AIRBRUSH STEP BY STEP

71

REVIEW: ULTRA & EVOLUTION 2024

MOVIE HEROES

Designs and portraits inspired by Back to the Future, Deadpool, Spider-Man & Lord of the Rings

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MOVIE HEROES

Since ancient times, art history has known portraits of male gods and heroes, of kings, rulers, generals and scholars. It was not about beauty, but about power, reporting and historiography. Anyone who paints a portrait today usually chooses a prominent or particularly striking character. This can often be found in actors, movie characters or pop stars, whose roles are often based on centuries-old heroic images.

This choice of motif is also reflected in this issue: **Benjamin Zikoll** looked for dramatic skin texture and found it in the Marvel film character Cable. Marty McFly also became an involuntary hero three times in order to save the lives and future of his family and friends. The Brazilian artist **Neimar Duarte** painted the world-famous movie poster on a bass guitar. The Croatian artist **Dalibor Pejicic** has portrayed Spider-Man, who finds himself in a rather quiet, anti-heroic scene. Finally, there is no hero without a villain to defeat: In „Lord of the Rings“, this is the dark emperor Sauron, painted on a saw blade by Serbian artist **Igor Amidžić**.

Unfortunately, things don't turn out as positively for heroes in real life as they do in the movies: **Rafael Padilla Ruiz** portrayed the famous Spanish musician and „guitar hero“ Juan Ramón Artero, who has past away much too early.

Our news pages are dominated this time by the new airbrushes from Harder & Steenbeck and there is also a lot to report from the Airbrush Step by Step publishing house.

So, let yourself be inspired by this issue and find your own „heroes in art“. But don't forget to share it with us – in the readers' gallery or as a Step by Step. Contact and further information can be found on page 63 or online at www.airbrush-magazine.net/get-published.

Your ASBS Team



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Harder & Steenbeck Ultra 2024: More than just an update for beginners

In the last issue, we presented the new Ultra 2024 from Harder & Steenbeck. In the meantime, the device has arrived both in stores and at our editorial office, so that we can get our own impression of the model update. In most cases, these are design changes or minor details that are optimized on the devices. In the case of the new Harder & Steenbeck Ultra 2024, however, "update" is clearly an understatement, as some structural changes have been added that have not yet been seen in this way.

Let's start with the highlights of the appliance: The Ultra 2024 has a new lever designed in such a way that an inexperienced beginner is instructed to first push the lever down to release the valve with the air, and only then pull the lever back to feed in the paint. This completely prevents incorrect handling, which often happens with beginners. This saves frustration and spills when spraying.

Compared to the pre-series model, the lever has become much more solid. The button is larger, has a completely different appearance and sits well under the finger. However, the lever is much closer to the cup, so there is less room for the finger to move. However, if you remove the cup, you can only work with the hollow, which only holds a few drops of paint. Users who are used to a smooth pull when pulling back the lever, as is familiar from the Evolution and Infinity, will be somewhat disappointed, at least at first. With the Ultra 2024, you have to apply significantly more force when pulling back the lever, which means that the response time until the paint comes out of the device is also significantly shorter and faster. The spring pressure can be adjusted to be slightly softer by loosening the spring adjustment screw a little.



The Ultra 2024 is supplied with a 0.45 mm plug-in nozzle, which is also new for the upcoming product series. In combination with the matching needle, the new physiognomy of the components provides a nozzle size that offers a very wide range of possibilities. The finest hairlines are possible, but also fast priming with more viscous colors. It is no longer necessary to change the nozzle, but it is possible. The Ultra 2024 can be retrofitted at any time, both with old nozzle sets and with the new ones from the current Evolution CRplus series.

The air head has become significantly more massive and the jetstream holes have a different look. Like the previous model, the air head does not have a removable needle protection cap, as is usually the case with the Evolution CRplus or Infinity. If you want to remove dirt from the needle tip, you can carefully use a cotton bud from the front or a regular brush to reach the needle tip through the holes. The air head is slightly duller in appearance than the rest of the chrome-plated airbrush device. Bubbling to mix colors or cleaner with the yellow Harder & Steenbeck bubble cap does not work with the Ultra 2024. You have to use your own pen or similar caps or open the air head slightly.

Another new feature of the Ultra is the paint volume control in the form of a rotating ring with five levels to make adjustment easier, especially for figure painters and beginners. The settings are intended for priming, applying base color, glazing and three levels for creating highlights. The DeVilbiss Sprite Major already had a similar option, but this preset was positioned in front of the lever. On the Ultra 2024, the adjust-





ment is located behind the lever and is fixed with the handle. However, the preset is clearly designed for model making and figure painting and is not suitable for beginners who want to draw the finest lines on paper. None of the settings are fine enough for this. However, you can also work without the preset by pulling through the lever completely. This means that the Ultra 2024 can be used like any other double-action device.

The needle chuck and needle adjustment screw have also been visually and ergonomically redesigned and, according to the manufacturer, enable better control as well as smooth removal and insertion of the needle without destroying it. Although all Harder & Steenbeck models already have a small funnel-shaped needle adjustment screw for optimized needle insertion, the new components are significantly more solid and therefore easier to handle. Nozzle and needle each have 4 markings for identification so that they cannot be confused. However, there are no markings on the air head.

As usual, the Ultra 2024 is delivered in black plastic packaging with a service card to show that the device has been tested. The device is supplied with a 5 ml plug-in cup and a plug-in nipple for connection to a quick-release coupling, so as with the previous model, it is very clearly laid out. However, printed instructions are no longer included. The manufacturer refers to the website for this. At the time of going to press, we were unable to find any further instructions or spare parts information on the new website apart from an introductory video in English. We assume that this will follow in the coming weeks.

Thanks to its innovations, Harder & Steenbeck's Ultra 2024 is the most modern airbrush device for beginners on the market. At 109.48 euros, it may not be the cheapest, but it is certainly the most effective when it comes to getting started and learning the technique. Thanks to Harder & Steenbeck's modular system, the Ultra 2024 can grow with your needs and can also be converted.

www.harder-airbrush.net





Evolution CRplus 2024 – The Evolution reinvented!

After more than 25 years and to mark the company's 100th anniversary, there is a major update of the most popular Harder & Steenbeck airbrush model – the Evolution. We took a closer look at the "new" classic, which has influenced many generations of airbrush users.

In the familiar black plastic case, the 2-in-1 version comes with the built-in 0.28 mm nozzle set, 2 ml cup and lid, as well as the new 0.45 mm nozzle set and 5 ml cup. Also included is a card with a spray test of the device, including a QR code with a link to the English-language operating instructions as a video.

Some of the important components of the device have become significantly larger and coarser. Visually, it is still finished in chrome and gold. The fineline cap for needle protection has become more stable. It is still easy to hold shut with two fingers so that you can mix your color components quickly without a bubble cap. The airhead can be easily unscrewed thanks to the grooved edge. The new lever is also very striking. Both the significantly larger control knob and the other components of the lever have been optimized and completely redesigned. The large knob provides better ergonomics when pulling back and contributes to finer control.

Another excellent feature is that the lever can no longer be installed in the wrong direction as in the past. This helps inexperienced beginners in particular to assemble the appliance correctly after cleaning. The center piece for fixing the newly designed needle chuck can also be easily unscrewed thanks to the coarse grooves and the solid needle clamping nut with large insertion funnel for the needle is not only stylish but also practical. The new stepless lever limiter is in gold, can be screwed to the required position very quickly thanks to the redesign and enables beginners in particular to limit the amount of ink.

The FineLine head design is more robust, less prone to clogging and seals better. However, the decisive factor in the revision is also whether the spraying behavior has become even better. And this is another area where the new Evolution scores highly. In combination with the 0.28 mm nozzle, the new lever and the needle control, extremely fine details can be sprayed – finer than with the previous 0.2 mm nozzle set. Pulling back the lever has become tighter, but reacts much more precisely and quickly. This is the manufacturer's response to the wishes of those users who previously found the long start-up time before the paint came out unpleasant. The









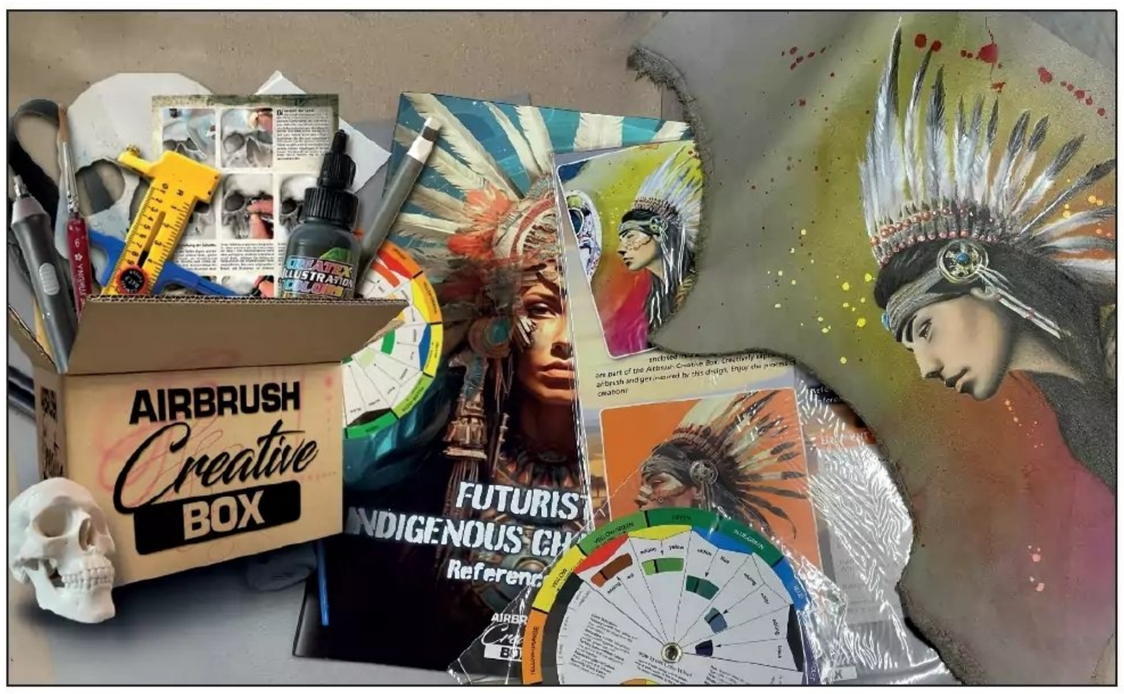
enclosed 0.45 mm nozzle set is also amazingly detailed, which is a far cry from the previous 0.4 mm nozzle set and still offers the finest details for coarser paint pigments.

The Evolution CRplus can be converted with micro, 2 ml or 5 ml cups. The previous 0.2 mm and 0.4 mm Evolution air heads will no longer be produced and will be replaced by the new 0.28 mm and 0.45 mm sets. They are compatible with all Harder & Steenbeck airbrushes. The "old" 0.2 mm and 0.4 mm needles can be used with the new nozzles and airheads, and the new nozzles also fit into the old airheads – compatibility is therefore guaranteed.

Conclusion:
Whether fine lines, precise color gradients, mini dagger strokes or micro dots – the new Evolution 2024 shines in all areas! The manufacturer has not only succeeded in giving the device a visual facelift, but has also optimized its operation and performance. The Evolution CRplus is available as a solo version with a 0.28 mm nozzle set for 165 euros and the 2-in-1 set with an additional 0.45 mm nozzle set for 220 euros from specialist dealers or directly from the manufacturer.

www.harder-airbrush.net

Airbrush Creative Box 6 & 7: New surface, new finish



Have you ever airbrushed on leather? If not, you should try the Airbrush Creative Box No. 6 which contains a piece of gray leather and, true to style, a stencil and instructions for the "American Indian" design, the half-portrait of an American Indian chief. Ideal for trying out and exploring the new surface - before you might tackle your expensive leather jacket! The box also surprises with an exclusive reference book with futuristic indigenous characters, a handy paint wheel, a flat brush and a bottle of ChromaAir airbrush paint from the US specialist retailer Spraygunner.

Ever tried a gold leaf finish with an airbrush artwork? Airbrush Creative Box #7 is providing you with a scarab design, the Egyptian lucky charm and symbol of life and resurrection which is ideal for a fine art piece, for T-shirts or motorcycle tanks. In addition to the stencil and instructions, it contains two exclusive sample sets of FBS masking film and Reflex Duria glatt paper as well as water color pencils, application milk and gold leaf for the "royal" finish.

Lucky for you, there are a handful of boxes of each edition left and they are now available to order from the newart online store. If you like these boxes, then the next surprise boxes will certainly be something for you – individually 39 euros or with a subscription from 129 euros incl. shipping. The next box no. 8 will arrive on May 15 – so you still have time until April 30 to place your order. But don't forget! Box no. 6 and 7 are only available while stocks last.

www.airbrush-creative-box.de



XP Pen Artist Pro 16 (2-Gen): Flexible sensitivity with comfortable ergonomics

With the 2nd generation of the XP-Pen Artist Pro 16 pen display, graphics tablet manufacturer XP-Pen is launching its latest pen technology in this compact 16" size. The manufacturer combines high resolution with excellent color accuracy and the finest pressure sensitivity. The Artist Pro 16 is therefore another productive tool for airbrush artists to create design templates, generate stencils or optimize painted airbrush artworks, e.g. for print preparation.

As always, the XP-Pen Artist Pro 16 (2-gen) comes in a sturdy, stylish box. It has a fold-out stand, the new X3 Pro stylus and a wireless shortcut remote. A mains adapter for all countries is also included. In addition to the connection cable, a cleaning cloth for the display, gloves and quick start guide are also included. The driver can be downloaded directly from the manufacturer's website. The device can be operated with a wide variety of systems. It is compatible with Windows, MacOS, Android, ChromeOS and Linux – in other words, the greatest possible compatibility that is currently possible. The pen display must therefore always be connected to a computer and does not work on its own. We tested the device on a current Mac Mini with an M2 chip. Depending on the connection option, the device can be operated with a USB-C to USB-C cable. Power, image and pen input are then transferred via a single cable. Or you can use the separately available 3-in-1 cable with USB, power and HDMI.

The built-in 16:10 display has a WQXGA resolution (2560 x 1600 pixels), which results in a super-sharp image in this size. The display also reproduces colors extremely accurately with its 99% sRGB color coverage. The device has a fully laminated screen, so there are no parallax errors and the pen can be positioned precisely. The display is glare-free and has no problems with fingerprints. It can be adjusted in terms of brightness and contrast as well as color temperature. The lower display area has an ergonomic wrist rest, which is helpful when working – whether with a stand or lying flat.

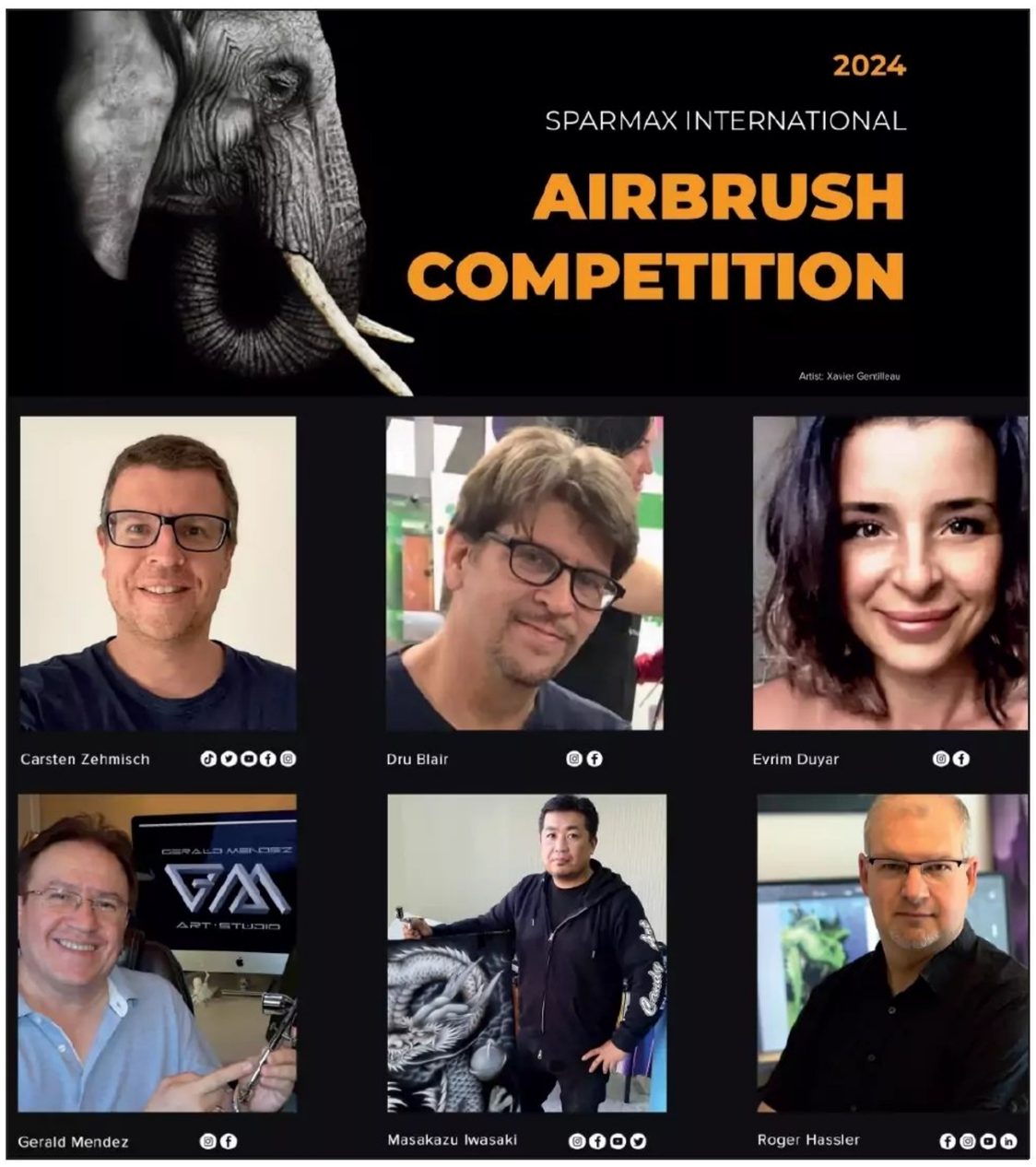
In addition to the excellent display, the included stylus is a special feature. Thanks to X3 Pro Smart Chip support, the stylus has very sensitive 16,000 pressure levels for the first time, doubling the industry standard of 8,192 pressure levels. Nevertheless, we could hardly feel a really noticeable difference in comparison. However, it should be emphasized that you get the best possible input technology currently available. The pen buttons can be changed and assigned individually in the driver menu. The pen has an eraser function at the other end and there is an integrated tool in the pen box for replacing the pen tips. Eight replacement pen tips are also included, four of which are felt tips.

The included Bluetooth remote control for executing functions via shortcut is also particularly noteworthy. For example, the integrated setting wheel can be used to zoom into a subject continuously. The remote control can also be customized in the driver menu to set up your favourite shortcuts. This has the advantage that you no longer need to have a large keyboard next to the pen display and can still control everything using shortcuts. A remote dongle for the remote control can be found in the pen box if required.

The XP-Pen Artist Pro 16 (2-Gen) is aimed at professional and semi-professional artists, who get an excellent, up-to-date input product with the device, which is also suitable for transportation due to its size and connection options. The high quality of the display and accessories is particularly enjoyable and justifies the price of 599.99 euros/USD.

www.xp-pen.com

Sparmax International Airbrush Competition 2024: Advocating for peace



Since 2016, the Taiwanese airbrush manufacturer Sparmax has regularly been organizing an international airbrush competition with participants from more than 30 countries. While the competition brings artists and art together across national borders and cultural differences, this year Sparmax recognizes the imperative of advocating for peace in view of the ongoing global conflicts. As part of the competition, artists are invited to integrate the theme of peace into their works. Those who succeed in doing so can count on bonus points when their work is judged.

Five categories are available for participation: Fine Art Realism, Fine Art Fantasy, Automotive Painting, Hobby / Model Making, as well as a Junior category for participants under the age of 17. There are cash prizes of up to 700 US dollars, Sparmax airbrush equipment and a comprehensive presentation of the winners in Airbrush Step by Step magazine. This year's top-class jury consists of the well-known photorealist Dru Blair, the Australian airbrush artist, lecturer and influencer Carsten Zehmisch, the Turkish modeling expert Evrim Duyar, the well-known Mexican illustrator Gerald Mendez, the director of the Japan Airbrush Association, Masakazu Iwasaki, Airbrush Step by Step editor-in-chief Roger Hassler and the Sparmax team.

The deadline for entries is May 20, 2024, and participants may submit one work per category, so multiple entries are possible. The images must be submitted as a digital photo by email. All rules and information at:

https://www.sparmaxair.com/competition

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Advertising

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Brazilian Neimar Duarte has always been a big "Back to the Future" fan. For his bass guitar project, he re-watched all the movies, including documentaries about them and about Drew Struzan, the original artist of the movie poster. His work inspired Neimar, and it was a challenge for the Brazilian to paint the work using only the airbrush - a different technique. At the same time, he enjoyed the freedom that this difference gave him when creating his "fan art piece".

EQUIPMENT – BACK TO THE FUTURE

Airbrushes: Iwata HP-CH, Iwata CM-C Plus, Harder &Steenbeck Evolution CRplus.

Colors: Automotive paints (Axalta, Sherwin Williams and Wanda or similar) - self-mixed from pigments and resin (transparent base), candy colors from concentrated alcohol-based ink and the same paint base

Underground: Music Man StingRay bass guitar owned by Rafael Silva.

Other materials: masking tape, fine ruling tape, sandpaper, printer paper, precision knife, HB graphite pencil, 0.5 mechanical pencil, ruler.

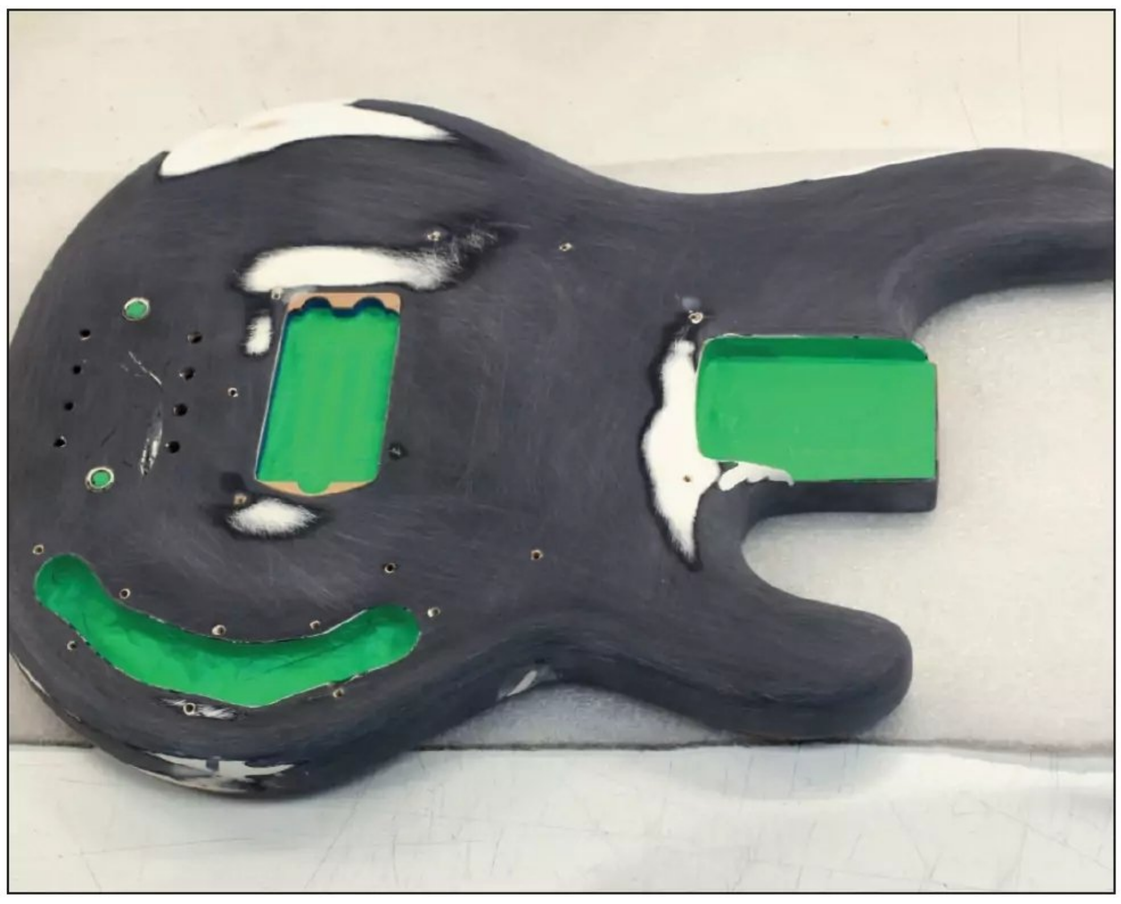
01 The instrument

Usually the instrument comes to me like this: fully assembled and in working order. The first thing I do is take a few photos for various purposes - including one for my digital studies of how the image will best fit on the instrument, and create some samples to show the customer. For instruments like this, I usually swap out the opaque pickguard for a clear one so I can maximize the surface area for the artwork without having to paint the pickguard....



02 Preparing the substrate

...But to do that, I usually have to touch up some imperfections that were previously hidden by the pickguard. Then I degreased the entire surface with a silicone remover and sanded with 320 and 400 grit sandpaper. No filler was needed here, the white spots are the factory primer under the black lacquer.



03 Primer and base color

As you can see from the green tape in the previous picture, I masked off all the cavities. I degreased the surface and applied a coat of polyurethane primer. After curing, I sanded the entire surface with 800 grit sandpaper. Then the surface was degreased again and a coat of a nice metallic blue was applied, which serves as a base for blue metal flakes.





04 Apply flakes

On top of the blue metallic primer, I applied a few coats of polyurethane clearcoat with blue metal flakes added. This was followed by a few coats of polyurethane clearcoat without flakes. After curing, I was able to sand the surface with 800-grit sandpaper without removing the flakes. After sanding the surface, I degreased it and taped a line around the edges, as you can see from the red FBS fine line tape. From the red line, I masked everything to the outside, including the back of the instrument.





05 Prepare masking

I have printed two copies of the picture to be painted on normal printer paper. One serves as a mask, the other for tracing the picture. Note that I have already cut out the mask you see in the picture with a precision knife. I'm basically separating the foreground subjects from the background.



06 Prepare background

I placed the foreground part of the masking on the surface so that this area is protected while I paint the background. The technique I used to adhere the paper to the surface: I cut small holes in the paper and put tape over the holes so that the tape would hold the paper in place through the holes on the surface. I then used white to start creating some clouds and a mist in the background. I wanted some flakes to show through the background, so I made sure to leave some areas transparent. This white is just the base for the colors that will follow.



07 Adding colors

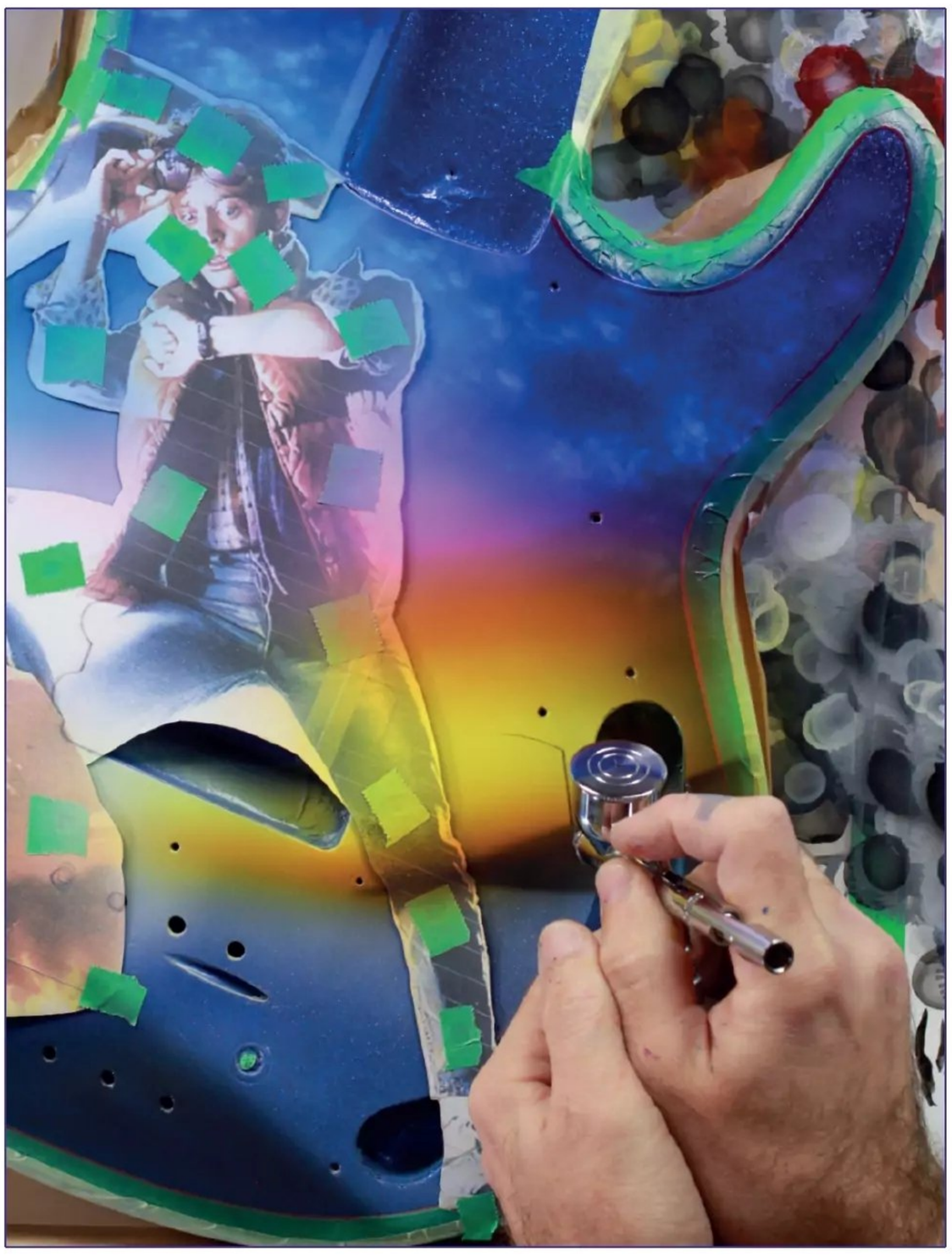
Here I have started to add candy colors, yellow and magenta. The orange you see in between is the result of magenta sprayed over the yellow.

