

Non-Metallic Metal Brushed Steel Painting Guide

by Richard Gray



You will need the following paints:

Vallejo Model Colour Black, Black Grey, Neutral Grey, White, Game Colour Ultramarine, Model Air Pale Blue Grey.

P3 Battlefield Brown

Coat d'arms Black (or Games Workshop Abaddon Black)

This is a simple technique to give the impression of a metallic object using standard paints. I have expanded on it to add texture to the surface to create a brushed steel effect. It bears a lot in common with the armour effect of the Lord of Plagues and is a good example on how you can adapt a technique to get a completely different look.

Although I provide the colours to achieve the same effect as my version, you should feel free to try out different colours to represent different metals and lighting environments, for example, it might be interesting to use Vallejo Buff for the highlights to show warm light reflecting on it.



The first stage is to paint the area Vallejo Black. This will give a nice dark, matte finish and a good base to work from for the steel effect. It also means that the metal will have a dark look to it, but if you wanted a lighter metal effect then just start with a lighter grey.



Stage two is very simple, just use the Black Grey and apply it roughly to the majority of the area. It doesn't need to be super neat. Leave a line around the trim roughly fade it out as it goes down the sides as the light would not catch it so much here. Small areas of black paint showing through are not an issue as they will either turn into damage or be covered by highlight layers.



This stage is where you start to make the marks for the brushed blue steel effect. Use the Ultramarine Blue and mix in a little Black Grey to take the edge off of the colour. I've used a Broken Toad Size 1 brush but use whatever you feel comfortable with.

At this stage the marks are quite chunky, at least in comparison to the ones you will be making later.

When making the marks you want them to be in a roughly criss-cross type pattern. Feel free to add random marks and lines in too. In the photograph you can see where the light hits the curve, you want to make the criss-cross pattern most dense here so that it hides more of the Black Grey colour. The opposite of this is true for where the armour curves downwards, you need to have fewer lines and fade out into the grey. The fading is achieved by having the lines less densely packed, not with any change in consistency or paint mixing.



It's now time to paint the lines a little thinner using Neutral Grey. The process is exactly the same as you have been doing, but the area is smaller as the light point narrows. It might be at this stage that you want to use a smaller brush.

One note in this photograph is that slight lip on the armour on the right also needs to be highlighted using the same method, but the small dip between the lip and the curve needs to be kept in shadow, which is achieved by not highlighting it much with the thin lines.

Always keep note of where the light hits the curve of the armour as this is the area that needs the most number of fine lines.



Now it's time to use the Pale Blue Grey. The area is much smaller to highlight now, I have also changed the pattern a little to try and follow the shape of the light spots in a slightly circular pattern.

Another thing to notice in this photograph is that I have added some reflection points in the lower areas of the curve and in the dip on the left between the curve and the gold rim, which follows the same light line as the gold and the curve. These reflections are not available with the method of using the light hitting the model, you have to work them out for yourself. As such they are not “realistic”, but they add visual interest. If the model was actually metallic it would be reflecting things from all around it, so you can in effect paint whatever reflections you like, just take into account the strength of the light will be affected by whether it is in shadow or not.

The colours used for the additional reflections are the same as before. Using a wet palette gives you the advantage of having the colours still on the palette so you can go back and use them.



This is a very easy stage. I used white to pick out a few points to make the marks gleam. If you note where the white dots are you should see that they are underneath dark marks to represent dints catching the light. Also there are some extra highlights on the sharp rim on the right.

I've added some bright highlights to the reflections on the lower curves, but these will be pulled back later with some glazing as they are very bright at the moment. The added highlights means that these reflections will have more gradient when they are glazed over, rather than just being one tone reflections.



Here is the final piece after being glazed. The glazing is exactly the same as that used on the Lord of Plagues' armour,, but using the colours in different amounts. The primary colour for the glaze this time is Coat d'arms black. Pay very close attention to the position of the light and try and shape the glazes to blend in the thin paint lines but at the same time keeping the shape of the reflections.

You should be able to see that the lower reflections I added have been heavily glazed back but are still visible.

The Battlefield Brown glazing has to be used very sparingly, it is not so much to blend the lines and add shadow, but to just tint the armour colour to add a small amount of dirt and visual interest as well as show that the armour is reflecting the ground around it.

Once you have finished glazing you can add a couple of white spots to bring out the bright highlights again.

I hope you find this useful and thank you for supporting me!