

# Painting With Earth Pigments and Using My Pigment Recipes

By Kimberley Smith



This Bay has 6 layers of pigment color (excluding black points)

### To paint model horses with pigments, you will need:

- A well prepped model horse
- A good quality matte spray - Testors Dullcote (recommended)
- Good quality round make-up brushes (various sizes)

### Pros and Cons of Painting Model Horses With Pigments:

#### Pros:

Rich beautiful color  
 100% control over shaded color  
 Limitless horse colors by custom mixing pigments and layering colors differently.  
 Less color layers compared to pastels

#### Cons:

Flaws can easily appear for a variety of reasons  
 - Most flaws can be prevented or fixed  
 Messy! Pigment dust will scatter.

### Using The Pigment Recipes & Helpful Painting Tips

1. For every pigment recipe, matte spray each layer unless otherwise noted. Let the matte spray dry at least 10 minutes.
2. For those who want to paint and sell model horses... here is a tip to get more model horses painted faster. Try painting 3-5 horses at a time by rotating the projects. There is no down time while waiting for matte spray to dry. By the time you get back to the first horse to paint another layer of pigment, the matte spray will be dry. Brush the next layer, matte spray and grab the next horse. This is also where hanging the horses to dry helps out a lot.
3. Use any soft round make up brush. A stiff brush can cause flaws. Try not to 'rub' in the color with any brush. Different size brushes are helpful when working with different sizes model horses. A smaller brush will also help apply color to legs or help with shading on the head.
4. Always begin with clean brushes to apply pigment unless the color your working with isn't lighter than the last pigment used on the brush. Horse color is almost always worked from light to dark so it's not a good idea to use a brush that has applied a dark color when used last. Make sure the brushes are 100% dry after being washed before applying pigment. It's always best to wash your brushes at the end of the day so they can dry overnight.
5. It's helpful to dedicate a small brush for only black 318 pigment and a larger brush for Titanium White.



## Using The Pigment Recipes & Helpful Painting Tips (... continued)

6. Never touch the painted pigment areas with your horse with your fingers and never try to wipe off a spot (wet or dry) to start over. Almost always, it makes the problem area worse. If a darker spot appears there are two ways to fix it. A very fine sanding sponge (last resort), and a similar colored Prismacolor pencil after matte spraying.

7. Try not to press hard on the brush or 'rub' in the color. This can cause flaws.

8. Do not apply the pigment straight from the container. Pick up the pigment with a brush and tap it on your work table. This will help keep pigment from scattering badly. After each layer, brush the left over pigment back into your container and wipe your table clean.



9. Never have a ceiling fan running when applying pigment, because even if the fan is on low, pigment will spread on every surface of the room. I learned that this the hard way and just had to give fair warning.

10. Unless otherwise noted on the pigment recipe, seal each layer of color with matte spray. Let dry at least 10 minutes between layers. I use Testors Dullcote on all layers of pigment.

11. In each recipe you will see instructions to "Base Color" or "Shading". Base Color means to fully cover the horse with the layer of pigment color. Layers that note shading can be shaded as desired or you can follow any given notes for that layer.

## Easy Primer and Matte Spraying Tip

4

As odd as it sounds, (this is preference), I find it easiest to hang my model horses while spraying primer or matte spraying them. I've been prepping and painting my horses this way since 2014 and it's always worked so well. I've never had a mishap with a horse unless I dropped the string. It is an easy way to primer and matte spray an even coat on a model horse without needing to hold a leg or tail.

To hang a horse I either tie a strong craft string to the tail or hind foot on the model horse or I Dremel a tiny hole on the end of a tail to tie the string on the model horse. If I Dremel a hole, it is very easy to fill in with modeling paste and then it's ready to paint. On a heavy model horse, I double up the string.

Hanging a model horse with string helps in two ways. While holding the string, I can rotate the model horse by simply blowing on part of the horse or bumping the tail to make the horse turn. While the horse is turning I can spray a nice even layer of primer or matte spray all around the horse, all the while, not touching the model horse. When I am done spraying I hang the horse to dry. I consider this a huge advantage because I don't have to worry about a horse falling over, or having any part of the horse not sprayed. I think it's also a time saver. The string on the horse is cut off only after the horse's color is finished. The only downside is there might be a small groove in the primer where the string was tied unless I made a tiny hole in the model's horse's tail to secure the string onto. If you tie the string around a tail, that area will need to be carefully sanded smooth and then painted.



## Prepping the Perfect Horse With Krylon White Primer

5

The following information is not meant to go over prepping fully nor is it the only way of prepping. Everyone has their own preferences. I wanted to include some helpful tips that I've learned along the way. After making sure the model horse's seams and other areas are perfect, it's time to primer the model horse.

It took me a long time to realize that the quality of the prepped horse is the most important part of painting a model horse, especially if painting with Earth Pigments. Even though prepping is not my favorite part, I find it helpful to remember that a finished model horse is only as good as the prep work under the color.

I find that pigment flaws such as dark specks or darker rough looking areas are less likely to occur with a well prepped model horse. This is the best advice I can pass on. When I first started painting with earth pigments, flaws plagued me and it can be frustrating to figure out why. Most of the time, it's due to prepping flaws. I am really happy when my first layer of brushed on pigment looks like a solid color with no flaws. That tells me that my horse is well prepped and ready for more layers of color. A super smooth primer finish will help create smooth color. Any roughness on a prepped model horse can cause darker color specks of color or larger flaws.

If using Krylon white primer, use 1000 or 2000 grit sand paper to smooth the primer finish after the primer has dried and cured at least 6-8 hours. Do not try to sand the primer a short time after the model horse was sprayed. I usually primer and then plan the sand the model horses the next day. A sock can also smooth the primed horse finish but I've found that although it works, it's a slower method. It is preference, but I find that sandpaper gets the job done faster. You can easily see when an area is finished because the Krylon primer will look glass smooth and shiny. You can also feel the smoothness of the primer. The sanding doesn't take long to see the shine but it does take quite a few small pieces of sand paper. If you accidentally rub the model horse too much or the primer was too thin on a certain area (you begin to see plastic or resin), spray more primer where it is needed, and let the horse dry at least 8 hours before sanding again. The primer must be fully dry before sanding.



## Prepping the Perfect Horse With Krylon White Primer

6

After getting your prepped horse glass smooth, spray one layer of matte spray on your model horse. This will help give the first layer of pigment something to hold onto better and it will help create a smooth even layer of color. Be sure you sanded in all the little muscle creases and hard to reach areas. Although careful prepping isn't much fun, the results of a beautiful flawless color on a model horse is well worth it.

After I have started brushing on the first layer of color, if I see flaws appear because I missed sanding a spot smooth on my model horse, I often use a baby wipe to wipe off the color, re-sand the primer, and then matte spray the model horse to start over. This is often easier than continuing and trying to fix the flaws later on.

There is one more thing to be watchful for. Not always but I am often plagued with static electricity while sanding my primed horse smooth. This can easily un-do a well prepped horse if left un-noticed. I usually find at least a few pieces of fuzz on my model horse after sanding or rubbing the horse smooth, and wiping the horse with a cloth or sock seems to make the problem worse. Any tiny piece of fuzz that may accidentally get sealed with matte spray on your model horse can cause the pigment to go dark and cause a dark speck or dark line. Be sure to check over your model horse carefully before your matte spray each time. Before you add the first layer of color, it's helpful to wipe the horse with a damp cloth or baby wipe, let it dry and then matte spray the horse. If color is already on your horse, try blowing the fuzz off the horse. Resist touching the pigment.