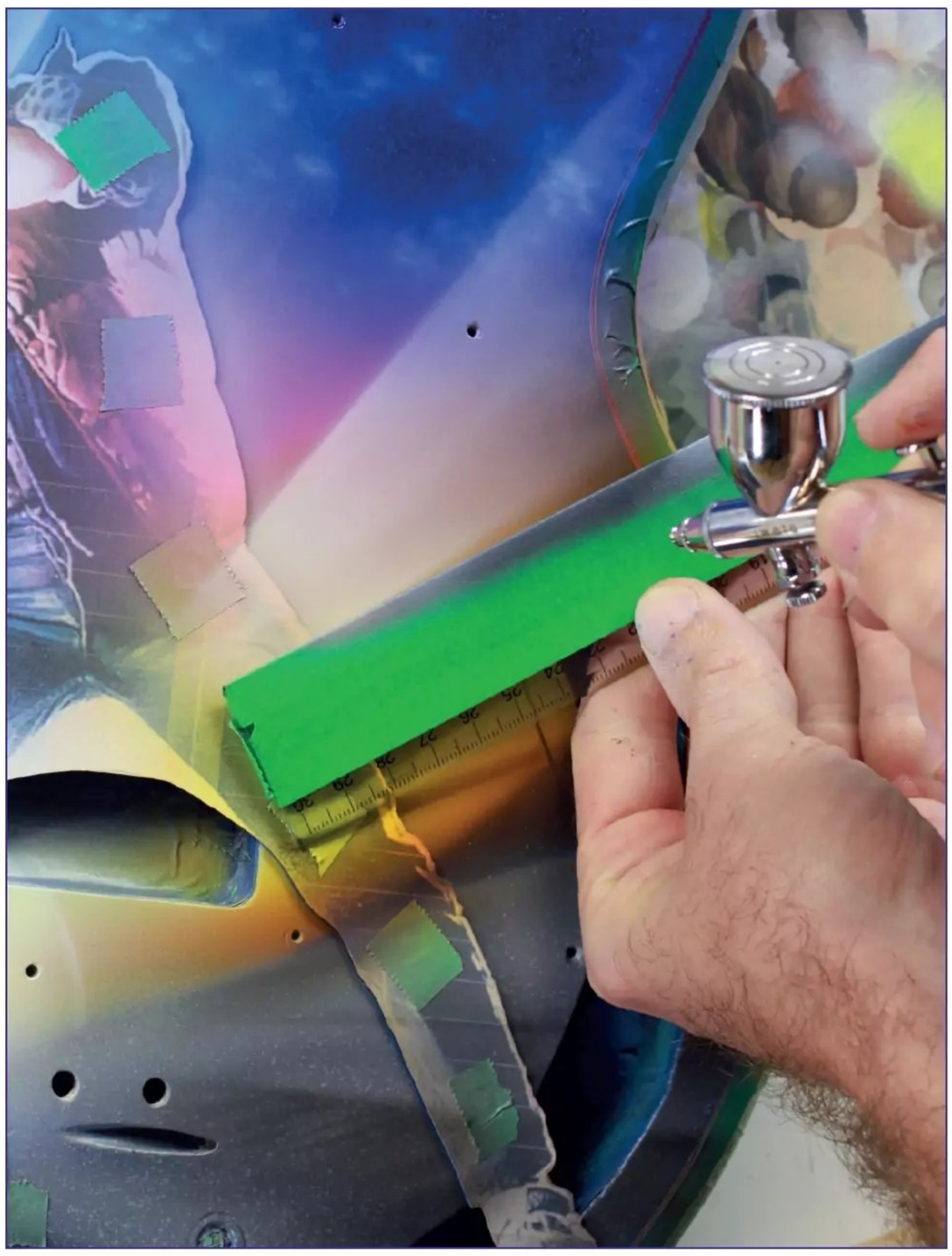
I then tinted the white clouds with candy blue and violet. I repeated the process in the clouds several times with white and blue candy paint to give them some depth.



08 Floor and light beams

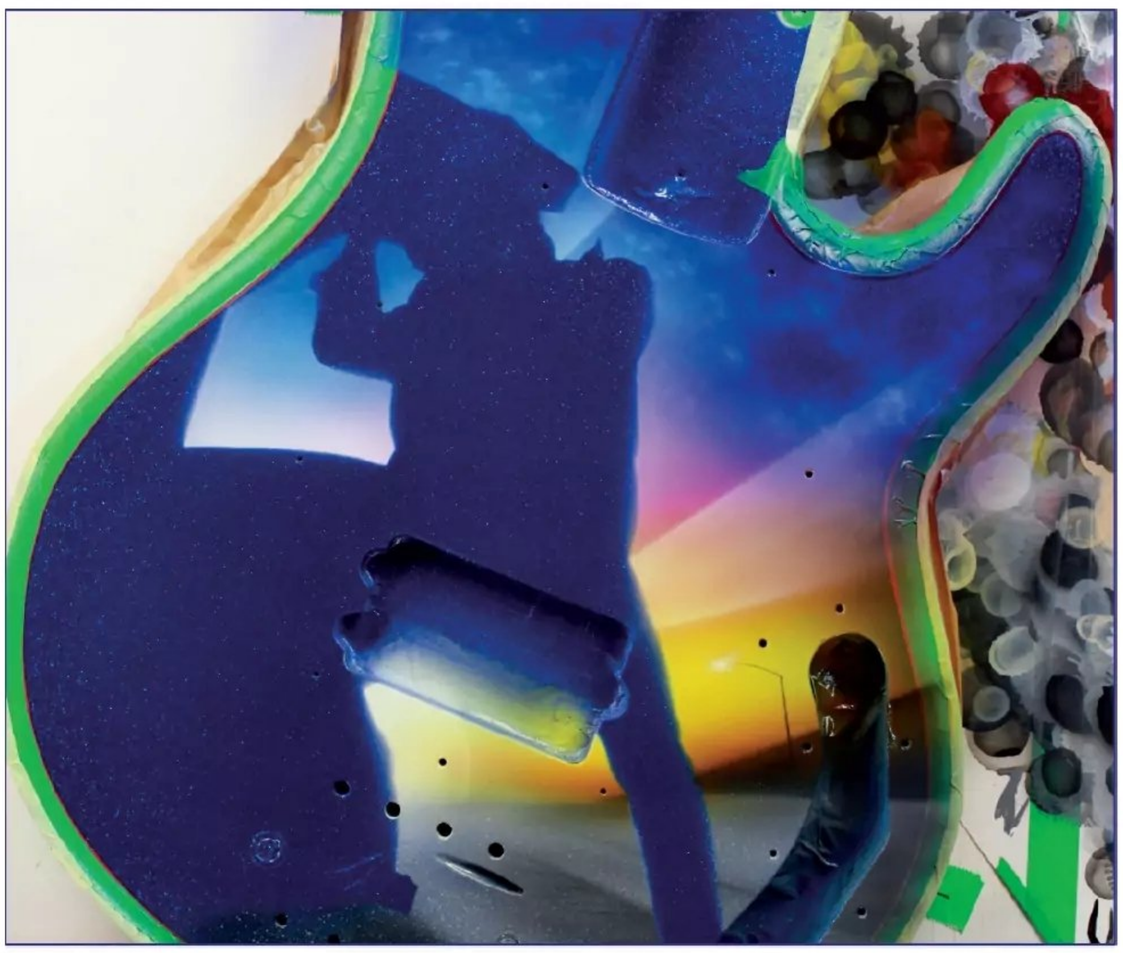
I used a dark brown to paint some dark areas on the bottom. Then I made a mixture of white and transparent base to create light rays using a tape-wrapped ruler as a stencil. By holding the ruler close to the surface near the light source and far away from the surface at the other end, you can create a nice transition from sharp to soft edges. If you add the Transparent Base to any color, in this case white, you can adjust the opacity of the color without diluting the color too much. This way you can create very soft gradients.





09 Remove mask

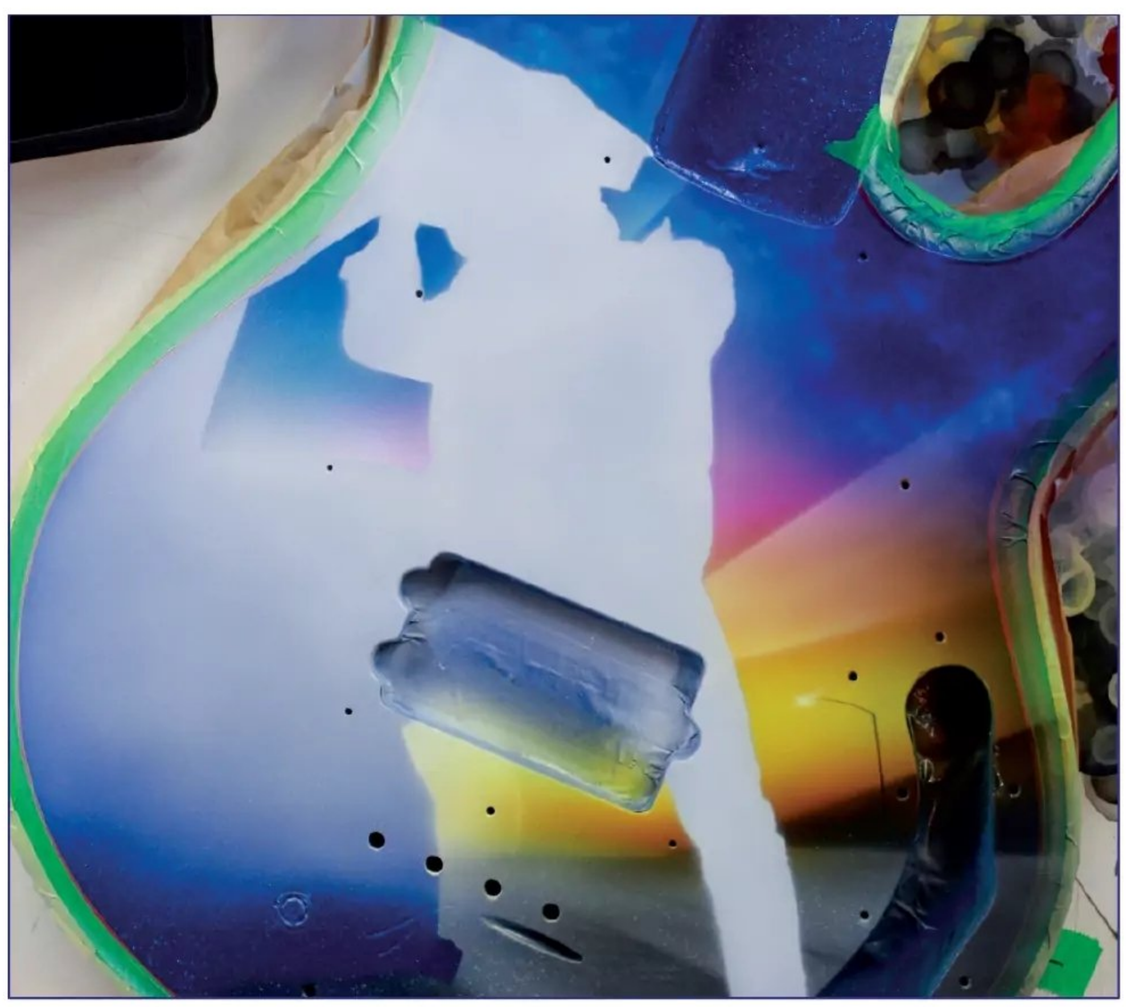
Once I had the background pretty much finished, I removed the mask, degreased the guitar surface and sprayed on a layer of Transparent Base to smooth everything out and protect what I had achieved so far. In the next step, I used the opposite parts of the mask to protect the background and start with the foreground image.



10 Create primer

To start with, I sprayed on a thin layer of white so that I could trace the lines on it. I made sure that I didn't spray white in places where I didn't need it. I then removed the mask, degreased the surface and applied another layer of Transparent Base to protect it. These intermediate layers of Transparent Base are also useful for reducing the steps created by the layers of paint so that you don't have any interference when painting over the edges later.





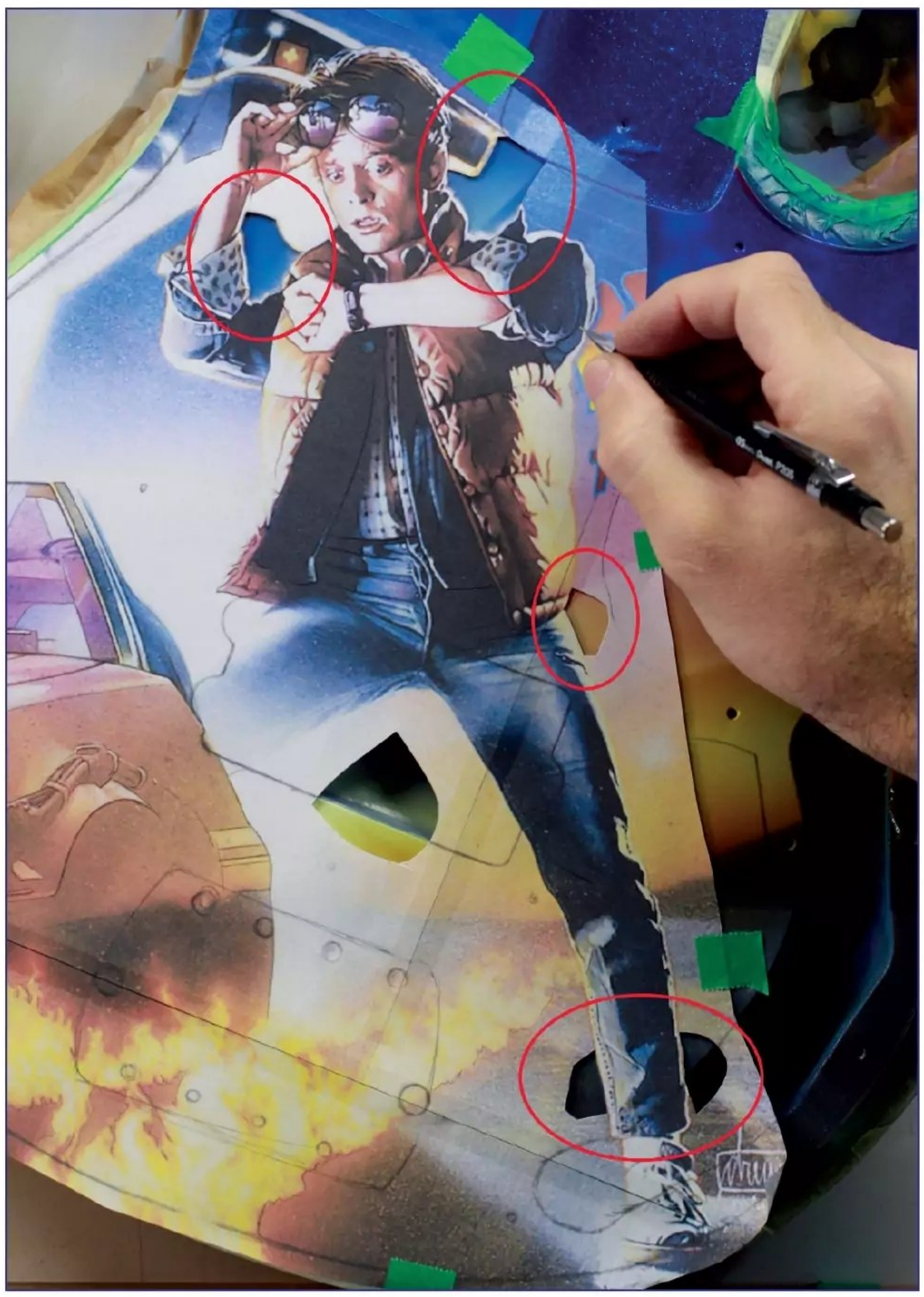
11 Transferring the image

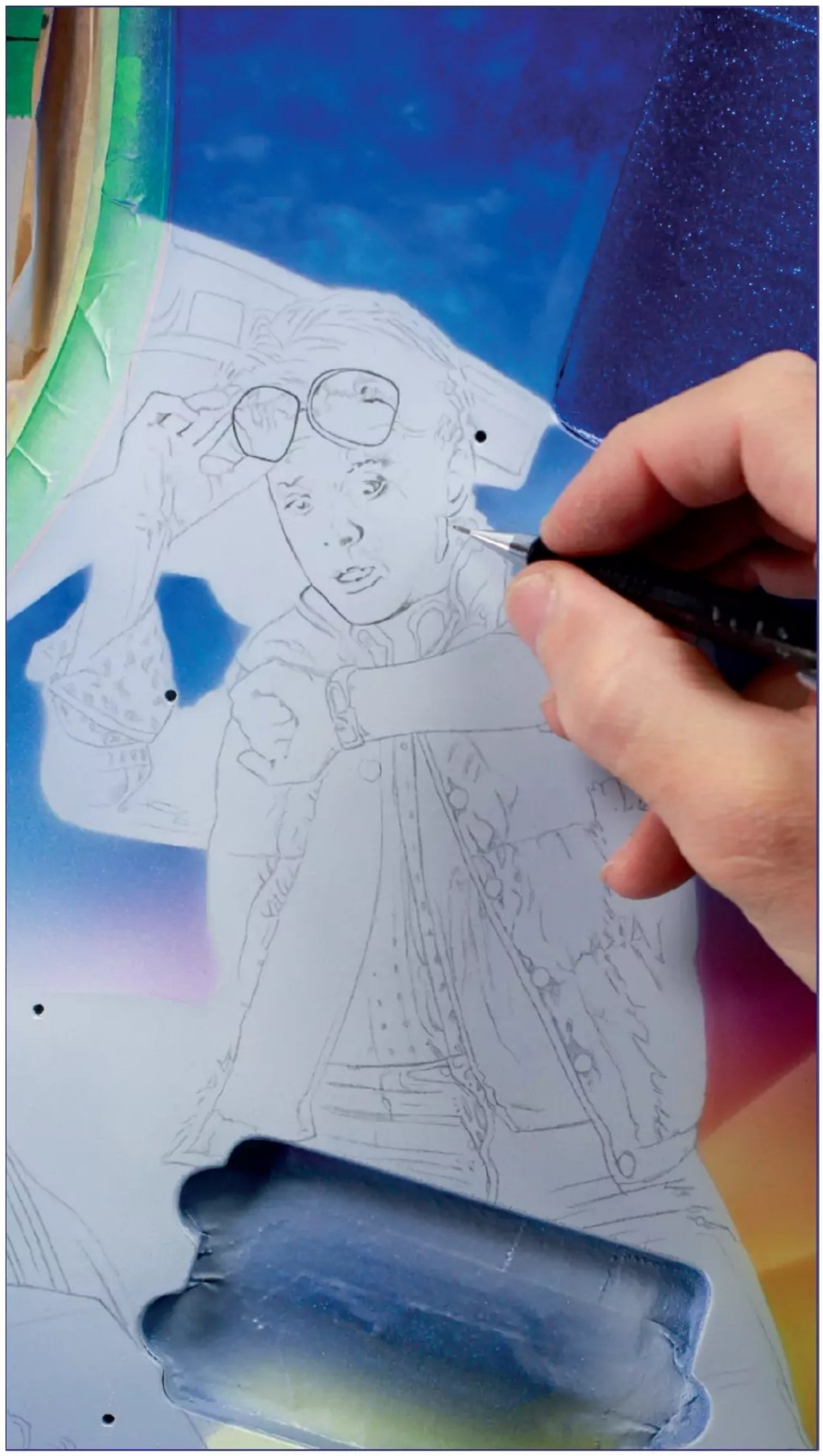
Now I use the other printout to trace the design. I used the transfer technique, which consists of blackening the back of the paper with a graphite pencil, placing the paper on the surface and tracing the main lines on the printout. In this way, the graphite color is transferred to the surface. The quality of the pencil depends on the situation. Since I transferred to white, I chose a light graphite pencil, class HB.



12 Refine lines

Note the openings marked with red circles in the picture. I strategically make these openings near the edges to find the exact position where I can place the image on the white base. Then I enhance the drawing where it fits best and spray another layer of Transparent Base to preserve and protect the graphite markings.

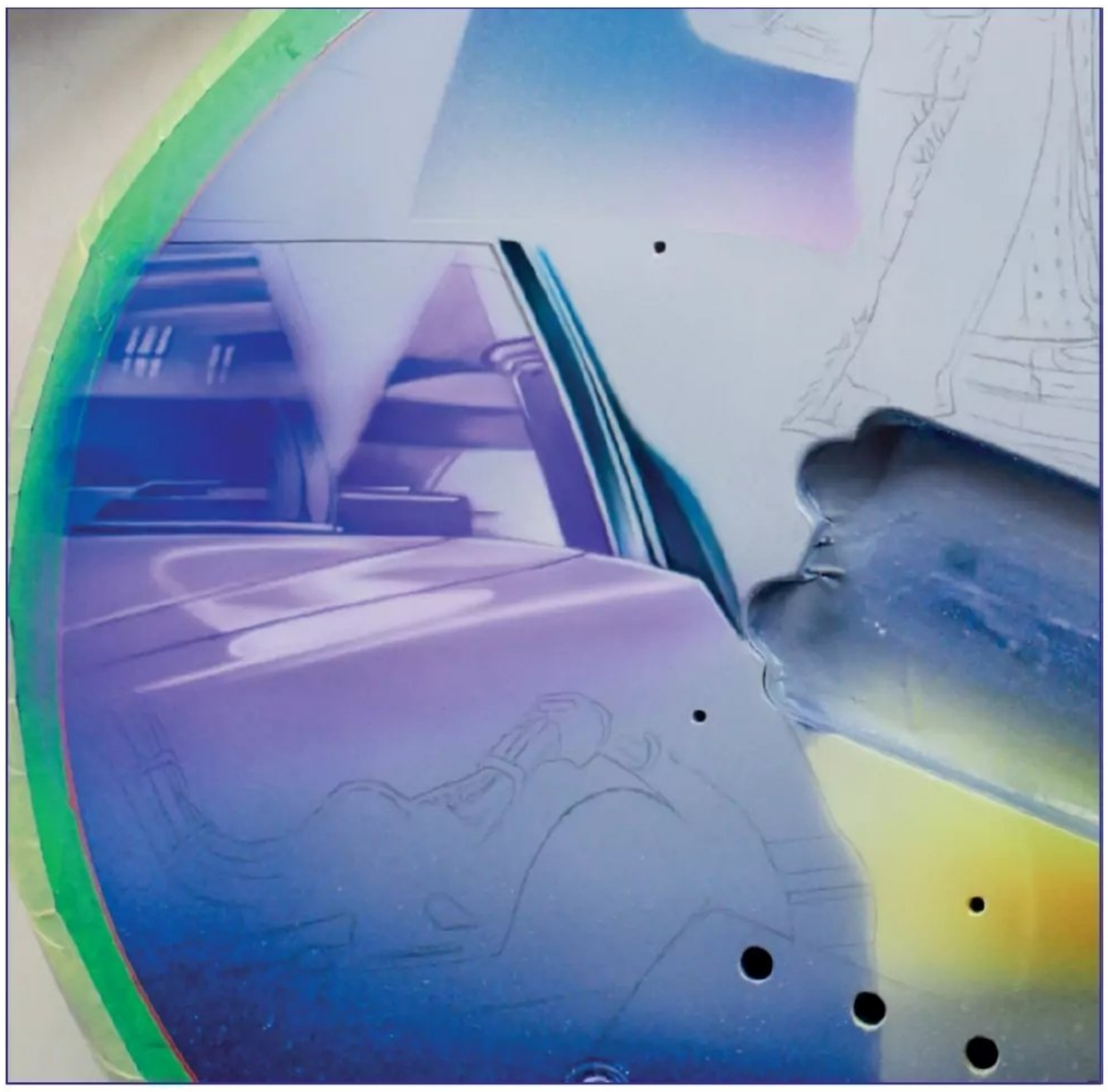


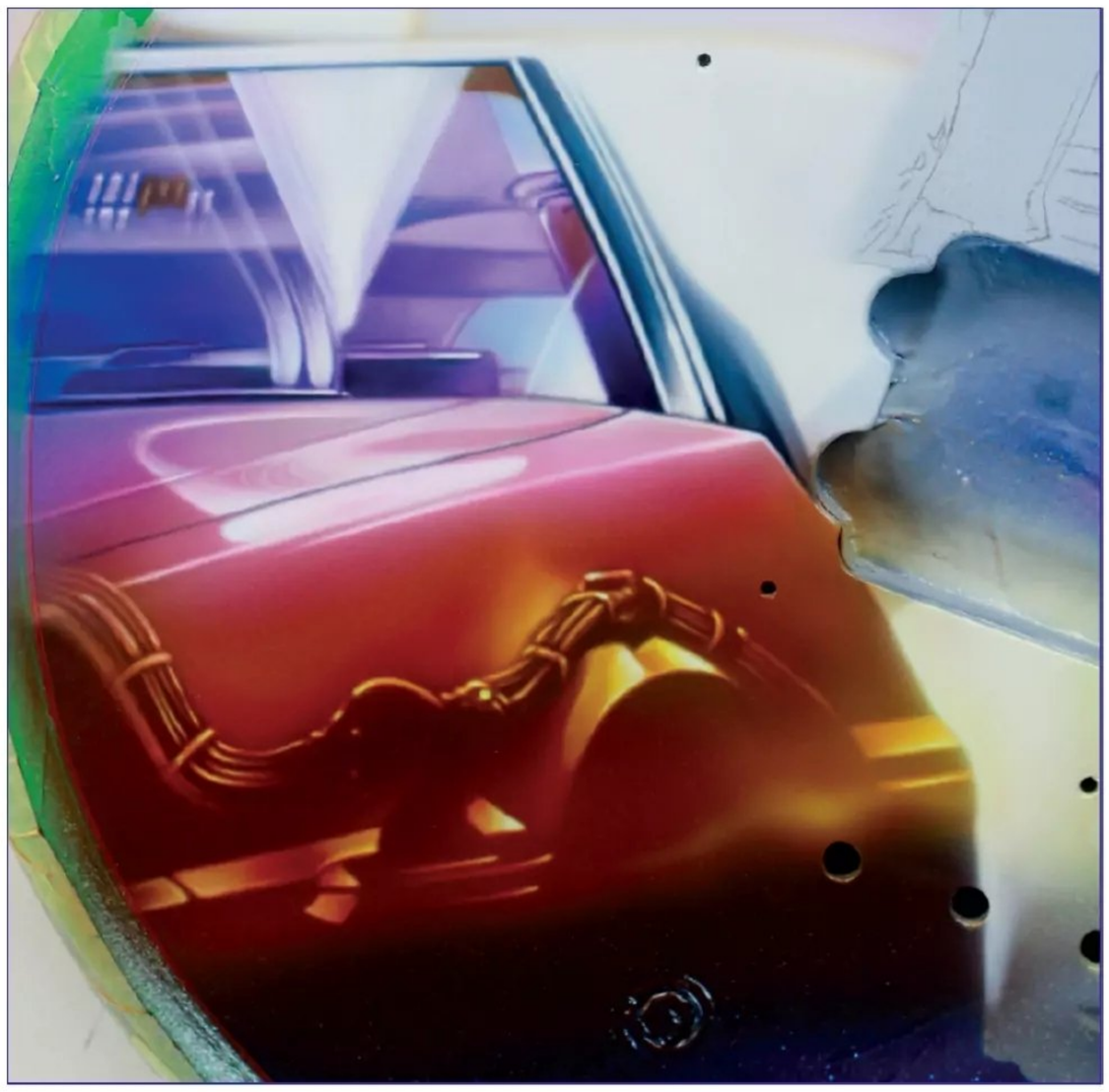




13 The DeLorean

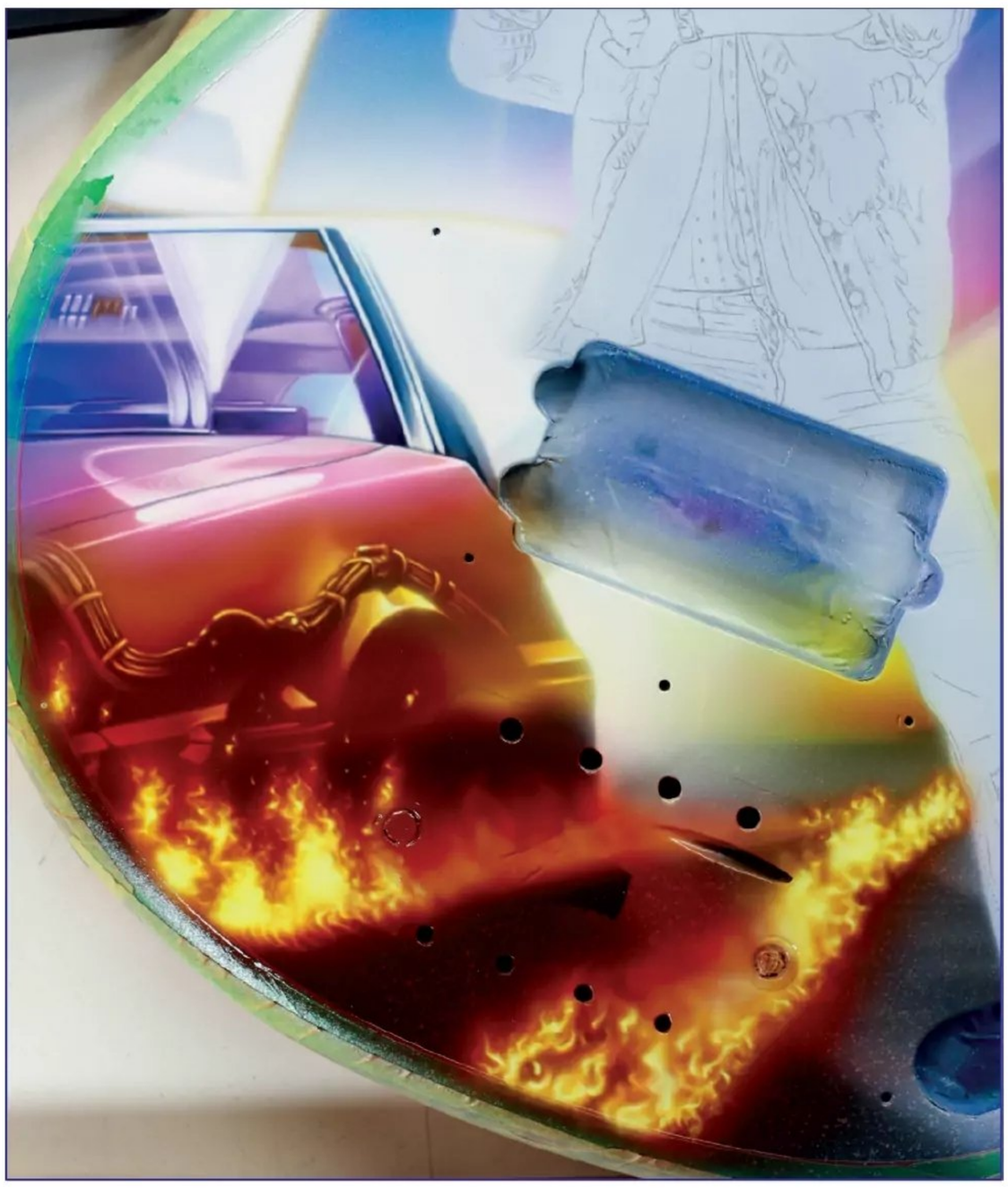
Here I color some areas of the car with purple and blue and add some dark areas with black on the door. I added more color and detail to the car with yellow, orange and blue. I also worked on the reflections and lighting coming from inside the car by using white. As you can see, there are many tones and colors that I achieved by layering transparent and candy colors.





