

# CHAPTER 9

## The Dreadful Black & White

Swedish banner painted by Franzoia Serge. Observe the excellent black and white checked pattern of the flag.

For the next five chapters I will deal with various colors grouped in categories. Let me say it from the start. I am not a professional artist nor I have finished any art school. What will be presented here coming



from personal observation, experiences and notions. Feel free to agree or disagree with it, accept the tips and use them for your painting or don't accept them, make your own observations and go from there. For example someone can say, hey don't shadow red by using alizarin crimson. Why not? If the shadowing made by it pleases me then by all means I will use it. I have shadowed red with darker red, brown, green, crimson, even blue. And I ask again, why not? In the end, we are amateur painters that like to experiment and try new things and if the end result is what we were looking for, then we are allowed to use whatever irrespective of rules.

Before we begin discussing about the various colors lets clear some words

using the following table.

### **Hue**

The specific character of a colour, e.g. an orange-red or a green-blue, its position on the colour wheel.

### **Value**

How dark or light a colour is, from 0 to 10, black to white. Cadmium Red Medium is typically about value 5.

### **Chroma**

How intense (bright or dull) a colour is, for example Cobalt Blue is high in chroma, Chromium Oxide Green is low in chroma.

### **Primary**

A colour that cannot be mixed from other colours, e.g. red, yellow and blue.

### **Secondary**

A colour mixed from two primaries, e.g. orange, green and violet.

### **Complement**

The colour opposite to another on the colour wheel, e.g. red and green, yellow and violet, blue and orange.

### **Subdue**

To dull down, to lower the chroma of a colour, usually by adding its

complement.

## **Bias**

The leaning of a colour towards another, e.g. a green-yellow or an orange-yellow.

Let's start with black. When you want something painted in black color, simply don't use black. Instead either mix some blue with ivory black for a cooler shade or flesh for a warmer shade. Adding some brown, red, violet or green will tint the black color slightly giving our blacks a greater variety. Add some titanium white to lighten the black a bit. In reality you will have made a gray but in our eyes still be black. Now add shadows with pure black, lamp black preferred and highlight with turquoise or flesh depending on if you want cool or warm temperature and minor quantities of white. Don't exaggerate the highlights though. Blend as well as you can for subtle transitions between shadows and lights. Look at different painted figures and you will notice after careful observation that no straight black is used anywhere. Instead different shades of dark gray, with the appropriate shadows and lights create the effect of a black surface even if its not. Otherwise if you start straight with black, there won't be any color for shadows. Ivory black is a color that can be used to darken other colors without overwhelming them.

Composite figure from Mohr's set "Funeral of Gustavus Adolfus" painted by Greg Di Franco. Lots of black clothing but nothing

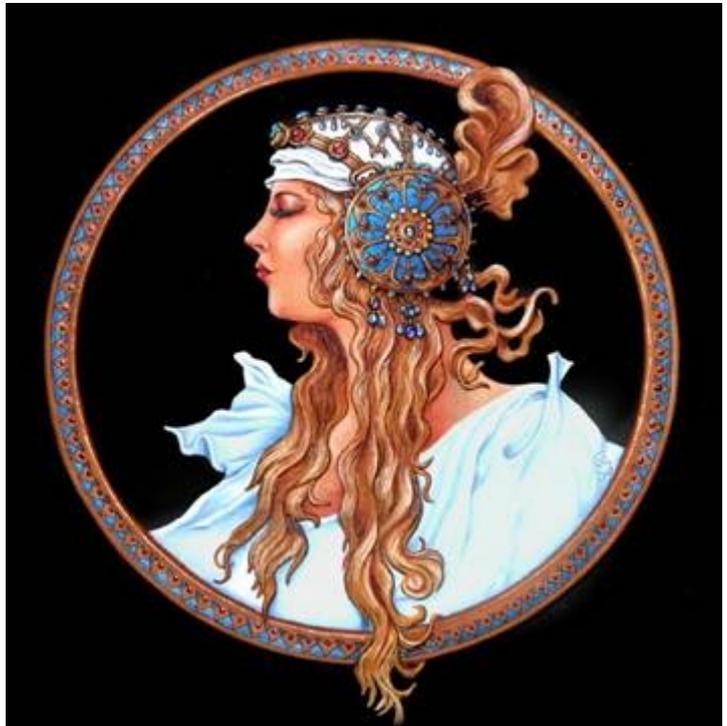


too difficult if you don't start with straight black.

Same story is white color but from the opposite side. If you start with pure white, there won't be any color for the highlights. Instead make different combinations of white adding nearly any color you like. Ochres and browns will create a tan-white, warm in color shadowed with more brown and highlighted with straight white. Red, green, purple or blue can be used for spectacular variety for your whites. Blue and green will give a cool temperature to your white. What is very challenging to make and interesting to observe after, is when different shades of white or black are side by side like a figure wearing a white tunic, with a white sash and white trousers.

A bust of an unknown artist from a Detlef Belasch creation. Observe the cold temperature of the white shirt.

