

AIRBRUSH

STEP BY STEP

79

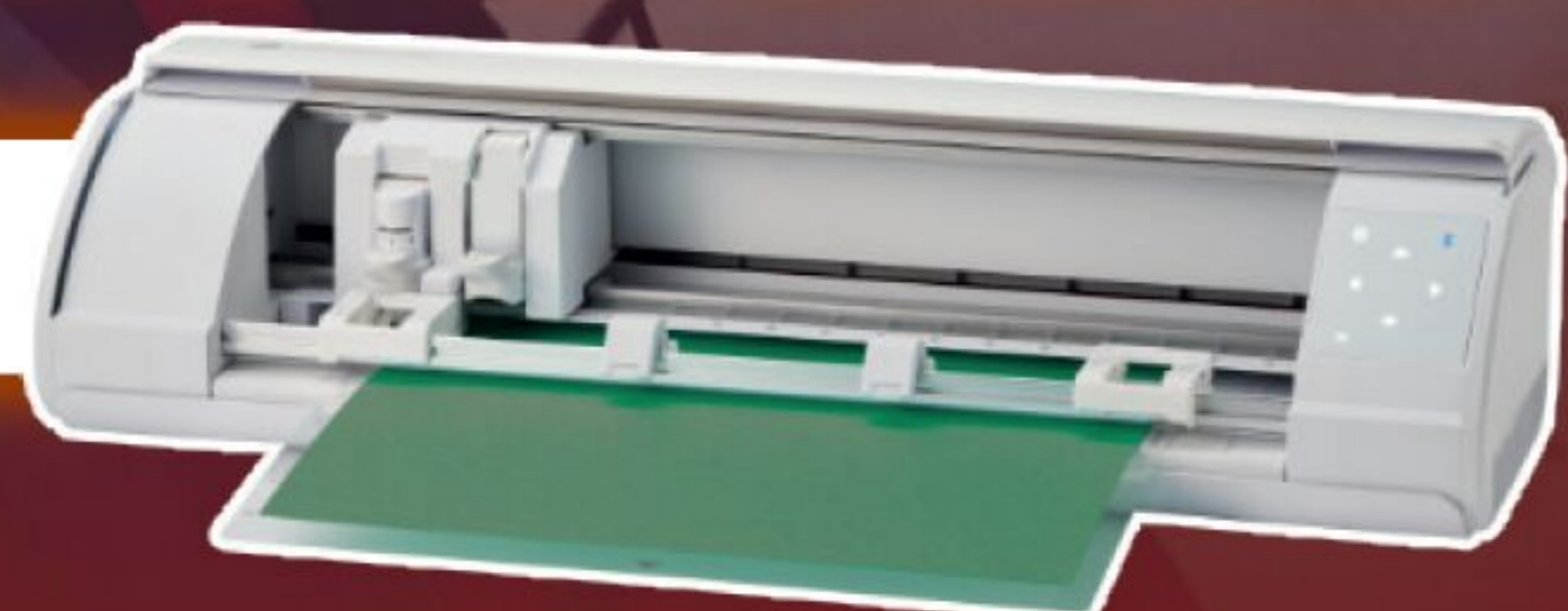


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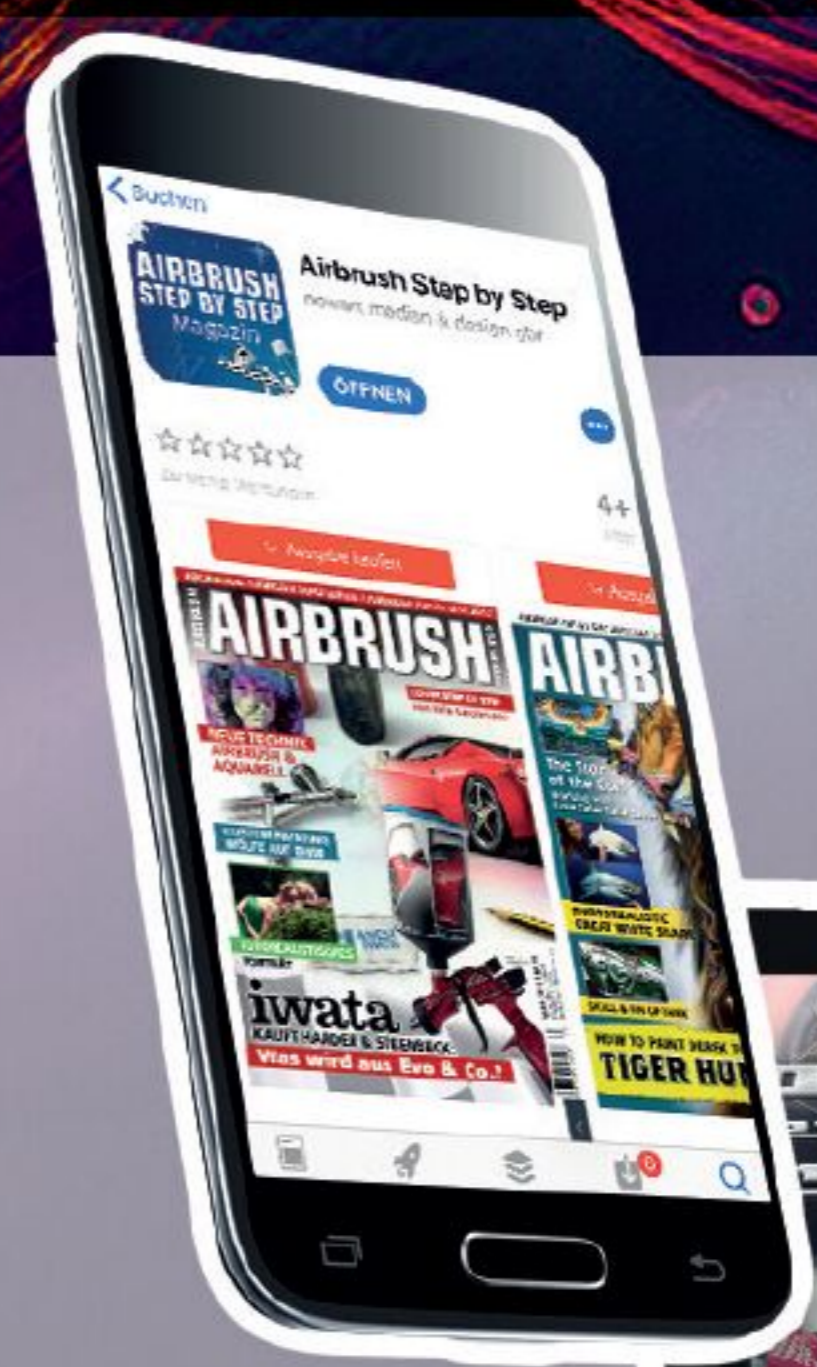
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Masks & stencils: Creative tools or beginner's stuff?

There are many preconceptions about working with masks and stencils: "Only beginners work with stencils! Art works created with masks look angular and unrealistic! Airbrush designs created with stencils is quick and cheap!"



Yes, stencils make work easier for beginners and provide them with quick, attractive results. It is also true that masks and stencils speed up the work. This is precisely why professionals also use stencils and masks, for example, when it comes to custom painting jobs. However, stencils and masks also provide them with valuable textures, repetitive patterns, and create sharp edges where they are needed. Ultimately, the difference in quality lies in the integration of the masking work: Are the textures and edges softly embedded into the design by freehand work,

or do they remain on the surface like a cut-out shape? This is what distinguishes the masking technique of a professional from that of a beginner.

This issue showcases five very different working methods and works, all of which were created with the help of masks and stencils: Daniela Frongia benefited from the masking technique in the design of her Cyborg Girl, especially in terms of the technical elements, but also managed to paint the soft, human facial features. For Lorena Straffi, the masking technique is a great help with her small scale painting on a Zippo lighter, and in delivering an efficient and realistic work to her customer. In Carsten Kleinbongard's motorcycle design, stencil work is a stylistic device: graphic decorative lines and patterns complement the figurative knight art work on the tank. When working with the Lumilor electroluminescent coating system as shown by US airbrush retailer David Monnig in his helmet tutorial, masking is the central design element for separating light and dark areas.

A real "helper" in this issue is the large cutting plotter overview. What devices are available, how do they differ, how are they operated? The article answers these and other questions in a clear, practical, and concise manner – and, of course, specifically from the perspective of and for airbrush artists. The second special is showing American skateboard art from the USA: In December 2025, the American airbrush retailer Coast Airbrush held the Skate Deck Paint Contest – we present the winners, their boards, and materials in this issue.

We hope that this issue will dispel some of the "masking myths" mentioned above and inspire you – whether you are a professional or a beginner – to experiment creatively with any technique.

We wish you a creative spring season!

Your Airbrush Step by Step Team

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Sagola XTech200: Airbrush made in Spain

Sagola airbrush equipment from Spain has been on the market for several years. However, it is not very well known in Central Europe. That's why we were so excited to have the opportunity to meet the Sagola team and see their equipment at the Fantasy Art of Airbrush Show in Grefrath in 2025. Airbrush devices from Spain – naturally, we were curious to see what to expect from European airbrush production, which is otherwise only found in Germany. Sagola has been around for 65 years and is best known for its paint spray guns. So it stands to reason that the company also has airbrush devices in its portfolio. We tested the XTech200 model with a 0.2 mm plug nozzle for you.

The XTech200 is delivered in a sturdy plastic box, encased in a stylish cardboard sleeve. In addition to the airbrush, the scope of delivery includes a key tool for unscrewing the air cap, a pipette, and a hose connector. The manual for the device can be found online on the manufacturer's website. Also enclosed is the unusually large protective cap, which can also be used as a bubble cap.

We connected a suitable 1/8" plug nipple from the airbrush accessories to connect the device to a quick coupling. Alternatively, the device can also be connected directly to a hose with a screw connection. The double-action flow system has a 1.5 ml cup, a red anodized aluminum needle protection cap, and a red anodized aluminum handle, which also serves as a design element. To limit the needle, the handle has a matte silver screw at the end, which looks very stylish.

The self-centering nozzle, which is quite large in volume with a diameter of 0.2 mm, can be quickly removed and easily cleaned with the included tool. The nozzle has a Teflon seal that fits tightly – but you should be careful not to lose it when cleaning. The needle tip is already very well polished, so the paint does not dry so quickly on the needle tip.

The XTech200 is quite light at 70 grams thanks to its aluminum handle and fits comfortably in the hand. The rounded wedge-shaped lever works well, is easy to pull back, and makes working with the device very pleasant. The spray pattern is typical





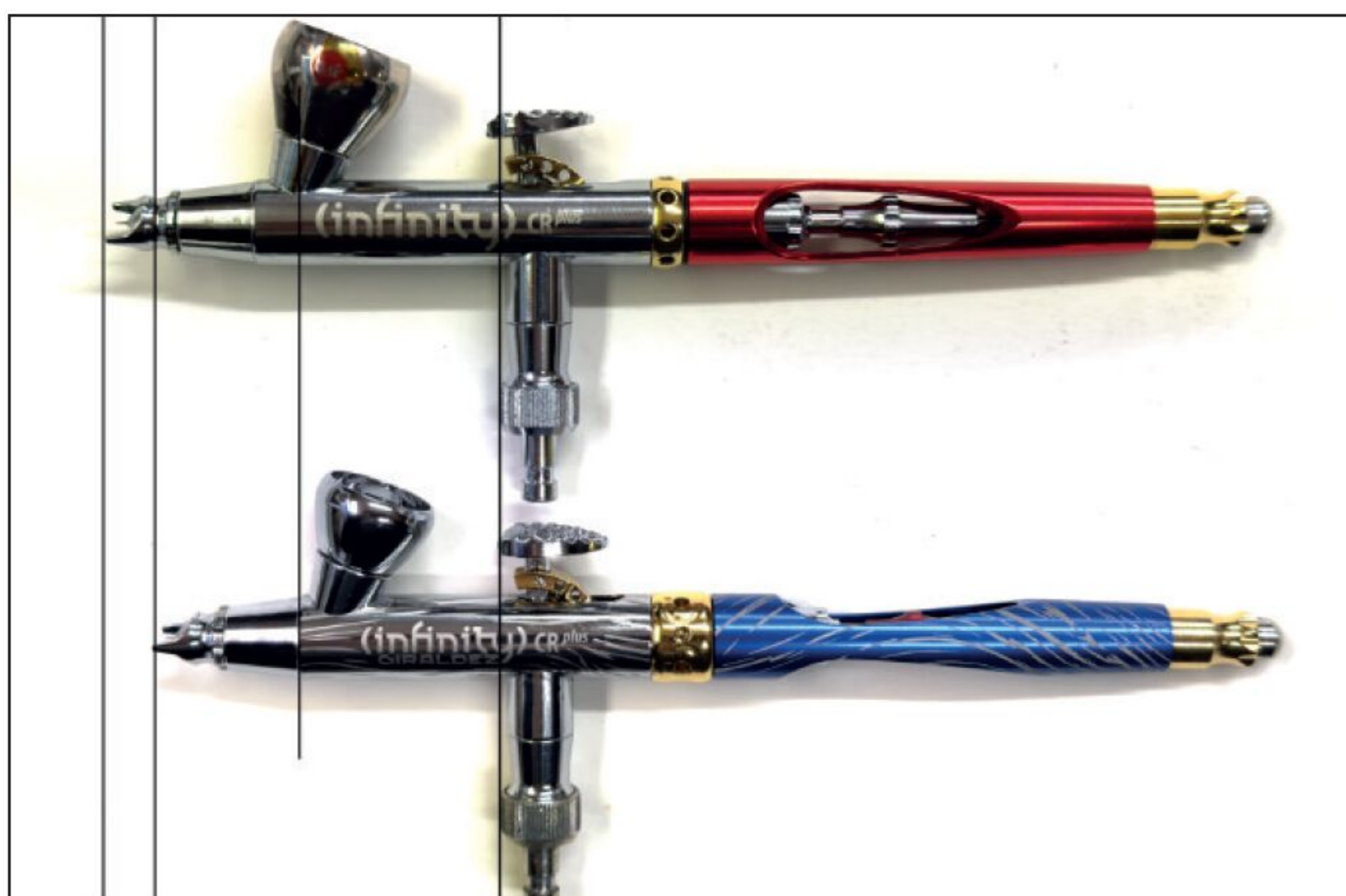
Harder & Steenbeck Giraldez Infinity 2024 CRplus MkII: Technology pioneer for maximum precision

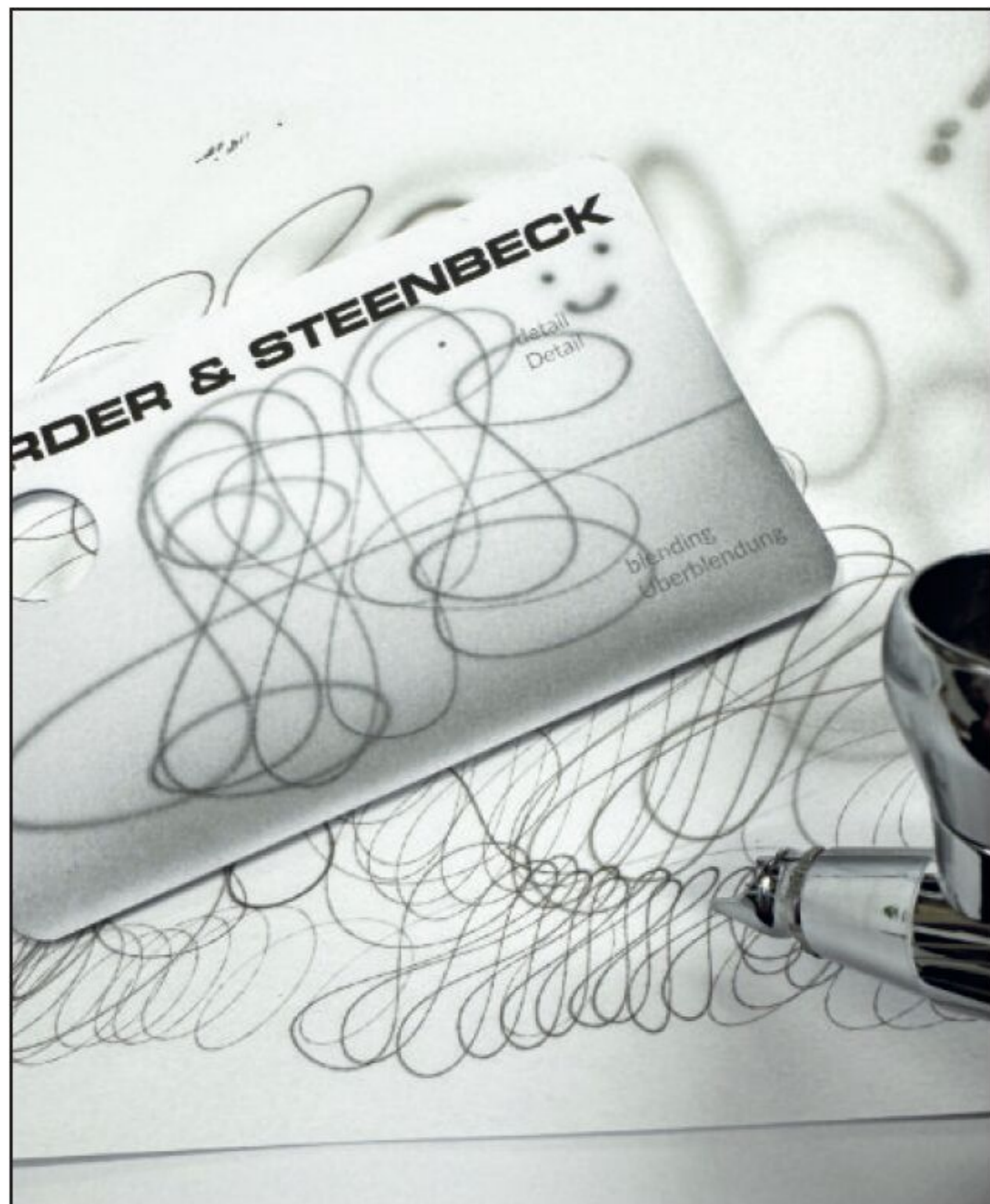
The well-known airbrush manufacturer Harder & Steenbeck is also located in northern Germany, about an hour away from our editorial office. So we decided to pick up the new Giraldez Infinity 2024 CRplus MkII directly on site and get first-hand information about the changes to the device. Talking to the manufacturing team, it becomes clear just how much heart and soul, passion, and technical expertise goes into Harder & Steenbeck. Many innovations make the new Giraldez not just a new version, but also a technology pioneer, as the revisions, research, and development will also be incorporated into the other current models in the future.

Anyone who thinks that the Infinity 2024 with titanium nozzle is the end of the line in terms of development and optimization has not yet seen the Giraldez. Harder & Steenbeck has gone

one step further and revised the device in several areas. While the first version of the Giraldez Infinity was designed specifically for tabletop painters, the new version is clearly intended for all users who value the highest level of detail. This applies not only to the smallest figures, but also to classic fine art illustration. Visually, the current Giraldez Infinity is still based on the previous model. The housing and handle in particular are laser-engraved with dynamic wave patterns, and the colors gold, blue, and red play a role once again.

As usual, the device is delivered in a black plastic case with a cardboard slipcase. On the back of the packaging, you can see all the features at a glance – and there are quite a few by now. The box also contains a demo card with a test spray pattern produced with the same airbrush device. It looks extremely





fine, and we will of course check during the test whether it is possible to achieve the same or perhaps even finer results. The important thing about the demo card is that it shows the user that the device works and gives them an idea of what the spray pattern should look like. Once again, for anyone who is in doubt: the spray pattern on the card is real and was sprayed with the same device that comes in the packaging! Included is a micro paint cup, which is a 2 ml paint cup with a lid that is pre-installed. This time, the lid is not laser-engraved with a large "G." Also included is the pre-installed plug nipple for quick couplings, three sketching caps, and the tool for properly unscrewing the gold-colored center piece.

According to the manufacturer, the Giraldez Infinity 2024 CRplus MkII is the most precise and artist-oriented airbrush Harder & Steenbeck has ever produced—and this was confirmed in our test. It combines all the internal technology of the Infinity 2024 with the ergonomics and control philosophy refined in collaboration with Spanish miniature artist Angel Giraldez. The innovation lies in the next-gen 0.25 mm stainless steel SuperFine Head system and the titanium nozzle system. This gives the Giraldez superior atomization, exceptional durability, and unparalleled control at any working pressure—meaning outstanding control and atomization even at low working pressures. This is clearly visible: the air cap is milled from stainless steel and not chrome-plated as usual. This allows Harder & Steenbeck to manufacture the air cap with even greater precision,



and the user benefits from optimized atomization of their paint. Incidentally, this new air cap also fits the other Harder & Steenbeck models. The titanium nozzle, already familiar from the Infinity 2024 model, has also been slightly redesigned and is not only found in the new Giraldez, but is now installed as standard in all Infinity models.