14 Fire

To paint the fire, I started with opaque orange and then worked on the light areas with a bright, opaque yellow. Then I carefully sprayed candy magenta on the edges and a little candy yellow in the middle areas. I repeated the process until I had achieved a good result.



15 Marty's pants

I started with the design of the pants using a variation of dark blue and purple. In some areas I created some texture by painting on dots.



16 Shirt and vest

Still using the same colors, I started with the shirt. For this type of detail, I add a little Transparent Base to reduce the opacity of the color and have more control to build up textures and color slowly. Then I paint his vest with a dark red and work on the shadow areas first. Always create texture where it makes sense.

I add more color by using transparent red in his vest and transparent blue in his pants. I also used some reflective colors like yellow and a little red in his shirt and pants. Then I increased the brightness with white.





17 Face and arms

I create the arms and head with a variation of skin tones, brown and black. Then I add reflected colors with candy and transparent colors like blue, violet, magenta and yellow. If necessary, I rework the highlights again and again.





18 Interim status

Marty and the Delorrean are as good as finished. All that's missing now is the "Back to the Future" lettering.



19 Lettering

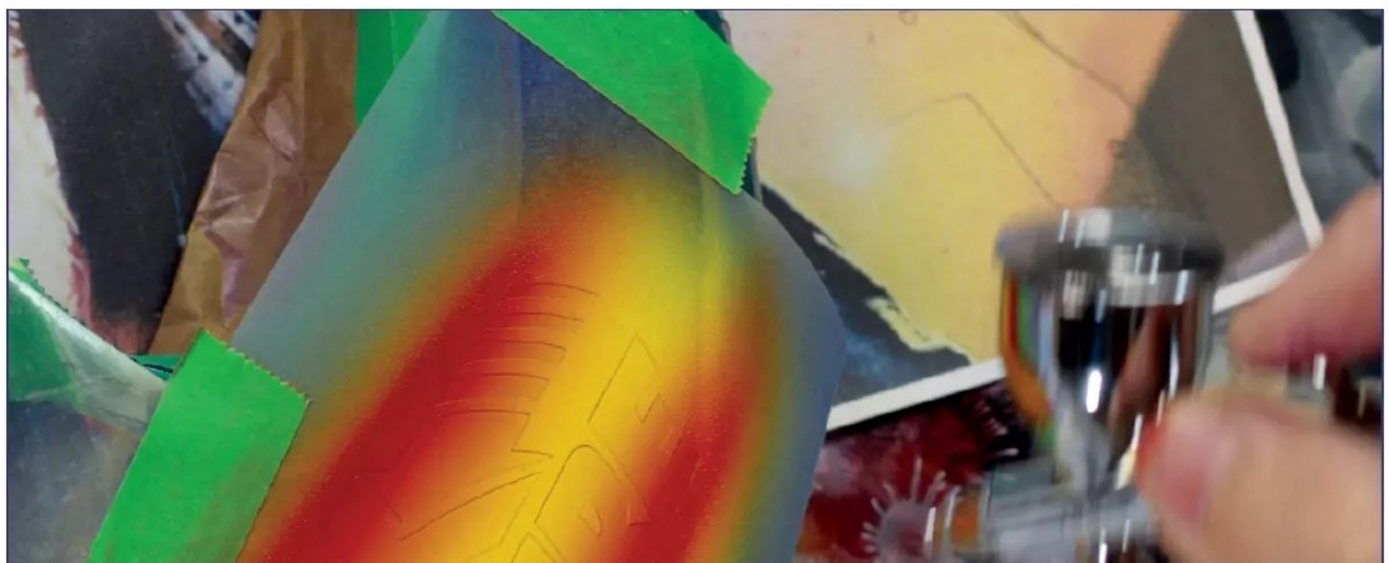
I printed out the lettering separately in the right size and cut out the letters with a sharp scalpel. I use adhesive tape to fix the template in the right place on the bass. As the B is covered a little by Marty and I naturally want to avoid overspray, I also cover the foreground motif with the mask so that it overlaps the lettering stencil a little.

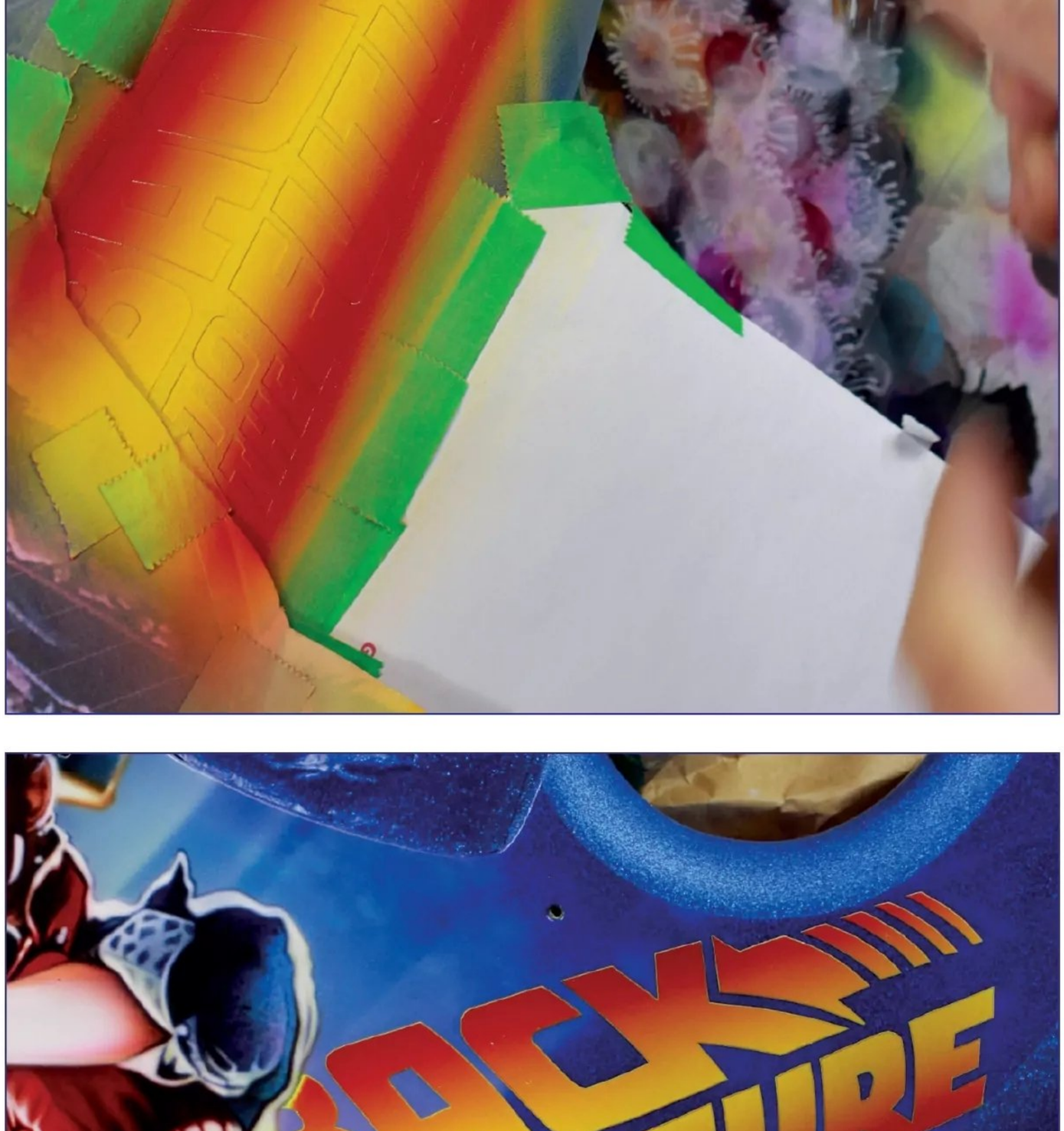




20 Color gradient

I use red and yellow to create the characteristic color gradient in the letters. Then I remove the masking.





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21 Pinstriping

Using a fine pinstriping brush, I outline the letters with a thin light blue line.



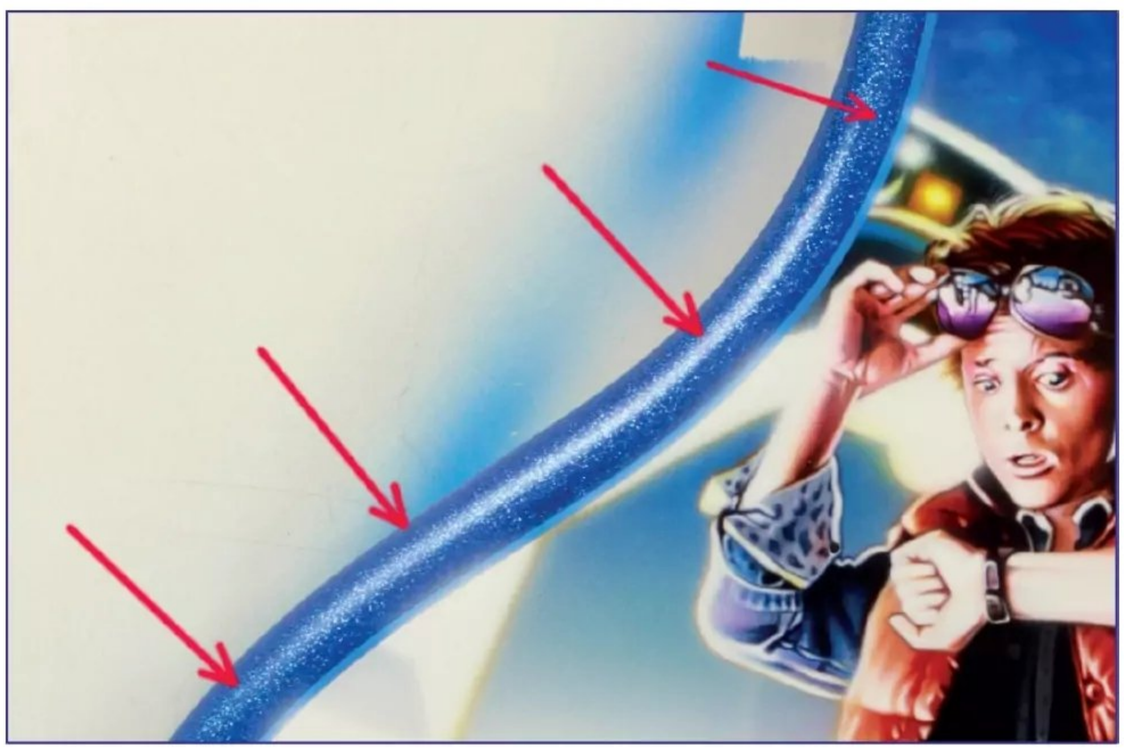
22 Additional light beams

After painting the lettering and the blue pinstripe border, I added more light rays to separate the layers and create more depth.



23 Final highlights

Note the areas marked with the red arrows. I added highlights on the pinstriping, making it look much brighter and more dynamic. After a few coats of polyurethane clear coat and a polish, the bass was ready to be assembled and shipped.





24 Finished bass

Now the bass guitar is finished - just apply clear varnish and reassemble. Then it's ready for the stage.





NEIMAR L. DUARTE



Neimar Duarte was born in 1985 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He taught himself to draw with the help of magazines, books and the Internet. Through his passion for classic cars, hot rods and choppers, he discovered the airbrush technique and bought his first device in 2005 without any prior knowledge. He built his first compressor himself from a refrigerator motor. Since then, he has continued to learn. He does all kinds of airbrush and pintstriping work, portraits, photorealism, fantasy art, motorcycles, instruments, helmets, etc. He also works with Harley-Davidson dealers and music bands. In portraits, he likes to mix photorealism with fantastic elements to stimulate the viewer's imagination. Since 2015, he has been a regular visitor to SEMA in Las Vegas, which inspires him greatly.

www.facebook.com/neimarfa



CABLE

The dramatic skin texture of the cyborg Cable from the film "Deadpool 2" was the decisive factor for the German artist Benjamin Zikoll in choosing it as a portrait project. Other important elements in this portrait are sharpness-contrast, hair structure, color saturation, color transitions and layering. In his step-by-step guide, he explains the simple means by which these challenges can be mastered.

EQUIPMENT – CABLE

Airbrush: Iwata Custom Micron

Colors: Createx Illustration Colors and Schmincke Aerocolor

Other materials: scalpels, eraser pens, electric eraser, various precision erasers from Tombow

Background: Schoellershammer 4G cardboard, 50 x 70 cm

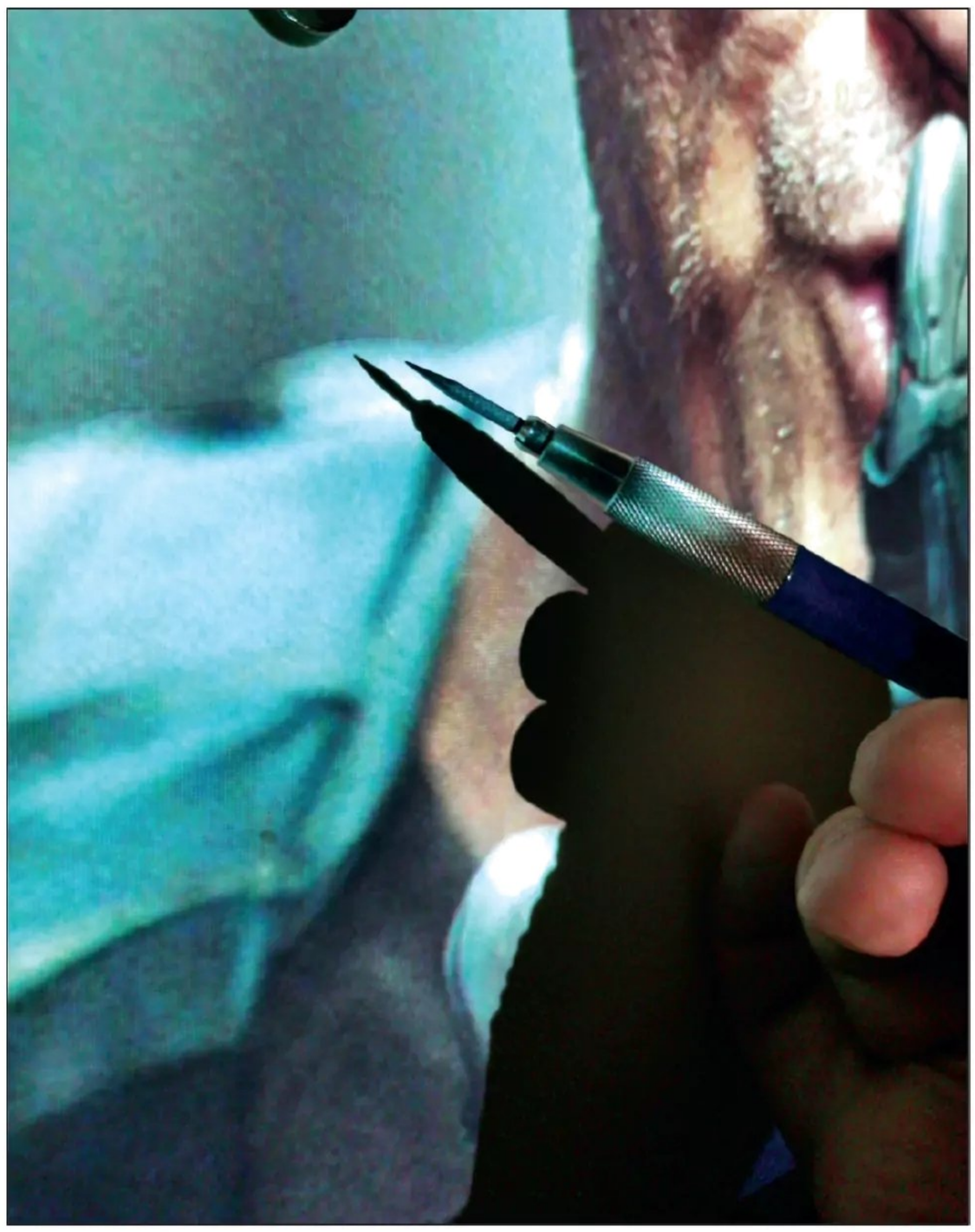
01 The template

This portrait presents some challenges, such as areas of light and shadow. These are quite striking in this picture. This is because some areas are more exposed to the reflection of the light and others are more exposed to the shadows. In addition, the left eye is illuminated (the portrait depicts a cyborg). It is therefore important that the area around the eye is illuminated accordingly. Or rather, the skin is illuminated. The skin texture is at the front of the focus area, which means that we also pay a lot of attention to the structure.



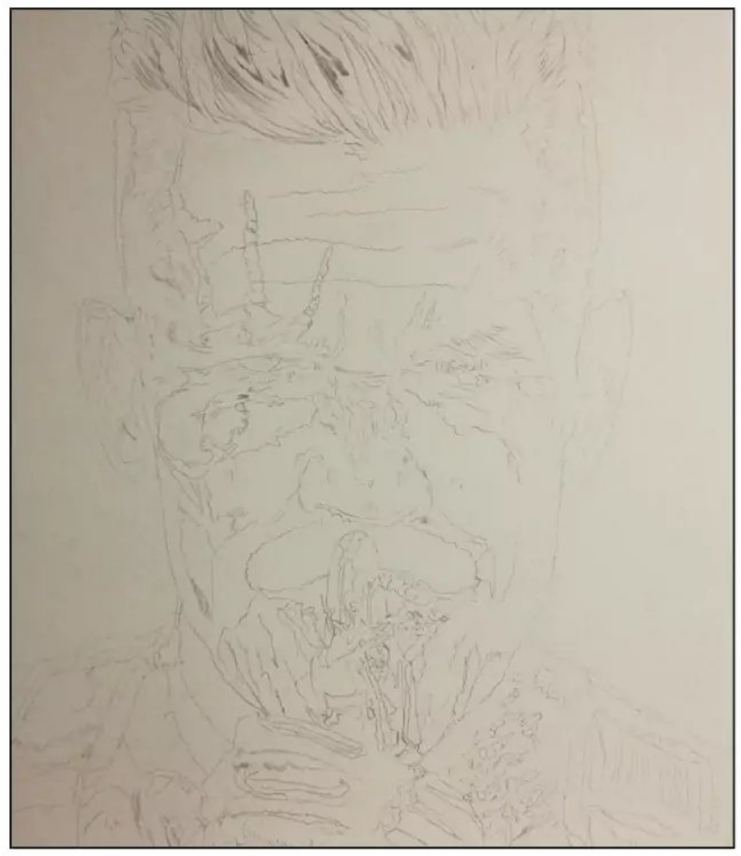
02 The transfer

I use an Epson HD projector for the transfer to my painting surface, which transfers my original in very high quality. It is important to make sure that the image is aligned at a straight angle and that there is no distortion. Alternatively, you can of course also use a projector or the good, tried-and-tested raster method.



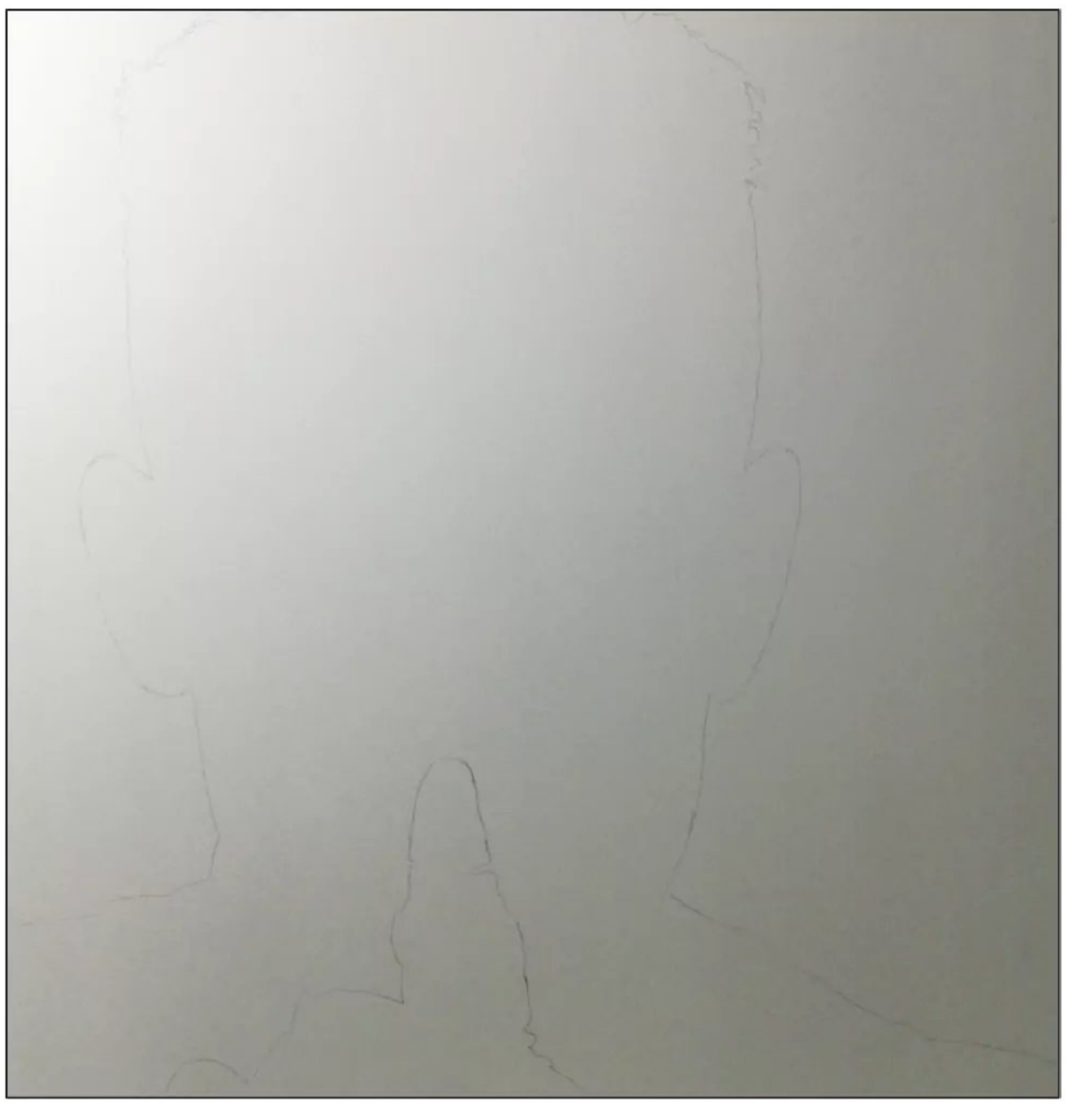
03 The preliminary drawing

For the preliminary drawing, I again allowed myself a lot of time and patience, as for me this step is crucial. The more detailed the preliminary drawing is, the more accurate the finished picture will be. It is important to note that every area, every shadow is indicated to make it easier for me to color these areas afterwards. I indicate shadow areas with very light hatching. If graphite lines are drawn too strongly, it is advisable to soften them with a soft kneaded eraser. Nothing is more unattractive than pencil lines showing through the paint.



04 Loose masks

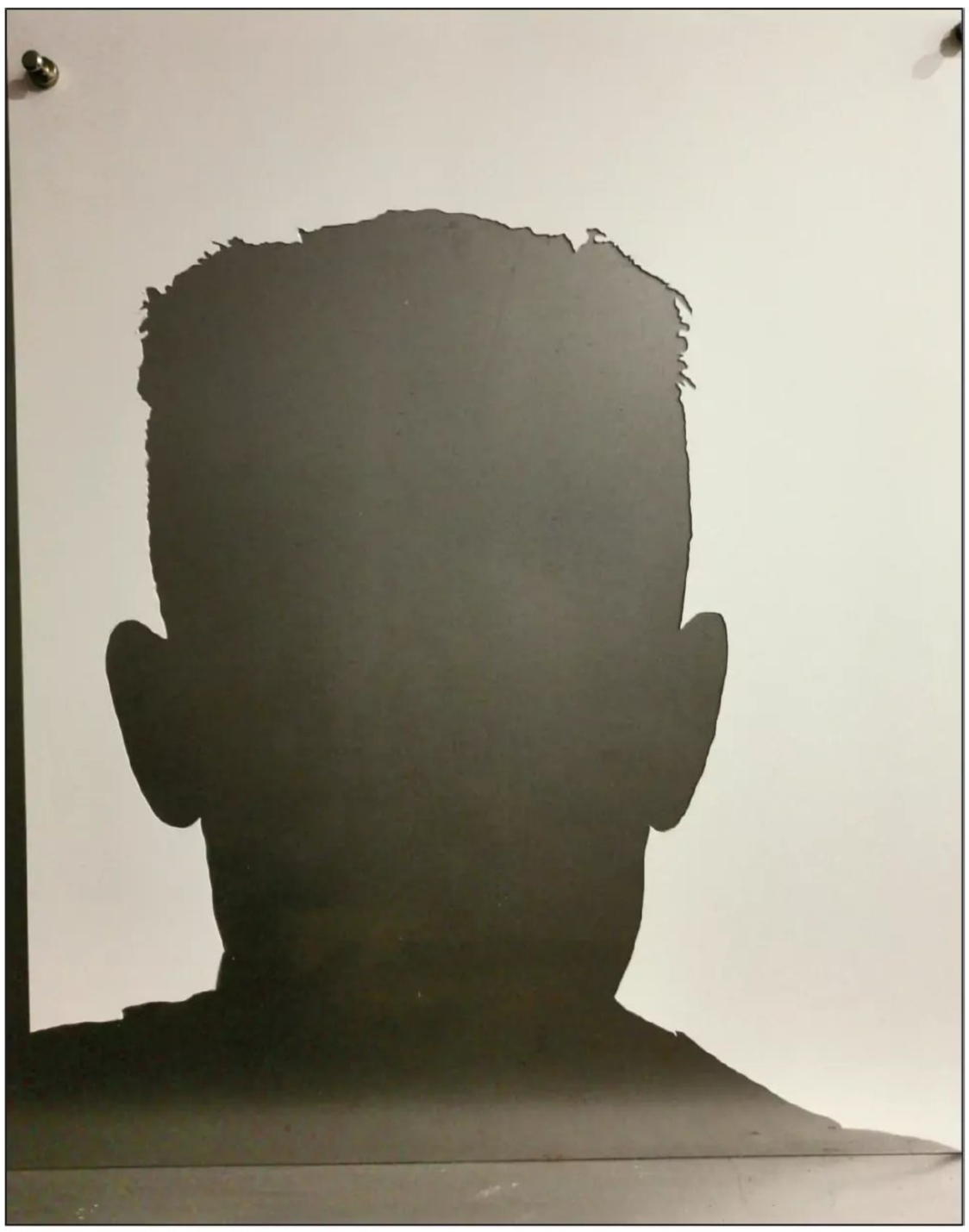
As the background is also heavily colored and will later have a sharp contrast, I create a loose mask for the portrait. This means that after my preliminary drawing on the painting ground, I directly line up another piece of thicker A3 drawing paper and transfer only the outline of the portrait and the hand.

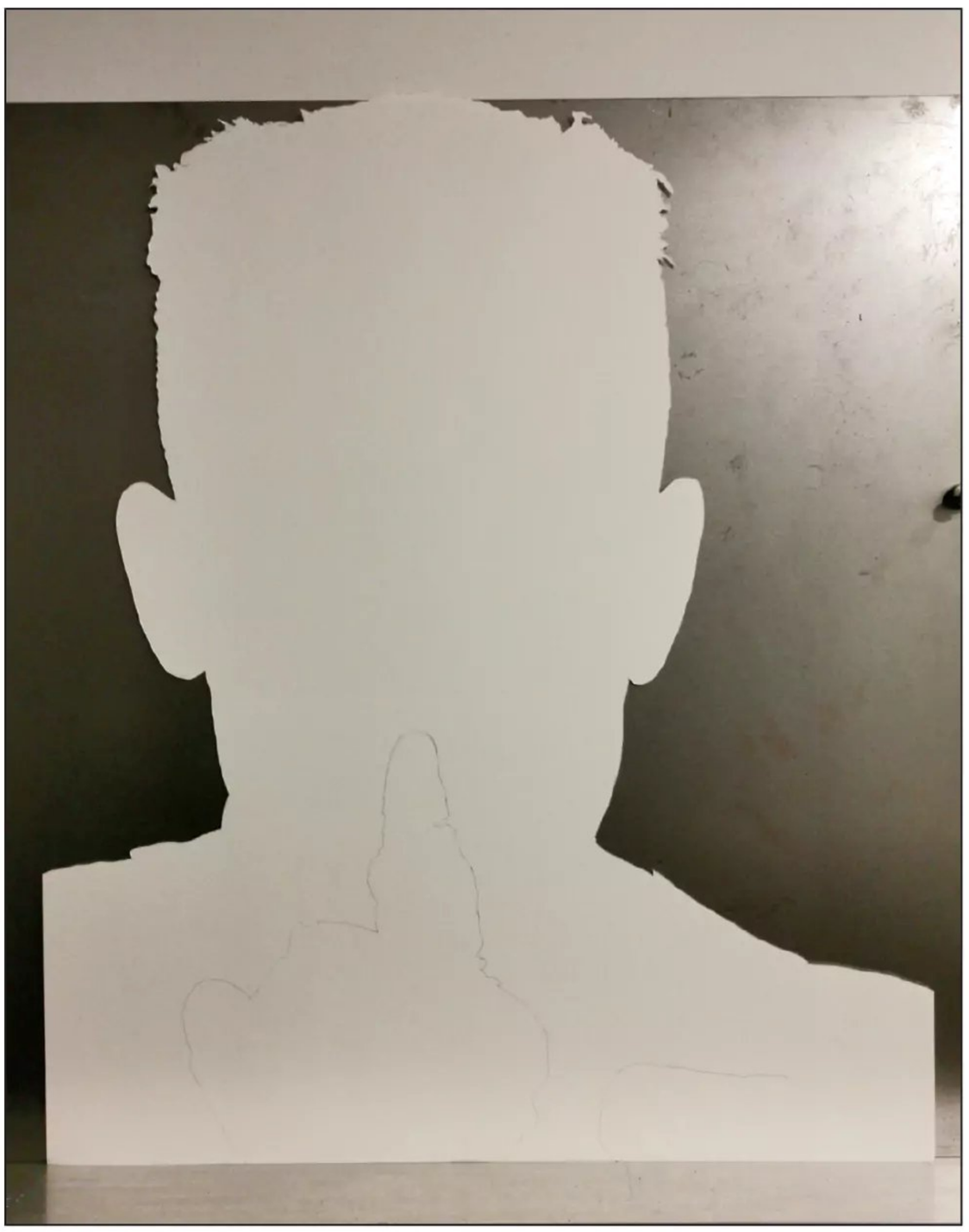




05 Outline and hand

We will also need a loose template for the hand during the course of the work. The loose mask must be cut out as precisely as possible, because as soon as the mask does not match the preliminary drawing 1:1, the proportions may shift. IMPORTANT! Keep all 3 mask parts. We will still need them.





