

AirSick 101

AIRBRUSH TRAINING

Paint - The Basics

Paint Mediums

The two paint mediums that we will be emphasizing in these tutorials will be either water based acrylic airbrush paints, or solvent based automotive paints and clear coats. There are several different paint systems to choose from in each category. As far as mixing colors, reducers, hardeners etc. you generally don't want to mix different paint systems together. Solvent based paint and/or water based may react in a way that could ruin your artwork or even your equipment. So always check your paint manufacturer's guidelines to get optimal results while painting.

Water VS. Solvent

There are several differences between water and solvent based paints. I will outline a few major differences to give you a better understanding of what may be the right choice of paint for you.

- A. **Drying time:** If you're the impatient artist, you can't beat the lightning fast dry time that solvent based paints offer. Solvents in these paints evaporate much faster than water in water based systems which allows the solvent based paint to be dry to the touch in just a few seconds in most cases. A water based system may need an external heat source (such as a fan or heat lamp) to speed up the drying process as you paint.
- B. **Clean Up:** Water based paints are easily changed out of the airbrush and cleaned up using either water or some sort of non-toxic water based airbrush cleaner. You will need to use harsh chemicals such as Acetone and solvent removers to clean up any solvent based paints. Use caution while handling and storing these products. They may be harmful to you if used improperly.
- C. **Getting Thin:** Before loading any sort of paint into an airbrush, you must first determine if the paint will need to be reduced or thickened in order to reach optimal consistency for painting. This goes for both water and solvent based paints. However, some companies may sell pre-mixed paints or "ready to spray", "pre-reduced" paints that are great to use in certain applications. The whole point of reducing or thickening your paint is to get the optimal atomization of paint and air out of your brush and onto your surface. If not properly reduced, you can run into some major problems that will cost time and possibly money to fix. To properly reduce (thin) or thicken your paint, you will need to follow the specific paint system guidelines that you can easily retrieve online or by contacting the paint manufacturer directly. Most airbrush paints will mix at a 1:1, 2:1, or 4:1 mixing ratio (2:1) This means that for 2 parts paint you will be adding 1 part reducer

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Paint comes in four major groups. Here is a quick overview of the characteristics of each type and a few examples of how they can be applied. There is a lot you can learn about paint. This article only scratches the surface. Do your research, the more you know, the better you will be.

Opaque

An opaque paint such as a base coat is heavy enough in pigment to allow no light to pass through to the surface. This paint is used for covering a surface with a solid color.

Semi-Opaque

A semi-opaque is an opaque paint that has been thinned down to allow some light to pass through and reflect back from the surface. Semi-opaque paint allows you to saturate an area of your work with color, but still see through to an image or color underneath. Semi-opaque paints are great for blending and shading due to their semi-transparent properties.

Transparent

Transparent paints are exactly that, transparent. They allow light to pass all the way through and bounce back off the surface. They do not cover an area with a solid color like opaques do. No matter how many coats you spray a transparent color, light will still pass all the way through. Transparent paints are extremely versatile at tinting and shading existing colors. By applying a yellow transparent paint directly over top of a blue base, you will see that your blue base has now turned green.

Candy

A candy color and a transparent are similar in that they are both see through; however, they are very different in many ways. Unlike the fore-mentioned paint groups above a candy is not really a paint at all. A candy is a dye that is used along with a clear binding agent to tint and color your work. One major characteristic of a candy is that it will continue to darken with each layer you build until no light can pass through and the candy appears black. Candies can be used in conjunction with metallic base coats and pearls to create some amazing effects.

**PRINTER
FRIENDLY**





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