It may not be immediately noticeable, but the new version is 4.8 mm shorter at the front than the Infinity 2024. This brings the user even closer to the painting surface and provides noticeably finer micro-control. To achieve this, the distance between the lever and the paint cup has been reduced slightly. It is still sufficient to work comfortably with the 2 ml cup. With the included mini cup, this is not a problem anyway. The much-discussed acupressure lever also contributes to optimized control. It now has a slightly softer surface structure, but above all, it is more perpendicular to the device, further shortening the lever travel and response.

Proven components such as the "Quick Fix" for precise adjustment of the ink volume limit, the Fine Line cap for quick removal of tip dry, and the wheel for individual adjustment of the spring pressure are of course still included, positioning the device among the top ranks of high-end devices. Conclusion: the new Giraldez offers maximum precision, improved ergonomics, a smoother trigger feel, and absolute confidence in detailed work—developed for artists in all fields who demand total control and want to work with extreme precision.

The Giraldez Infinity 2024 CRplus MkII is available for €255.88 from the manufacturer or specialist retailers.

www.harderairbrush.com



LumiLor: Sprayable light design for any object

LumiLor is an electroluminescent coating system which allows anything coated with it to function as a light. Electroluminescence simply means that an object is capable of emitting light when an electrical current passes through it. The multi-layer, sprayable coating system consists of backplane, dielectric, LumiColor, busbar, and Conductive Top Coat collectively known as the LumiLor Stack.

Highly conductive and low resistance, Backplane supports the electrical current across the entire illuminated surface. Dielectric is applied over the backplane and under the busbar to insulate them and insure there is no burning or shorting. LumiColor is a large particle material which emits light when under power. It is currently available in white, blue, aqua, green, orange, Yellow, Violet and Pink colors which you see when LumiLor is lit. For the bus bar, backplane material is used to create a low resistance path for better distribution of electrical current. The Conductive Top Coat is a translucent conductive material which allows the electrical current to be distributed to produce light. The Encapsulating Clear or Encapsulating Top Coat is an automotive grade speed clear coat to protect from elements, contamination, and ultra-violet rays. It also encapsulates the electrical current to protect from electrical shock and provides a surface for optional top coating.

LumiLor can be applied to any non-porous substrate such as plastic, vinyl, metal, wood, fiberglass and carbon fiber. When

applied according to specifications, Lumilor is very thin with a thickness of only 4.6 mils. It stays cool to the touch even when emitting light and is flexible up to nearly 180 degrees, reliable with no filament to break. This way it will conform to any surface, any shape, producing a consistent glow over an entire surface area.

Unlit LumiLor appears as a gray hue, similar to an automotive primer. Anything placed over LumiLor will absorb a certain amount of light. Opaque top coats are used to hide the light you want to block. Transparent paints, such as pearls and candies, can be used to tint the color. The heavier a transparent top coat is applied the more light it will block. Artwork can be applied over LumiLor including airbrushing, hydrodipping, spray chrome, etc. LumiLor can last 10,000 power-on hours or more when properly applied and powered. The lighting sequence can be controlled in various ways, such as simple on or off, strobe effect, sequencing, and motion & sound activation.

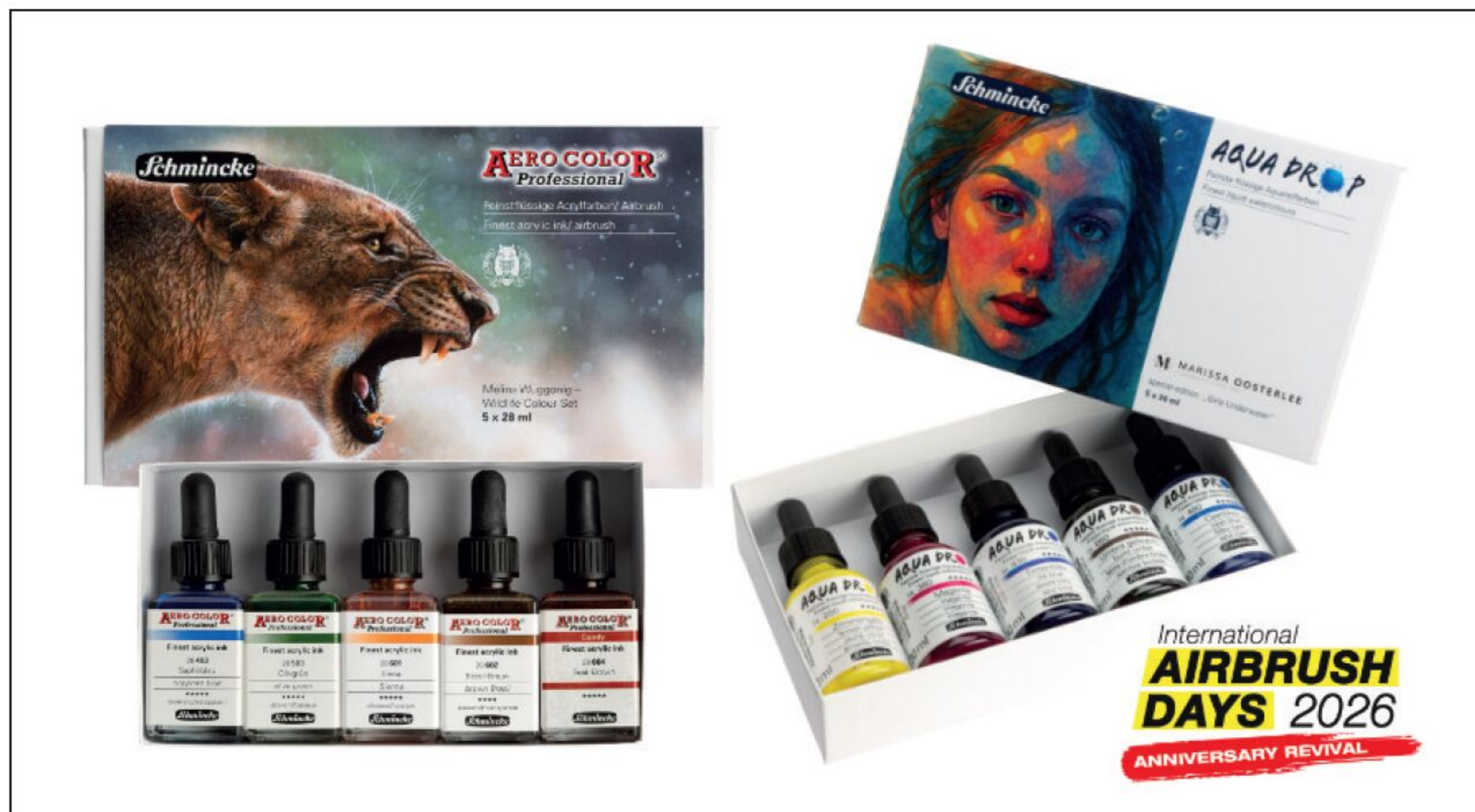
LumiLor components are available in sets and bundles as well as individual products. Starter Kits of 2 oz per component, enough to light up a panel of 4 x 10", is available as off 199 USD.

www.lumilor.com

Seen at www.coastairbrush.com



International Airbrush Days for your home: Schmincke paint sets by Marissa Oosterlee and Melina Wuggonig



for Marissa's portrait technique as they can be applied in thin, transparent layers, easily diluted, reactivated, and erased.

Melina Wuggonig's wildlife art provides the basis for the new edition of the Aero-Color Professional Cardboard Set of the same name: Natural tones such as sapphire blue, olive green, sienna, Brazil brown, and teak brown have been compiled for the Austrian artist in the set of five. The brilliant, finely fluid acrylic inks in the distinctive glass pipette bottles are the classic choice for airbrush techniques and ideal for Melina's erasing and scratching techniques on aluminum.

What an honor: Inspired by our "Team Photorealism" at the International Airbrush Days 2026, paint manufacturer Schmincke has released two paint sets: The Aqua Drop cardboard set in the Marissa Oosterlee Edition contains the five most popular colors used by the Dutch artist: lemon yellow, magenta, ink blue, burnt umber, and cyan blue. The liquid, highly lightfast, pigment-based watercolors are ready to use and ideal for spraying with an airbrush. They are particularly advantageous

Of course, both sets will also be used in the workshops by Melina Wuggonig and Marissa Oosterlee at the International Airbrush Days 2026. They can also be purchased directly from the Schmincke sponsorship team there – or now in specialist airbrush shops.

www.schmincke.de

Vallejo True Metallic Metal paints: Realistic metal look from the bottle



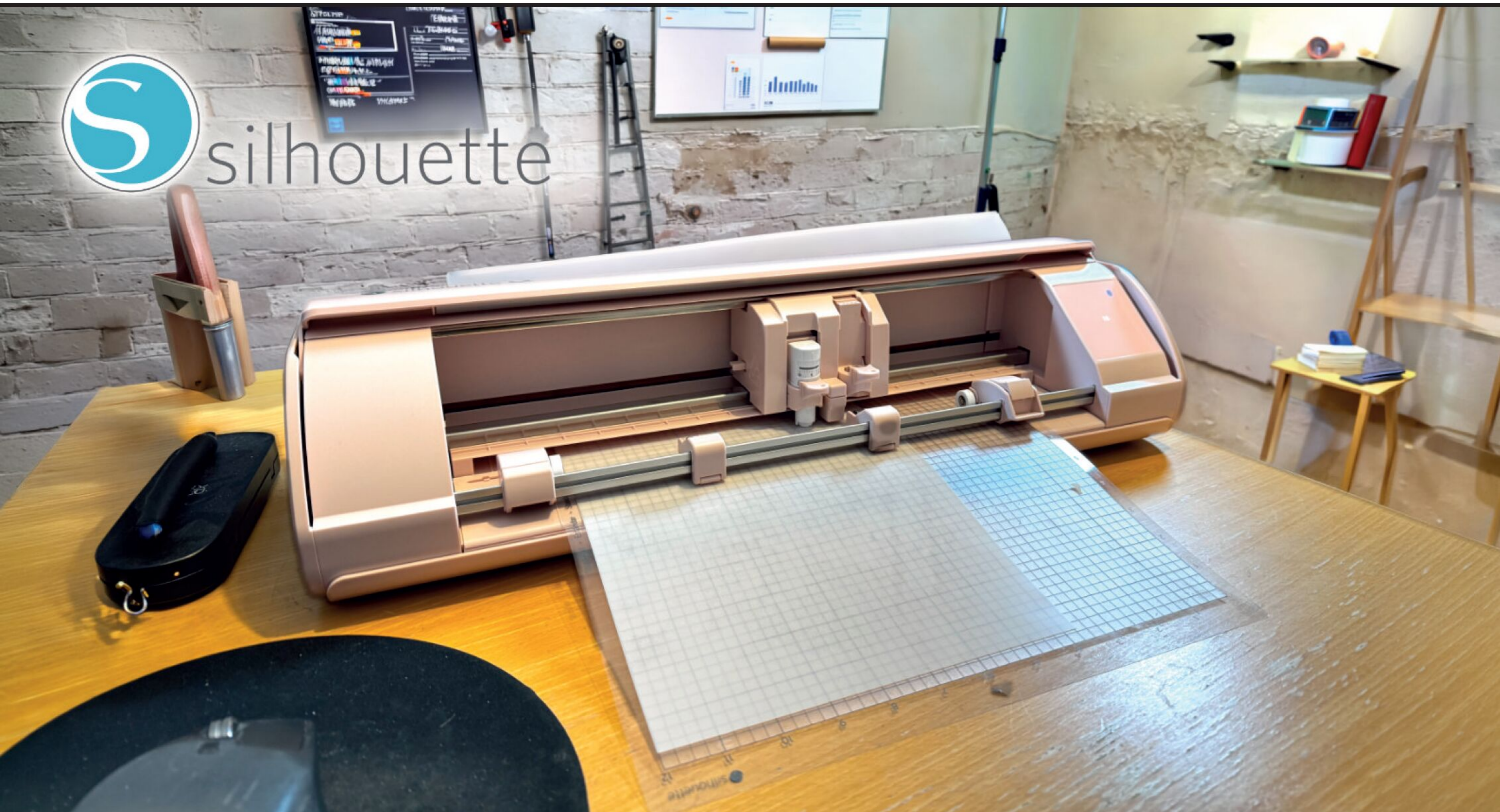
No matter what kind of gaming or model building you do, metal looks are almost always in demand, from armor and weapons to vehicle parts. But realistically depicting metal surfaces and reflections is not so easy. In most cases, the non-metallic metal technique (NMM) is used to create realistic metal imitations with conventional base colors. Model paint manufacturer Vallejo has now introduced True Metallic Metal (TMM) paints. The range covers the entire metallic color spectrum, divided into 20 chromatic families. Each family contains

4 sub-products: "Base," the main metal tone; "Light" for metallic highlights; "Shade" for non-metallic glazes; and "Airbrush," which corresponds to the main metal tone but is specially optimized for airbrush application. These color families form a unit for creating metal effects, but can also be combined and mixed with other colors. The application of the colors follows a logical and intuitive process of light, shadow, and color tone design. The base colors contain ultra-fine metal particles with strong luminosity and high coverage. The airbrush-optimized base color is designed for airbrushes with a nozzle size of 0.3 mm or larger and a working pressure of 1.8 bar. The highlight color is lighter and has more radiance, while the transparent shadow color is darker and dries to a satin finish.

The Vallejo True Metallic Metal paint range is available from specialist retailers at a price of €4.85 (RRP) per 18 ml bottle.

www.createx.de

www.acrylicosvallejo.com



Silhouette Cameo 5 Alpha: Faster, quieter, more precise

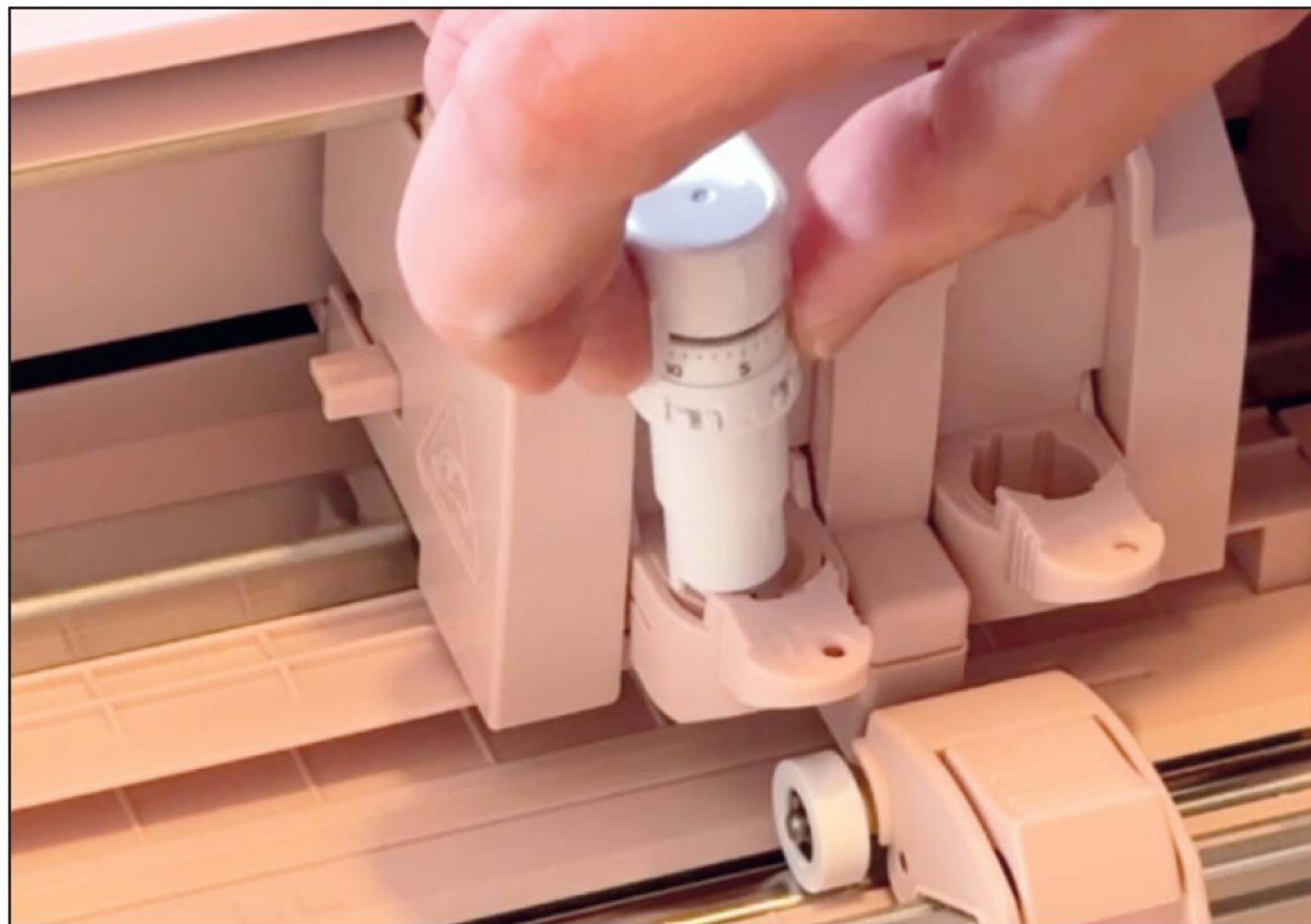
Who isn't familiar with the legendary Silhouette Cameo plotter? The Cameo is indispensable, especially for larger projects such as A3 templates. The latest model is now in its fifth generation. So it's high time to take a look at the changes and features offered by the Cameo 5 Alpha.

According to the manufacturer, the device scores with even more precision, power, and flexibility. Developed for high demands, the Cameo 5 Alpha offers partially improved stability, greater material diversity, and compatible tools for almost any creative or professional project. The device impresses with precise cuts and a cutting speed of up to 400 mm/s – that's 100 mm/s more than the previous model. Whether paper, vinyl, Mylar, fabric, cardboard, or other more specialized materials: the wide selection of different blades and tools such as hot transfer pens, pen holders, punching, embossing, and engra-

ving tools offer many possibilities for customizing and processing materials. The standard scope of delivery includes the automatic blade and a holder for manual blades. Additional tools can be purchased separately. A standard adhesive cutting mat is also included for immediate use. This works great for Mylar stencils. It is not suitable for paper, but a mat with light adhesive strength is available as an accessory.

In addition to the generally increased cutting speed, the speed of the drawing tool has also been improved and the Print & Cut function has been revised. Cutting out previously printed designs is now even more precise. Thanks to Intelligent Path Technology (IPT), the cutting order of plot jobs is calculated optimally to save time. Completed jobs can be re-executed at the touch of a button. A very positive feature is the lower plot volume compared to the previous model. Now you can place the





device on your desk and even work with it in the evening without disturbing others!

The Silhouette Cameo 5 Alpha has become more robust in some areas; for example, the timing belts for the drive are encased in metal rails. The pressure rollers are also more stable and yet easy to adjust. However, the matte housing is still a bit rickety in some places, but this does not interfere with use. Unlike its predecessor, a holder for approx. 45 euros must be retrofitted in order to plot from a roll. Also available as an accessory is an electrostatic bed on which thin materials with a thickness of up to 0.5 mm can be fixed intact and without sticking. Electrostatic adhesion prevents tears, waves, and deformations, especially when processing thin papers.

The control panel is not quite as visually appealing as that of other competitors, but it is still functional, and you don't have to reorient yourself when operating it if you have already had a device from this manufacturer. The Cameo 5 Alpha does not have drawers or storage compartments for accessories. The plotter can be controlled via a USB connection (not included) or, as is now standard, via Bluetooth. Connecting to our MacOS system was a little tricky at first, but if you follow the correct sequence, it works without any problems.

The free Silhouette Studio Basic software is available for Windows and MAC OS systems and is the most powerful and capable design software for hobby cutting systems on the market. This innovative software offers features that are normally only found in high-end design software. Silhouette Studio is intuitive, easy to use, and free for all Silhouette users in the Basic version. It is also particularly easy to automatically trace black-and-white drawings, known as vectorization, to create a template file in a matter of seconds. Additional features such as advanced import/export are available with additional upgrades that further expand the functionality of the Silhouette software. These upgrades are a one-time purchase and provide permanent access to the features without any monthly costs. In addition, the software offers 1 GB of free cloud storage. This protects your projects from data loss on your home PC/MAC.

The Silhouette Cameo 5 Alpha is available in a 12" version in various colors, starting at \$229.99. For even larger projects, you can opt for the Cameo 5 Alpha Plus with 15". This is available from around \$399.99.

www.silhouetteamerica.com

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Latest news from INTERNATIONAL AIRBRUSH DAYS 2026



By the time the next issue of AIRBRUSH STEP BY STEP magazine is published, INTERNATIONAL AIRBRUSH DAYS 2026 will already be history. A year of preparations is coming to a head. But even shortly before the end, there is still some news about this unique event:

Tickets available until April 6!



Sparmax competition live

Sparmax CEO Chia-Chi Chen and Iwata Marketing Director Brooke Cedros will announce the winners of this year's Iwata X Sparmax International Airbrush Contest live and exclusively in Hamburg on May 2. The announcement will be shared directly via video on social media.