06 Coloring the background

Once the preliminary drawing is complete, I fix the mask onto my preliminary drawing. Now you can see whether the mask has been cut out cleanly. Now I mix the first colors for the background. I use the colors sepia, phthalo green and basic cyan. I work from the back to the front – this means that I finish the background first and then the main motif. The background is always painted out of focus to create a sharp contrast.

The background is the easiest part. With the right distance and a small area, it can be finished quickly. It is important to ensure that the positioning of my magnets for the stencil is not too close to the edge. Otherwise the masking would be too sharp-edged. However, I will return to the subject of the softness of the edges again and again in the course of this article.





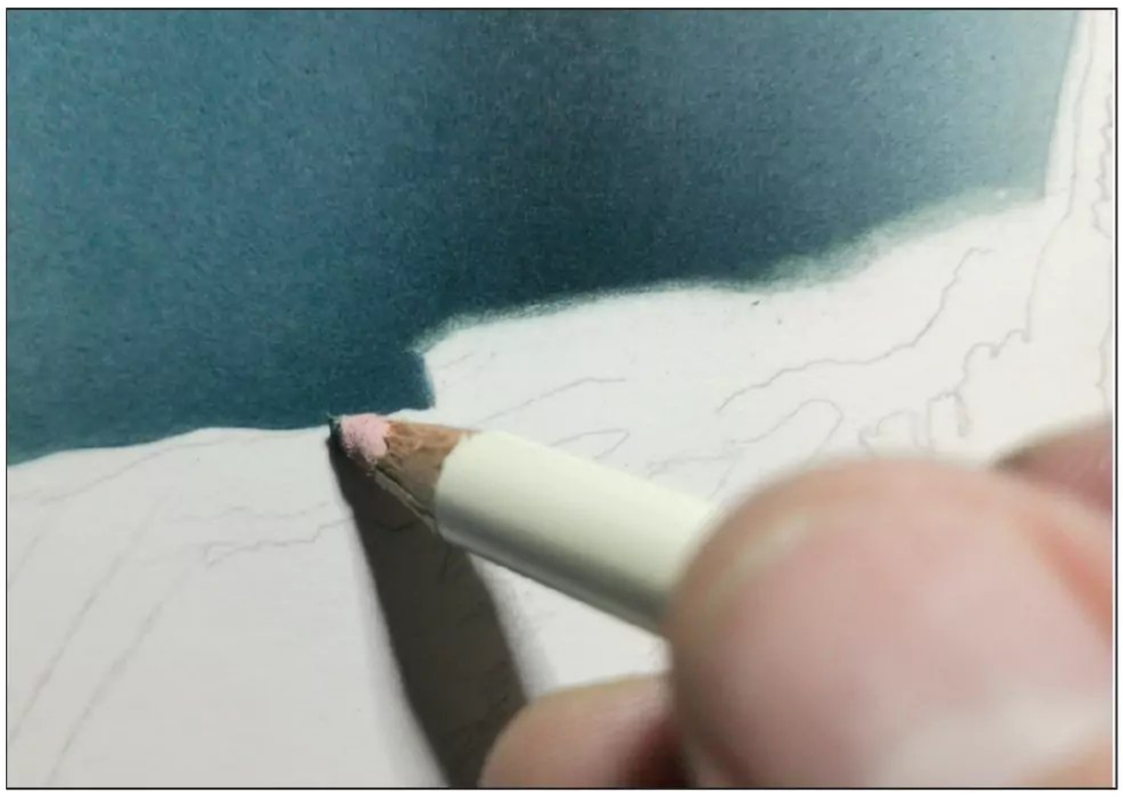
07 The finished background

Between the work sections, it is always important to take a step back from the picture in order to assess from a distance which areas need more coloring. The intermediate stage shows the finished background. In general, it should be mentioned that I start with the lightest area when creating the background – as darkening is always an option. I don't use separate color tones for this, but dilute the selected tones to the maximum. This can be a mixing ratio of 1:5, i.e. one part paint and 5 parts water.



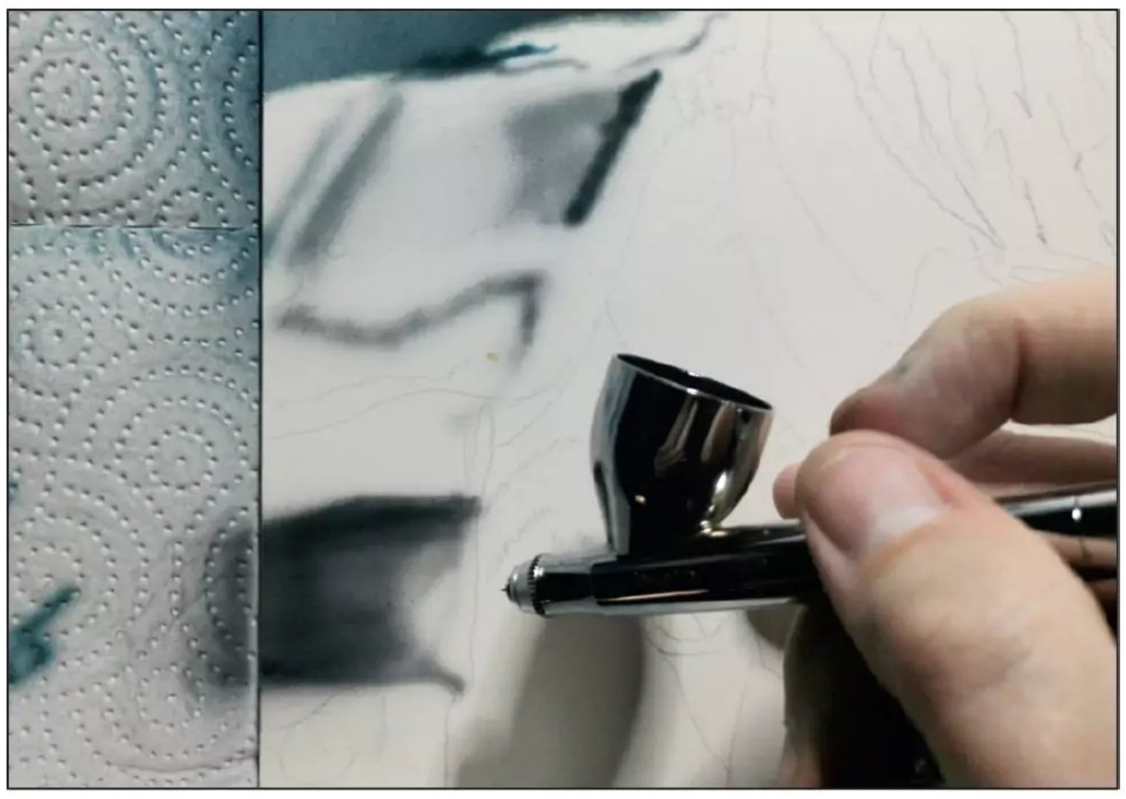
08 Toning down the edges

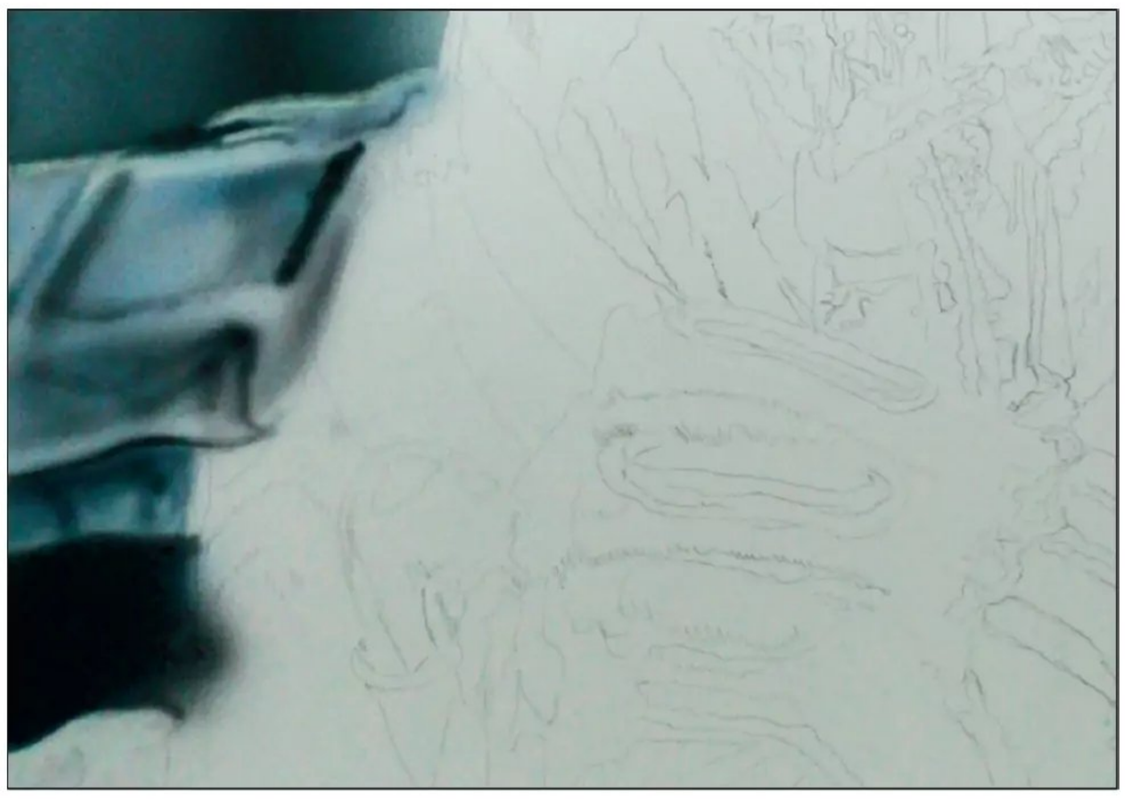
Now we come to one of the most important issues, namely the areas that are too sharply masked. The fact that some areas are masked too sharply is completely normal and happens to the best of us. However, we must not simply leave these hard edges as they are. These areas or even the entire main motif may run the risk of appearing pasted on. Anyone who often works with masking film knows what I mean. So let's grab an eraser pencil and carefully erase the edge. I can't attach enough importance to this preliminary step, and you'll notice that I refer to it again and again in the next step by step.



09 Building up the first layers of paint

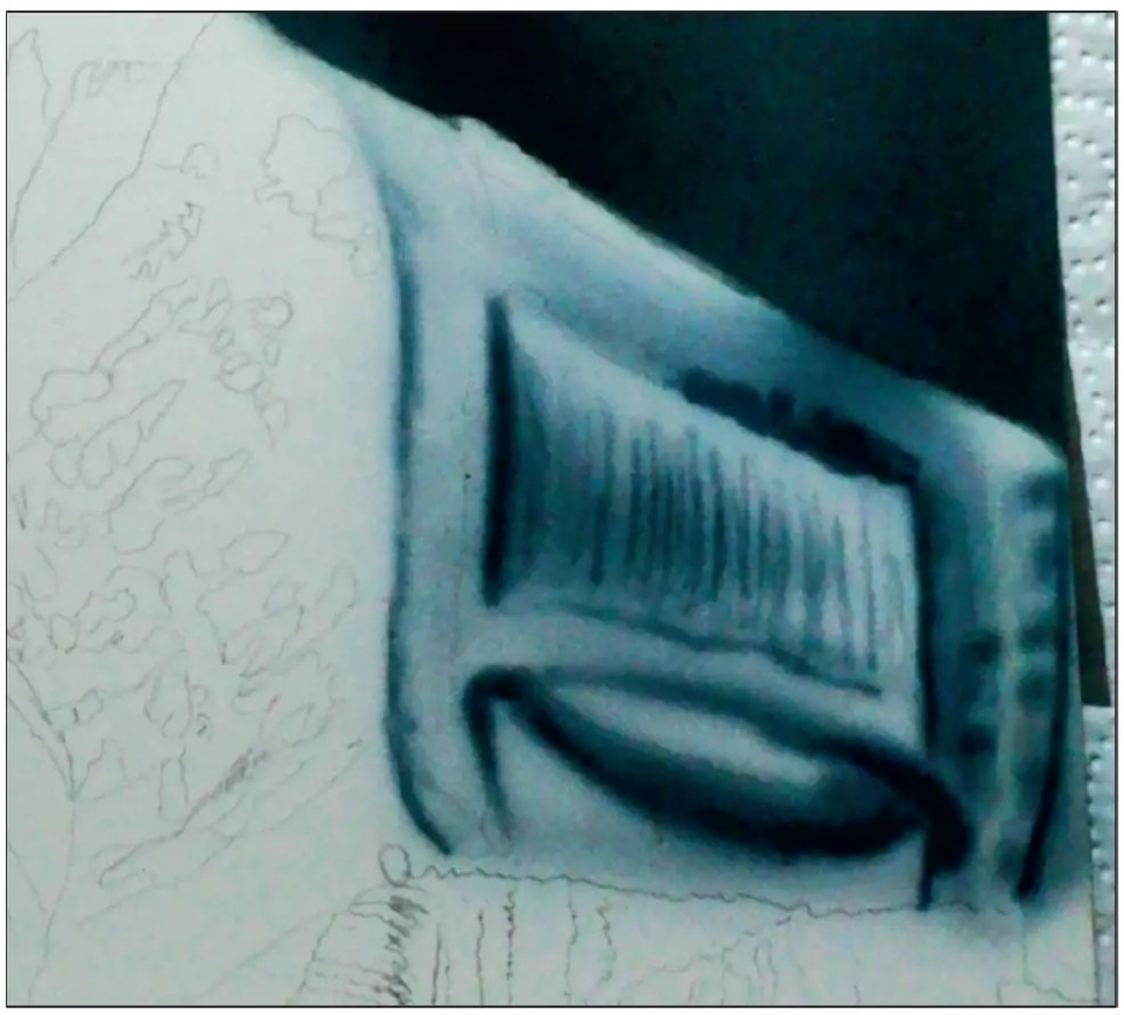
Now I apply the first layers of paint and strengthen the dark shadow areas. I always use the white of the background whenever possible. This gives the picture an additional natural character. I spray the first layers of paint on thinly so that I can still see my preliminary drawing clearly. I use my old Iwata CRI for the rough details. This is always a good companion for my rough backgrounds and blurred details. For the clothes, I paint the areas slightly out of focus, as the area in focus is later reflected in the face. I use the basic cyan color for this, which I darken slightly with sepia. Right at the beginning, it is important to make sure that light and dark areas are not oversaturated or colored too darkly. It always helps to keep our distance from the picture.





10 First structures of the clothing

By roughly suggesting the clothing, I am getting more and more into the flow and am already starting to work some details such as lines and small folds into the clothing. The whole appearance still looks very rough and not very expressive, but in the end everything comes together like a puzzle.



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11 First hair structures

I use a diluted black to indicate the shadow areas and the direction of the hair. I use a wide precision eraser from Tombow, which I normally only use for my graphite drawings. However, it is also very suitable for my project due to its texture. I cut the eraser tip at an angle with a scalpel to work out the long strands of hair.





12 Highlights of individual strands

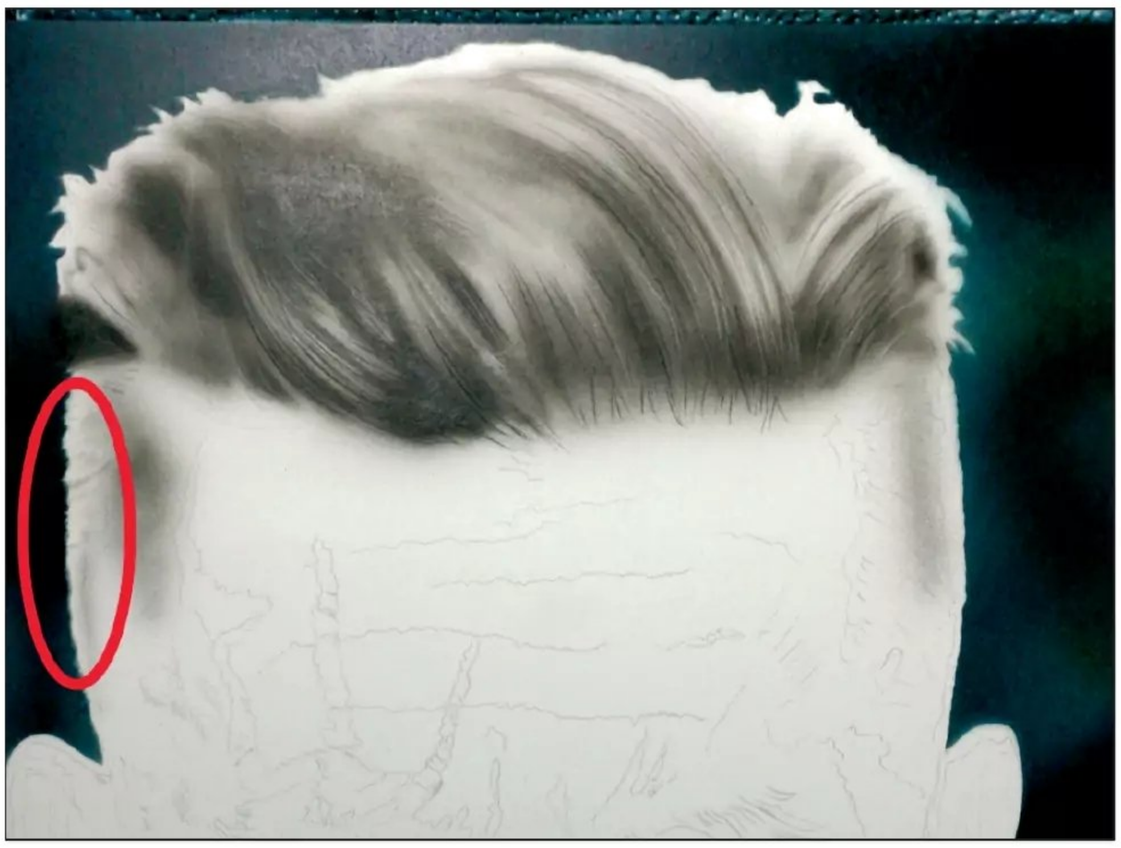
As the light reflections of individual hairs are more visible, I remove the color extremely carefully with a foil knife. It is very important to hold the blade at the right angle. Otherwise the base can be damaged very quickly.



13 Transitions and hairline

Here you can already see a rough construction of the hairstyle. As I have roughly outlined the hair after the first coat of paint, I can now start to work out the erased hair further. I always work in several layers, which means that I approach the depth in the picture step by step. In order to achieve the depth effect of the hair, I always hint more strongly at the shadow areas.

Do you remember what I wrote at the beginning about softening the edge? Here we have a similar case, namely the outer edge of the hair. Although I have already softened the edge, this is not quite enough in this case. This is because some of the hair can still be outlined in the background or worked in. I can work them out really well with an eraser pencil. You can use both the soft and the hard eraser tip for this. The hairline shows individual hairs at the base of the head. I add these sporadically with a black Polychromos pencil.

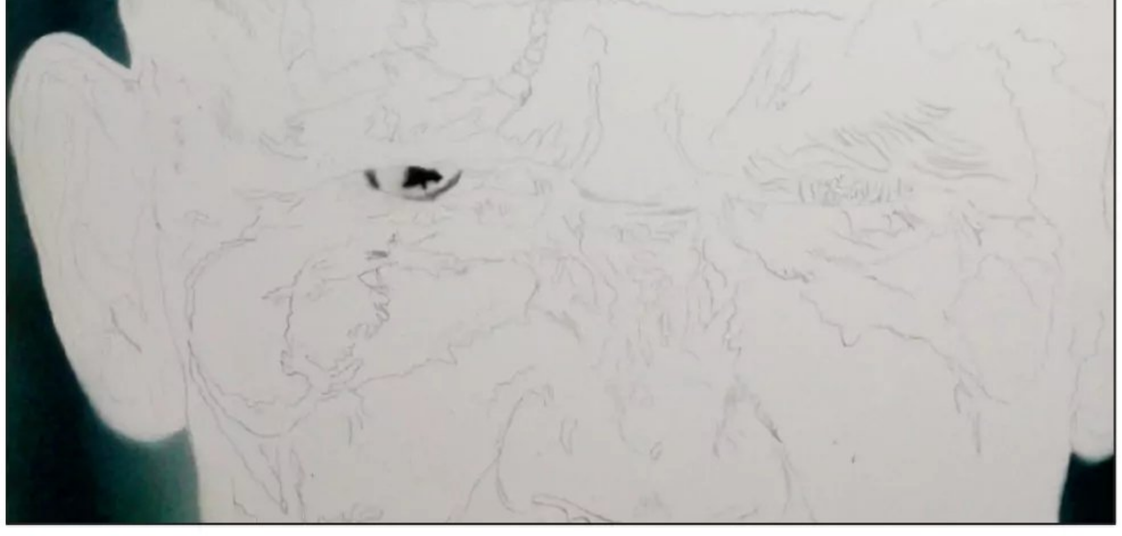




14 Working out the highlights

I keep alternating between the scalpel and my precision eraser in the intermediate steps to work out individual hairs. On the right-hand side, I give the section of hair a light brown tint, which I tint with heavily thinned Brazilian brown. The outer edge remains light and hazy and does not disappear into the background, as is so often the case. The reason for this is the lighting. With a diluted black, I continue to work on the hair at the temples and use the black in one go to start the eye.

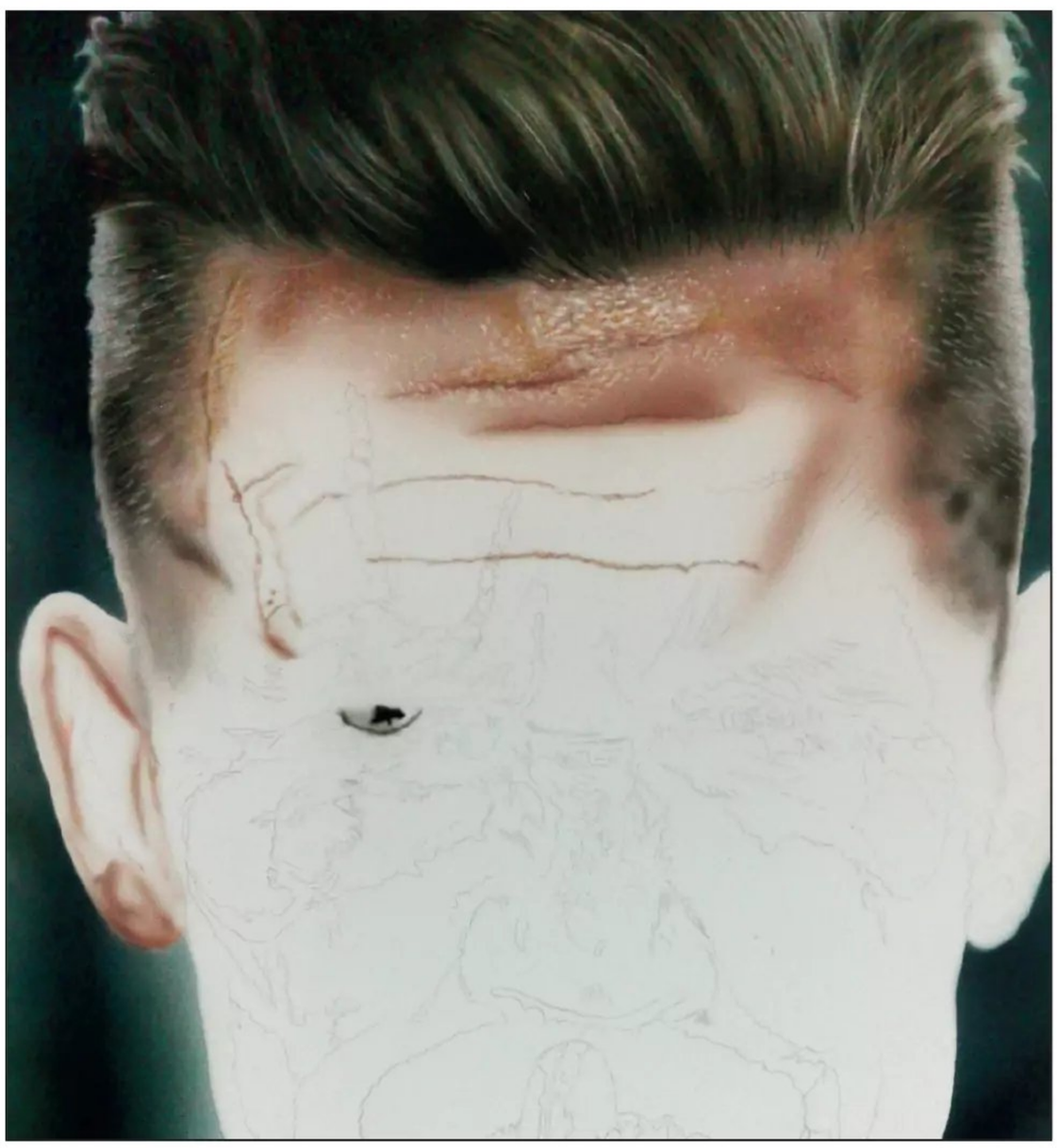




15 The first skin tones and pores

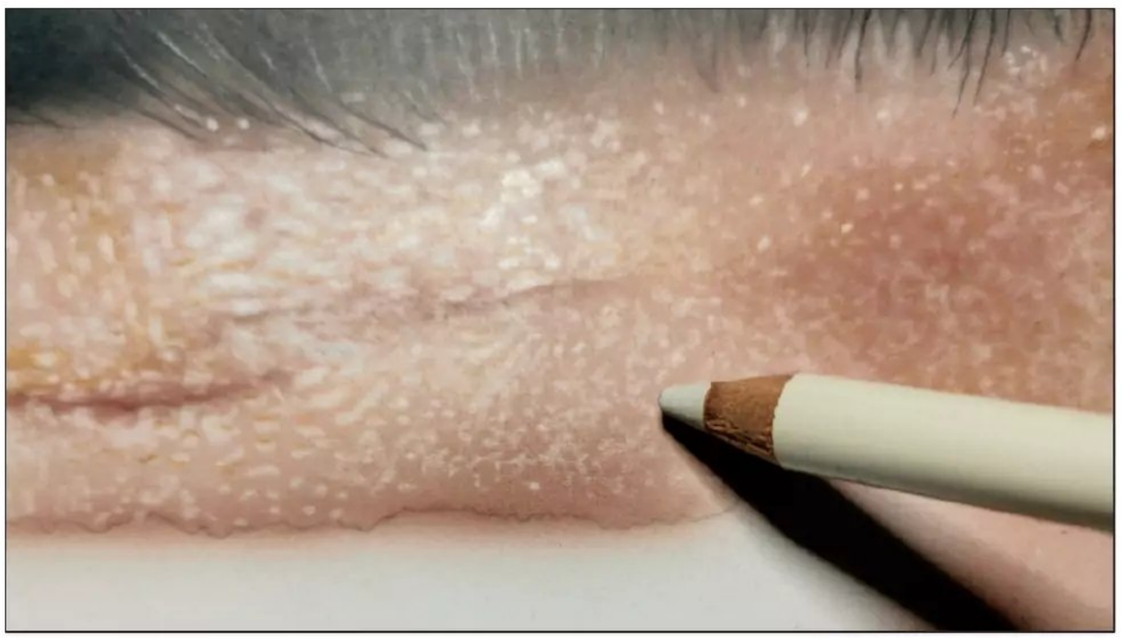
I use a diluted skin tone to indicate the first wrinkles and scars. I always work from light to dark. I erase the first light reflections on the forehead area, which are worked out more and more as I go along.

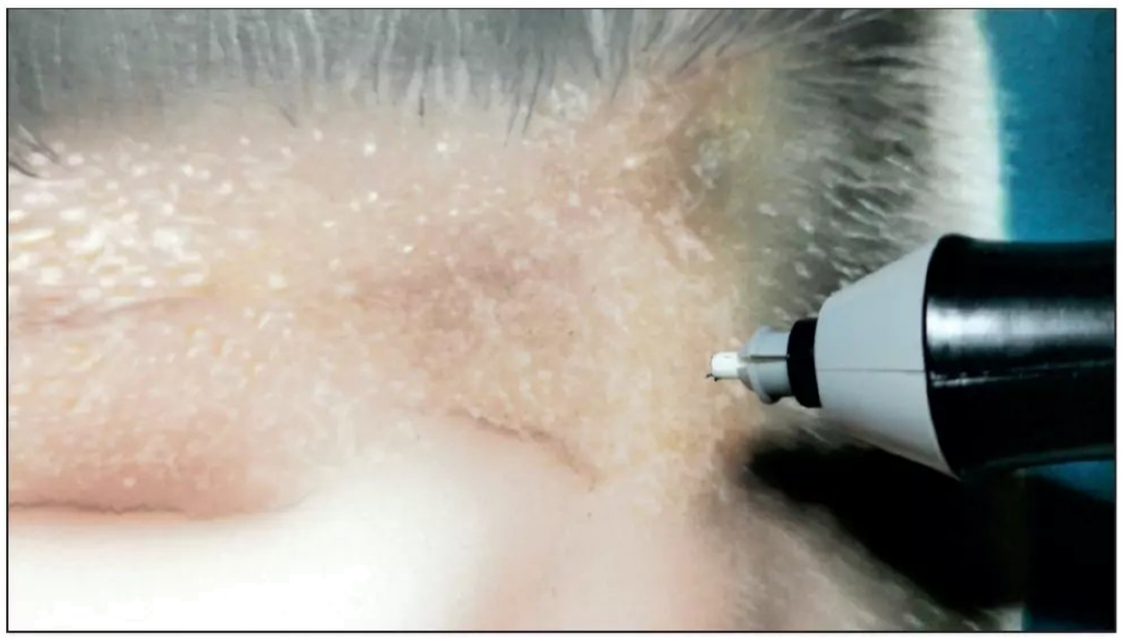




16 Colored pencil and eraser

The surface texture of the skin is relatively complex, as it varies from coarse to fine. I use a white crayon or my electric eraser for isolated areas. It is essential to work with extremely little pressure.





17 Approaches and transitions

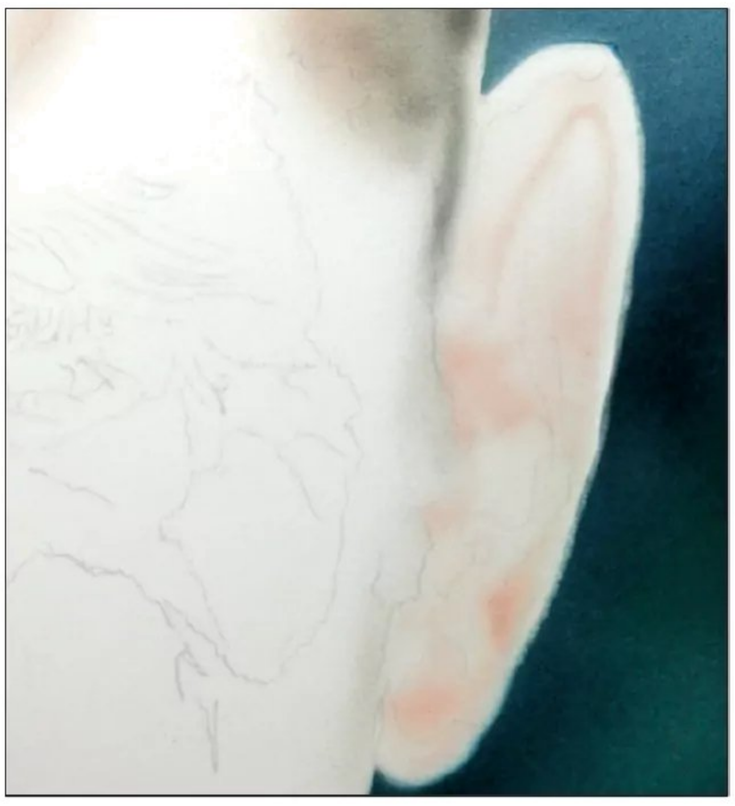
By overlapping the individual layers of color, I once again emphasize the roots at the hairline and the outer edge.

