then wiped most of the orange colour off onto the paper towel until the time when I dragged the brush over the paper towel and hardly any of the paint was left on the brush. This is something you will get a feel for over time.

Once most of the paint is removed from the brush then I dragged the brush over the raised areas. In this case I start around the back in case I have too much paint still it doesn't matter so much around the back. Then drag the brush over the backbone and over the haunches on the legs then over the feet / toes and the arms hands / fingers. The effect you are looking for is to have a light colour on the raised parts of the model only – you are not trying to colour the entire section with this lighter paint. While you are painting it you might think that the shade you have chosen is too light but in my experience thats what you need at this final stage of the paint job.

Finally drag your brush over the nose and mouth area and across the bridge of the nose. You might want ever so slightly more paint on the brush when you drag over the ears as they are tiny and so the dry brushing has a limited effect so I like to nearly-dry brush the ears.

Use the same dry brush technique to highlight the clothing, the wooden utensils and even the saw blade / Musical Instrument strings.



I sincerely hope that you like the critters and armed with this painting guide feel able to try painting them for use in your games of Everdell.

If you would like any samples to test your painting techniques on then I'm more than happy to include a couple of mis-prints / chipped models so that you can try out the painting techniques discussed above. Just message me via ETSY when you place an order and ask for a couple of models to test paint. :-)

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Thanks

Andy

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