Registration deadline extended

March 1 was actually the registration deadline for INTERNATIONAL AIRBRUSH DAYS 2026, but there are still a few last tickets available. Therefore, the registration deadline has been extended until after Easter, i.e., until Monday, April 6, or until tickets are sold out.



International participants

The registration list currently includes participants from nine different countries: Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Finland, Great Britain, Israel, and, of course, Germany. In addition, there will be sponsors and special guests flying in from the USA, the Philippines, and Taiwan.

Special guests

The list of special guests is also growing, and we are delighted to welcome our AIRBRUSH STEP BY STEP authors Ralph-Torsten Kolmer, Marcus Eisenhuth, Thomas Olczyk, and Midas Bayle Villanueva III, among others.

Unique event

Speaking of "unique": The word is used for many events and products, but for the INTERNATIONAL AIRBRUSH DAYS 2026, it is 100% accurate. Unlike, for example, the Fantasy World of Airbrush or other workshop offerings, the INTERNATIONAL AIRBRUSH DAYS 2026 will certainly not take place every year, and probably not even in the next 2-3 years. After all, a 20th anniversary only comes around once. Furthermore, this event is extremely complex and costly to organize – especially for a

two-person publishing house – and would not be possible without the support of sponsors and numerous helpers on site.

So, take advantage of this last chance to get a ticket. We look forward to celebrating our 20th anniversary with you!

www.airbrush-days.com

Preliminary agenda

	Team „Photorealism“ Wuggonig/Oosterlee Girl power sponsored by Sparmax and Schmincke	Team „Custom & Fantasy“ Fuchs/MacKay The US professional team sponsored by Iwata and Createx	Team „Freehand Creativity“ Dmytrenko/Naylor Freehand precision sponsored by Harder & Steenbeck	Sponsors' Expo / Students Gallery Consultation /Shopping from the sponsors Exhibition of students' artworks
FRIDAY, May 1, 2026	11.00 a.m. (optional) Harder & Steenbeck Factory Tour Exclusive factory tour with General Manager Warrick Smith Individual arrival: Harder & Steenbeck GmbH & Co. KG, Hans-Böckler-Ring 37, 22851 Norderstedt			
	From 2 p.m. Meet & Greet Demos Meet the artists, stroll from one to the next, look over their shoulders and strike up a conversation.			Arrival of participants, welcome
	Realistic wildlife art by Melina Wuggonig	Scott MacKay's Custom Painting Freehand Art	David Naylor's Micro Airbrushing Techniques	Opening of the Sponsors' Expo, the mini trade fair for sponsors
	Photorealistic portraits by Marissa Oosterlee	Rod Fuchs' fantasy creatures	The fantasy art of Anzhela Dmytrenko	Set-up of the Students' Gallery with students' artworks
	4.00 - 5.30 p.m. Demo Melina Wuggonig Wildlife textures and techniques	Rod Fuchs Airbrushing on skateboard decks	Anzhela Dmytrenko Professional tips on mural design	
From 5.30 p.m. Anniversary Party We are celebrating 20 years of AIRBRUSH STEP BY STEP magazine with you, with delicious food on us, drinks and pleasant conversations with participants, artists, sponsors and special guests.				
SATURDAY, May 2, 2026	9.00 a.m. - 1 p.m. Workshop Marissa Oosterlee Photorealistic portrait techniques	Scott MacKay Custom Painting Classics: Graphics & Flames	Anzhela Dymtrenko Anzhela's Freehand Lace Technique	
	1.00 p.m. - 2.00 p.m. Lunch break. Snack selection Announcement of Iwata X Sparmax International Airbrush Competition with Anest Iwata Sparmax president Chia-Chi Chen			Sponsors' Expo Students Gallery
	2.00 - 6.00 p.m. Workshop Melina Wuggonig Wildlife Essentials: Eyes and Fur	Rod Fuchs Custom Painting Creature Design	David Naylor Introduction to the micro freehand airbrush technique	
	6.00 - 6.30 p.m. Evening break Snack selection			Sponsors' Expo Students Gallery
	6.30 - 8.00 p.m. Demo Marissa Oosterlee Mixing, perceiving and comparing colours	Scott MacKay Preparing designs with PenDisplay and plotter	David Naylor Technical questions about airbrushing	Sponsors' Expo Students Gallery
SUNDAY, May 3, 2026	9.00 a.m. - 1 p.m. Workshop Marissa Oosterlee More than just airbrushing: working with mixed media	Scott MacKay Develop your own fantasy designs for custom painting	Anzhela Dymtrenko Dream Tree: Fantastic Nature Illustration	
	1.00 p.m. - 2.00 p.m. Lunch break. Snack selection International Airbrush Days Award. We will award a prize for the best artwork in the students' exhibition.			Sponsors' Expo Students Gallery
	2.00 - 6.00 p.m. Workshop Melina Wuggonig Light and airy: realistic plumage	Rod Fuchs Skulls - from sketch to design	David Naylor Airbrush freehand techniques in color	
MONDAY, May 4, 2026	9.00 a.m. (optional) Harder & Steenbeck Factory Tour Exclusive factory tour with General Manager Warrick Smith Individual arrival: Harder & Steenbeck GmbH & Co. KG, Hans-Böckler-Ring 37, 22851 Norderstedt			





LUMILOR MONSTER HELMET

Illuminating airbrush designs – that’s the power of the Lumilor electroluminescent coating system. Using a helmet, Lumilor instructor and Coast Airbrush owner David Monnig demonstrates how it

works. The „electrified“ paint, combined with House of Kolor neon colors and pearls, gives the Monster brand a sophisticated yet unmistakable design.

EQUIPMENT – LUMILOR MONSTER HELMET

Airbrush: Iwata Eclipse HP-CS, Iwata LPH80 (1.2/E4) / LPH400LV(1.3)

Paints: Lumilor 4oz Bundle Kit. House of Kolor: Wax & Grease Remover, S2-02 Celestial White, NE508 - Neon Chartreuse, HOK0035 Kosmatic Pearl Green, S2-00 Karrier,

KK09 Kandy Green, S2-25 Jet Black Base, S2-26 White Base, RU311 Medium Reducer, UC21 Clear Coat.

Further materials: Scotch Brite Abrasive Pad, Spraylat Liquid Mask, Coast Vinyl Mask, FBS Mask & Tapes, JB Weld.

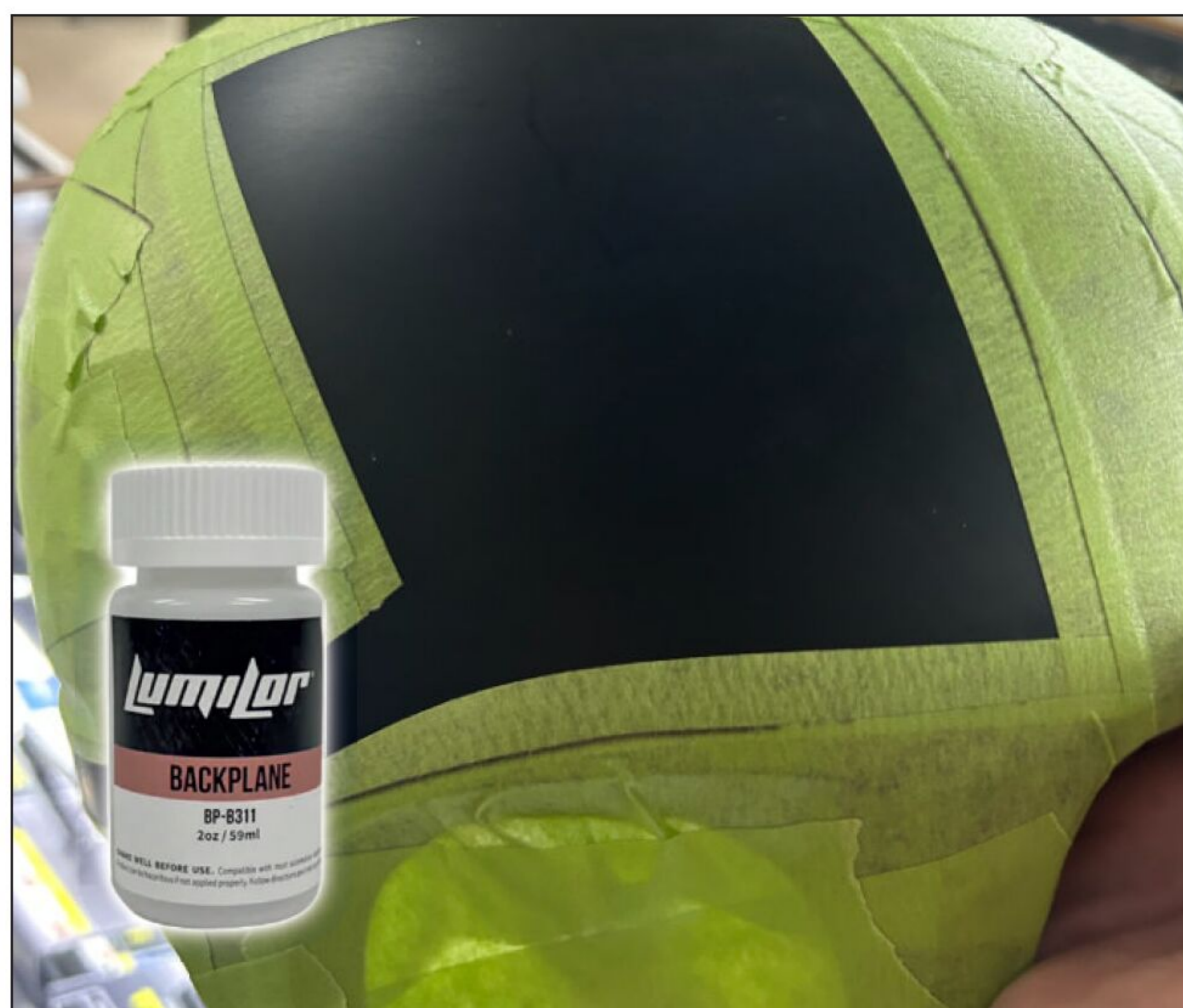
01 Helmet Prep

Stock finish of the helmet is matte black. Prep and scuff the surface using a red Scotch-Brite pad, then pre-clean it with wax & grease remover / degreaser.



02 Backplane Layout and Coating

Identify and mask the backplane area. This is the section that will light up. Apply 3 wet coats of Lumilor Backplane with 10 minutes flash between coats.



03 Conductivity Test

After removing the masking, test the backplane conductivity with a multimeter. Target 12 ohms edge-to-edge. Make sure the painted area is completely dry before testing.



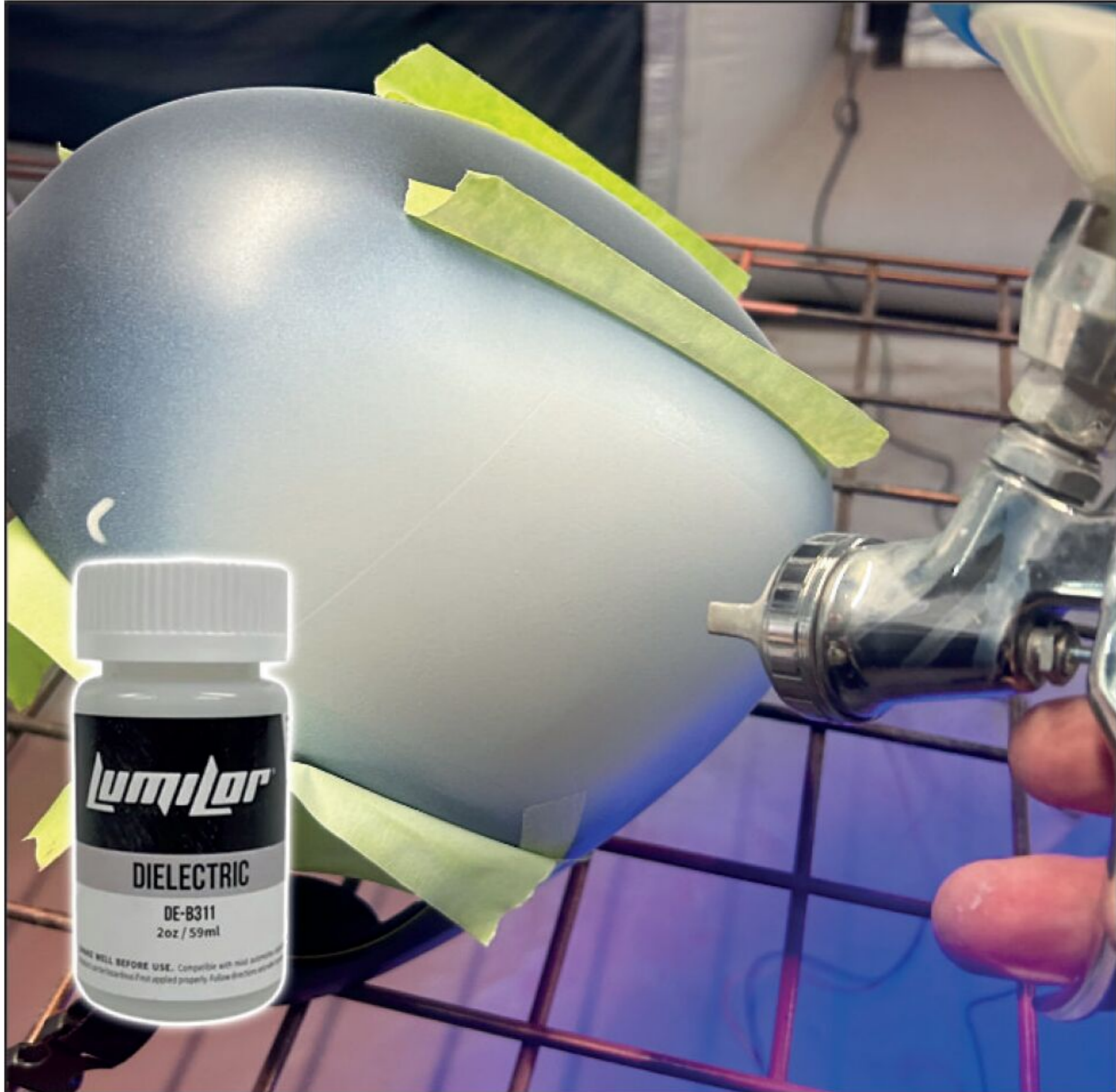
Using a plastic razor blade, take off the edge to make sure it won't poke through the following Dielectric Insulator layer.



See video for tips!

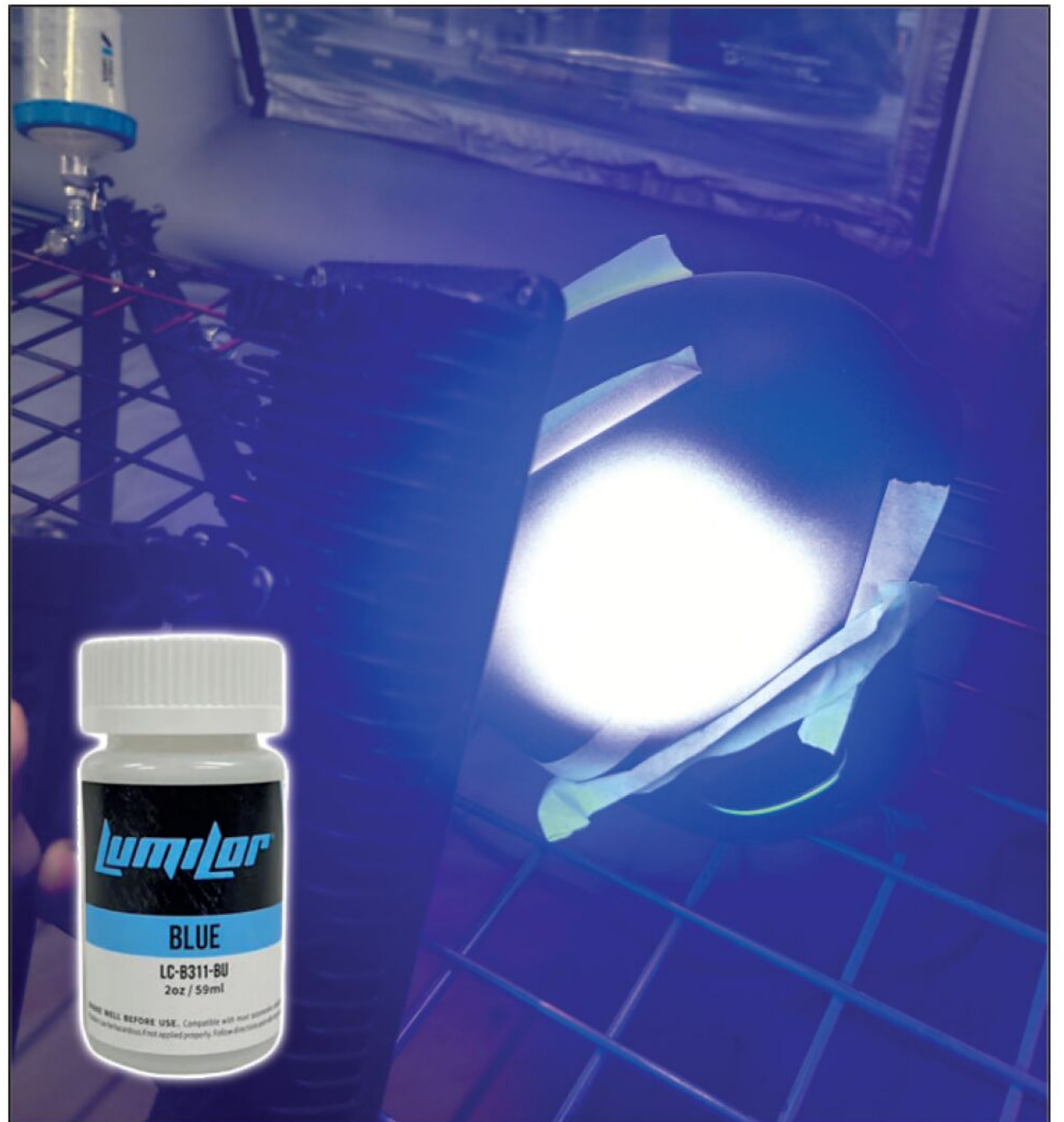
04 Dielectric Insulator Application

Spray 3 wet coats of the Dielectric Insulator with 10 minutes flash between coats. This is the insulation coat, much like a wires outer casing. Allow the spray mist to spread generously over the edge of the backplane surface to ensure that the entire area is covered.



05 Spraying Lumilor

Spray 3 wet, even coats of Lumicolor White with 10 minutes flash between coats. Use fine atomization. Check for even coverage using a UV (black) light.



06 Bus bar Application

Mask the backplane / design area and apply the liquid bus bar using backplane material, outside the perimeter of the backplane. Important: Bus bar must cover approximately 1/3 of the lit surface area for proper power transmission.



It should never overlap the backplane / design area. Apply 3 wet, even coats of Backplane with 10 minutes flash between coats. Once cured, confirm with multimeter, target up to 24 ohms.



1. Try to surround the backplane with the Bus Bar.

2. The area of the Bus Bar should equal 1/3 of the surface area of the Backplane.

See video for tips!