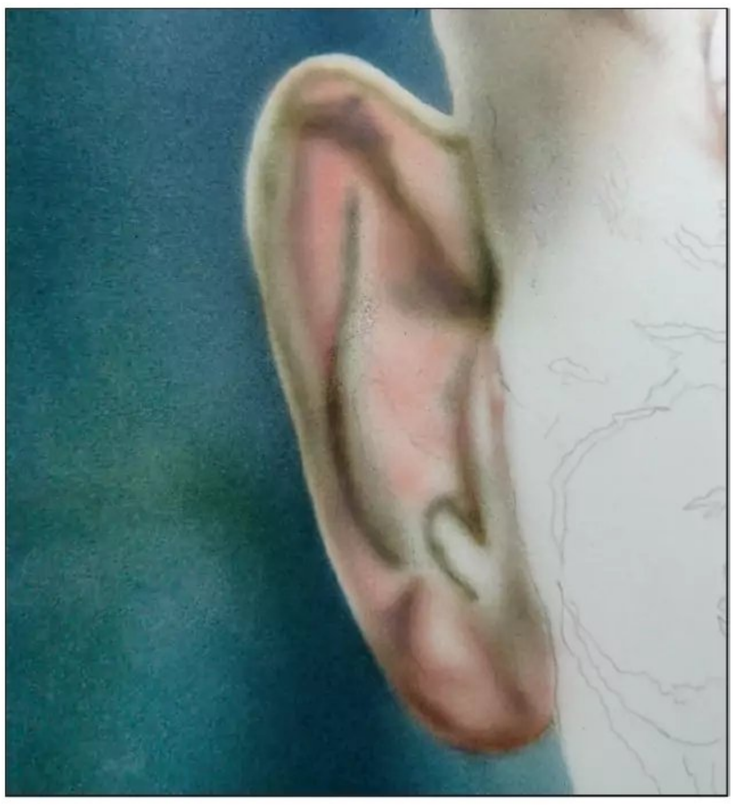




18 The ears

On the ears you can see that I have indicated shadow areas with a darkened skin tone. Ears have a complex anatomy and also a relatively thin skin wall through which the light penetrates more strongly. This means that this penetrating luminosity must also be represented in our portrait. To do this, I mix cadmium orange and scarlet red and spray in the area where the skin is thinnest. I also use this color for the glowing mechanical eye. Now the painting slowly picks up speed.









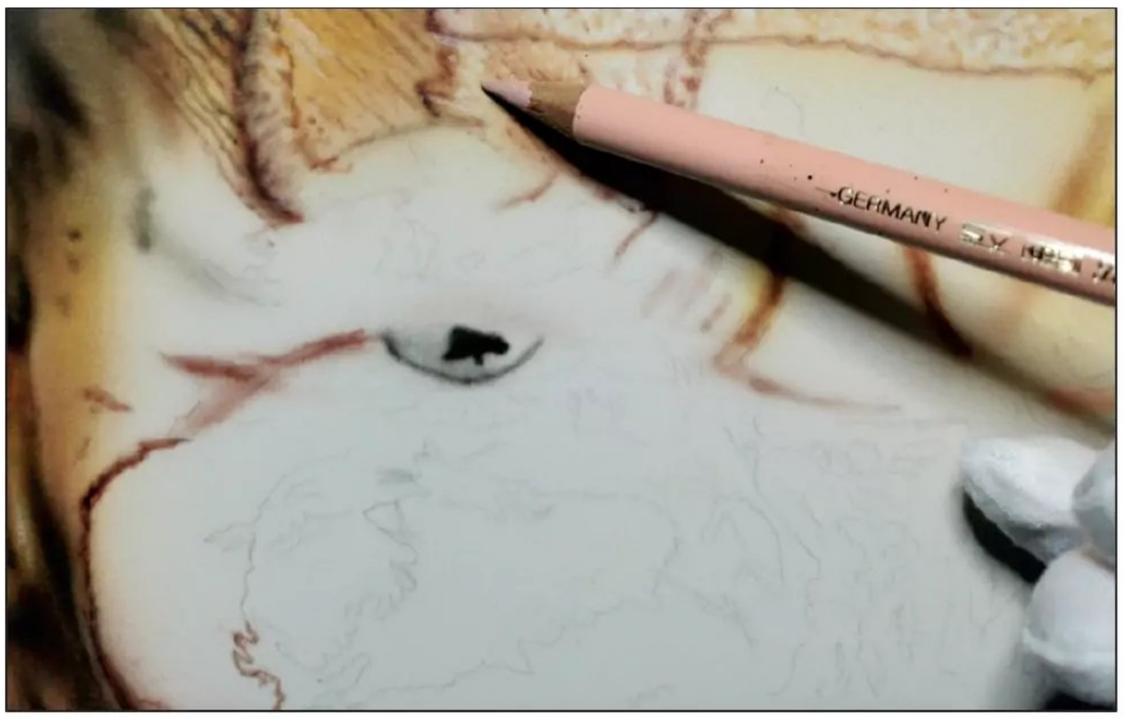
19 **The forehead**

The hard scars, lips and wrinkles are further emphasized. Again and again I use my eraser for the skin pores and use a flesh-colored Polychromos for the light areas of scarring. I spray a highly diluted gold ochre over the left half of the face to give the facial area a radiant dynamic.

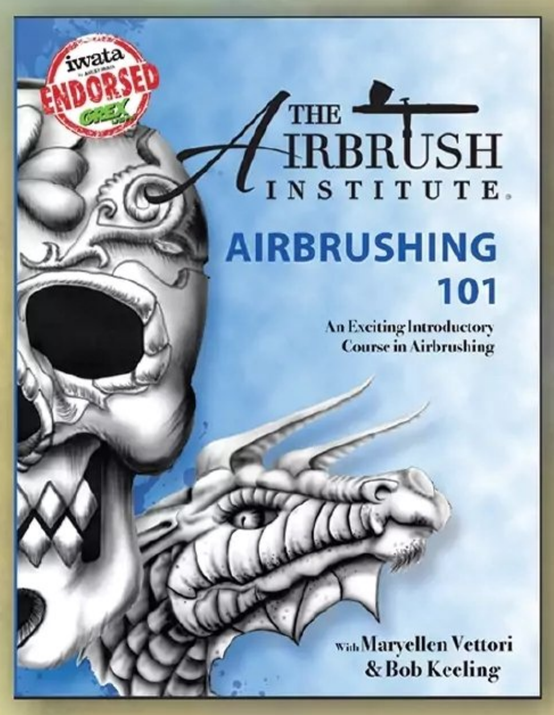








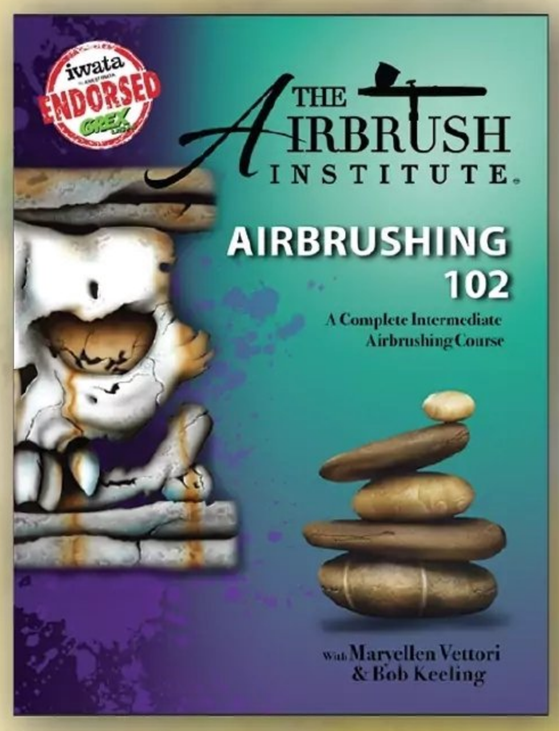
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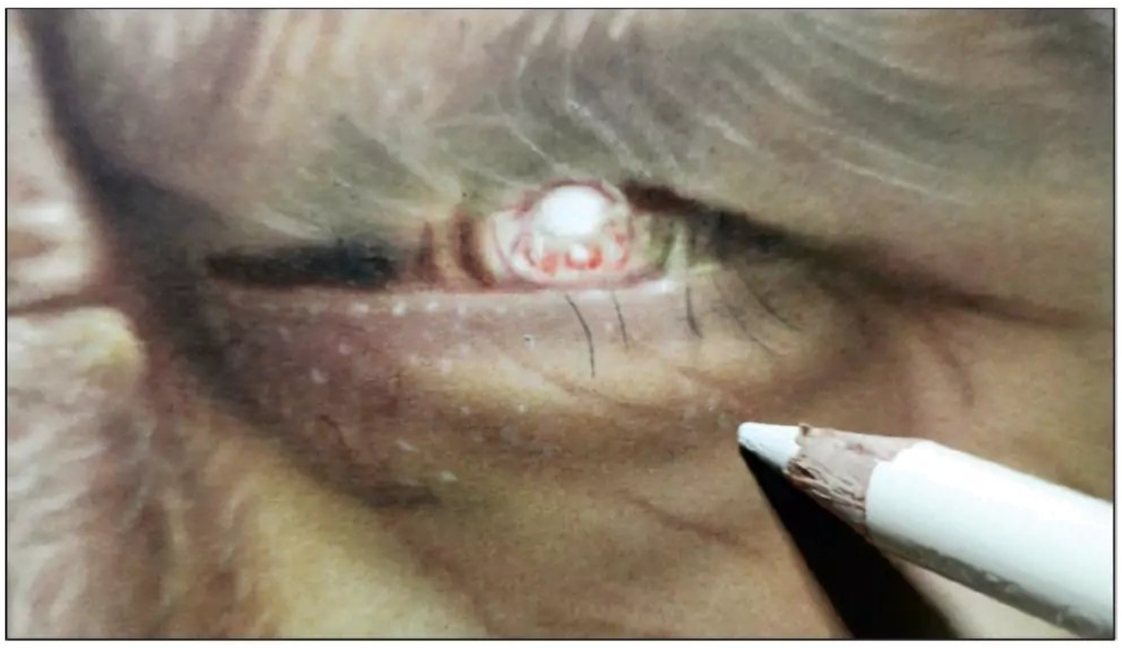
20 Filling areas

I continue to work my way down and gradually increase the intensity of the colors. It's essential to outline the pores after each new layer of color. This is the only way to give the skin a three-dimensional effect.



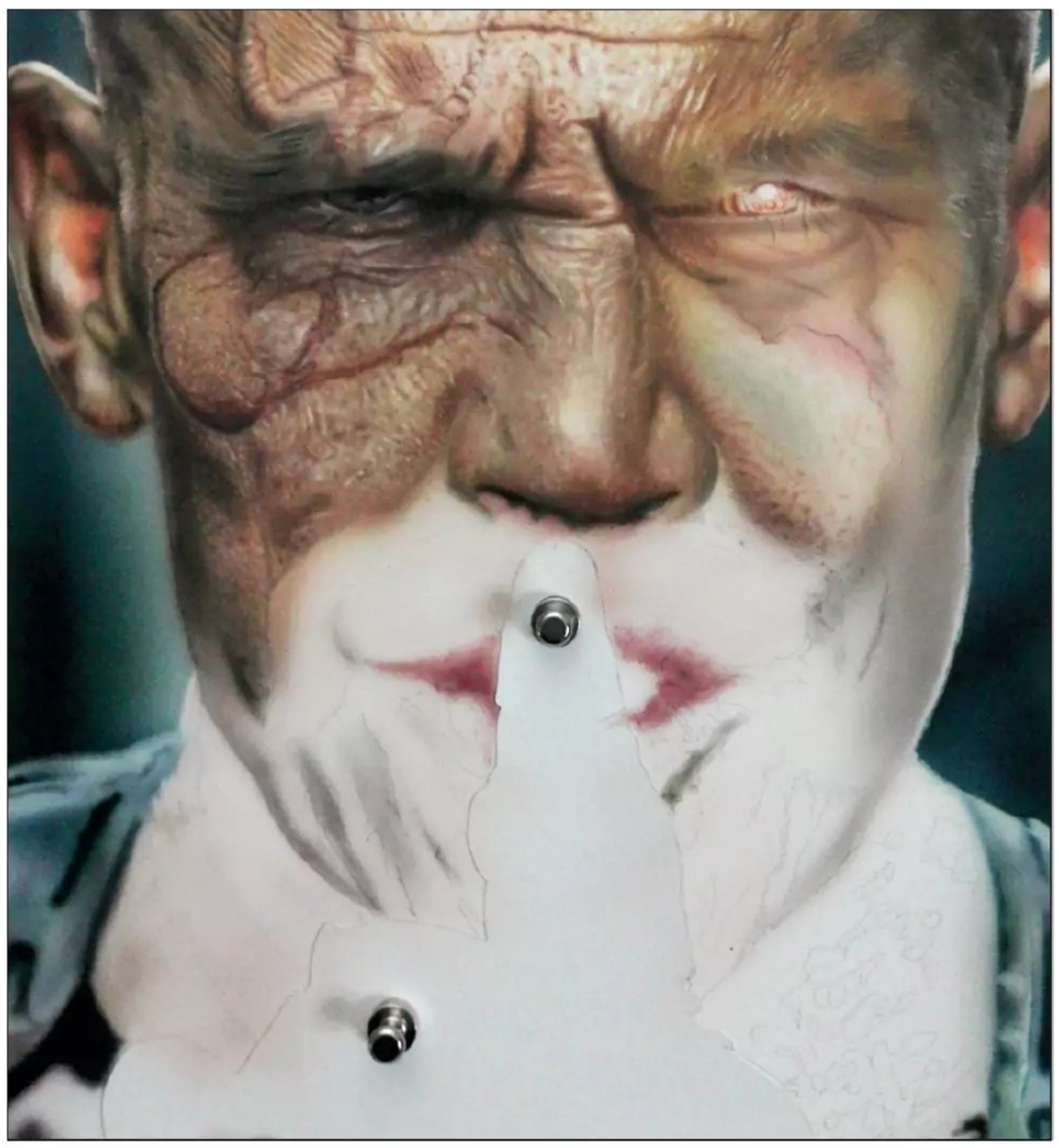
21 The mechanical eye

With the mechanical eye, it is important to depict the later luminosity. To do this, I first get the pure white in the pupil, which is later influenced by the surrounding color. I spray the area around the eye again with a diluted gold ochre tone to achieve a slight glowing effect.



22 The chin

Now we come to the hand – no, actually we come to the mouth and chin. As you will remember, we also drew the hand at the beginning when creating the masks, which we are now using and positioning as a loose mask. I can finish the lower part of the face with this mask. For the lips, I use a reddish skin tone that I have mixed myself. When designing the stubble and lip textures, I follow the photo template.

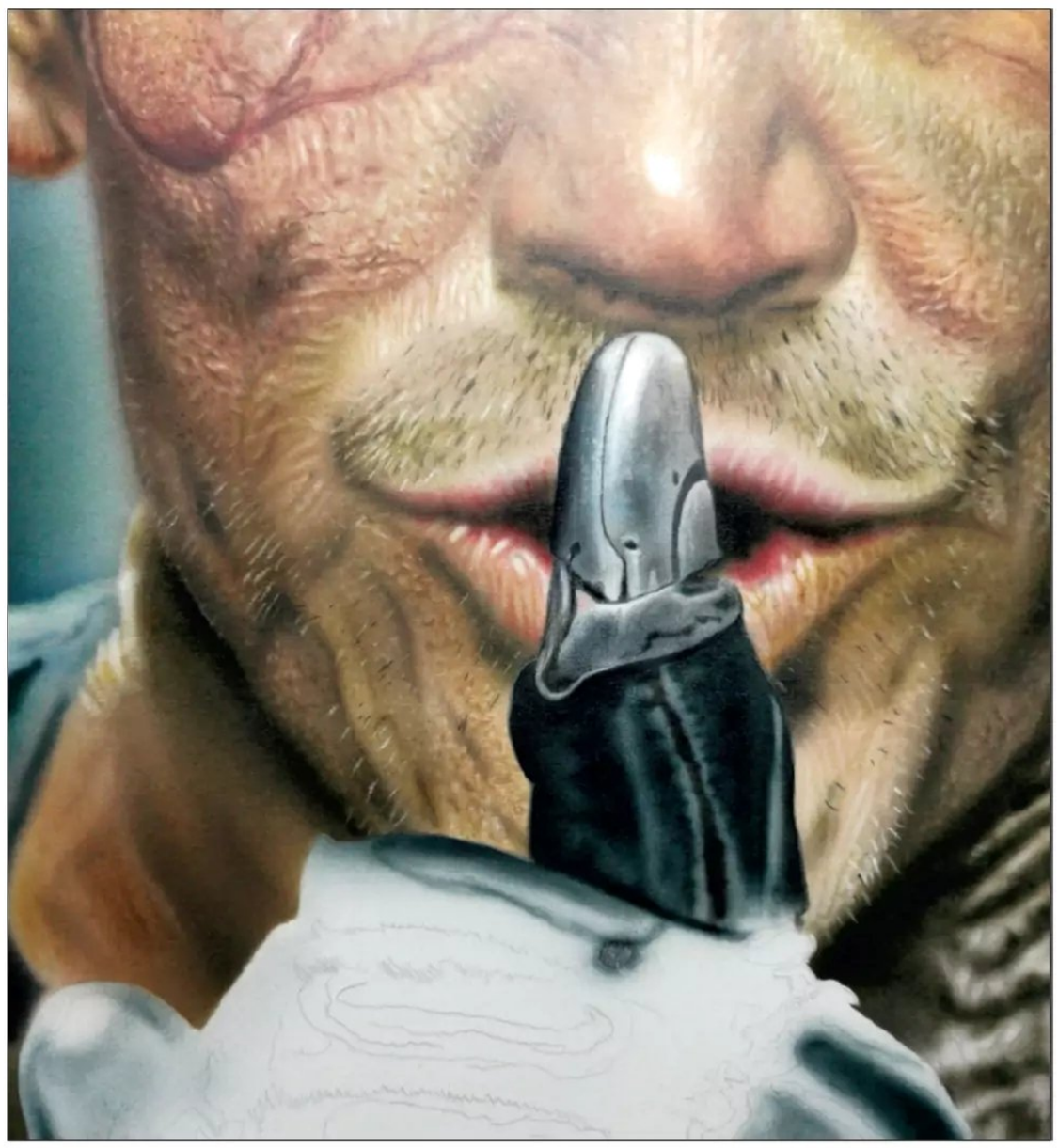




23 The hand

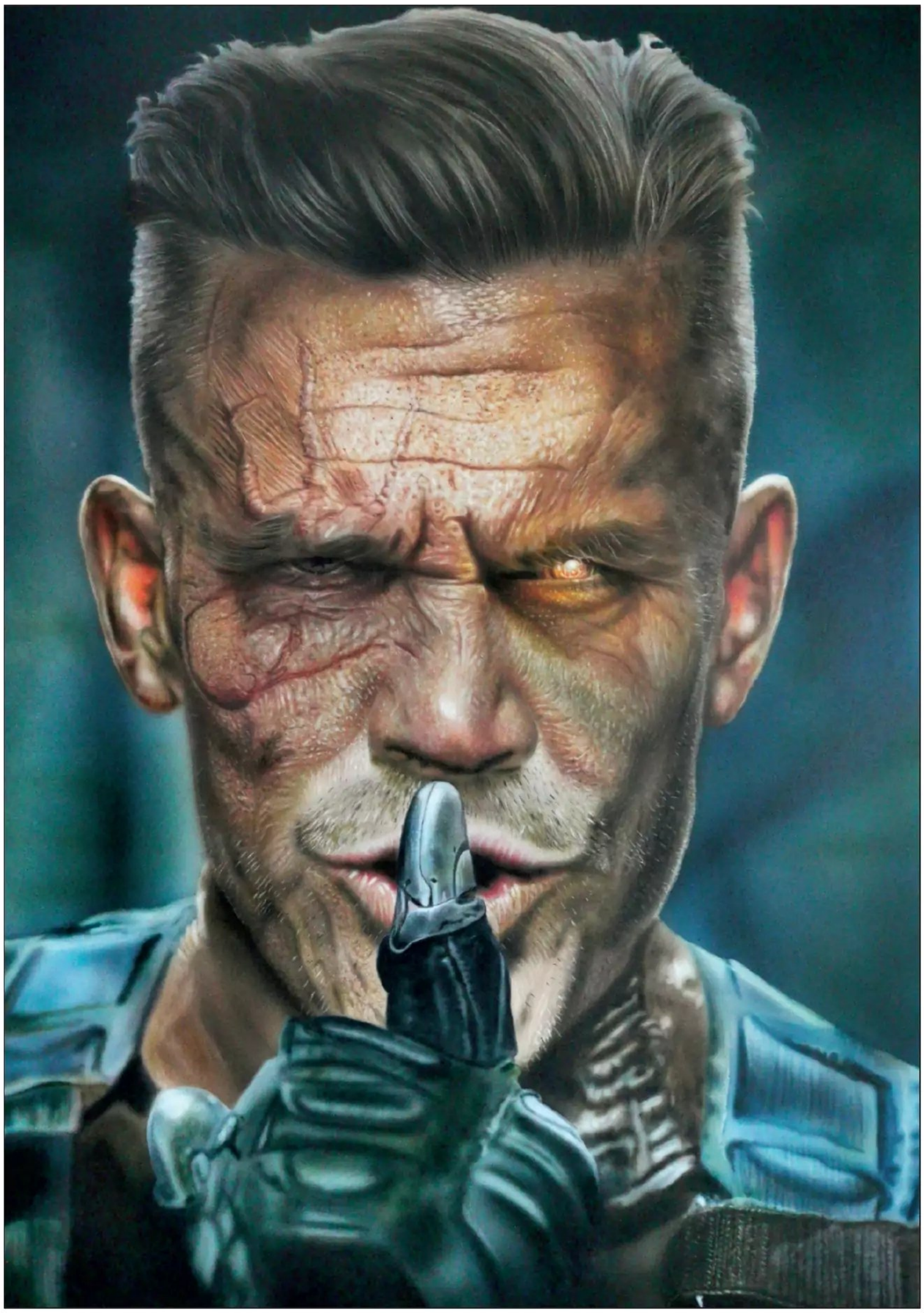
Now we swap the masks. The hand is exposed and I protect the remaining area with the first mask. I'm only working on the hand. As you can see, I first used an anthracite-colored Polychromos to create the hard areas. I continue working on the hand freehand with a cyan-blue and sepia mixture. This is the easiest part, but make sure that the metallic index finger has a metallic effect. One of the ways I achieve this is by carefully working in a slight texture with a soft eraser pencil.



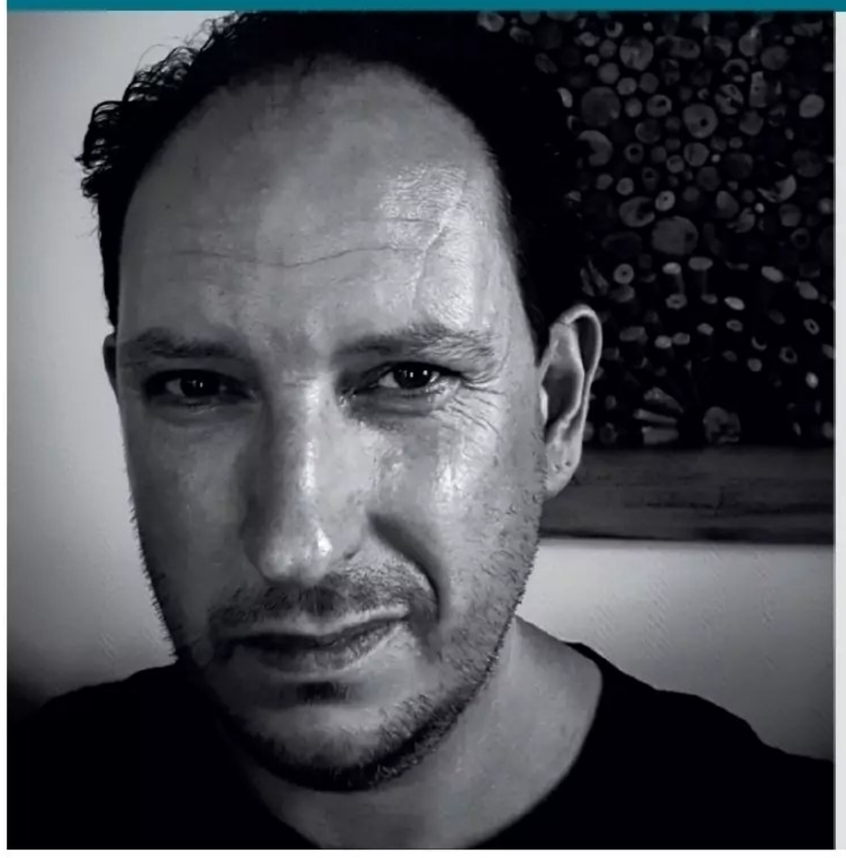


24 The finished picture

As in the photo template, the hand and clothing in my portrait are rather rough and blurred. The focus is clearly on the face. The tip of the finger is also sharper than the rest of the hand. So my picture is finished. The total effort for this picture was about 40 hours. I hope I was able to give you an insightful and exciting understanding of surface textures, transitions and various effects.



BENJAMIN ZIKOLL



Benjamin Zikoll was born in Cologne, Germany, in 1976 and has lived in the city of Leverkusen for 27 years. He has been painting and drawing since childhood. He first came into contact with the medium of airbrushing when he attended the master school for painters and varnishers at the Cologne Chamber of Crafts in 2002. Enthusiastic about this technique, he attended the IBKK art school in Bochum for six and a half semesters. After successfully graduating, he attended the master school for another six months under the direction of Roland Kuck. As he was moving in the direction of realism and photorealism, he worked as a lecturer at the Cologne Chamber of Crafts in 2004, teaching airbrushing, among other things. Since then, he has continued to develop his skills and knowledge.

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SPIDER-MAN

Despite being over 60 years old, the Spider-Man character still inspires many fantasy fans young and old. Croatian artist Dalibor Pejicic has portrayed the superhero in a rather quiet scene, alone and withdrawn in the vastness of the universe. The reduced elements and colors make the design very suitable for airbrush beginners. Thanks to its intelligent texture effects, the design still looks professional and very impressive.

EQUIPMENT – SPIDER-MAN

Airbrush: Harder & Steenbeck Infinity, Iwata Eclipse

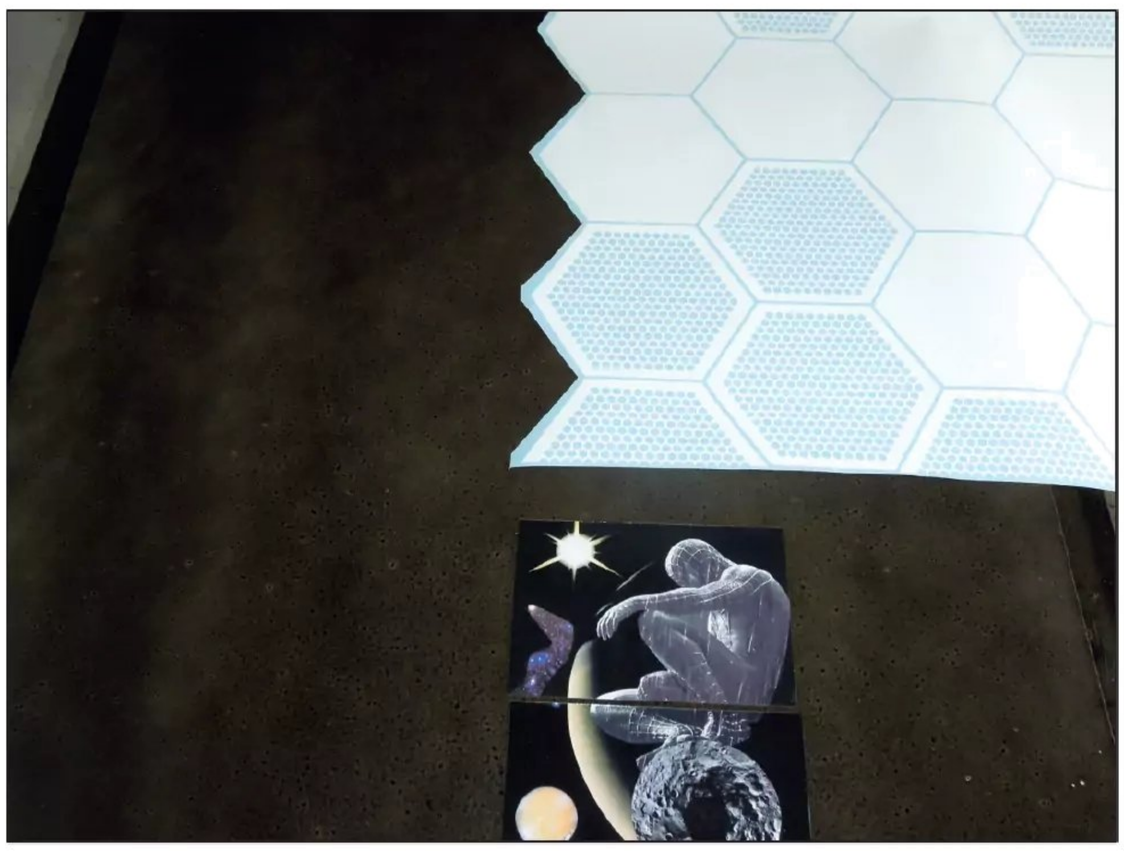
Colors: Createx

Other materials: Scalpel, adhesive tape, hexagon stencil, texture net, eraser pencil, masking film, stencil film, brush, pencil, newspaper

Background: Lesonite board

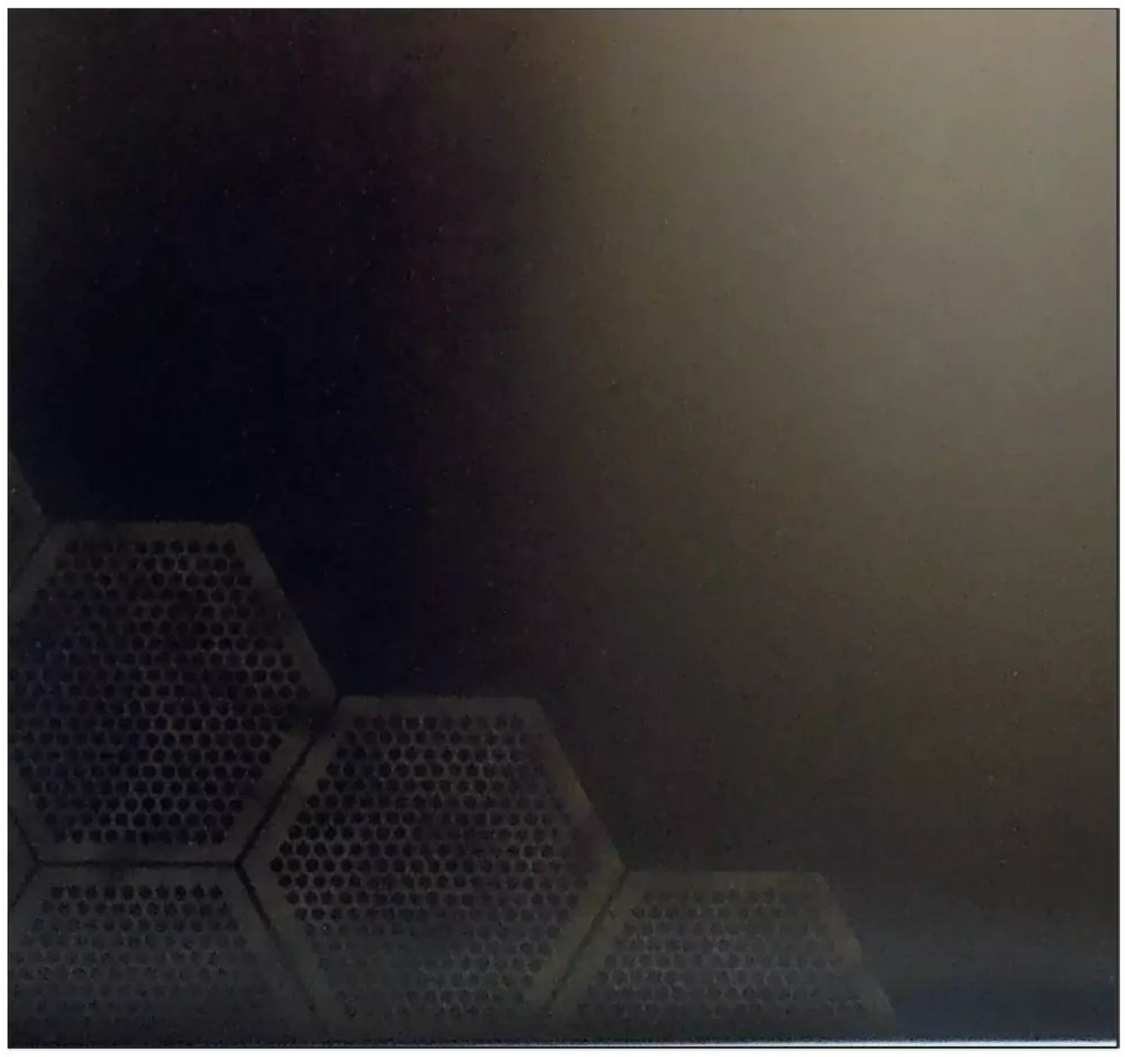
01 Template and background

To get a better overview of the Spider-Man image with its specific science fiction elements, I made a rough design in Photoshop beforehand. A friend prepared a sticky mask with hexagonal shapes for me. I positioned these in the bottom left-hand corner of the painting ground. Then I primed the white Lesonite plate with black paint as the background color.