Instead of gray black boring shadows, some shade of blue has been used. If you make 3 different mixes of white with 3 different hues added, your end result will have all 3 surfaces white but each will look different from the other. Titanium white is the most used white, opaque all purpose white that you will use it in nearly every color mixture you make. Flake white is a transparent white, useful for white glazes. Zinc white is rather rare lately because of its zinc component which is poisonous.



An amazingly painted Napoleon in coronation robes



by Greg Di Franco. Here shades of ochre have been used for shadowing, Compare with previous photo. Also observe how direction light is implicated by the careful painting.

As with every other color, use the amount of shadows and highlights you feel happy with them. Don't consider that a black item has less and a white has more. They can have as many as we want them to have. Just be patient when you paint and don't rush for finish. Black and white will be also discussed in the chapter about painting metals since they can be used to implicate a metal surface by careful shadows and lights. Although I don't own any gray oil tubes, only exception is Payne's gray. It's a dark gray, rather transparent color than can be used as a shortcut when we need a gray fast and it's perfect for white metal simulation but more about this later.

# Painting Whites

Mark Bannerman

Two summers ago, I had an opportunity to attend my first big model show in Toronto. As I examined the figure in the display room, I noted the tremendous use of white colours on figures by the great Masters such as Bill Horan, Don Weeks, Phil Kessling, and Mike Good. I have followed these guys for several years through magazine articles. Seeing their figures in the flesh was really impressive. On examining their figures, there was absolutely no evidence of any pure white whatsoever. In fact, this can be said about black as well ! I was a little stunned and decided to start asking questions. I had an opportunity to corner Mike Blank, a Swedish figure painter who is undisputably one the masters when it comes to the treatment of whites. I asked the question straight out how he approached painting white. After a twenty minute explanation, I was convinced I would never try to paint white clothing. Admittedly, his results are absolutely stunning but blending 28 tones of white just seemed way beyond my abilities - and patience ! It was really necessary for me to understand how to paint whites. And while whites is nota commmon colour for the WWII figure buffs, it is absolutely crucial for the napoleonic types. I sat down a few weeks ago and tried to figure out a technique that was neither complicated and easy to duplicate. This is a technique described in the November 1991 issue of Military Modelling by Derek Hansen. I will share how I approached his technique with slight variations on a white bed sheet draped over a 1/35th scale Hornet figure.

After the usual clean up, and priming, I applied a light coat of Humbrol enamel white to the entire figure. Once dry, it was time to tackle the white sheet. I sprayed two thin cotes of Tamiya Gloss to ensure the undercoat is

protected by the subsequent use of thinners and oils. On the figures bed sheet, I laid a base coat of light grey oil paints using Titanium White, Burnt Umber and a very tiny spec of Prussian Blue. This latter colour is very strong and the spec should be the size of a typed period. I took a thick brush and stroked upwards to deposit the oils into recesses and shadow areas. Continuously stroke until the highlights are back to the original white colours and all shadows are a taupe colour.

After the oils had dried, I applied Humbrol white to all the highlight areas. Let this dry and apply Titanium white to the highlight areas over the Humbrol White highlights. Let this sit for several days to thoroughly. Now you have two distinct colours - shadows in a murky off-white brownish colour and very white highlights. The next step is the crucial step. Once thoroughly, I applied a coat of Titanium White colour over the entire sheet including the previously painted shadows. I immediately removed the oil paint leaving a glaze-like film on the bed sheet. This essentially does two things - lightens the bed sheet and blends highlights and shadows together. Once dry, the last step was to apply some shadows in the very deep recesses using the shadow mix of Titanium, White, Burnt Umber and a spec of Prussian Blue.

The rest of the figure in brief: The jacket took a base of Humbrol 67 mixed with Humbrol White, shadows mixed with Paynes Grey oils and Humbrol 67, and highlighted in Humbrol light grey. The straps were painted in Mars Black oil and lightly drybrushed with Humbrol 93. The pouches were painted Humbrol White, stained with Burnt Sienna and drybrushed with Burnt Umber oils. Semi-Glossed after drying. Boots were painted Humbrol white, Mars Black mixed with Burnt Umber. Buttons and buckle painted Black, and highlighted with Silver. Gloss coated when dry. The head is a Warriors

offering painted in my usual manner.

When I completed the figure it looked suspiciously boring. I decided this fellows needed some dirt and grime as he was supposed to be in the depths of Russia. I pulled out every brown coloured Humbrols I had and started to poke the figure`s lower jacket with an old dried up brush using Humbrol 29, 84, 72, and 110. Think of this step as a dry-brushing treatment, but rather than stroking, use a poking action. I repeated the steps adding Humbrol white to the browns. I must have poked the figure 1000 times! Caution - if it does not look like enough dirt, it probably is enough dirt! It is easy to go overboard with this. If you feel you have applied too much dirt and grime, lightly dry brush with the grey base colour and this will help tone it down. That wraps up another fun project. If any of you have suggestions, comments or another method of dealing with whites (or anything I have mentioned above), I would certainly appreciate hearing from you.