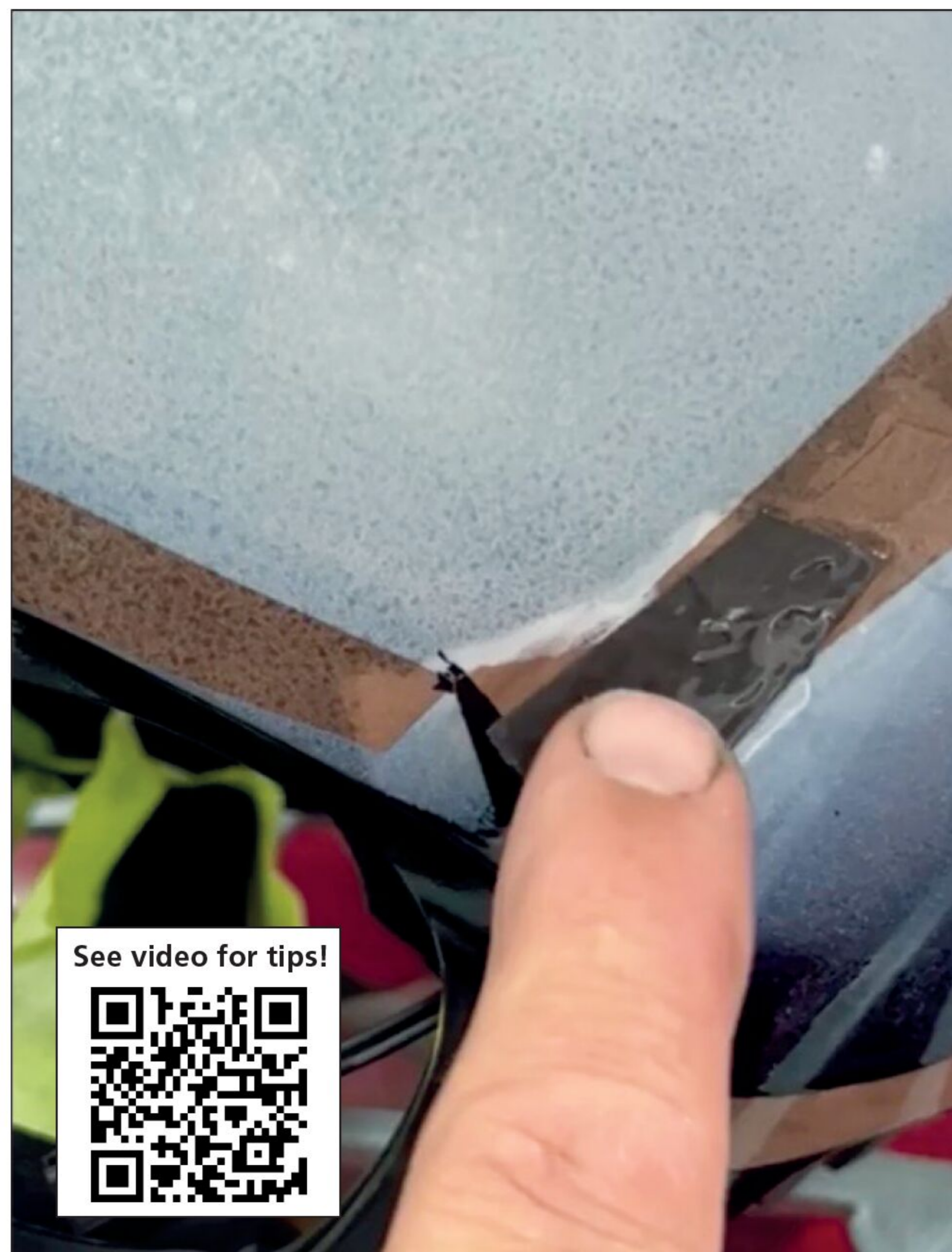
07 Conductive Clear and Wire Connection

Before applying conductive clear, ensure the backplane terminal is masked off. Conductive clear cannot contact this area. It only needs to be applied over the illuminated area and bus bar. Apply 3 wet, even coats of conductive clear. Remove masking, then connect wire leads to the backplane and bus bar terminals.



08 Sealing Wires

Use JB Weld to secure and seal the dried wire leads.



09 Transparent Neon and Shading

I am mixing the neon with transparent Celestial White from House of Kolor as a clean-up of the grayish-blue area that I would normally get from Lumilor. Then spray the transparent neon to get a nice rich, but translucent neon. Also, spray over the rest of the helmet in a cloudy manner as

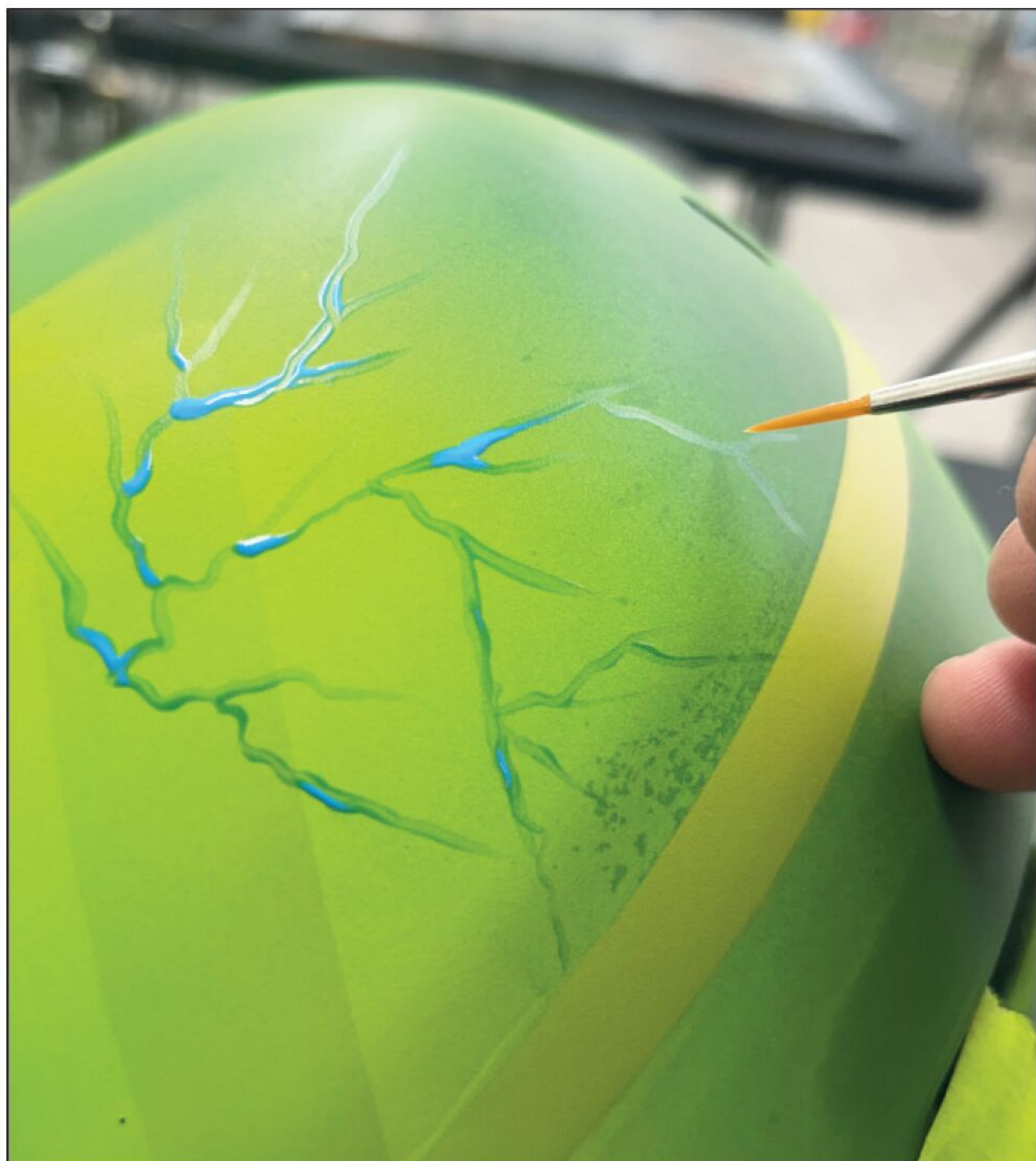
a basis for further design elements. Next mask the M sign on the Lumilor field and shade the inner contours using HOK KK09 Organic Green. This allows the light to brighten the neon and glow through.



10 Liquid Mask Effects

Use the positive mask of the M logo to cover the design. Apply liquid mask by brushing it on and allowing it to

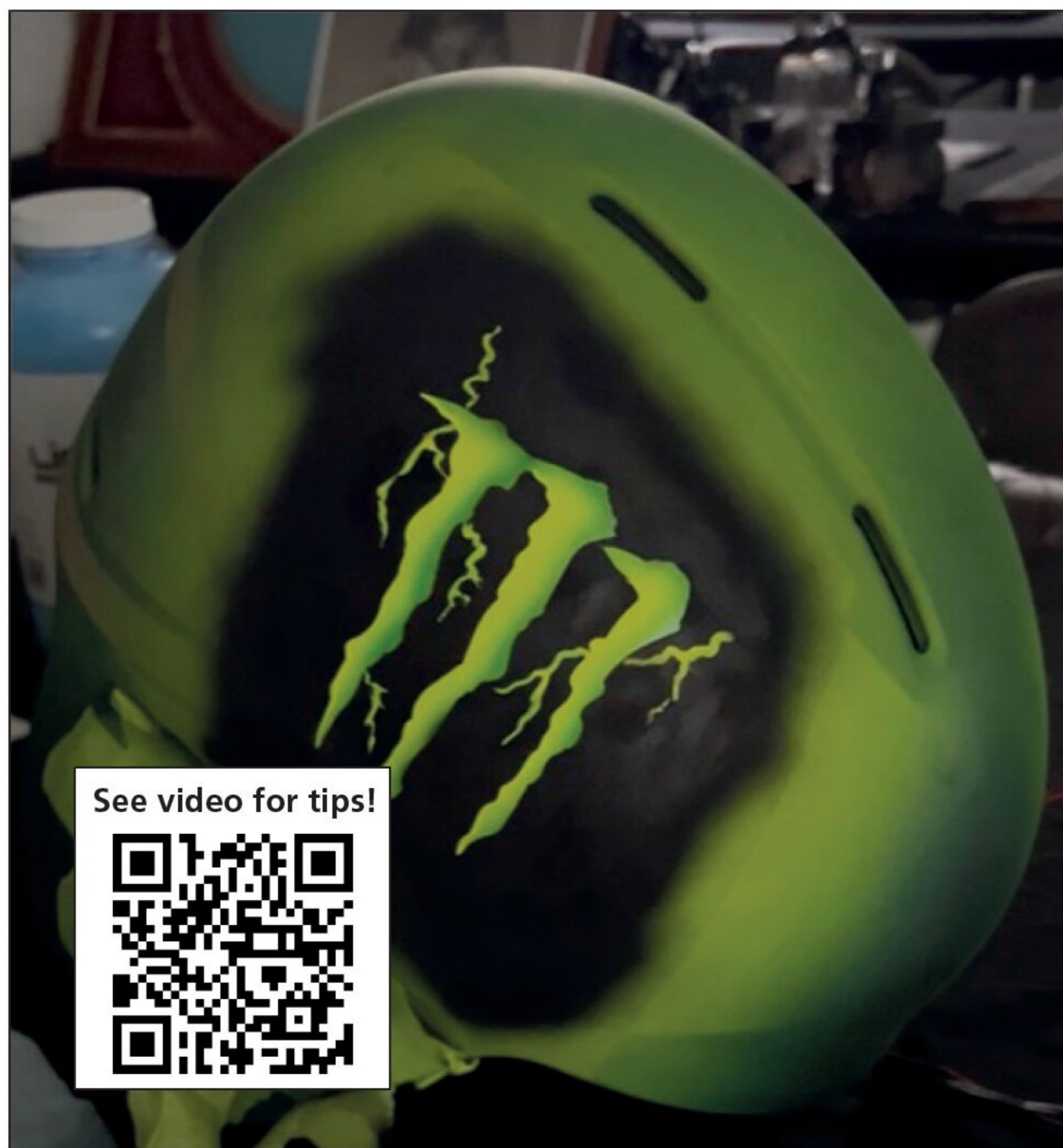
dry to create a lightning effect. Spray some Organic green around the liquid mask lightning.



11 Backlight Block-Out

Paint the unmasked areas in Deep Black HOK S2-25 to fully block unwanted light and color. Try to leave a little bit

of glow around the logo and the lightning. Toggle Lumilor on/off to confirm complete block-out.



12 Monster Logo Application

Apply the Monster logo on the rear using a vinyl mask and HOK Neon Green to match logo color. Consider lay-

ing down the outline and the positive of the letters separately to get the outlined font characteristic.



13 Finishing Black color

The rest of the helmet is now covered in black, showing the finished M sign as well as the Monster logo on the rear.

14 Mini "M" Logo Masking

Mask the mini "M" logo with a vinyl mask for a ghosted pearl effect using HOK Shimrin 2 Pearl.



15 Pearl FX Mix and Spray

Mask off the helmet completely between and around the Mini M Logo masks to keep it from overspray. Mix HOK Green Pearl FX with S2-00 + FX35 Styling Pearl at a ratio of 48:1, then reduce with RU311 at 1:1. Spray test/sample first to confirm the desired effect.



16 Final Clear and Cure

To finish apply top coat with HOK UC21 Clear Coat and allow to cure 24+ hours.



17 Light on!

Hard to catch the Lumilor effect in the magazine, but don't miss to see the light effect in the video!



DAVID MONNIG



David Monnig is the owner of Coast Airbrush, a cornerstone of the custom paint industry founded in 1989 in Anaheim, California. After its early years under founder Frank Monnig, David took over the business and guided it through its evolution into a globally respected hub for professional custom paint, education, and technical innovation. Today, Coast Airbrush specializes in the manufacturing, training, and distribution of high-end airbrush and spray equipment and materials, supporting artists across automotive, motorcycle, commercial, theatrical, themed entertainment, and fine art disciplines. David remains closely involved in technical development, product testing, and real-world workflow refinement. Education is central to his mission, with Coast Airbrush hosting workshops, classes, and collaborative events led by respected artists from around the world. Coast Airbrush is also widely known for fostering custom paint culture through long-running industry events such as the Airbrush Rendezvous, as well as through media and documentary projects that highlight the artists, techniques, and history behind the craft.

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MOLLY HATCHET CHOPPER

For the paint design of his restored 1981 AME Chopper, Carsten Kleinbongard's customer chose the legendary debut album cover of the band Molly Hatchet from 1978. The cover features the equally world-famous fantasy illustration "Death Dealer" by American artist Frank Frazetta from

1973. Carsten Kleinbongard harmoniously integrates the artwork into a yellow and red metallic flake bike design with shiny, dark contoured decorative lines and subtle graphic effects.

EQUIPMENT – MOLLY HATCHET CHOPPER

Airbrush: Paasche Turbo, various double action airbrushes with large nozzle diameter

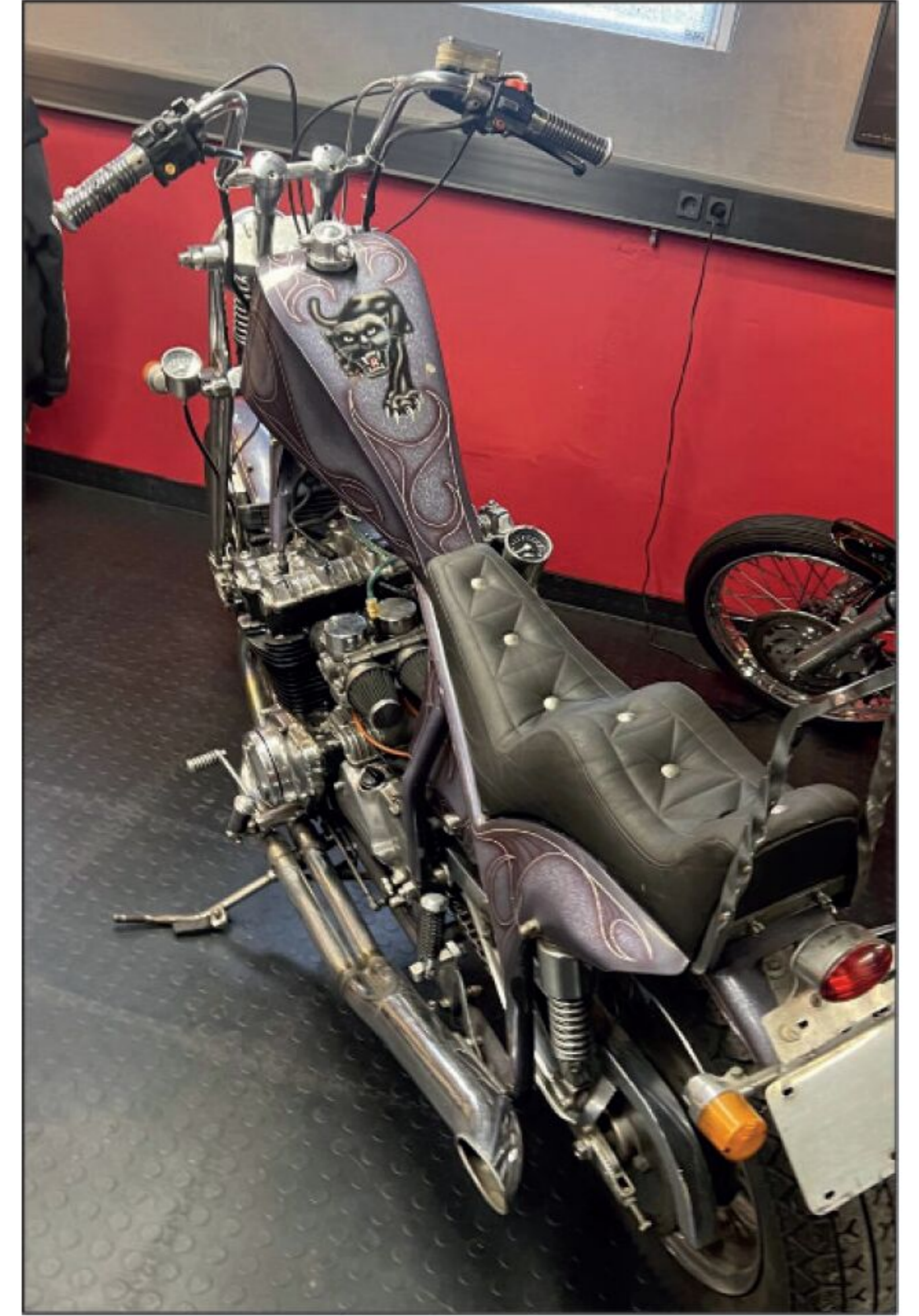
Other materials: 3M lining tape, coarse metal flakes

Paints: Createx Candy20, Schmincke Aero-Color

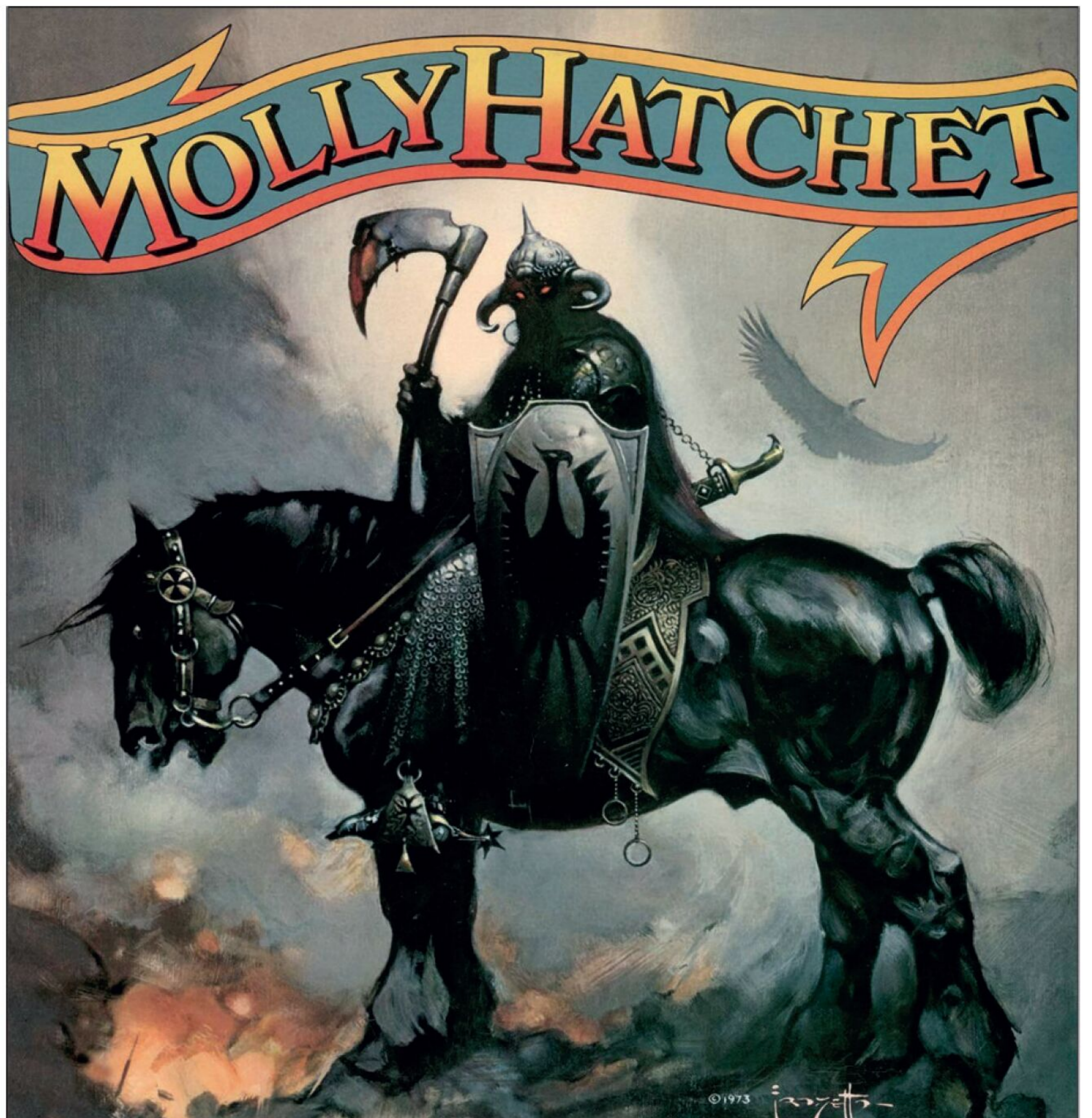
Base: AME Chopper SC 900, built in 1981

01 The project

After a long break from artistic work, I once again had the opportunity to give a friend's custom bike a new paint design. He had bought an old chopper in need of restoration and decided to give this motorcycle a new lease of life in the style of the 1970s/80s. For those interested: this is an AME Chopper SC 900 built in 1981 with an 85 hp Honda Boldor 900 engine.