02 Hexagons

The hexagon masking is removed. I spray over the area again lightly with black paint to avoid too much contrast.

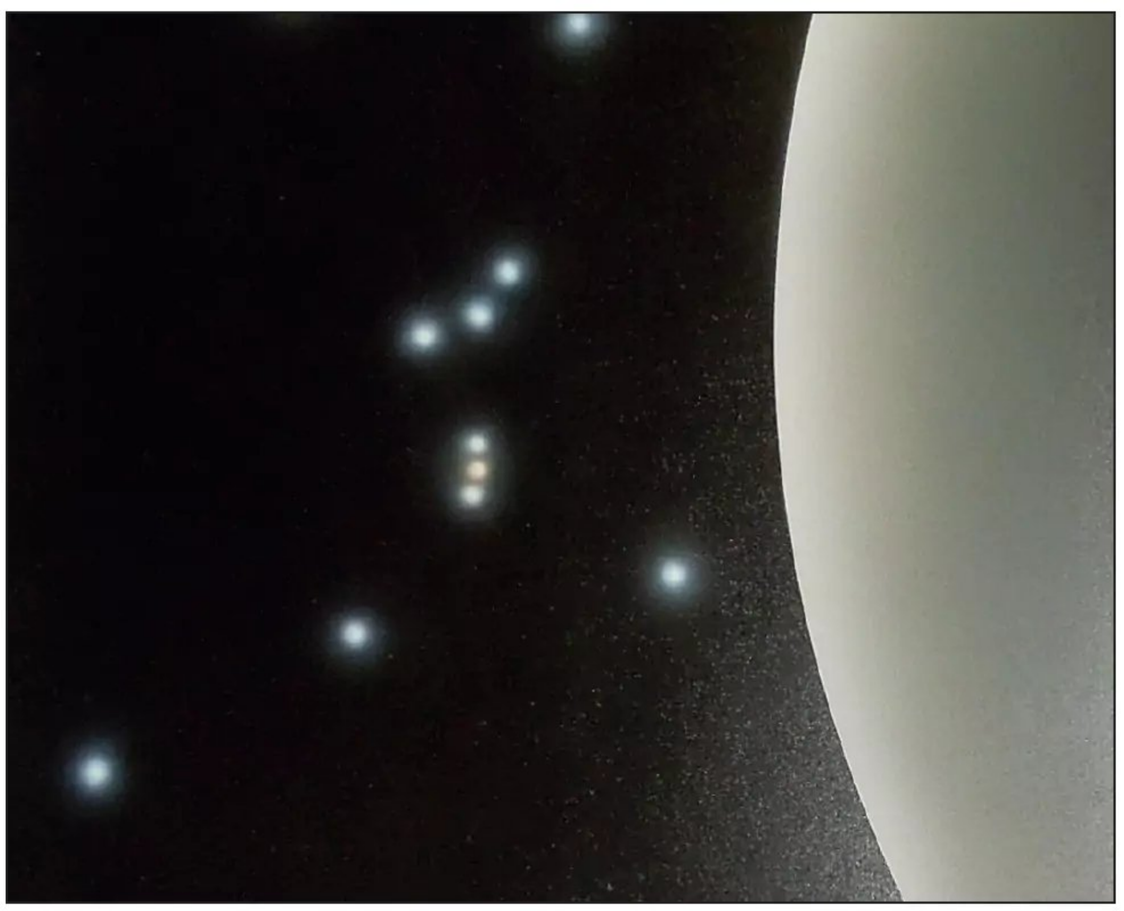


03 Stars

Now I add the stars. For the large star, I use a template that I cut out of cardboard with a scalpel. I first spray the template with white and then add a glow of light around it. Using another, narrower stencil, I place a second star shape over it with yellow paint and spray on another bright glow of light.

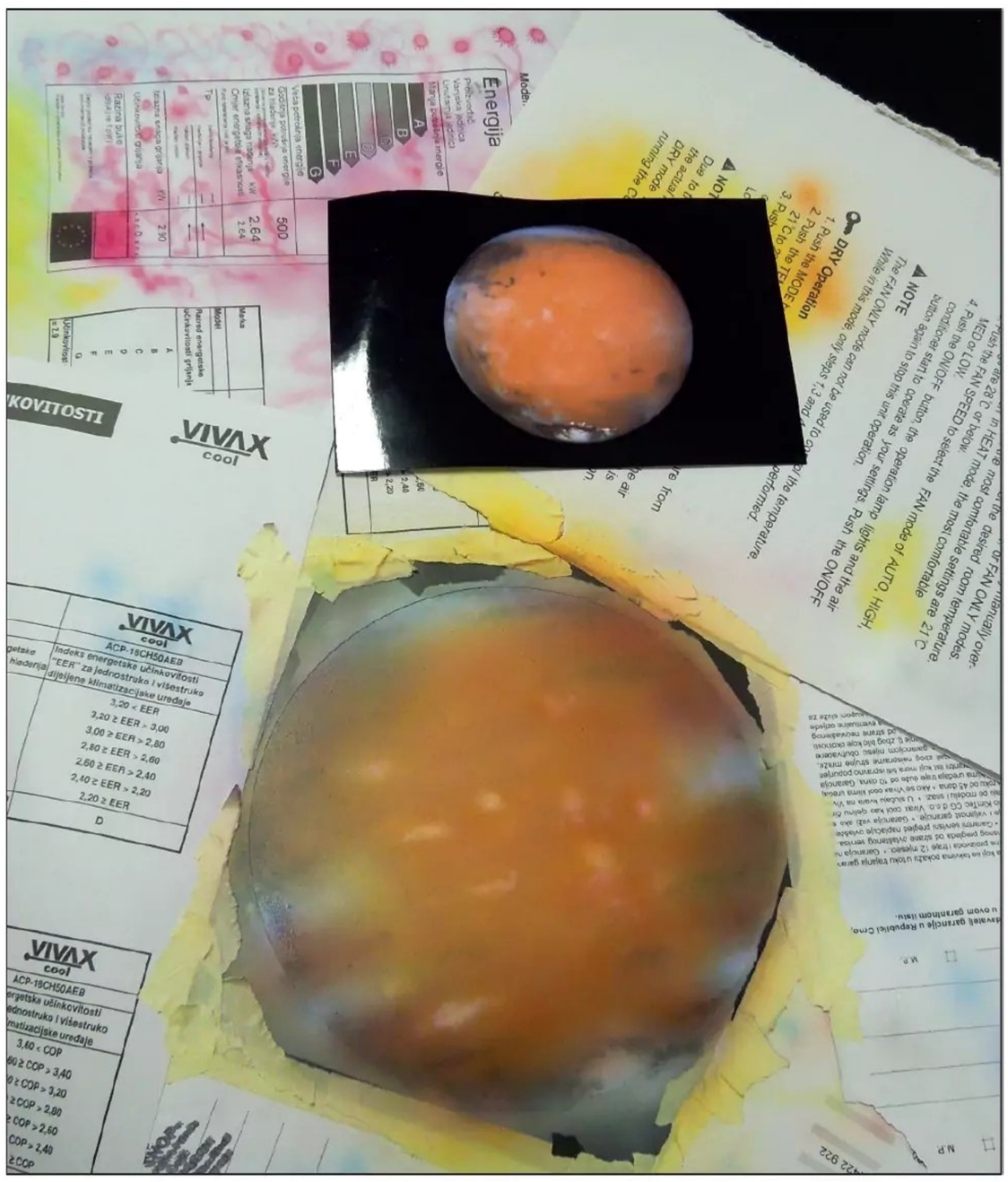
The small stars are only created by light sprays of white paint, which I apply close to the painting ground. Then I used a special fluorescent paint and sprayed it over the white – as a little surprise when the lights go out...





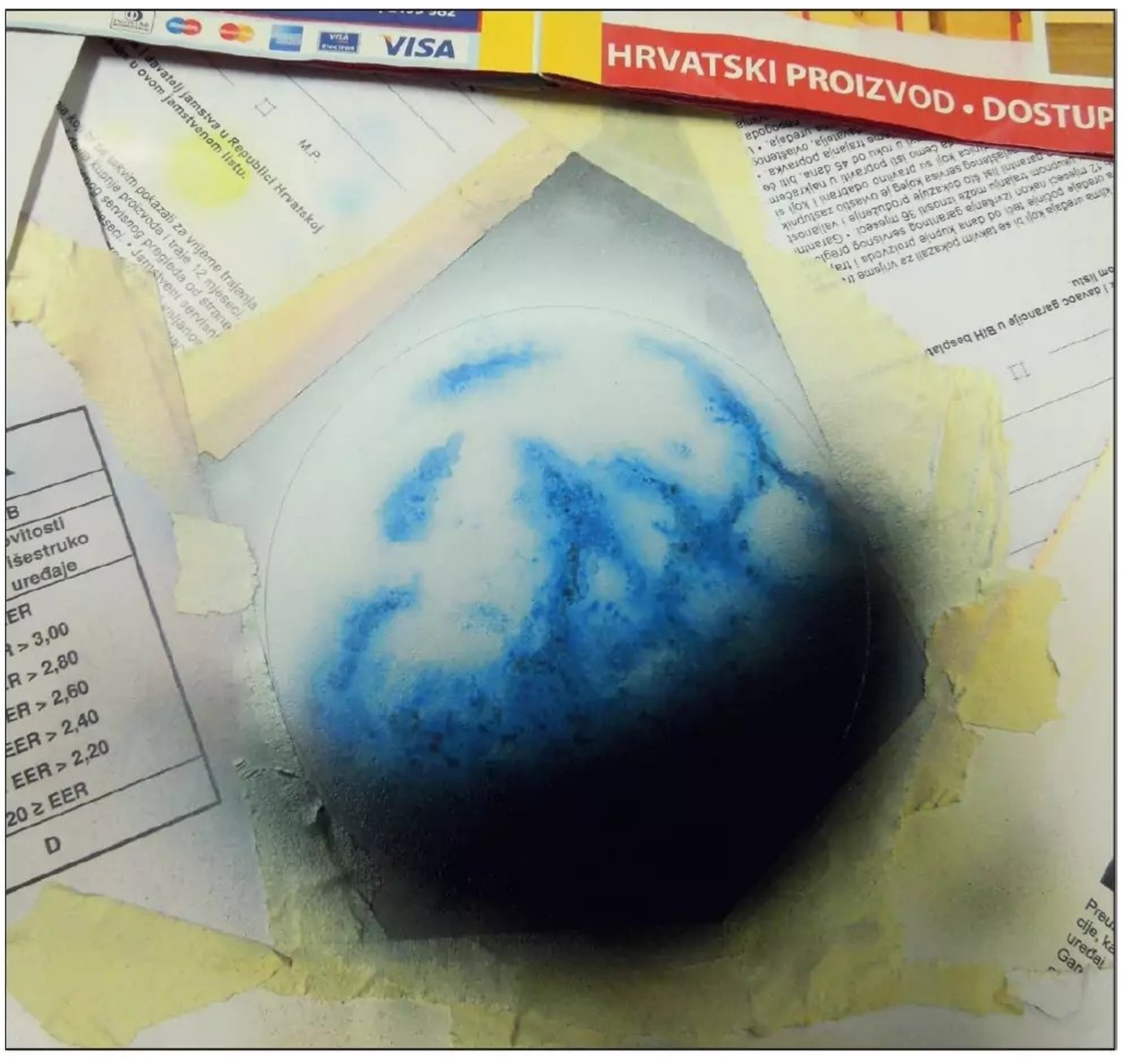
04 Mars

The first planet I create is Mars. I position a round, sticky mask that I cut myself and protect the background with paper. I used various techniques for the color and texture: Airbrush, brush, finger, whatever comes to mind – there are no rules here, just think outside the box. Only my template photo gives me a direction and idea of how I can design Mars.



05 Earth

I proceed in the same way with the Earth: Circle masking, protect the background, submit white as a base, and then I add light and dark blue and black shading with the airbrush. Again, you can play around with all sorts of things to get the best possible result. Improvisation is the best part of the game. In the case of the earth, note the semi-circular black shading, which defines the lighting conditions in the picture and fades the earth out to one side into the background. This makes the picture more realistic, because the planets don't just hang in the sky like round stickers – the way children like to draw them.



06 Saturn

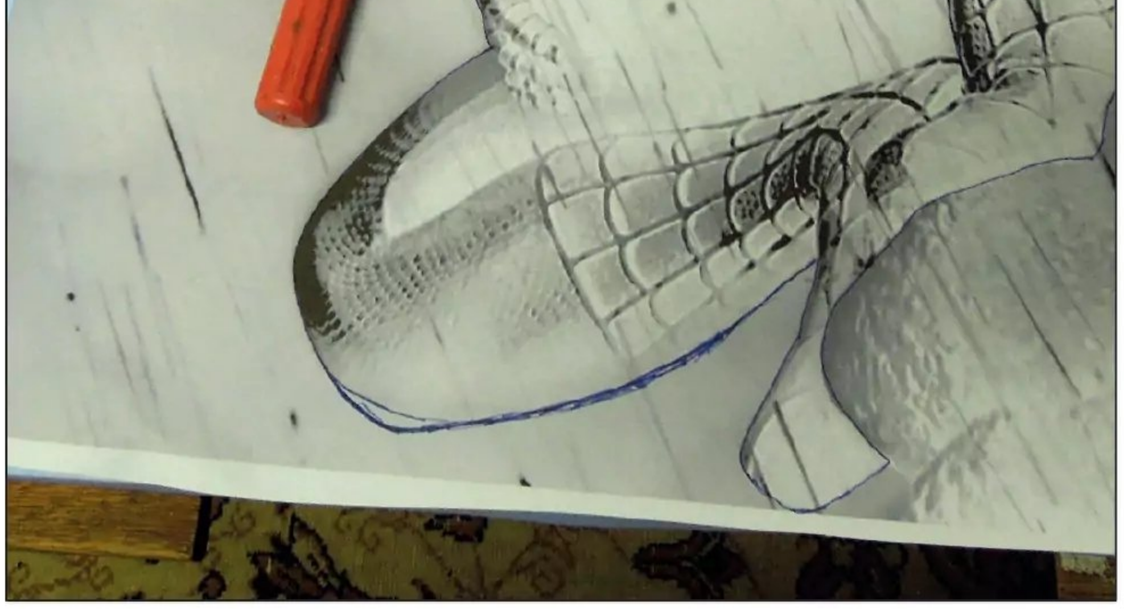
Saturn as the largest object, but without the ring, as desired. It is only half visible in the picture. Here, too, I stick on a large mask and spray the round edge of the mask with white at a great distance. The paint mist automatically creates a gentle gradient towards the center of the circle, which immediately gives the sphere volume. I give Saturn a touch of color with yellow. I am happy with the result, the edges will be softened later.





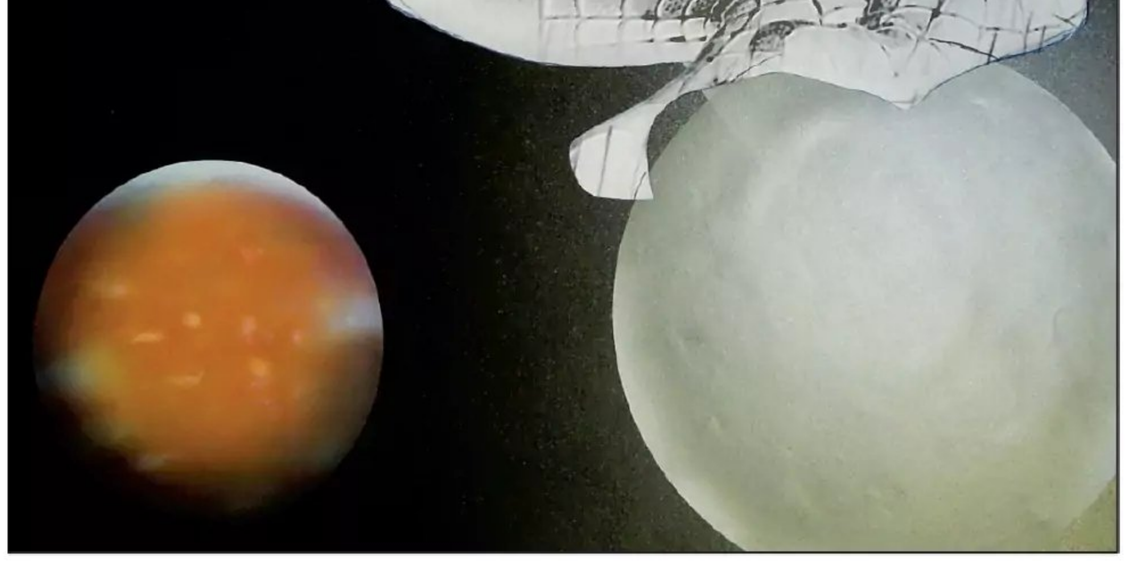
07 Spider-Man template

And now the tricky part – Spider-Man. The photo was printed out and Spider-Man was then cut out along the outline with a sharp scalpel. This step requires a lot of time and patience, so take your time.



08 Moon

Another circular, adhesive mask is cut out for the moon on which Spider-Man is crouching. I position the moon masking so that Spider-Man can also be placed correctly, especially his feet. Then I spray the moon shape with a light color to create a base coat for the next texture.



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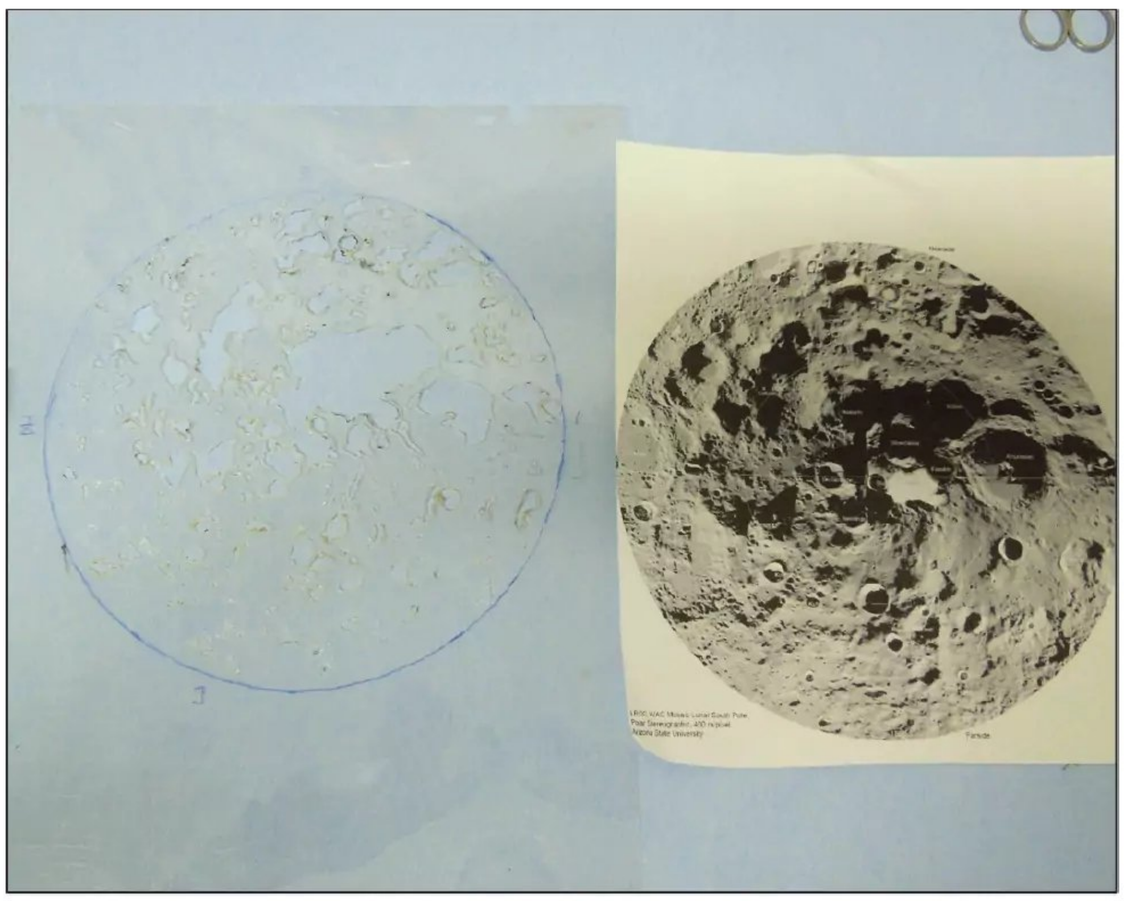
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09 Stencil for moon texture

To create the moon texture, I use a thin plastic film. I use a stencil burner to burn the texture into the foil. Caution: A breathing mask is a must, as you burn plastic and this produces toxic fumes. A wide variety of effects can be achieved with this method.



10 Applying the texture

Now I place the texture stencil on the masked moon and spray it black. After applying the black paint, I used wet Q-tips to create lighter areas and a 3D effect. The speckle technique is also a good choice to add small dots by reducing the airflow in the airbrush.



11 Celestial bodies at a glance

Here you can see the intermediate state with the arrangement of the four planets / celestial bodies before I add the actual main character, Spider-Man, next.



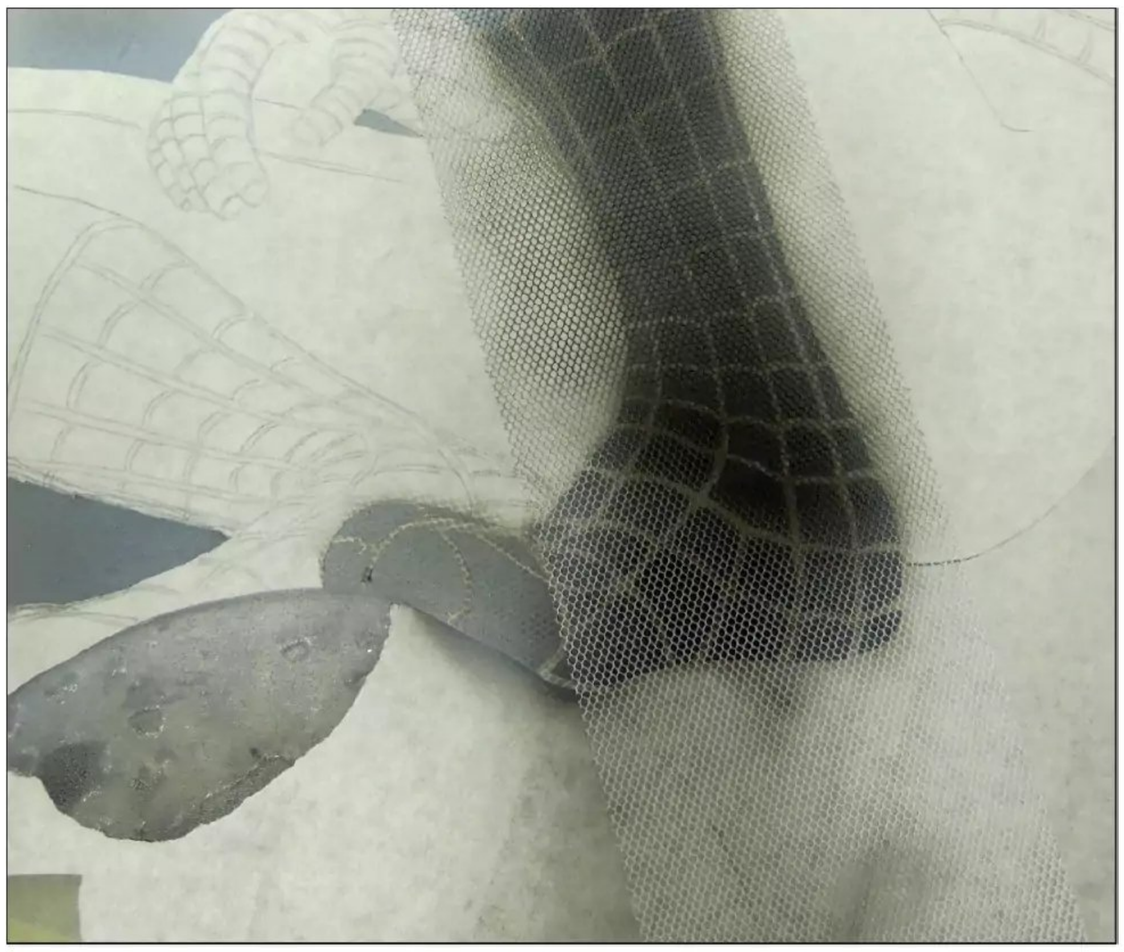
12 Masking and priming Spider-Man

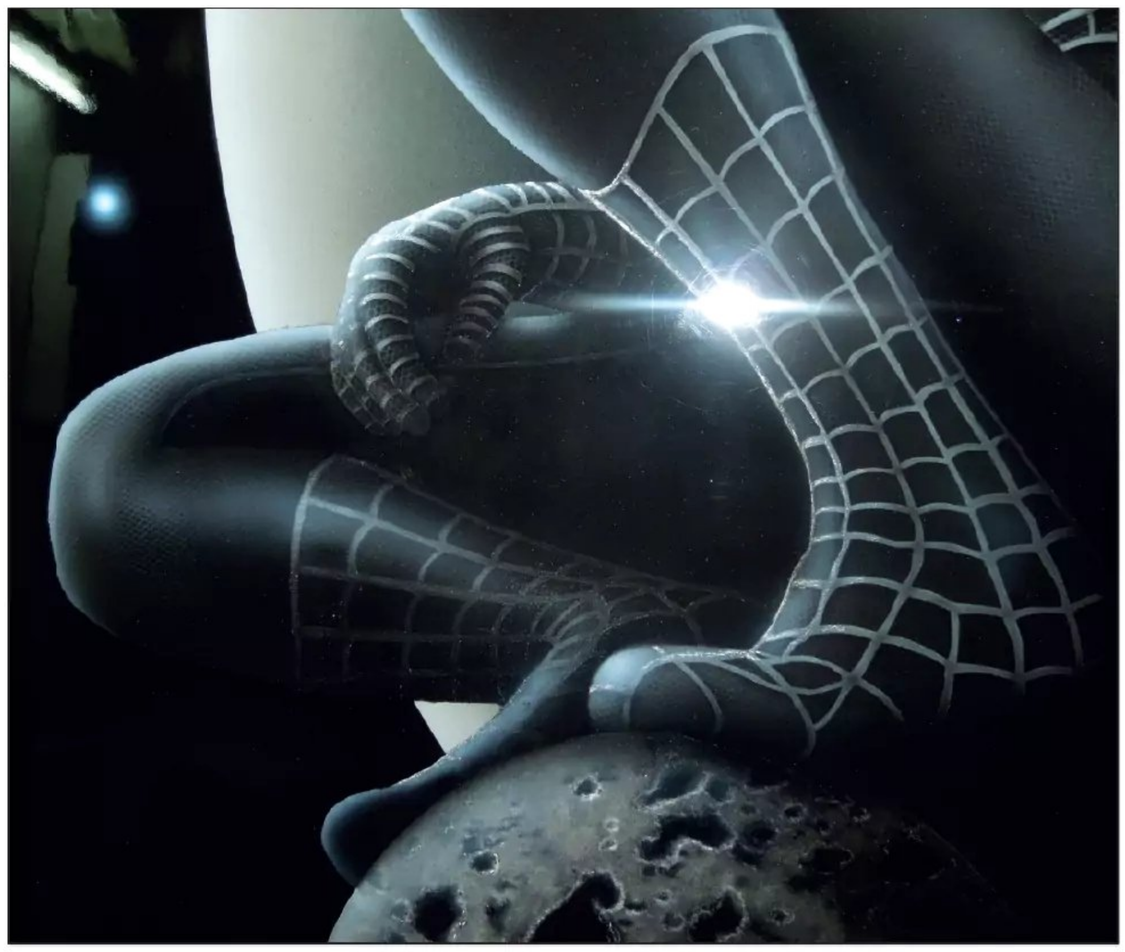
Now I mask the Spider-Man figure in the place I had already planned and expose the inner contour area. Then I fill the area with a thin layer of white to make the basic shape visible.



