

Death Shroud Scythe Painting Guide

By Richard Gray



This guide focuses on how to paint the scythe blade. It is a smooth nmm (non-metallic metal) effect with a little creativity thrown in. There will be future guides featuring other versions of nmm and different metals.

The paints needed for this are as follows:

Vallejo Model Colour Black (matte finish)

German Grey

Neutral Grey

Dark Sea Grey

Buff

Games Workshop Abaddon Black will work

Rhinox Hide

Mournfang Brown

Scale 75 Eldanil Violet

White of your choice, I used P3 Morrow White



As usual, the model is primed and left to dry for 24 hours before painting.

To paint the scythe the first thing I did was lay out the paints I would be using in a wet palette. I find a wet palette makes life much easier as you can swap between colours without having to worry that a colour will dry up, this can be particularly frustrating if it is a colour you have mixed!

To make a wet palette you will need Grease Proof Paper, Kitchen Towel, a Sponge and a Plastic Tub that will hold the sponge. Fill the tub with water and place the sponge in and then squeeze it, otherwise the sponge will float; you want it to be full of water. Make sure there is still water nearly to the top of the sponge. Fold the kitchen towel a couple of times and cut it to shape to lay flat on top of the sponge. You do not want folds or ridges as these will raise the grease proof paper out of the water and let the paint dry. Cut the grease proof paper to shape to lay flat on top of the sponge. The paper is probably from a roll so have the curve facing downwards as this will prevent it rolling up later on. Tap the paper all over so that the whole surface area is damp.

A quick tip; if you use an airtight tub then you can seal the paint away after you've finished and it will last a long time. Add copper (coins) to the water if you plan to leave it for a while as this will help to kill any bacteria.

Paint will separate after a while, the same as if you had it in a paint well, so keep an old brush handy to give it a quick stir every now and then.

One final note is that white paint can be tricky to keep for very long. I usually just wipe white paint off of the palette and reapply some fresh paint next time.



In the above photo I have painted the whole blade German Grey. Areas will be glazed black later for contrast.



The next step is to add Neutral Grey to show the first stage of highlights. The paint is applied quite

thinly. You should note in the photograph above, there aren't many hard edges to the paint, a couple of thin coats will be easier to control than one thick coat and will leave less severe marks. Apply more coats where the highlights will be brighter. You will notice that there is an effort to create contrast between highlights and shadows and that the line separating them is quite strong. This helps to form the shape of the blade and gives a base to the highlight position. If you highlight too far then just use some German Grey to pull it back

When applying these highlight layers you will have an easier time later on if you make the transitions smoother. The odd mistake or mark should not be an issue though as later on you can turn it into battle damage.



In the above photograph you will see the third stage highlight. This is a continuation of the previous stage, just shrunk into a smaller area that will gradually build to bright highlight points. This stage is made using Dark Sea Grey. In the photograph you can see there are obvious paint lines as I start to consider adding dints and marks to the blade. These will still be glazed over to make them less prominent.



Now I start to add a little bit of colour to the blade to make it more interesting. I added some Buff to the Dark Sea Grey; this in effect adds some desaturated yellow and lightens the grey for the next highlight stage. You will also note a few dark patches where I have purposefully added German grey to show marks on the blade. By adding them at this stage they will be softer after the glazing stages. I have also used the grey and buff mixture to add a highlight line along the top of the scythe blade to show the light catching it.

The next stage will start to add more colour to the blade. The idea is that it is a futuristic, exotic metal, so the colours are not based on realistic metal reference but to emphasise a fantasy element.



At this stage I have added a bright highlight glare in the middle of the blade, this will be toned down as it's much too bright and the edges are not soft.

I have given the blade a very gentle glaze of Rhinox Hide, this has increased the warm effect of the Buff paint. Do not glaze over all of the highlight points with Rhinox hide as it will dull it down and make it dirty, the idea is just to blend in the edges of the highlights to help the transitions and add a bit of colour. I've also started to glaze on some Eldanil Violet; this will make the shadows very dark and take away some of the warmth from the deepest areas. It also adds another nice colour that works well with the Rhinox Hide.

You should be able to see that I have also placed a highlight on the underside of the dents and scratches I placed on the blade before. The highlight gives them a 3 dimensional effect.

I now have to smooth out all of the paint marks and soften the highlights, so a lot of the detail will vanish.



I realised I had gone too harsh with the details for the look I wanted, but due to the nature of glazing it was not a big issue. By using many, very thin layers of paint (it has the consistency of coloured water) I was able to smooth the transitions and tone down the damage. This allowed for much more subtle highlights and makes the effect more blade like. The damage and highlights are still there, but only barely visible. I will bring them out more in the following stages.

The most important glazes are still Rhinox Hide and Eldanil Violet. The Violet has made the dark sections look very deep. This is a much more satisfying look than just painting a dark section straight black. You may notice that I have glazed in some of the Dark Sea Grey and Buff mixture to help with the position of the highlights. I also added a touch of White to the mixture for the tip of the blade and the glare in the middle.

It is important with this style of painting to not be afraid to go back and tweak or even completely repaint sections so that the final look matches your aim. Glazing highlights and then shadows will add a lot of depth to a piece that would not be there with straight blending.



Now the blade really starts to come to life! I have used German Grey to add very fine scratches and then straight black to add dints in the darkest areas so that they stand out from the deep violet.

I've added a little more white again to the Dark Sea Grey and Buff mixture and then very carefully highlighted all of the sharp edges. The little nicks on the blade edge really add some authenticity to the look of the weapon, but be careful not to over highlight them as otherwise they will overpower the careful transitions you have created and will make the blade look cartoon like.

At this stage the blade already looks finished and it would be perfectly fine to leave it like this. Just add some tiny white dots for the highest highlights so achieve maximum contrast.



The stages from here on are just refinement. There are more glazes of Rhinox Hide and Eldanil Violet to tone down the battle damage even further. This is more suitable for display and competition level pieces as toning the damage down like this will make it very hard to see on the tabletop. It is meant for close inspection. As you glaze over highlights, some of them will need to be touched up again. You might note the scratches crossing the taper of the blade have had little white highlight dots reapplied, and this has really made them shine.



This final image of the blade shows where I have got carried away and added more battle damage and glazed back the highlights even further. It is hard to capture the depth of the paint layers in the photograph but in the flesh they make the blade much more visually interesting.

The piece also shows how much better the blade looks when attached to a finished handle as it frames the blade.

One final point I would like to make is to note how glazing has made the highlight lines transition into the blade much more fluidly. If you had just painted straight highlight layers onto the blade the result would be much more harsh.

I hope this has been of some use to you.

Thank you!