**02** The design

He asked me to come up with a coherent concept for the paint design using motifs typical of choppers of that era, e.g., by Boris Vallejo, or images based on album covers by Iron Maiden or Molly Hatchet. The choice finally fell on a motif from a Molly Hatchet album cover. I roughly sketched the design of the lines and shapes on the paintable surfaces in a sketchbook and constantly adapted it to the motorcycle during the design process.



03 Metal flake base

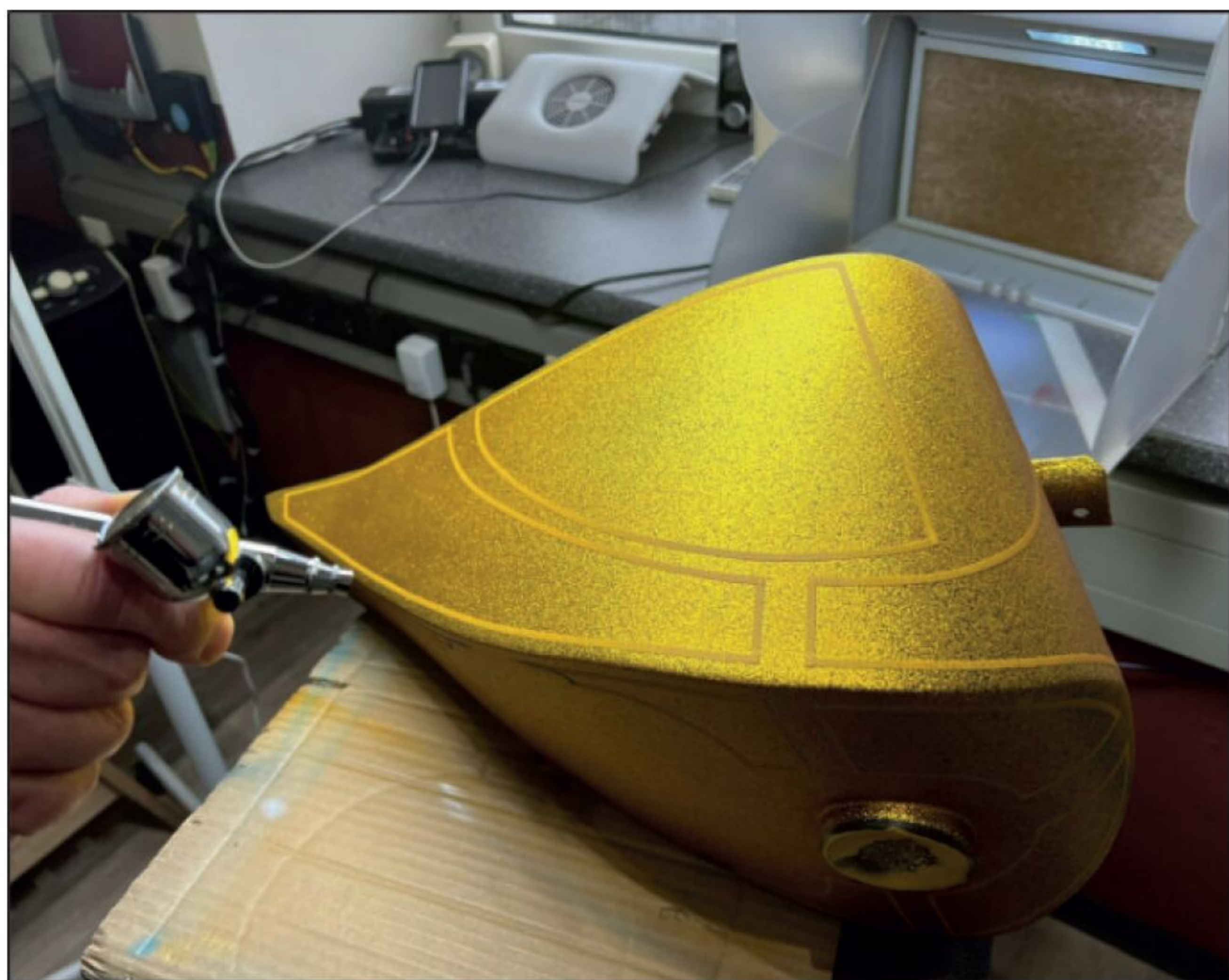
The surfaces I worked on were prepared with metal flake on black paint. I had this base coat with metal flakes

applied at a paint shop.



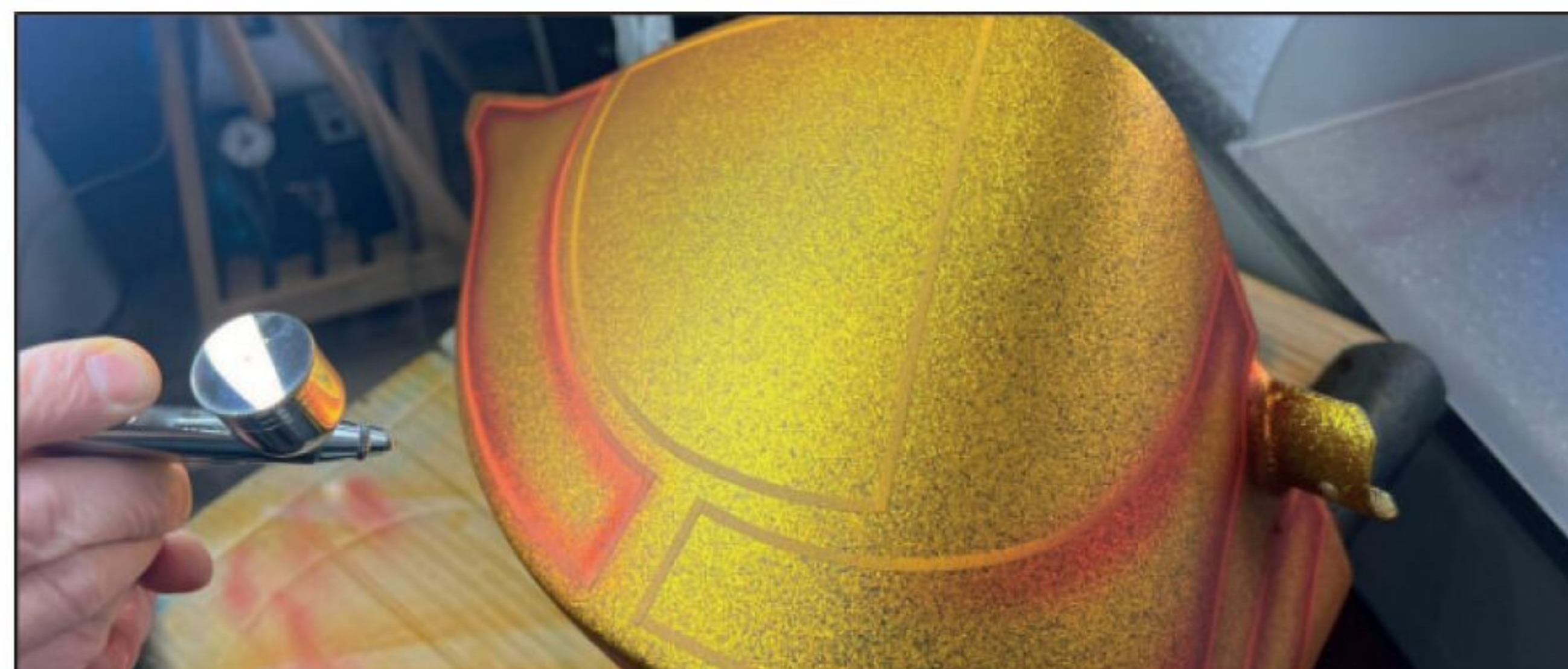
04 Lines and candy yellow

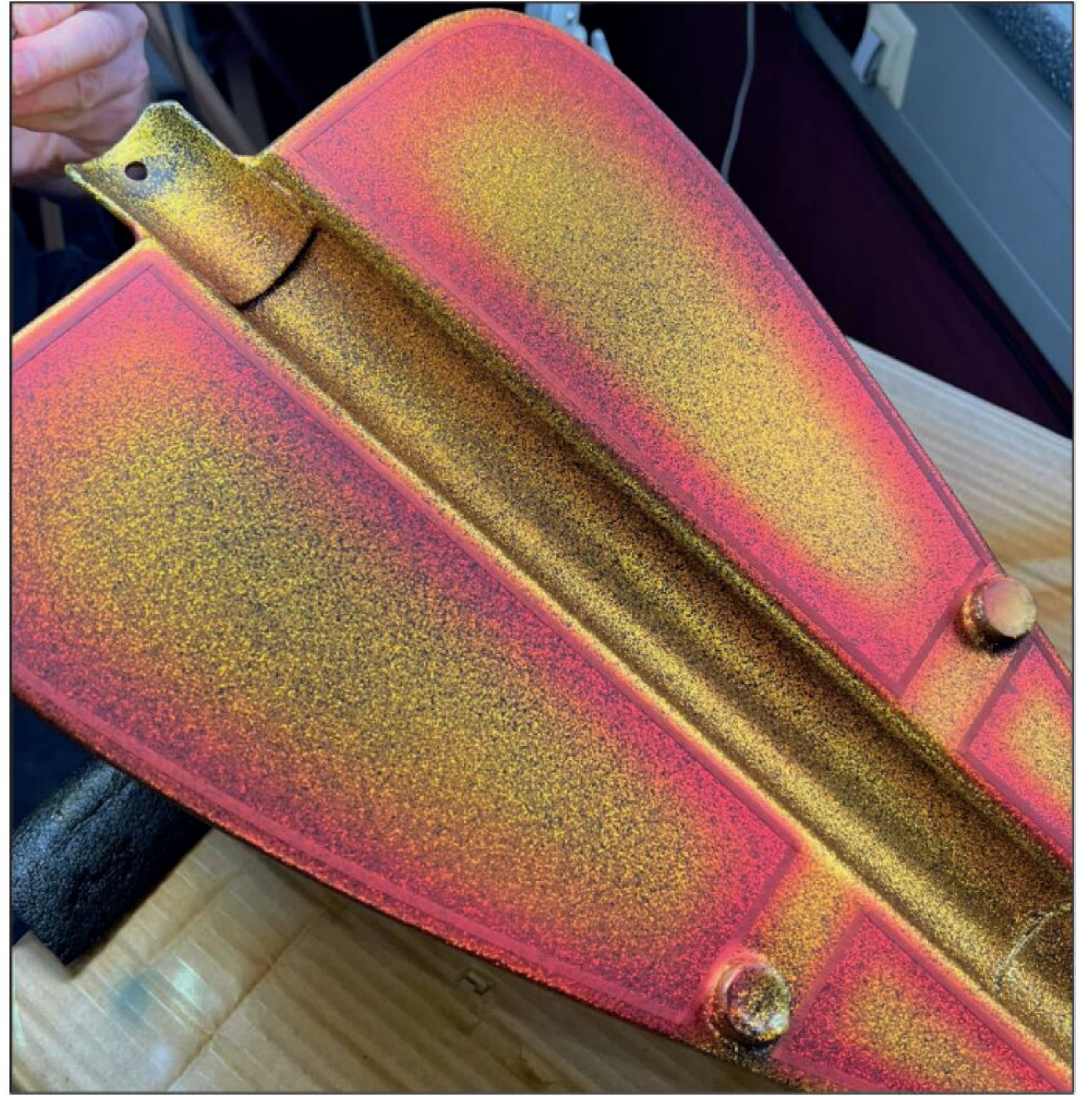
The color of the linear design was silver. Therefore, before the candy colors were applied, all painted surfaces were lined with 3M lining tape. I then sprayed the first coat of candy yellow onto all surfaces. I had to pay special attention to the saturation level of the color.



05 Highlighting lines

Now the surfaces were separated and highlighted. To do this, the inner sides of the surface at the edge of the lining tape were given a candy red gradient.

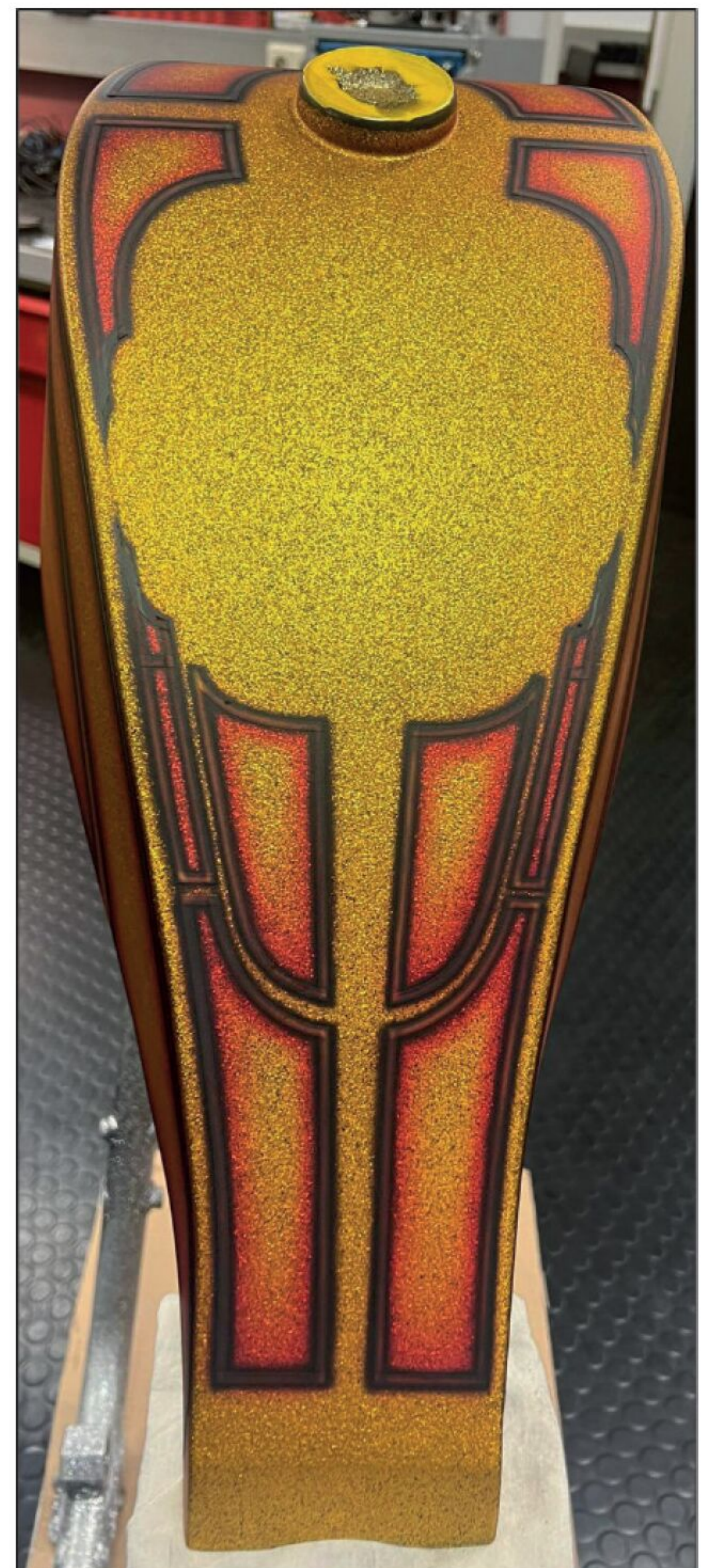




06 Enhancing contrasts

To enhance the contrasts with the silver line, I applied black to the edge of the line, keeping it so narrow that it did not cancel out the red gradient. Precise use of the spray

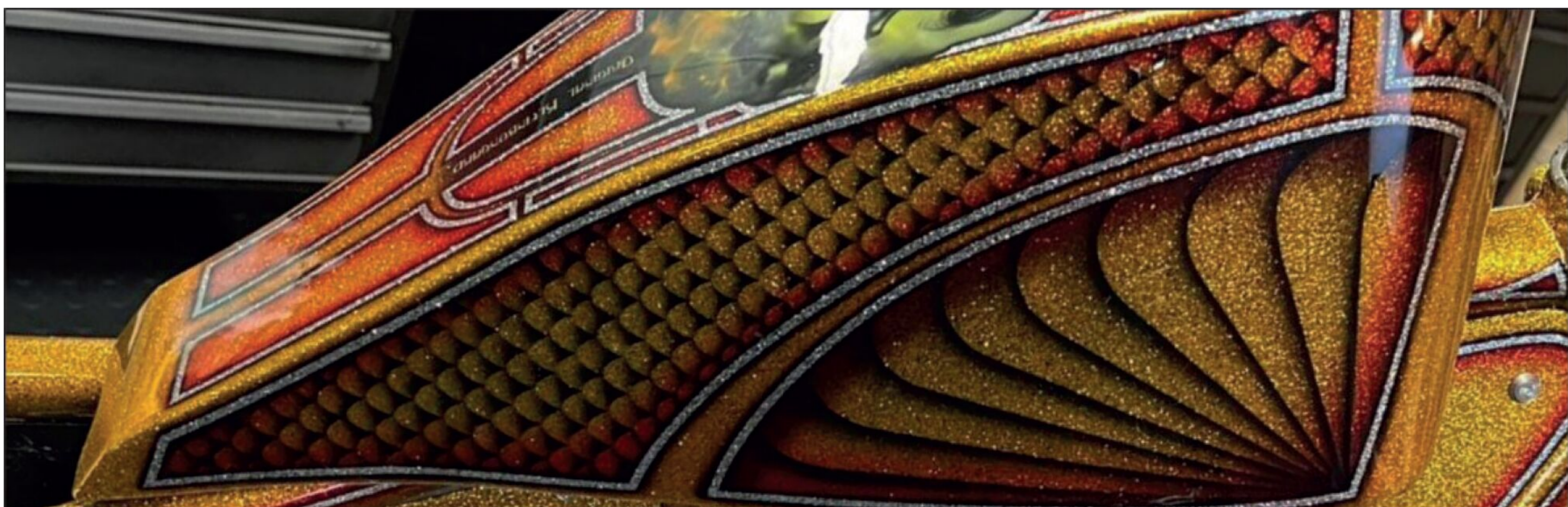
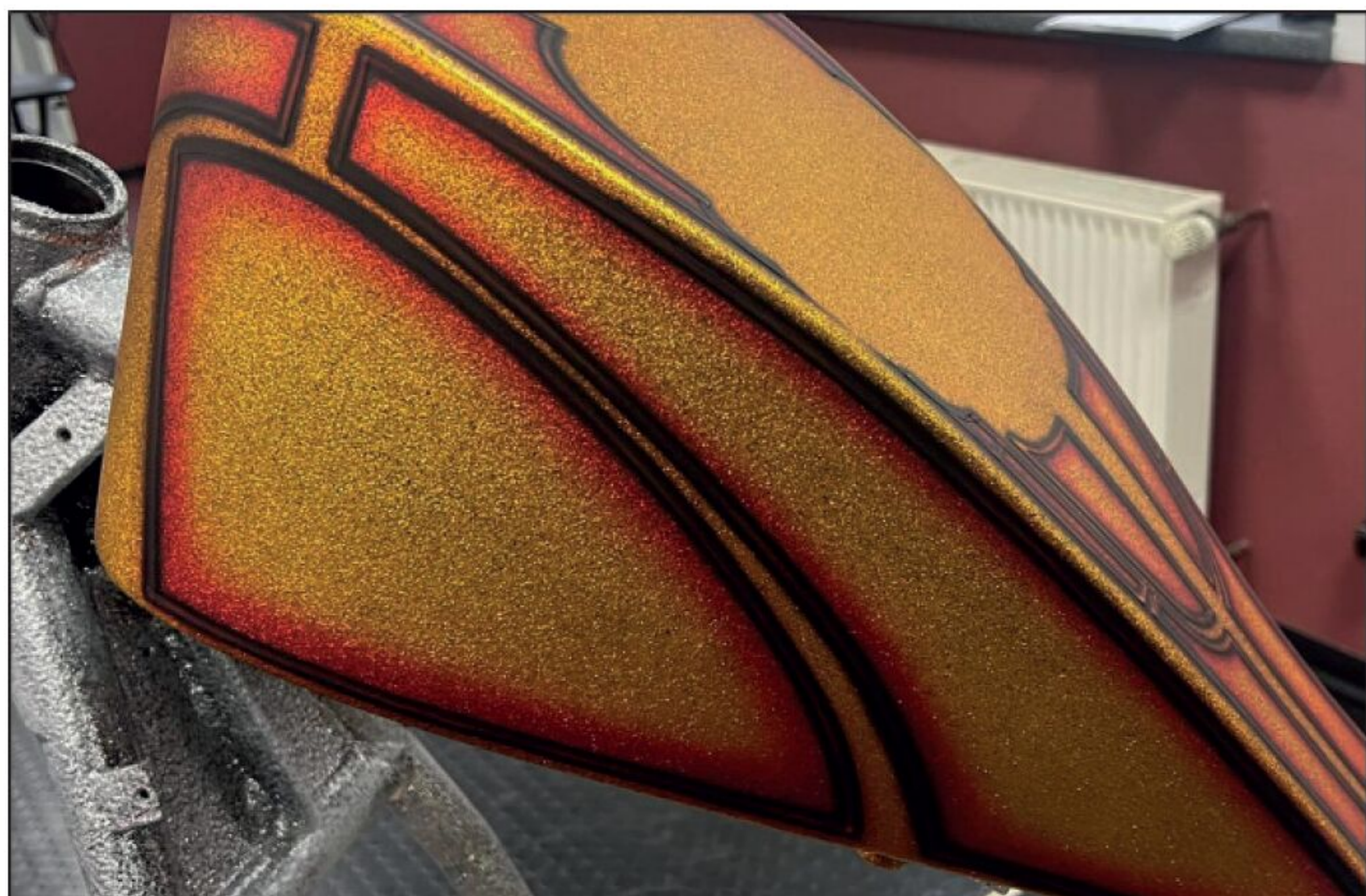
technique meant that it was not necessary to mask the adjacent areas.