13 Hexagon texture

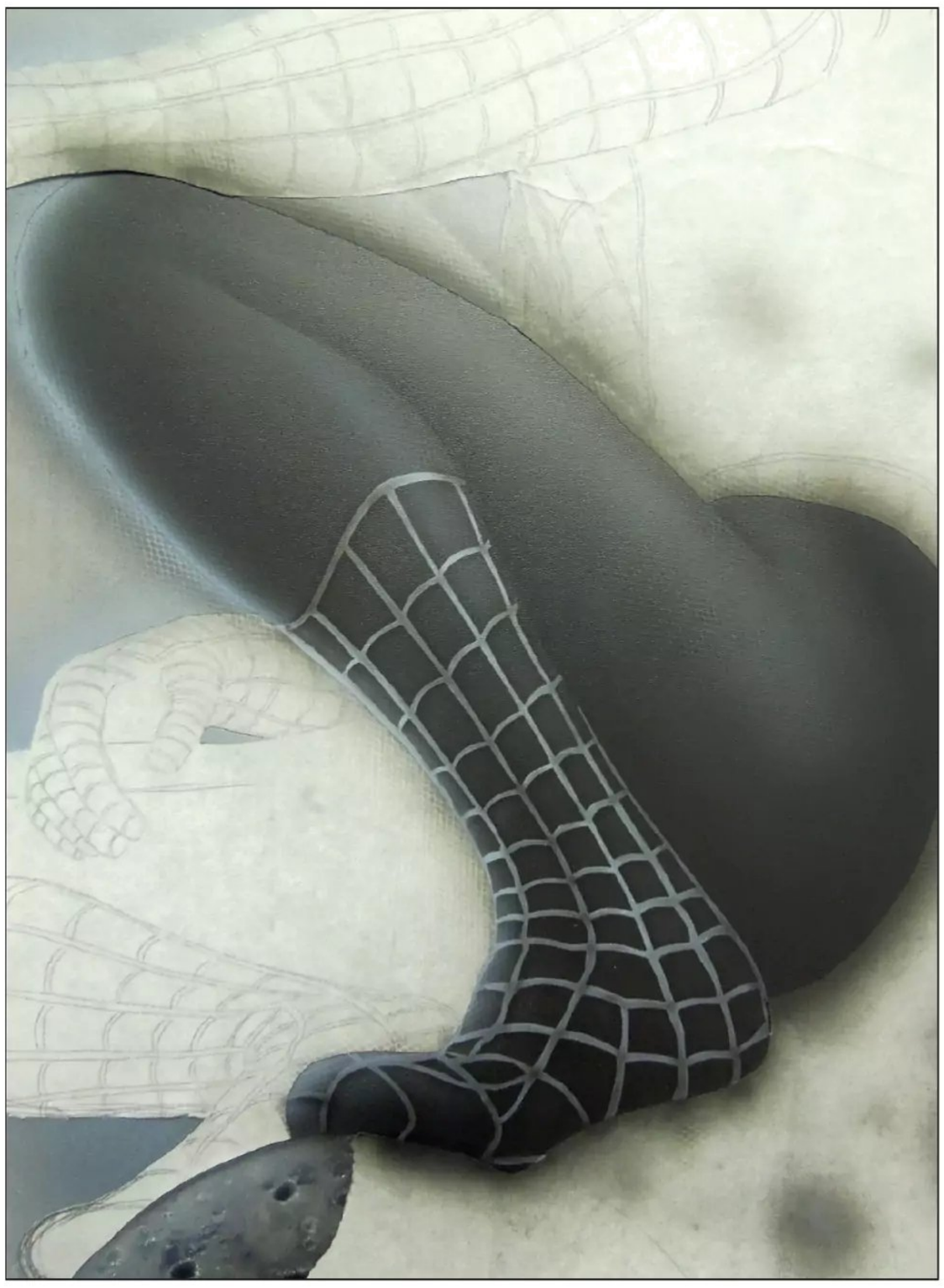
I then masked the basic shape again and began to reveal and shade the details piece by piece. The client wanted hexagons in the Spider-Man design, so I found a small web with a hexagonal texture and used this for Spider-Man's shoes. After unmasking the individual rectangle pieces, I applied light coats of black paint, which I sprayed through the web. The texture became visible through the existing white primer.





14 Details, light and shadow

I worked my way forward piece by piece: feet, legs, arms, body, etc. In order not to forget the light conditions and light-shadow areas, I used white paint for the lighter parts and black paint for the darker parts, depending on the area, which is much easier when the template is positioned and you have a better overview of the image itself. The goal is to achieve oval shapes as they occur in reality (again a 3D effect).





15 Vary texture

By dragging and rotating the mesh in different ways, I was also able to achieve different textures in the different parts of the suit, making the shape, volume and material appear even more realistic.

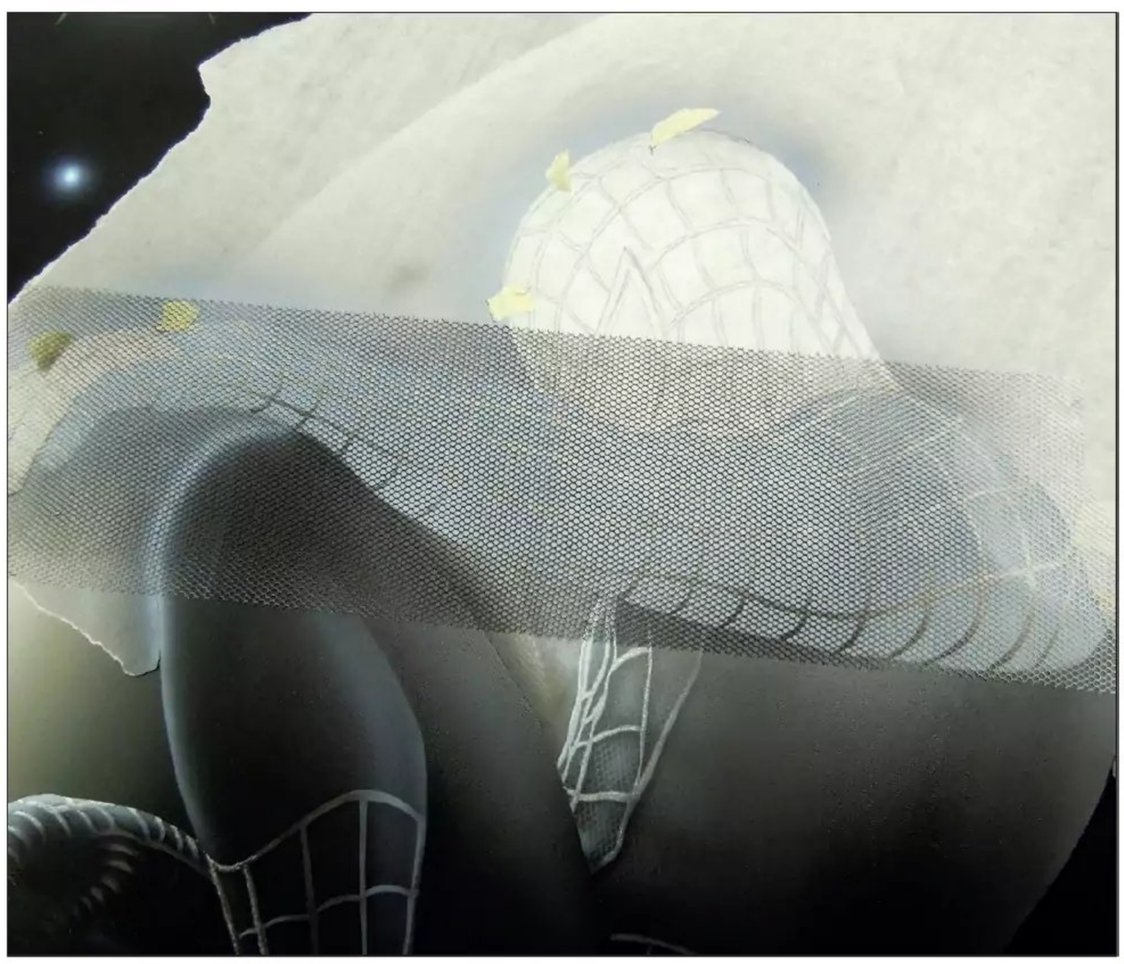






16 Upper body

I also proceeded in the same way with the upper half of the body. The mesh was my constant companion with every layer of paint.



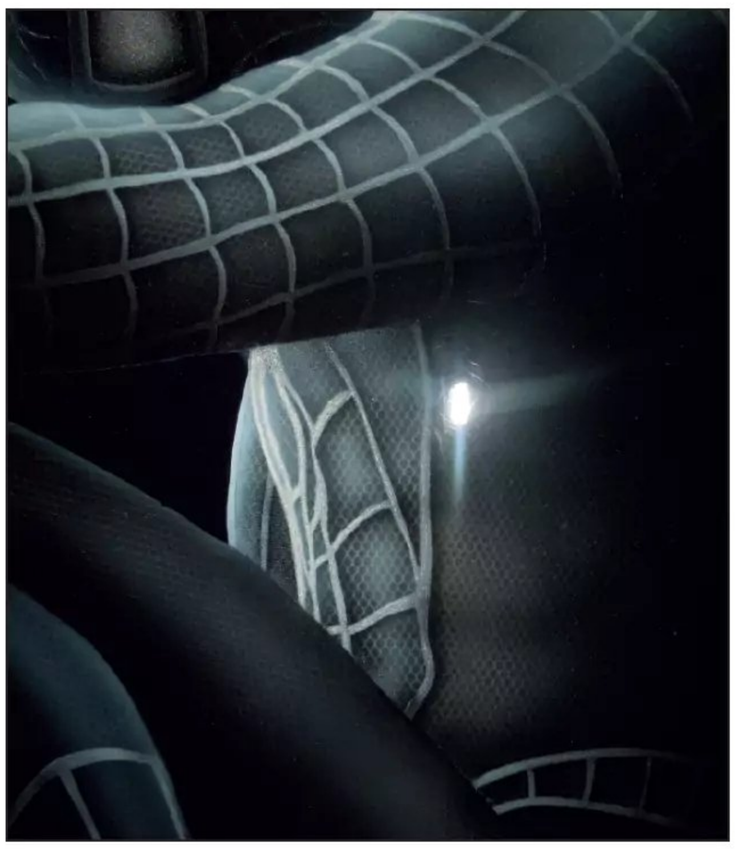


17 Erasing details, softening edges

Done, the texture and the suit look good. So I can move on to the next step. You can use an eraser pencil to remove some more black color to add brighter details – a very simple technique with great results. I apply some more black paint around the planets to soften the hard edges and make them rounder.







18 Finished image

Now the picture is finished. I apply six coats of clear varnish. This creates a relatively thick glass-like effect that gives the picture depth and stronger colors/contrasts. This is the reason why it is impossible to take good photos of the final result without seeing the reflection in the image. Nevertheless, the subject has come alive – colors, shades, stars, planets, everything is there, as it should be. The stars glow in the dark – just as I wanted them to. I hope you enjoyed the article and that it inspires you to try it yourself. "With great power comes great responsibility."



DALIBOR PEJICIC



Croatian artist Dalibor Pejicic is a biker himself, so it made sense for him to try out the airbrush technique for himself. He bought his first airbrush about 12 years ago and initially started spraying superheroes, as they had a great influence on him as a child. Quickly, his art became more serious and from then on he experimented with different mixing techniques, with airbrushing always playing a role. He loves to incorporate different and unusual textures into his paintings using utensils such as sponges or plastic gloves. No rules, no limits! That is Dalibor's motto. His aim is to constantly reinvent himself, refine his airbrush technique and create original, unique art.

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Chicho

For the Spanish artist Rafael Padilla Ruiz, known as "Fali", this project was something very special. He portrays the late musician Juan Ramón Artero (Chicho), the "guitar hero" of the Spanish comedy rock band Mojinos Escocios. With his work, he wants to pay tribute to him, capture his memory and give him a touch of fantasy.

EQUIPMENT – CHICHO

Airbrush: Iwata Eclipse 0.3

Colors: Custom Creative O2, black, red, blue, sienna, pink, yellow, green, grey, violet, each transparent and opaque

Additional materials: Adhesive tape, graphite, gold leaf, gold glue

Surface: composite panel

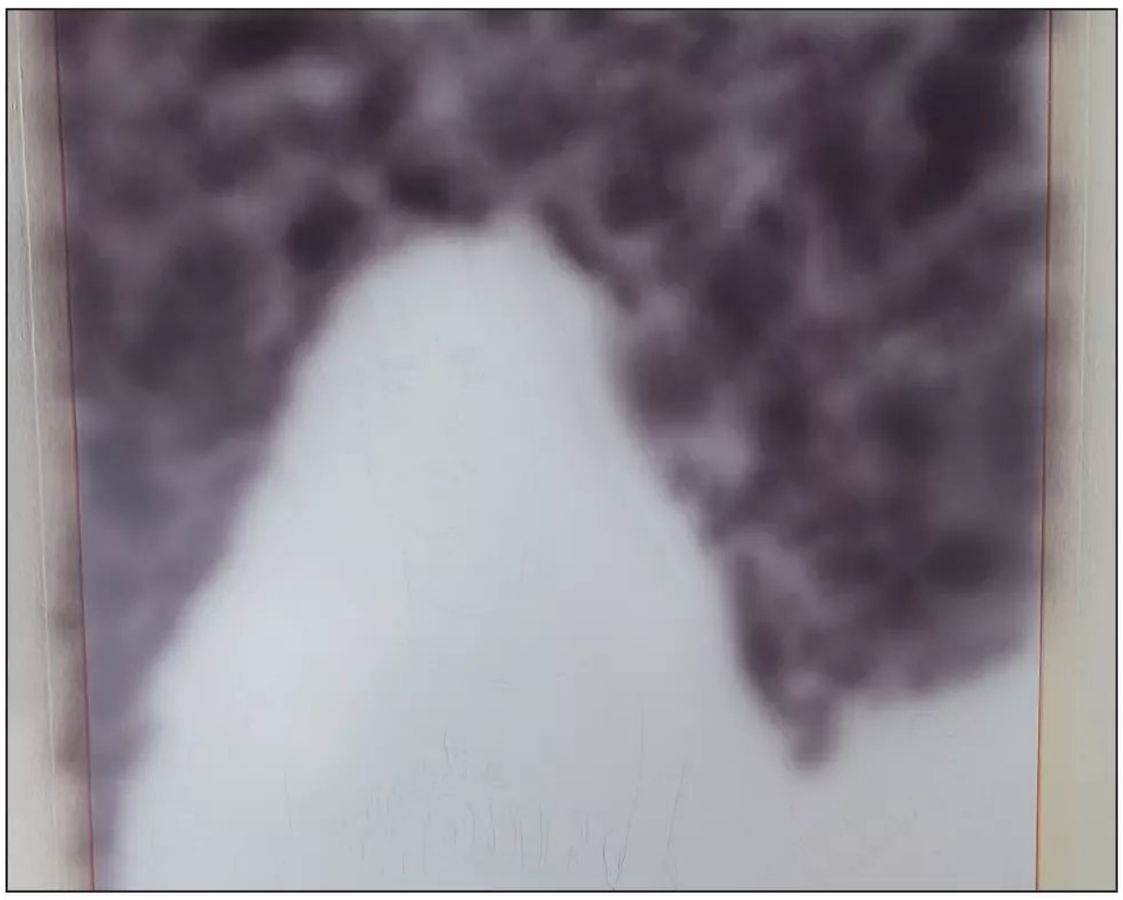
01 Drawing

For good work, it is important that the drawing is transferred cleanly onto the base and that all the lines are in the right place. To do this, I use graphite on the back of the copy, remove the excess with paper and trace the contours with a pencil so that the lines have the same thickness.



02 Background

To create a bit of atmosphere, I first color the background a bit blotchy with a mixture of black, red, blue and reducer. This creates a dark purple. To be able to work out the hair and the contour better later and create soft transitions, I leave some space around the head and don't paint the background color right up to the drawing.



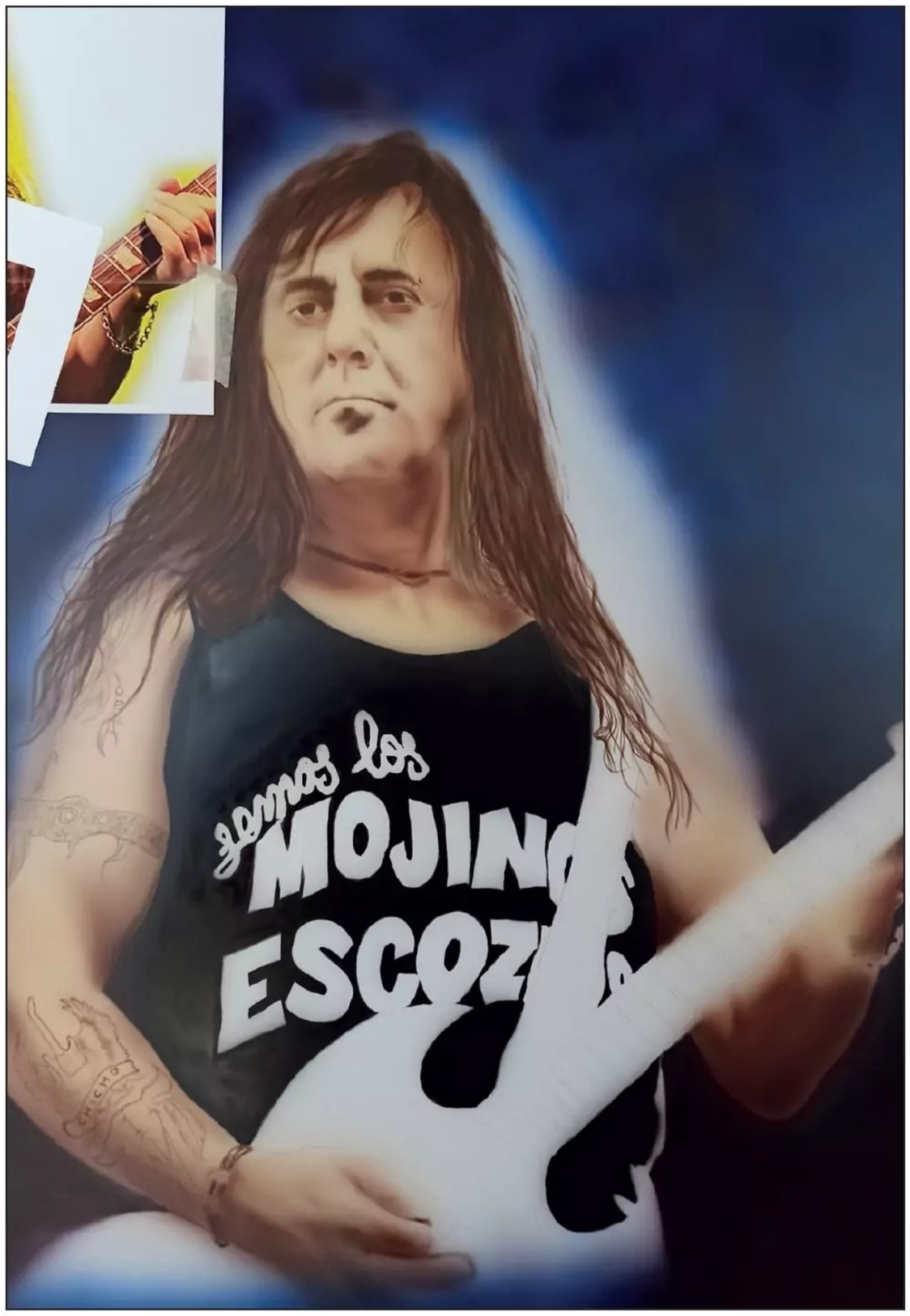
03 Coloring the surroundings blue

I use the same color to make the lower part a little more opaque. To give the background a bluish tone, I spray with transparent blue and transparent pink in equal parts.



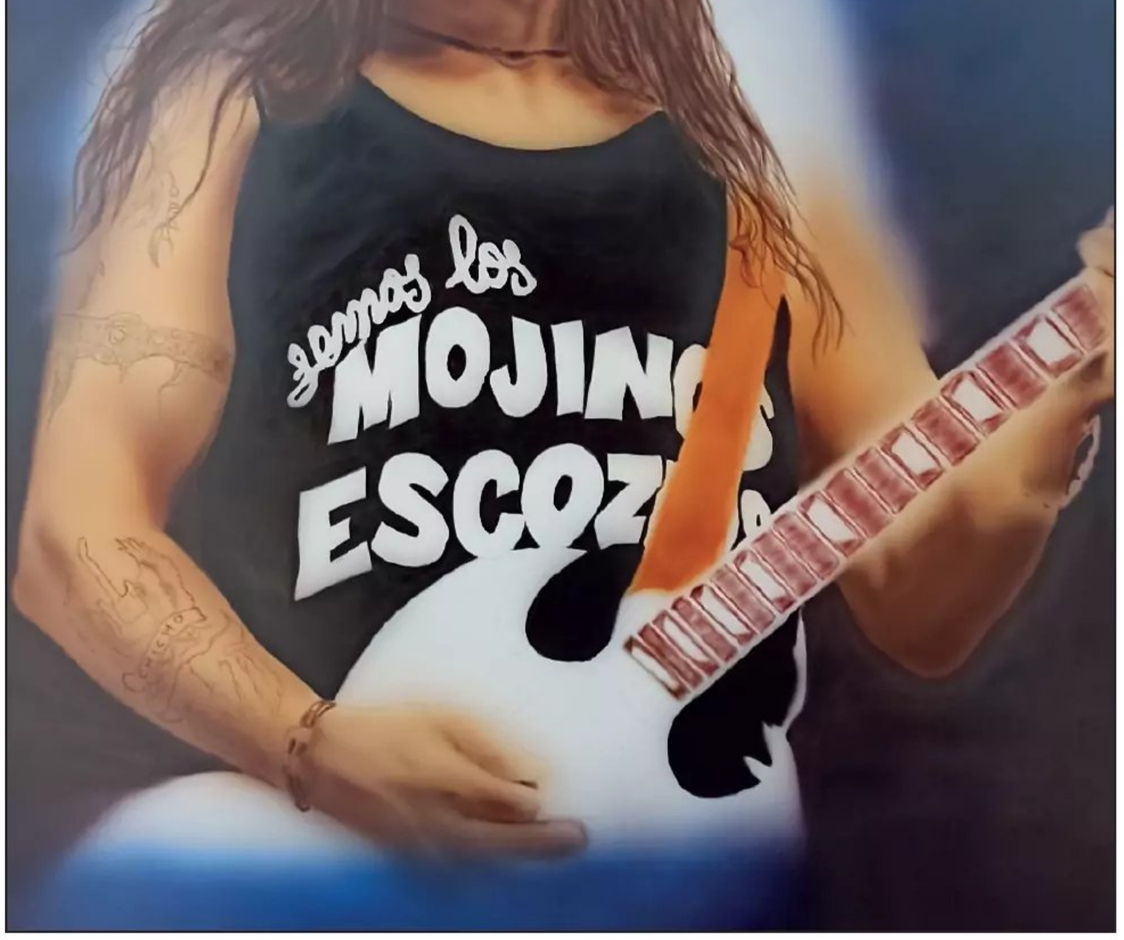
04 Shirt and shading

I paint the entire shirt with opaque black, leaving the band's logo white. I use a mixture of sienna and diluted black to create a dark brown tone, which I use as a base for the skin and hair. I spray the hair in long strands in the direction of growth, using my photo as a guide. I also start to shape the facial features of the portrait. I shade the first dark areas without losing the leading line. I do the same on the hands and arms.



05 Skin tone

Once the shading has been worked out, it's time for color. I mix another skin tone with rusty yellow, green and red, which I spray on the face and arms. Again, I take the shades and gradients into account and spray the color in thin layers. I also use the paint to create the guitar strap and neck. Here I simply add a little more red to the mixture.



06 Guitar and shirt

I use red to design the guitar and the mixture of sienna and black to give it volume. We also use this color to give the letters on the shirt shape and volume. After applying the paint, I add texture with the help of a fiberglass eraser. Finally, I use white colored with red oxide to give the guitar volume and brightness.





07 Hair

I give the hair more volume and darken it with the black and sienna mixture I have just used. Then I turn my attention to the white area around the head, which is still white. I fill in this part with transparent blue and create a soft transition to the rest of the background. Then I add more hair, which lies loosely over the blue area and merges into the background.





08 Fantastic glow effect

Using white, I adjust the skin colors to create texture and remove the glow. I also give the whole outline a glow effect to give it a touch of fantasy. In the background, I add fog and rays of light to create a little atmosphere.



09 Detailing the effects

Now I color the background effects from the previous step with transparent blue and violet and then return with white. I use this to rework the outline again to bring out a little shine and some textures. I create a dynamic glitter effect in the form of dots. I use the colors in the cup of my airbrush to embed the texture and adjust the color.



10 Finishing the picture

When all the work has been adjusted, I remove the adhesive tape. Then I just have to sign it. In this case, me and my teacher and great friend Juanjo Baron, who helped me with this work, signed it.



11 Gold leaf frame

To give the picture a little more impact, I want to give it a gold leaf frame. To do this, I stick a 3-millimeter profile tape around the picture to create an edge and apply water-based glue to the remaining edge of the picture to attach the gold leaf. I wait 10 minutes and then apply the gold leaf. Using a tool called a "twister", I create a circular look on the gold.



12 Clear lacquer finish

We apply several more coats of clear varnish. The next day we sand them down and varnish again to give the picture a smooth finish.

In memory of Juan Ramón Artero, "Chicho".



RAFAEL „FALI“ PADILLA RUIZ



Rafael Padilla Ruiz, known as "Fali", was born in Malaga (Spain) in 1981. He was drawn to drawing from a young age and around 2005 he got to know the airbrush and the great teacher Juanjo Baron, with whom he still takes lessons today. He is busy airbrushing almost every day.

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SAURON

Who would fit better on a brass saw blade than the cruel emperor Sauron from the "Lord of the Rings" saga! Serbian artist Igor Amidžić, who lives in Germany, has airbrushed the tyrant in his spiky armor onto the unusual surface. Although he was helped by a reference photo, he prefers to rely on his own creative flair for the textures.

EQUIPMENT – SAURON

Airbrush: Fengda FE-180 Airbrushes

Colors: Createx Illustration Colors

Surface: Saw blade with 50 cm diameter

Other materials: 240-grit sandpaper, silicone remover, paper towels, black primer, red 3M Scotch-Brite pad, black base coat from the spray can, baking paper, scalpel, Oramask 810, foil squeegee, transfer paper, 2K automotive clear coat

01 Prepare the saw blade

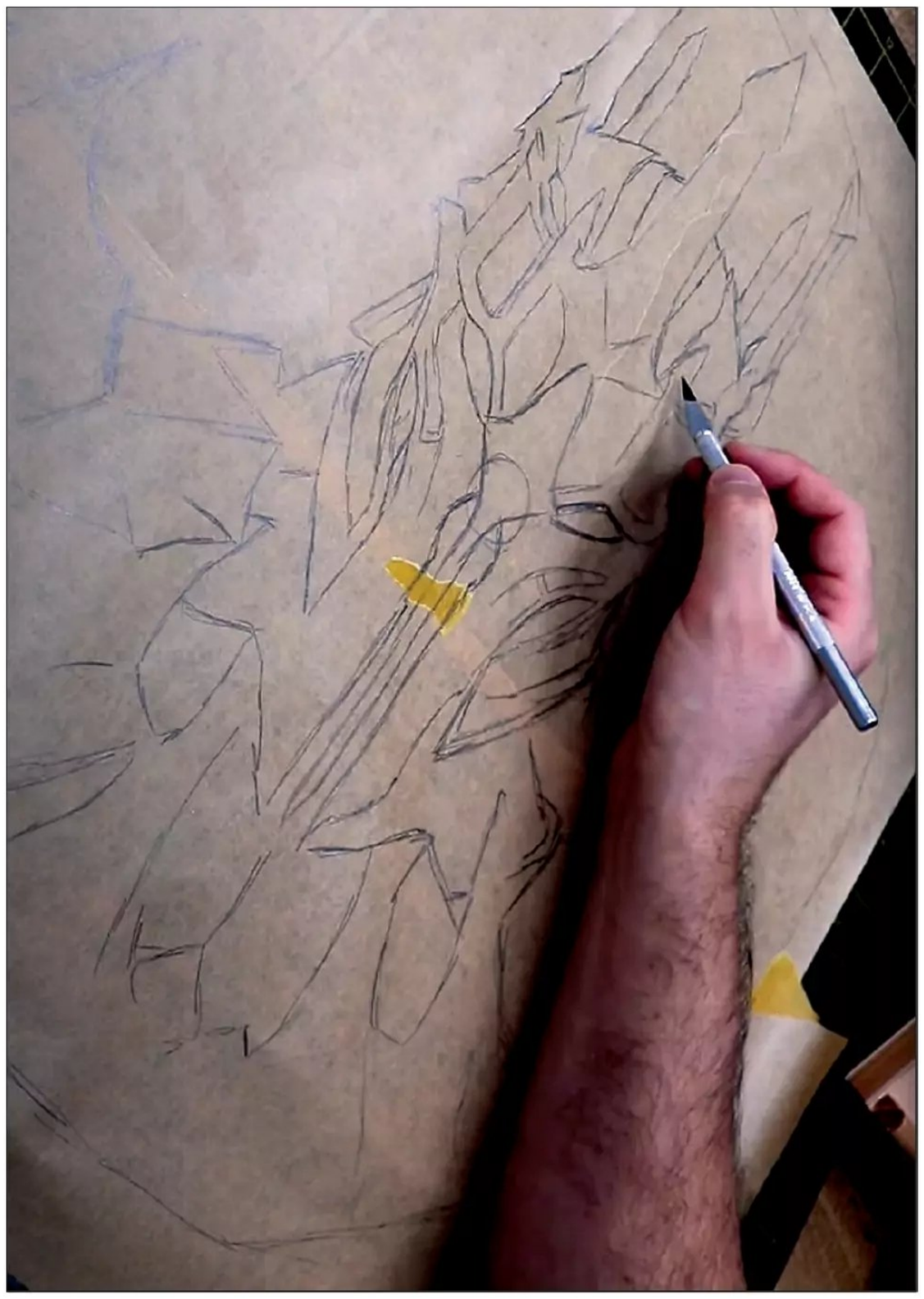
As with every project, everything starts with preparation. To speed things up, this time I bought a new saw blade instead of finding an old one and spending hours sanding away the rust and dirt. But I have to admit that restoring and painting an old, used and discarded saw blade has a certain poetic feel to it.



Even though the blade was new and shiny, I had to wash off the protective oils and sand the blade down a bit to make the primer adhere better. To do this, I used a rag soaked in paint thinner and 240 grit sandpaper. I then wiped everything down with silicone remover and paper towels. Then the blade was sprayed on both sides with a black primer/filler. After sufficient drying time, I sanded it lightly with the red 3M Scotch-Brite pad and then painted it with black water-based basecoat from the spray can. A thick coat was not necessary as I intended to cover the entire saw blade with the airbrush design.