07 Scales and fans

Now the inlays of the surfaces were applied. To protect the adjacent surfaces, they were masked with masking tape. When implementing the scales, it was important to ob-

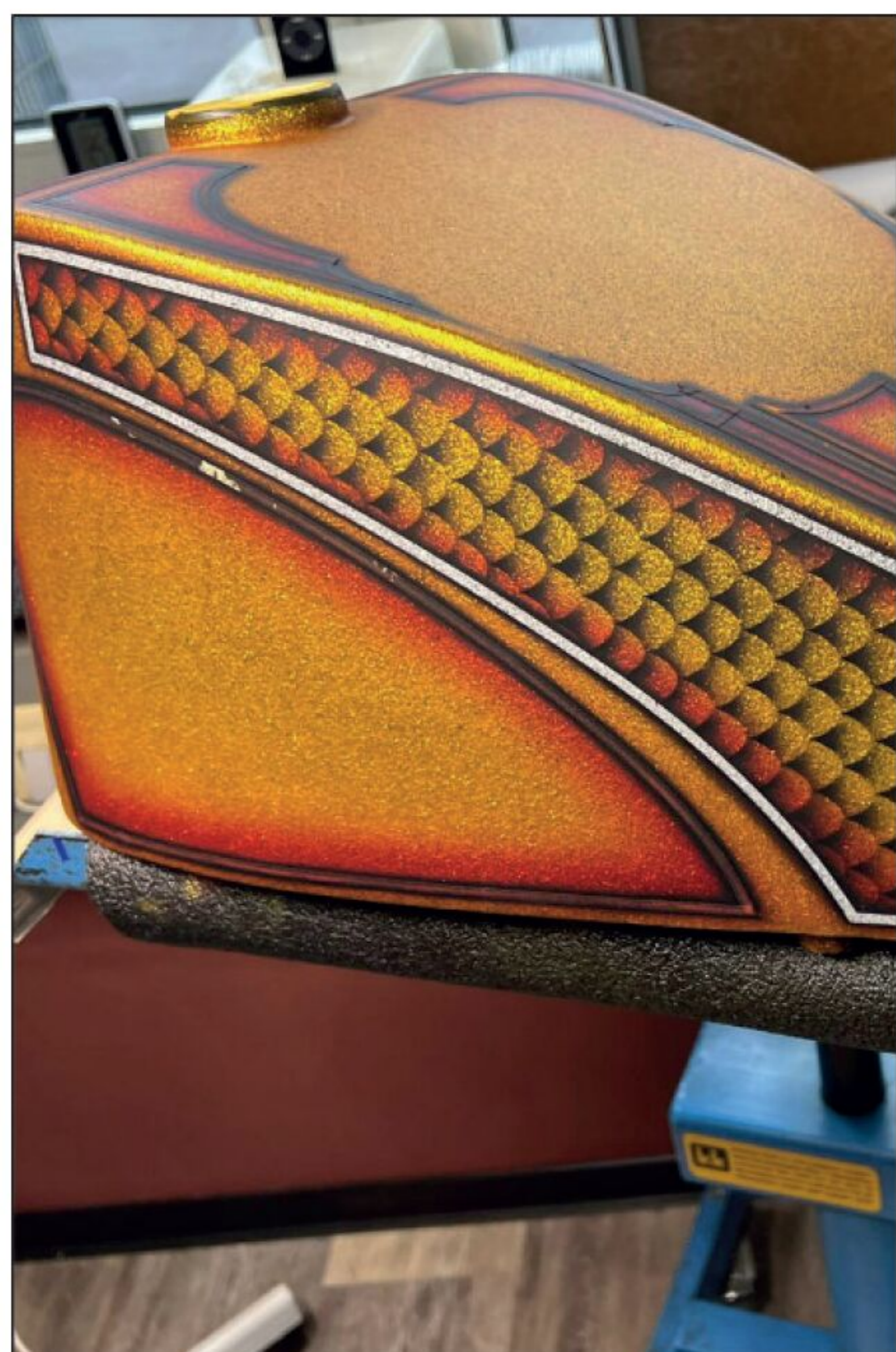
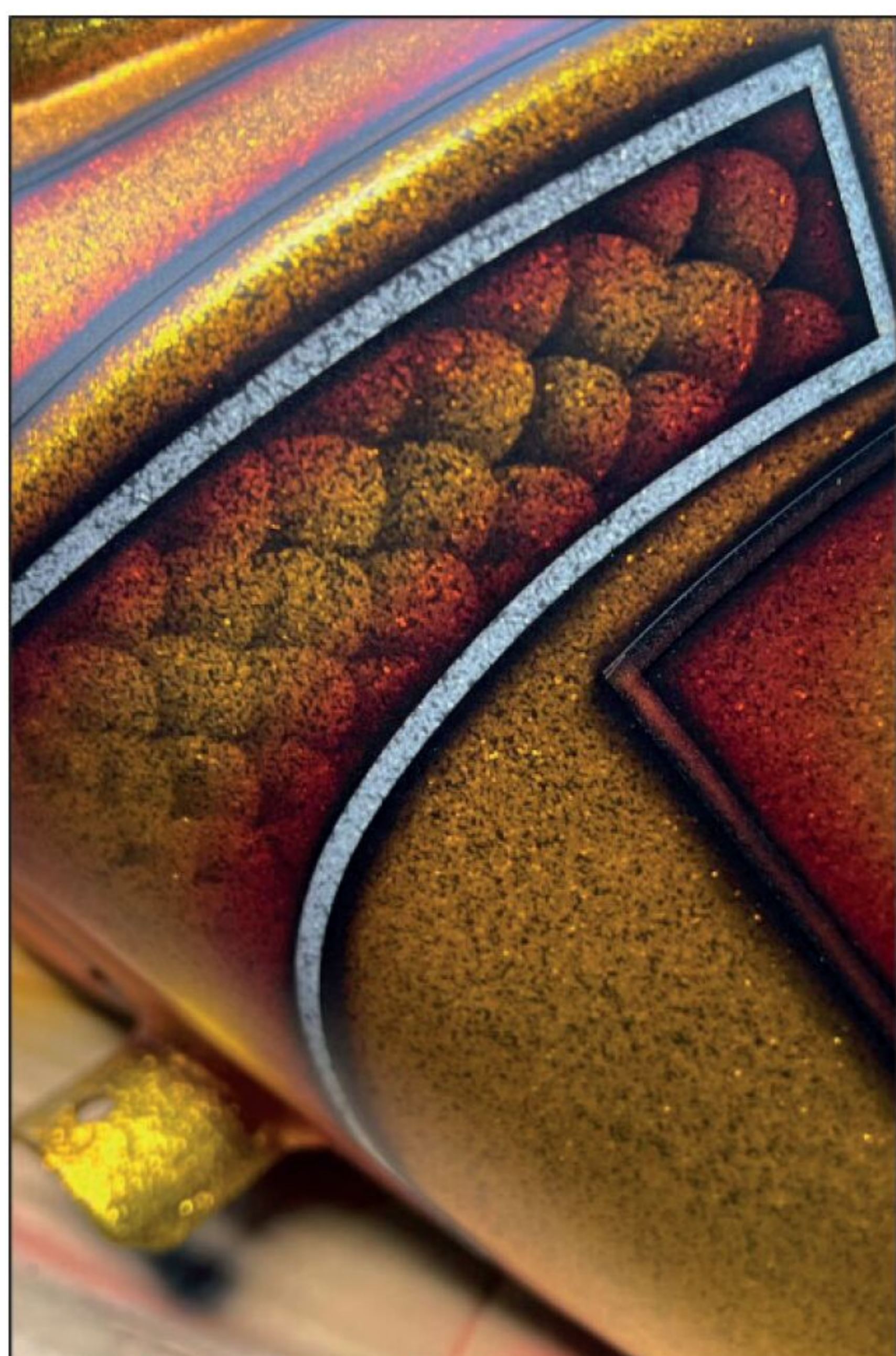
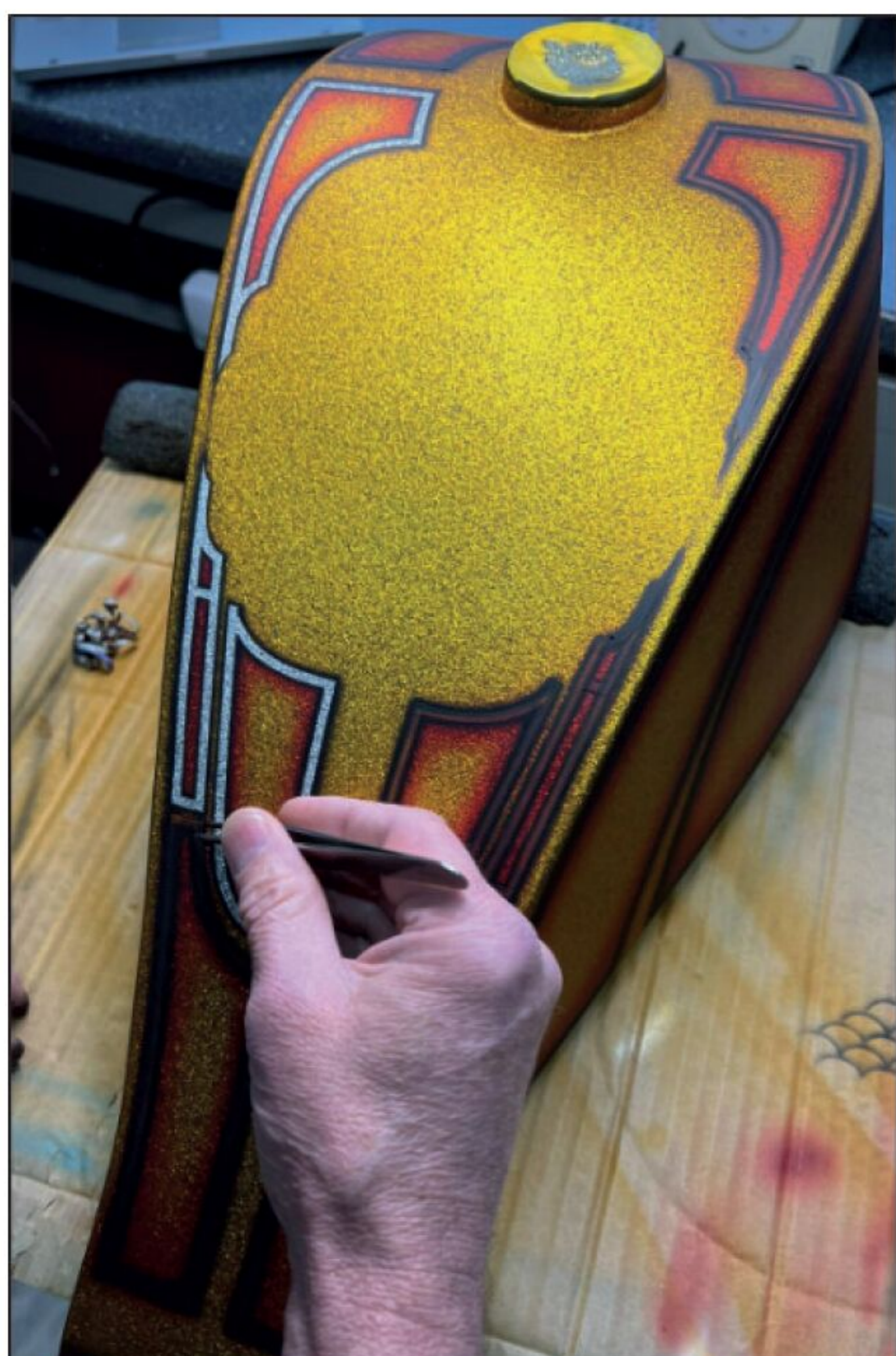
serve the principle of "form follows function." Scales and also the fan, which can be seen on the finished tank, were applied using a loose mask and black.



08 Remove and correct the masking tape

Once these steps were complete, the masking tape could be removed. Any imperfections can now be corrected,

as the entire work will now be coated with a protective layer of clear lacquer in the paint shop.



09 Molly Hatchet design

Once all the paint units had been safely returned from the paint shop, the surface of the tank was lightly sanded again and prepared for the subsequent “Molly Hatchet”

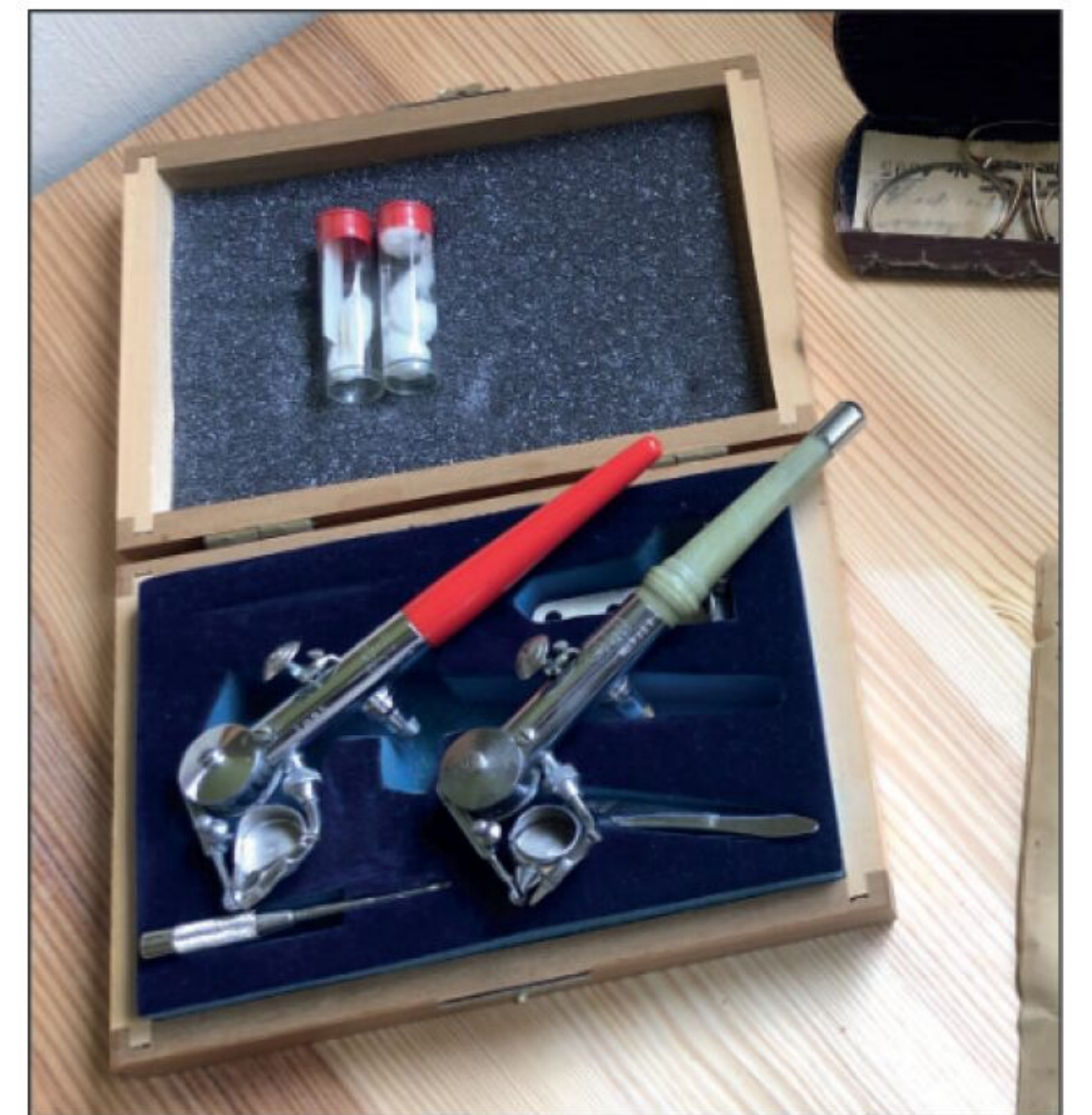
motif. Using a kind of paper cutout, the outline of the motif was sprayed in black using a loose mask and transferred to the designated area.



10 Working with the Paasche Turbo

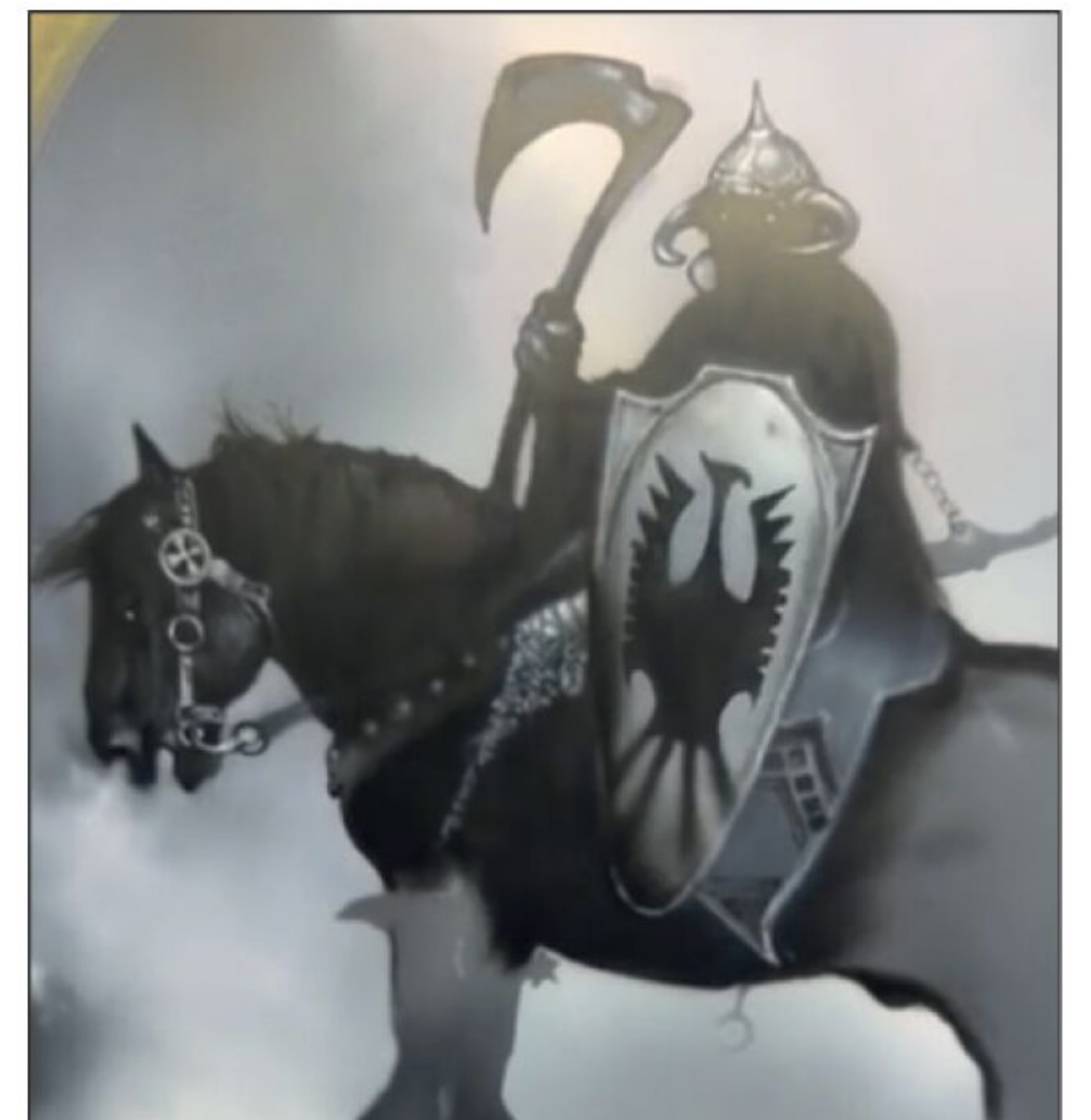
Once this was done, the most time-consuming part of the work began: spraying the smallest details. I would like to emphasize that no brushes were used. Everything was sprayed exclusively. For this, I preferred to use a Paasche Tur-

bo, which I have in a “newer” and an older functional version (approx. 1930). I must admit that the use of these airbrush devices requires extensive experience in airbrushing and very skilled handling.



11 Black and white details

Alternating between white and black, I gradually added the details of the horseman motif. I used an old record cover, which my buddy gave me, to constantly compare my work with the original.



12 Color accents and adjustments

I added some color accents to the motif with yellow and red and adjusted the design to match the color scheme of the tank.



13 Clear coat

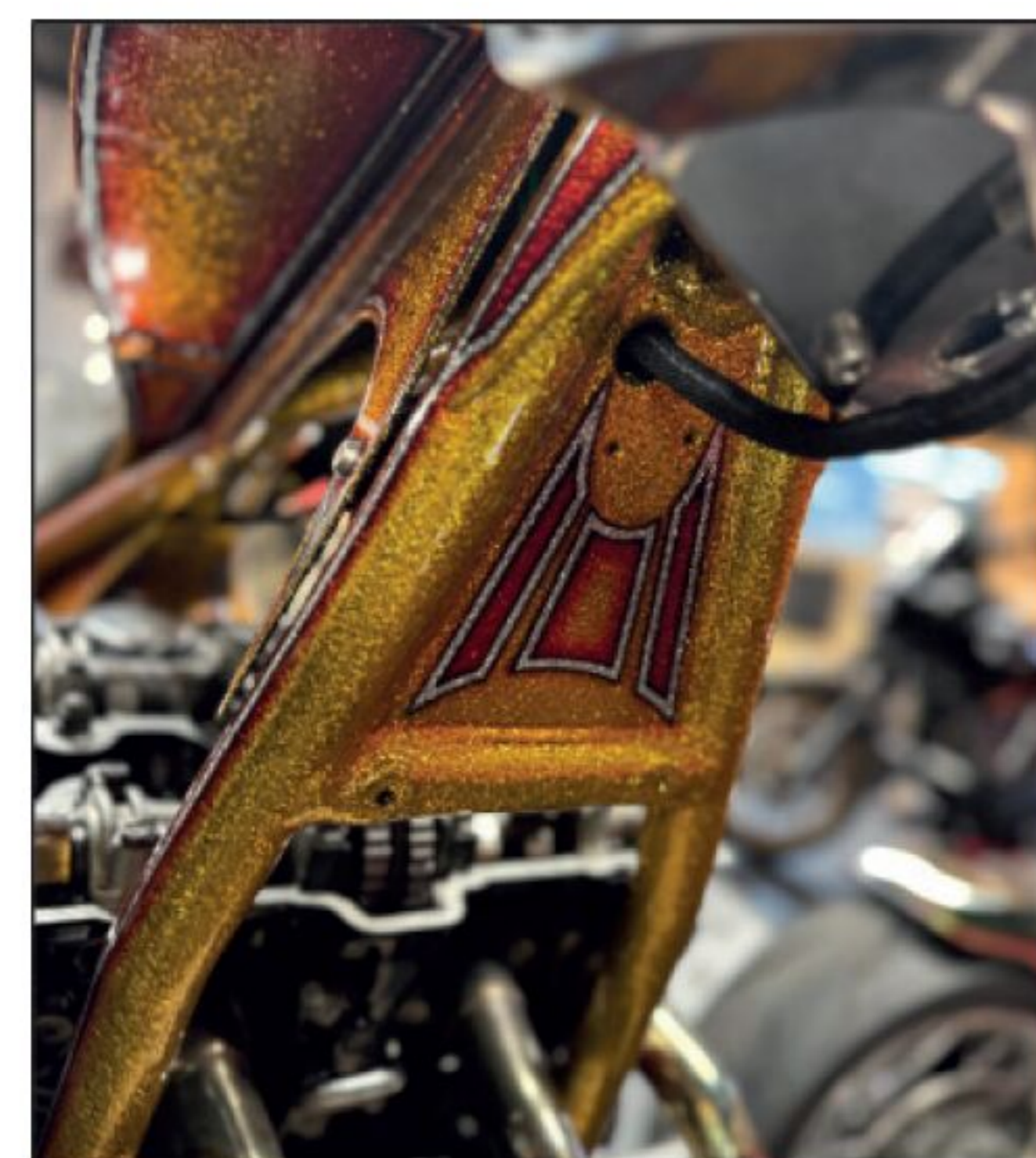
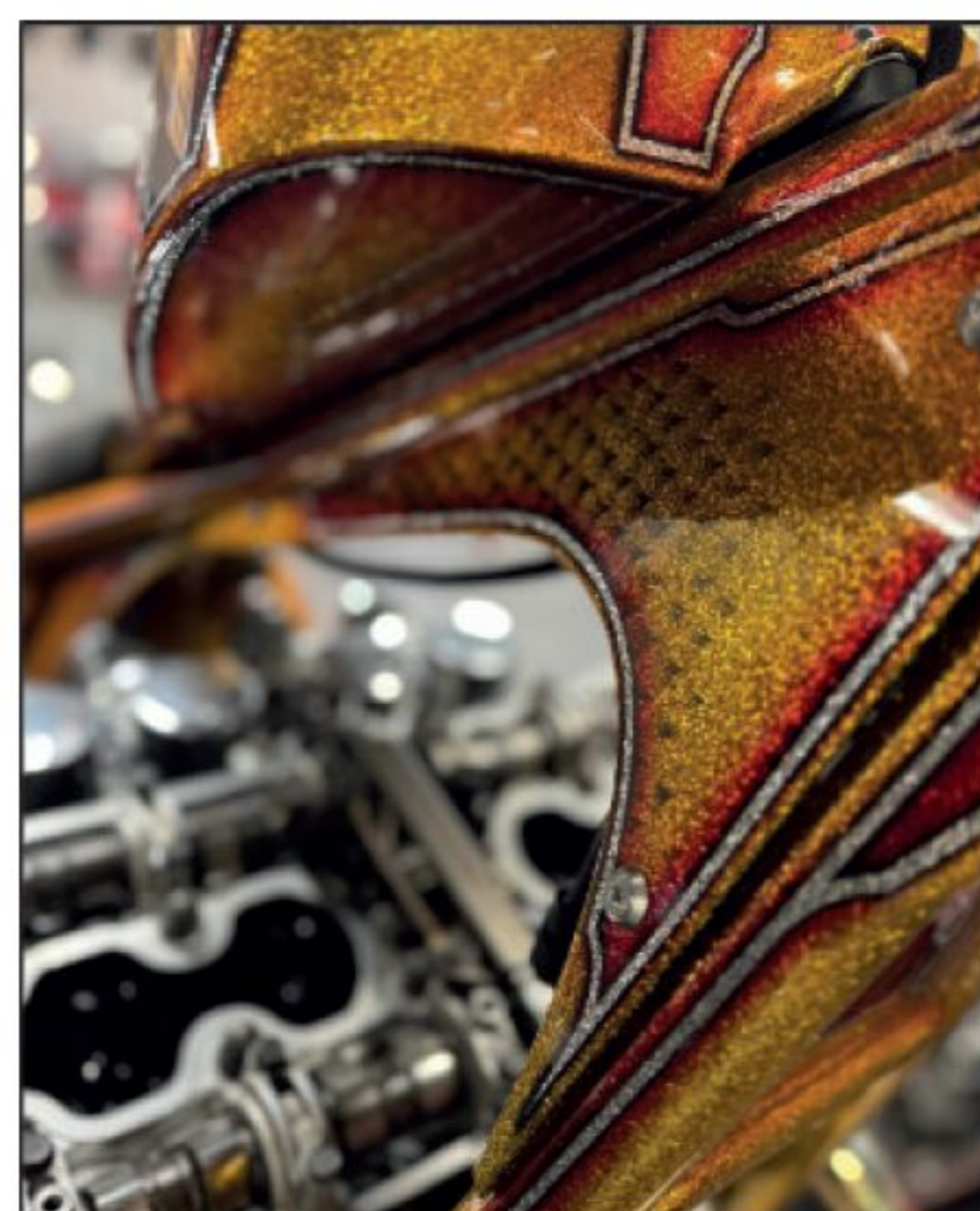
Finally, everything was covered again with a protective layer of clear coat, resulting in a total of approx. 15 layers of paint. This high level of effort was mainly due to the use of coarse metal flakes.



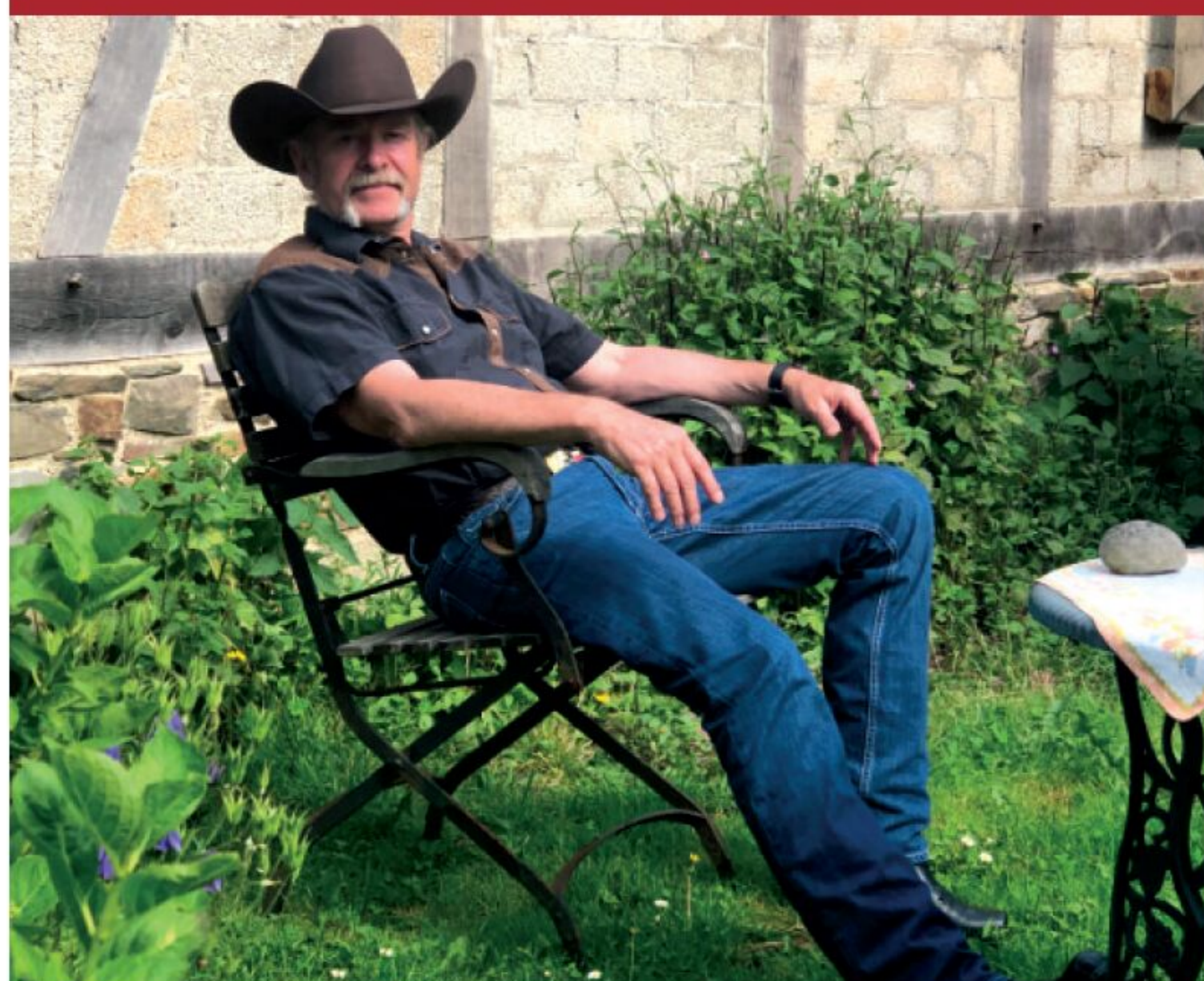
14 Ready for restoration

That completed my part of the work and my buddy can continue restoring his bike.





CARSTEN KLEINBONGARD



Since completing his studies in airbrush techniques and master class with Professor Bruno Konrad in figurative drawing and nude painting over 20 years ago, Carsten Kleinbongard from Windeck / Germany has been working as a freelance artist. Among other things, he has been a lecturer in perspective and airbrush at several art schools. Since 2000, he has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions with his works. In 2009, his specialist book "Perspektive sehen und verstehen" (Seeing and Understanding Perspective) was published by Edition M. Fischer.

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CYBORG GIRL



Italian airbrush artist Daniela Frongia typically works freehand, but she wanted to create a tutorial to help beginner and intermediate-level airbrush painters understand key techniques. This

guide demonstrates how to achieve a high-quality illustration using masking techniques, stencils, and other tricks—ideal for those still gaining confidence in freehand airbrushing.

EQUIPMENT – CYBORG GIRL

Airbrush: Iwata Takumi Micron 0.18

Compressor: Iwata Power Jet Lite Compressor

Paints: Createx Illustration Colors Black, White, Viridian Green, Orange, Yellow, Scarlet Red, Magenta; Lifeline: Light Natural, Burnt Sienna, Sepia, Blue Violet, Lifeline Na-

tural Lip, Cobalt Blue, Sepia

Surface: Synthetic Lavanguard paper (34 × 48 cm)

Further materials: Masking tape, rotary cutter, Skin texture stencil, Lyra To Rafx 444 eraser pencil, dark brown watercolor pencil

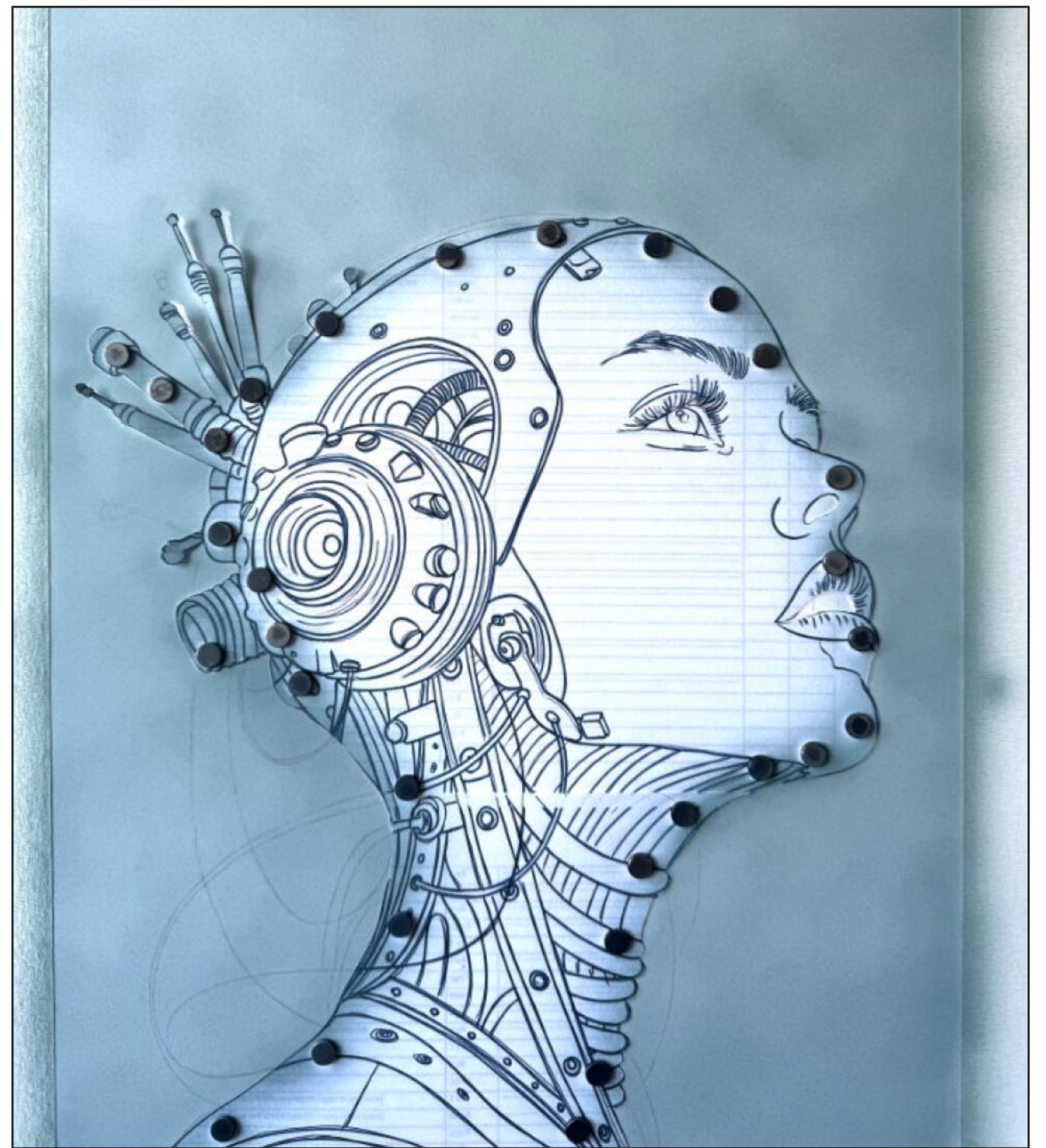
01 Transferring the Sketch

I transferred the drawing onto Lavanguard synthetic paper using carbon paper. Next, I printed and carefully cut out the silhouette with a rotary cutter, securing it to my work surface. Since I work on a metal board, I used magnets to keep everything in place, ensuring precise alignment.



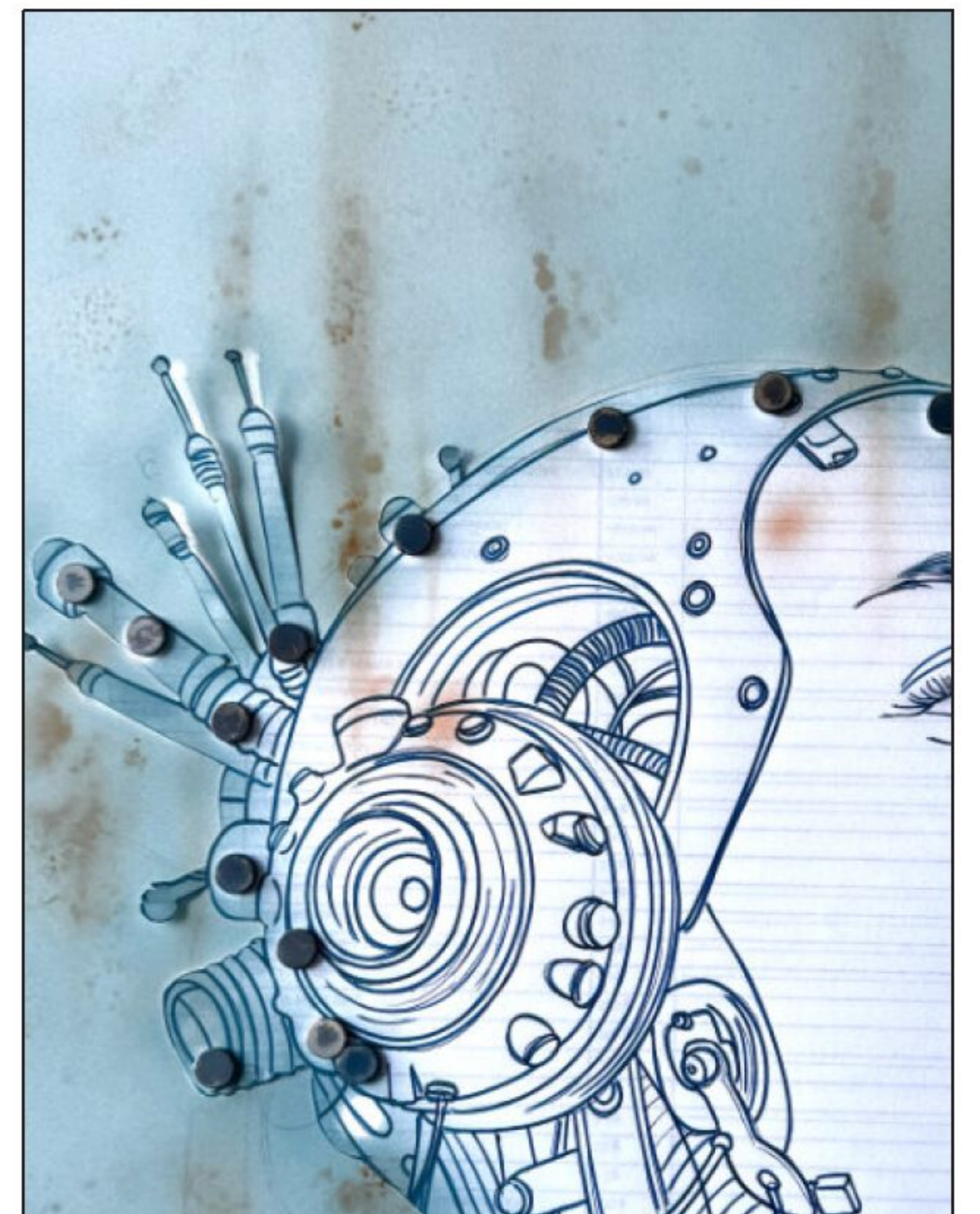
02 Creating the background

I mixed white with a small amount of black and Viridian Green to achieve the desired background color. Using smooth, even strokes, I built up the tone to create a consistent, polished look.