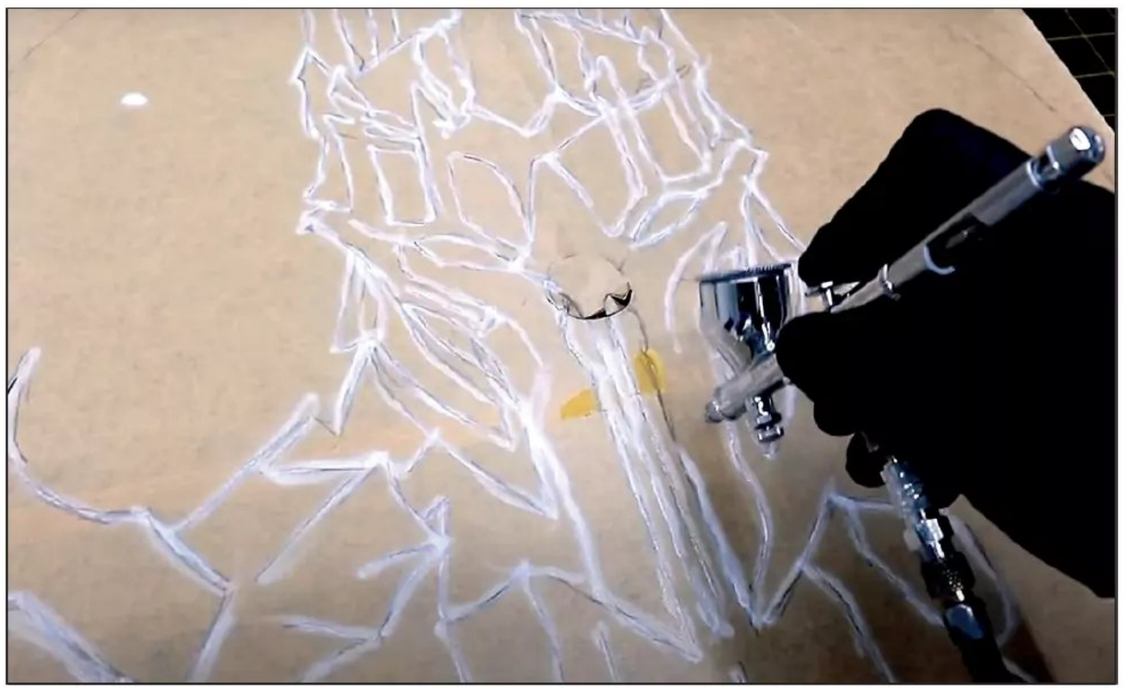
02 Preliminary drawing

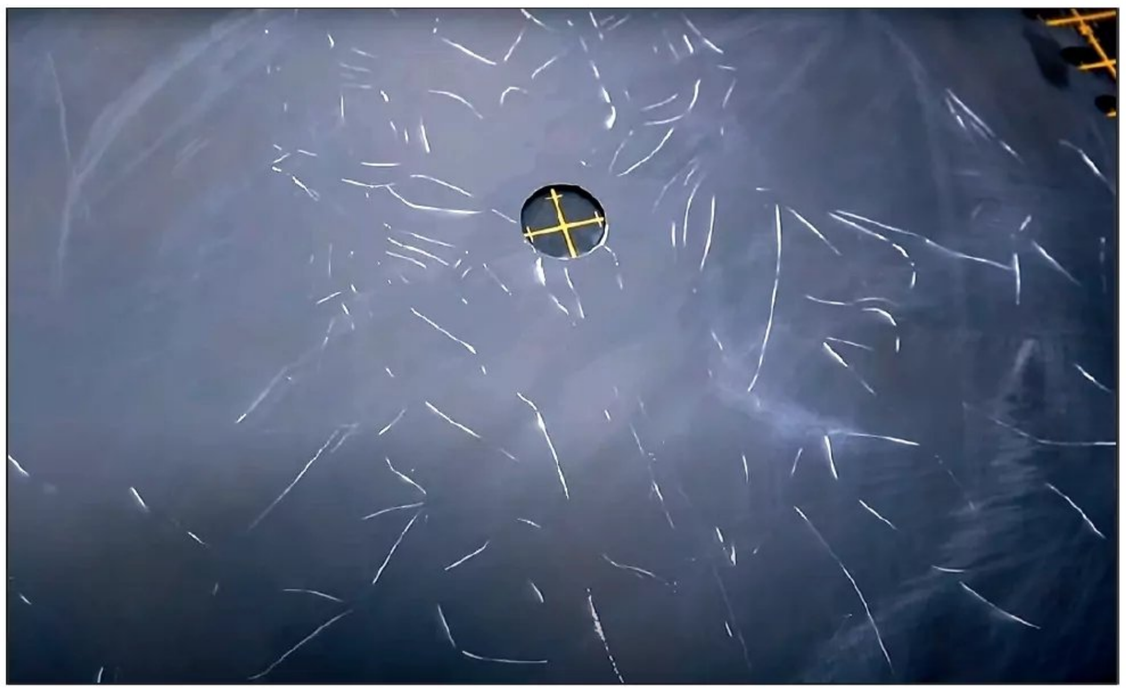
The next step was to draw the outline of the saw blade on a piece of baking paper. I use baking paper because I can see through the paper. This is very helpful when aligning the outline with the object you want to transfer it to. It also makes it easy to copy things from the PC screen if you need to. Another advantage is that it is very easy to cut without tearing. I then roughly sketched the design on paper without worrying about too many details. I cut along the pencil lines with my exacto knife, taking care not to cross the lines because I wanted to keep the paper in one piece.



03 Transferring the outlines

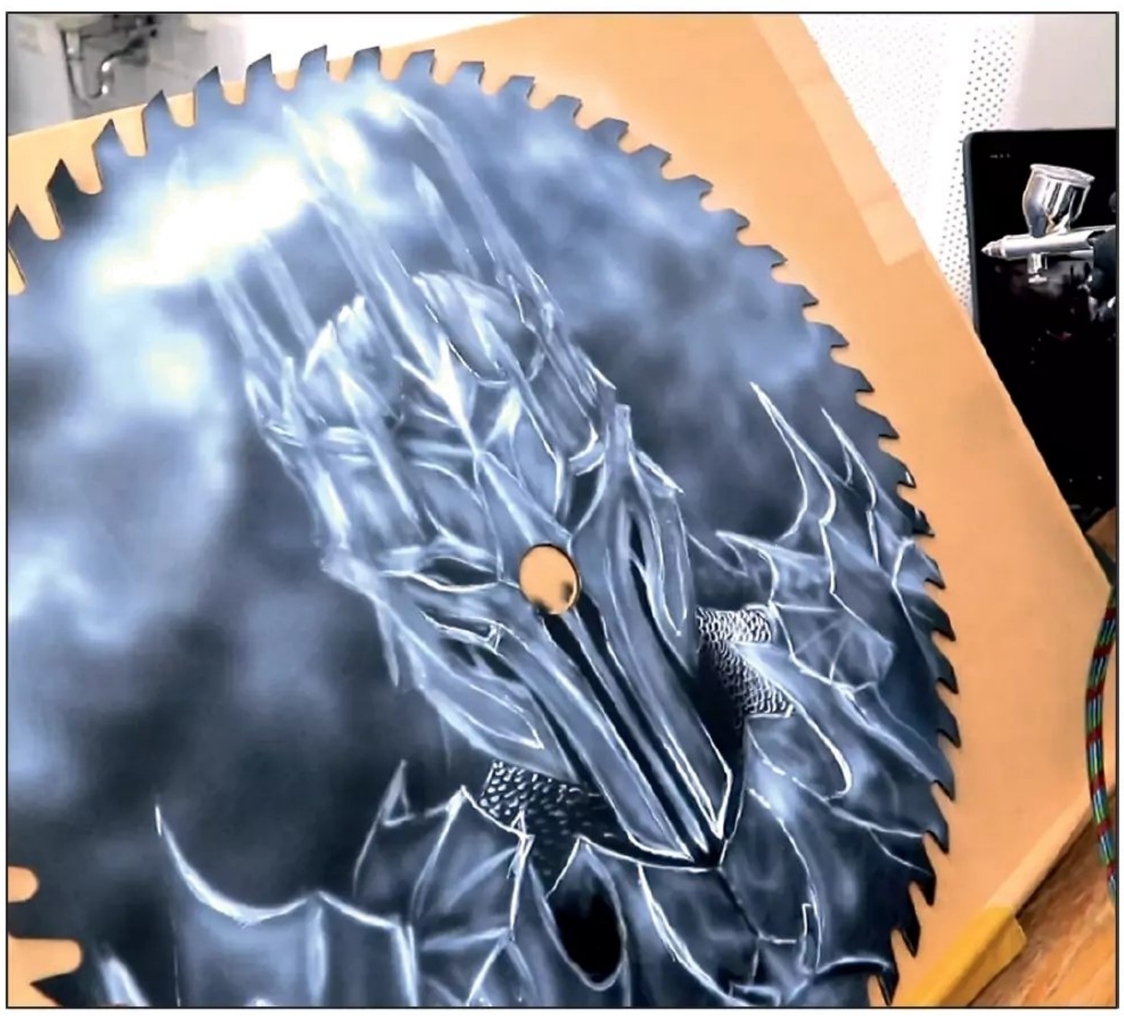
Next, I placed the paper on the saw blade, carefully aligned the outlines with the edges of the blade and taped it down in a few places. Then, using my airbrush, I sprayed a generous coat of undiluted white paint with light pressure on the lines I had cut earlier. The paint should be as thick as possible so that it doesn't dry too slowly, run under the paper and make a mess. It also makes the lines much easier to see. The pressure should be low because the paper should remain as still as possible. Once I was sure that all the lines I had cut out were sprayed, I could remove the sketch. My design was transferred to the sheet in the form of very thin white lines, which will be a useful aid in the next steps.





04 Creating shapes

Now I am ready to start roughly filling in the shapes. In my years of practice, I have learned that I don't have to paint everything perfectly from the start. I don't worry about the precision of the lines and shading. Even the proportions are not that important at this moment. I fought my need to be overly technical and managed to free my arm and my mind. It took a long time and a lot of sweat for me to realize that painting is a natural process with ups and downs and that mistakes are not only allowed, but even encouraged, because it is from the mending of these mistakes that true art is born. So I filled the airbrush cup about halfway with white paint and added just a few drops of thinner. Right now, the paint needs to be thick and well covering. I quickly reinforced my sketch guides so they wouldn't get lost and started filling in the figure and the sky in the background with the first shades.



05 Background

Once I had created the basis for my shapes, I began to add the colors for the background. At first, I only sprayed the base colors, more specifically, the colors that are most prevalent in the painting. This will be my color base. As before, the paint is not too diluted for better coverage, and the pressure is higher than normal to better atomize the thick paint and speed up the process.

I started with the sky by spraying on some light ochre, followed by a brown on the medium-dark areas. Lastly, I sprayed a dark brown on the darkest areas, which I also used to sharpen the clouds a little and give them a slightly three-dimensional look. I used this color palette to achieve a stormy, volcanic type of cloud. I sprayed the lightest areas that remained white with a light mist of purple. Then I came back with pure white and sharpened the brightest parts of the clouds, just as I had done before with the dark forehead.



06 Black and white details

I never mask my main subject while editing the background, or vice versa, because I think it creates an unnatural, too crisp outline around the subject. It can also be very time consuming, and for me personally it's tedious work. I enjoy painting much more than masking, so I like to remove any overspray that I can't tolerate and that seems unnecessary or blurry. Before I start working on Sauron, I decide to add more details in black and white, bringing him closer to a fully framed motif. However, I added some orange that would represent a reflection of a nearby fire or an erupting volcano, just to see how it would look and to test the opacity of the orange color. I was quite happy with this opaque orange.



07 Armor texture

In the previous step, I added some more armor textures with reduced black and white. I really enjoy working on textured metal armor. I like how strong the contrasts are on very small areas. Even on a square inch of armor, under certain lighting conditions, you can have a dark brown and a bright white, for example. I say "dark brown" and not "black" because when I work in color, I always avoid using pure black.

I find it's very easy and forgiving to improvise with textures like this. Once you get a feel for it, it's very easy to do without having to look at any reference photos. Since I'm happy with the amount of detail right now, I'm ready to add some subtle colors. I spray heavily reduced orange on the left side of the image where the fire reflects on the armor. On the right side, I sprayed some bright yellow-green to create a patina effect on the centuries-old armor.



08 Texture details and speckles

Now it's time for my favorite part of the painting process, which is the detailed texturing. I return to the armor by applying white with one airbrush and a very dark brown with the other. In fact, these two colors are regulars in two of my airbrushes. They are always present and used in every one of my paintings.

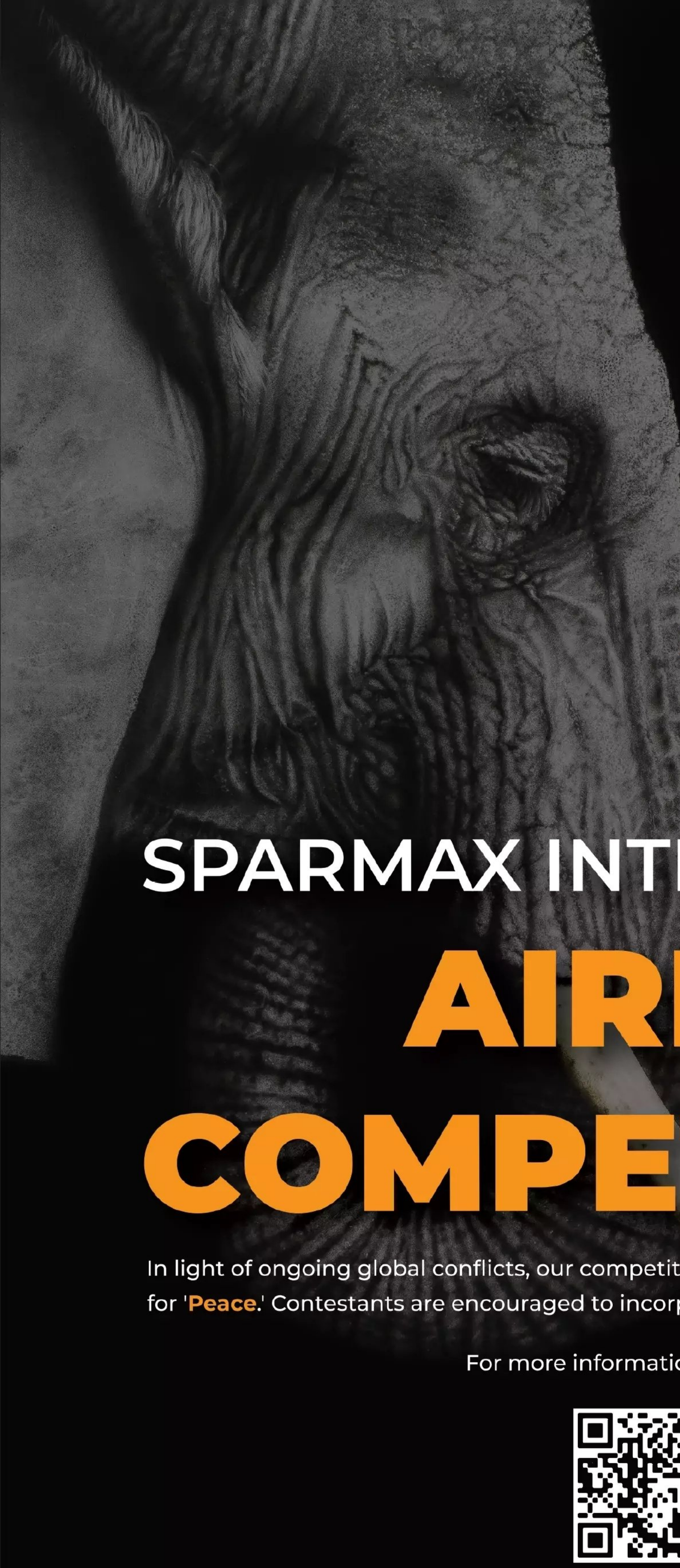
Here I occasionally take a look at my reference photo, but mostly the texture comes from my imagination. I decide where my light sources will be and adjust the highlights and shadows accordingly. I diluted the white a little too much so it wouldn't stand out too much, but I also reduced the pressure to avoid splashes of color. I did the same with my dark brown. I choose a spot I want to work on and start with the dark color to create small indentations, cracks and irregularities in the metal. Sometimes I use the technique of paint spattering, pulling back on the lever so that the paint slides down and collects at the tip of the needle. I then pull the trigger down to create a sudden burst of air. This creates small patches of paint, which in this case make the armor look porous because they look like tiny holes in the material. You can also use this trick to create snow, splashing water or a rain effect.



09 Reflections and highlights

Once I was happy with the textures and the coarseness of the lower part of the armor, I boosted the colors with another pass. I sprayed a red orange on the left side (right shoulder) with a gradient to a yellow orange to bring the fire reflection on the armor to life. On the right side, I sprayed a little more of that yellow green and a very light coat of heavily thinned purple because I wanted the armor to catch the reflection of the bright purple sky above. I then made another pass with white, enhancing only the bright highlights and certain edges, which always makes for a sharper, more expressive image. These tiny white dots are very effective not only on eyes, but on all other reflective surfaces and have a huge impact on making your images look vibrant. Just be careful not to overdo it, as this can have the opposite effect.





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10 Helmet

I applied the same process to the helmet, which proved a little more difficult to handle due to the many symmetrical shapes that required extra attention, before moving on. After spraying on the orange, purple and green tones, I came back with white highlights and darkened some areas for more contrast. I took special care to make the nose area of the helmet the sharpest and most detailed part of the painting to create depth of field. This is because in nature it would be the most prominent part of the subject and would attract the viewer's attention the most.



11 Finished portrait

After I was finished with the image, I did a quick visual check to make sure there were no missing proportions or symmetries. It's always good to literally take a step back from your painting and look at it closely. It's funny, but from a distance you can see everything much more clearly. Another trick when looking for symmetry errors is to turn the painting upside down. This will reveal some interesting things, I assure you.



12 Black Speech

Next, I needed to add the Black Speech inscriptions that would be stamped into the ring when it was thrown into the fire. I didn't want to freehand paint them because that would be very tedious and I honestly don't think I could do them as well after many hours of work. I created the design using Adobe Illustrator and Silhouette Studio and then used my Silhouette Portrait Plotter to cut the design onto Oramask 810 film. I used an airbrush cleaning needle to remove the letters from the foil.



13 Applying the stencil

After the stencil was finished, I applied a transfer sheet and pressed it firmly with my palms and a plastic squeegee. The next step was to remove the paper from under the stencil film. To do this, I turn the stencil over so that the paper is on top. Then I start to slowly peel the paper away from one corner, keeping it bent and parallel to the table and using the palm of my hand instead of my fingertips to peel it away. This way, all the loose parts of the stencil stay on the transfer foil and don't come off together with the paper.



14 White primer

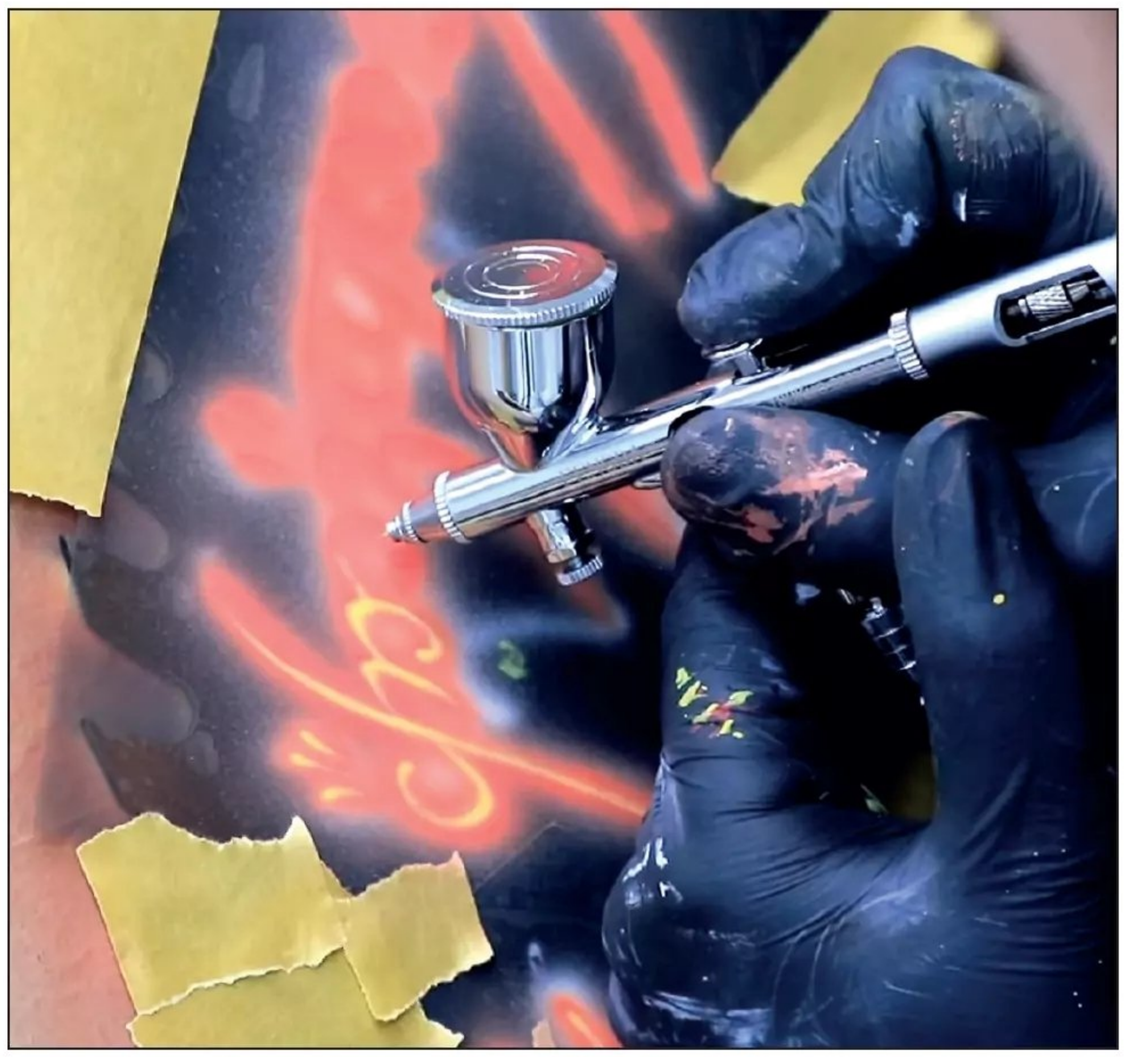
I applied the motif to the sheet and also masked the edges with tape to avoid overspray. I've learned that when I think the area I'm spraying around is taped off enough and that I'm safe from overspray – I tape off some more! I recommend you do the same, because those sharp straight lines from the foil edge are very hard to hide once they're there, especially if they appear on a soft, multi-colored surface like a sky.

I poured the thinned white out of my airbrush and filled them in with a clean, thick white straight from the bottle. No thinning this time, I want a quick and strong opacity as a base for the next step.



15 Yellow-red glow

After spraying on a nice thick layer of white, I was able to spray a mixture of red and orange over it. Even though the opaque orange from Createx covers very well, it's important to spray white first if you really want the color to stand out and be as vibrant as possible. And that was my intention here. I wanted it to glow like fire. Inside the letters, I freehanded the shapes with a yellow mixed with a drop or two of orange.



16 Removing the masking

It was time to remove the stencils. It was a scary moment. I'm sure most of you can empathize with me when I say that. Everyone has had an accident when removing a stencil or tape. The sight of peeling paint stings more than the Nazgul's blade. I tried to remove it as carefully and slowly as my patience would allow, and thankfully all went well.



17 Glow of light

The final step of the painting process was to give the lettering a glow effect. This was achieved simply by spraying on diluted yellow from a distance. Care must be taken to ensure that no spray patterns are visible, just a misty layer. I took a few more looks to make sure everything was OK, signed my name and gave the blade a coat of matt 2K automotive clearcoat.



18 Finished saw blade

I really enjoyed writing this step by step guide and did my best to explain all the steps of the process. If you want to see it all with your own eyes, please visit my YouTube channel "Mystic Airbrush". There you will find this motif and many more interesting and useful videos and instructions. I wish you good luck with all your future projects, and please remember: the most important thing when painting is to have fun!



IGOR AMIDŽIĆ



Igor Amidžić was born in Serbia and studied product design at the Polytechnic in Belgrade. He has been airbrushing for 15 years. After moving to Germany, he has been running the "Igor Amidžić Airbrush Studio" in Seefeld since 2023 and has turned his long-loved hobby into a small business. His main job is as an aircraft painter at General Atomics Aerotech Systems near Munich.

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Our Readers´ Artworks



Rob Ballendux: Oldtimer
Airbrush: Iwata
Farbe: E'tac
Surface: Schoellershammer Board



Michael Cords: Send It!
Airbrush: Iwata Custom Micron Takumi
Paint: Createx Illustration Colors
Surface: Blair synthetic paper, 43 x 64 cm





Leslie Baldwin
Airbrush: Iwata
Paints: Inspire
Surface: Motorbike tank



Andrew Smith (Smidzink Airbrushing): Sea Turtles
Airbrush: Iwata Eclipse
Paints: Createx Wicked Colors



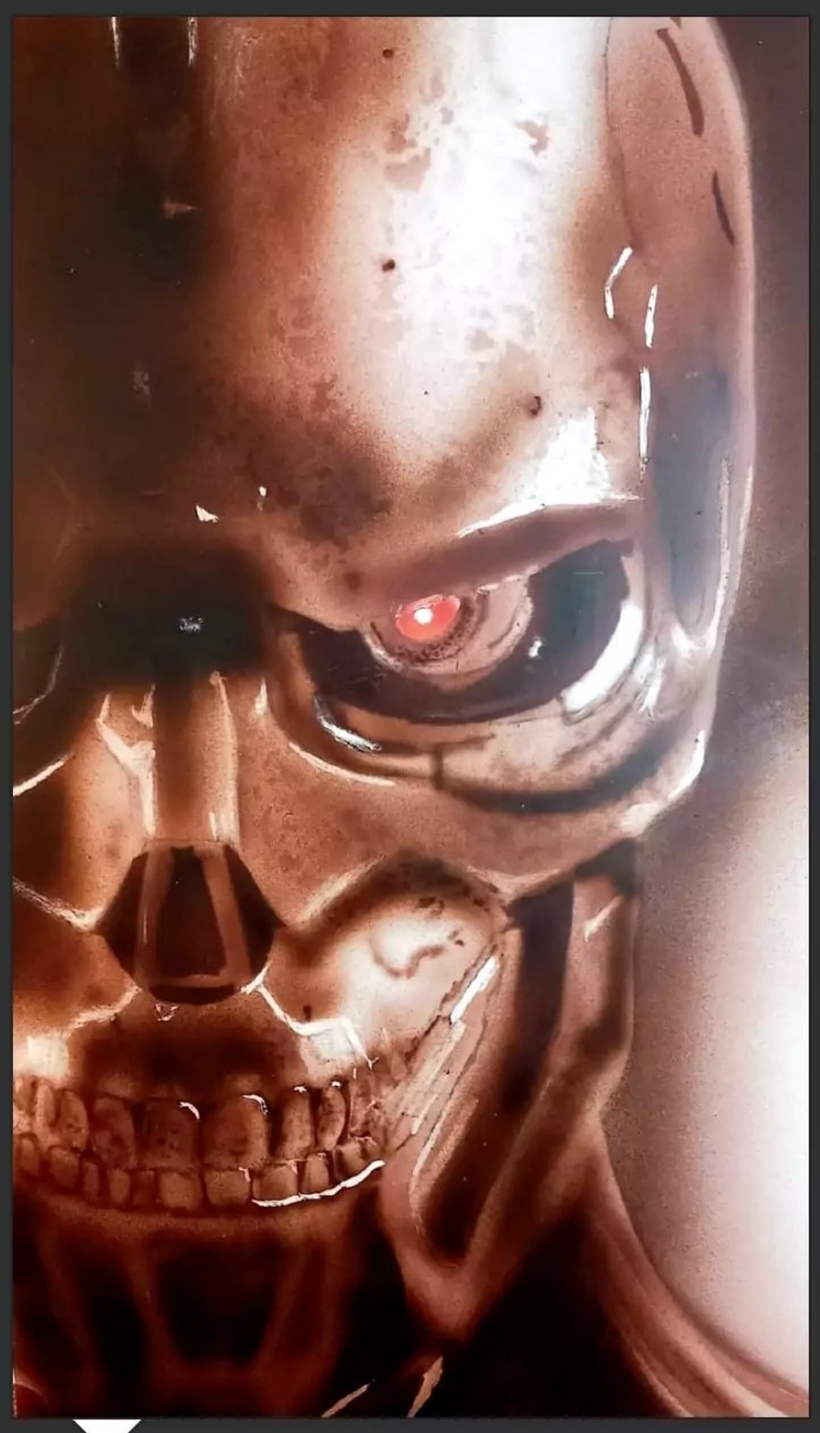
José Sanchez: Trojan Bodypainting



Luis Manuel Pérez Sánchez
Airbrush: Iwata Eclipse and Takumi
Paint: Custom Creative Juanjo Barón
Surface: Schoeller cardboard, 51 x 36 cm

Dave Currell: Debbie Harry
Airbrush: Iwata HP-B
Paints: Createx Illustration Colors
Surface: Yupo Paper





Mark Nagle: Metallic Skull
Airbrush: Iwata Micron
Paint: Createx Illustration Colors
Surface: Yupo paper



Andy Schroeren: Model
Airbrush: Iwata**; Paints:** Model Air Schwarz
Papier: Watercolour paper



Marcia Timmermans-IJzerman: Parisa
Airbrush: Iwata CM-C
Farbe: Createx Illustration Schwarz
Surface: Createx Yupo



Domenico alias Dom Liquido: Lionfish
Airbrush: Harder & Steenbeck Infinity 0.15 mm / 0.4 mm
Paint: Wicked Colors
Surface: wooden panel, 80 x 53 cm, treated with acrylic plaster

How do I enter?

Simply send photos of your artworks – digital and at least 9 x 13 cm, with 300 dpi resolution – to: **info@airbrush-magazin.de** or mail (also min. 9 x 13 cm prints) to: newart media & design, Hamburger Str. 26, 21493 Schwarzenbek, Germany. Photos sent by mail cannot be returned.

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Preview

Airbrush Step by Step 72 will be available from June 28, 2024



Fruit salad with snake

You wouldn't want this "dessert" on your plate, but as a painting on the wall and above all as a texture exercise for aspiring airbrush artists, this composition by Spanish artist José Luis Parada Caballero is ideal.



Cross spider

Are you disgusted by spiders? Then this piece of art is not for you. But it's really impressive how Marcus Brazel has brought the otherwise tiny animal with its many details to oversized dimensions on illustration board.



Wolf

Hungarian artist Nagy Géza's wolf is not photorealistic. On the contrary: its various more or less elaborate textures give it a very painterly, artistic appearance.



Kingfisher

The Spanish artist Idoia Urrutxurtu was particularly keen to portray the beauty and diversity of the plumage in her kingfisher illustration. She achieved this with transparent colors and numerous etching tools.

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