03 Simulating a Rusted Metal Texture

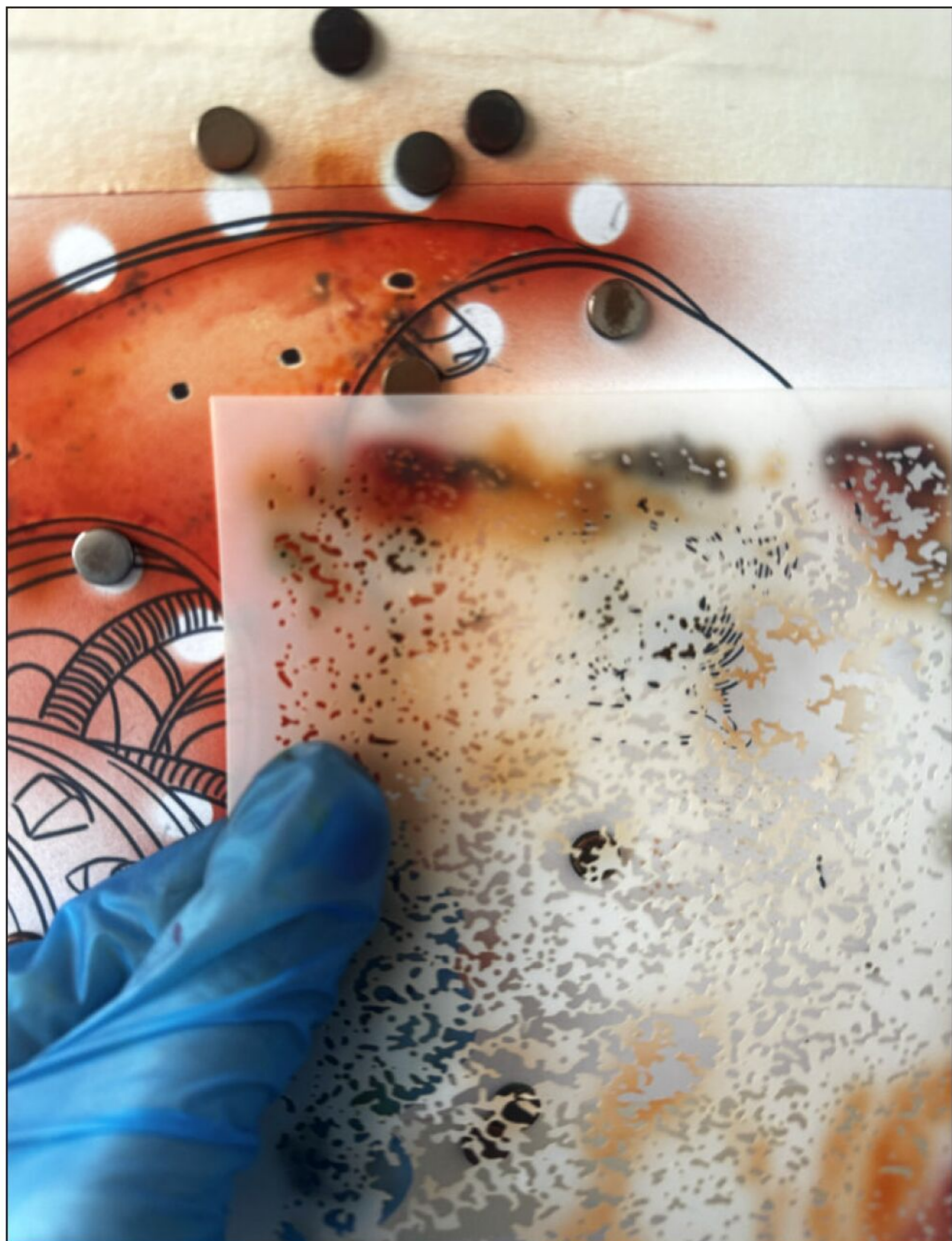
To add realism, I used Sepia to create a rust effect. Instead of freehanding, I opted for a skin texture stencil, which, when held close to the surface, replicates an oxidized metal appearance. Layering the color multiple times enhanced the rusted effect, ensuring depth and detail.



04 The Headpiece

To work on the first head section, I leave the mask on the figure and also mask off the painted background. Then I cut out the middle head section, removed the mask, and attached it with magnets. The base layer was a mix of Scarlet Red and Magenta, applied evenly while preserving a lighter section

for highlights. I then sprayed a thin yellow glaze over the highlight areas to enhance the contrast. To add texture, I used a skin texture stencil, creating a rough, worn effect. Using an eraser pencil, I selectively lifted paint to enhance the three-dimensional appearance.



05 Vent & Cables

In the same way, I then unmasked the ventilation opening where the internal cables would be visible. A light mist of black set the base, after which I carefully added high-

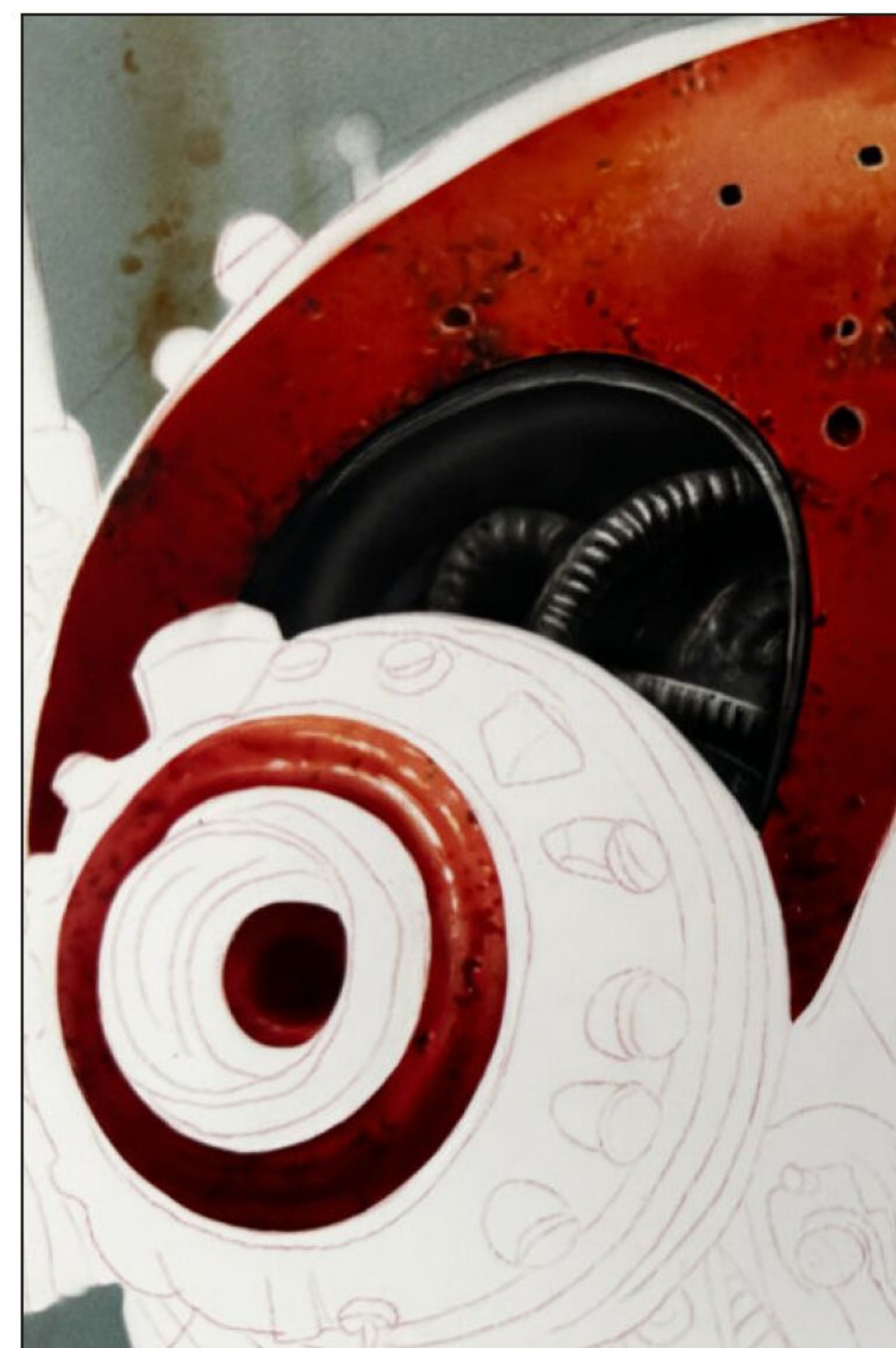
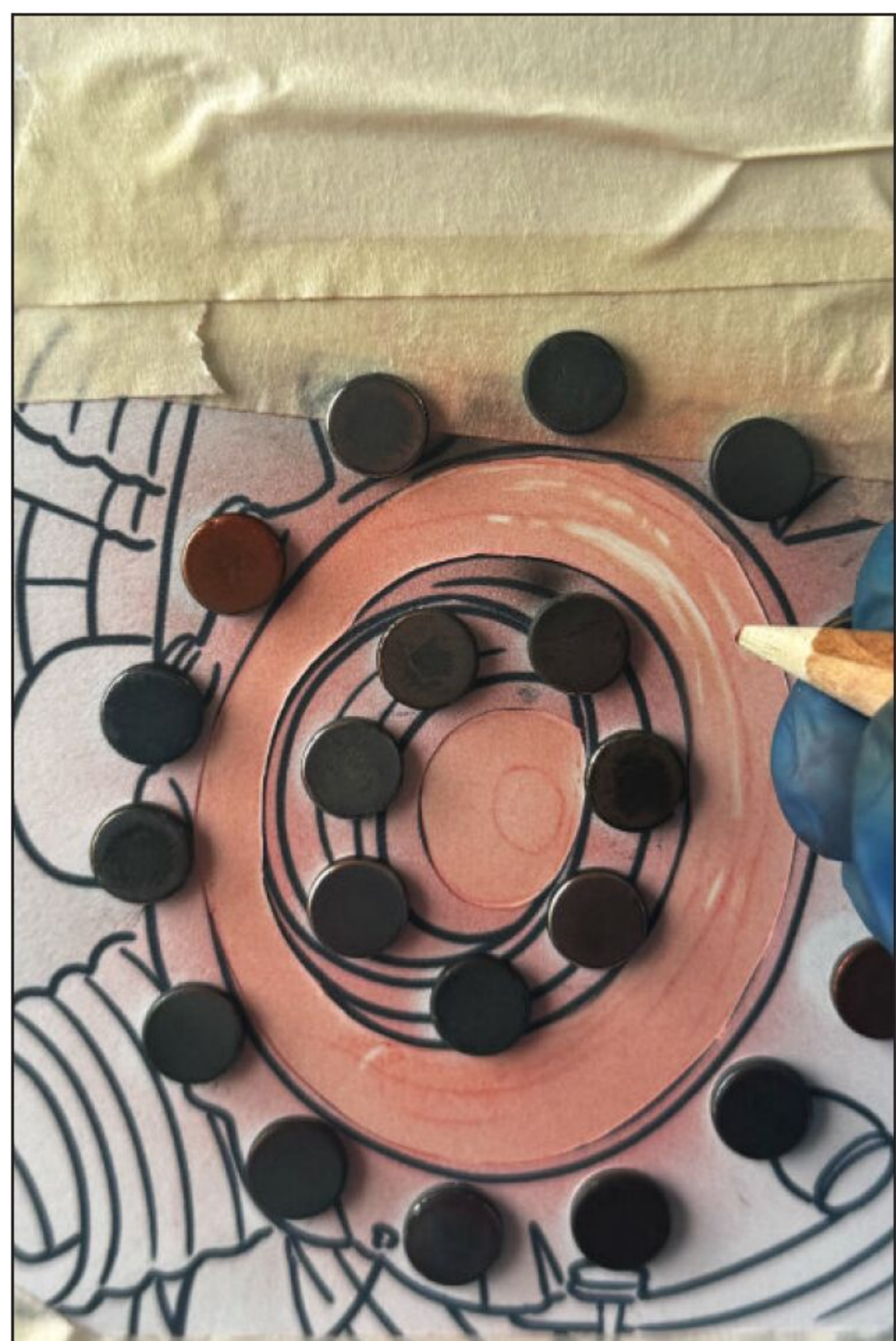
lights with the eraser pencil. This process was repeated to deepen the black and achieve a more striking contrast.



06 Continuation of the head section

Since the reddish-brown element continues in the ear section, I treated it in the same way. Using a scarlet red base, I incorporated highlights with the eraser pencil and adjusted the shadows with a scarlet red and black mix. A yellow

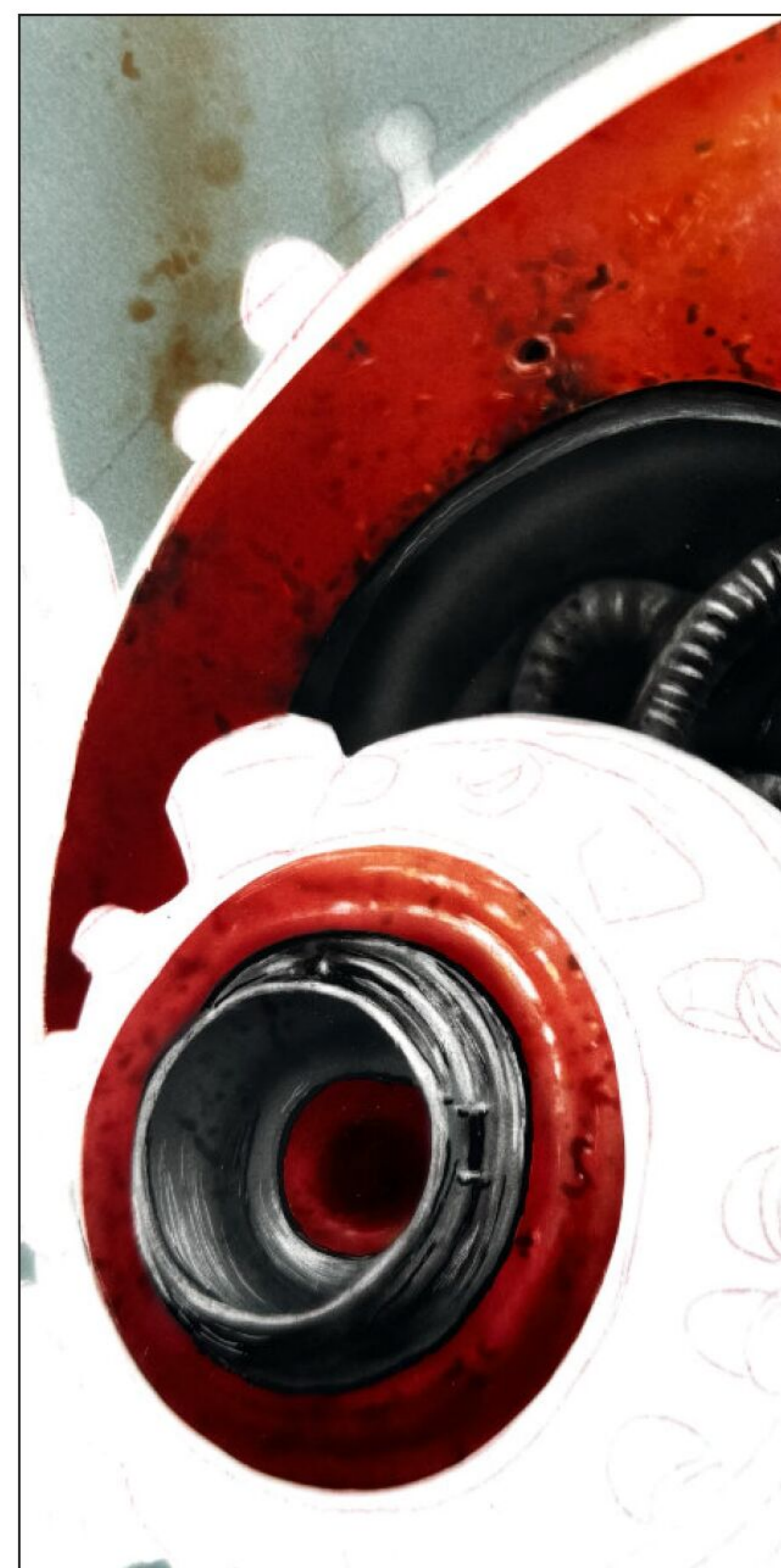
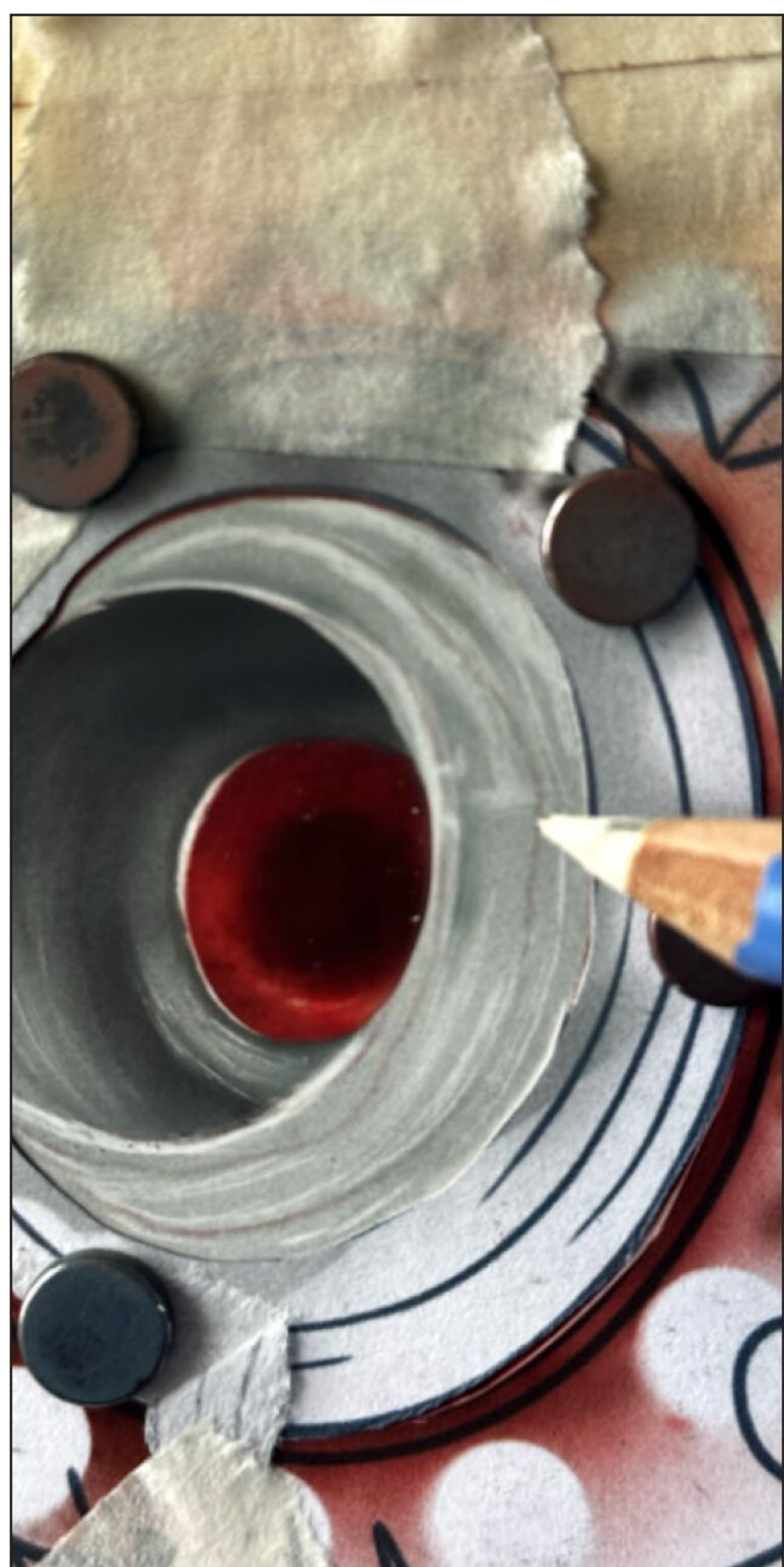
glaze over the upper portions helped maintain vibrancy. To match the headpiece texture, I reintroduced the skin texture stencil, ensuring consistency across the design.



07 Rendering the Metal Components

For the metallic elements on the „ear“, I used a desaturated black mixed with white, gradually layering in depth.

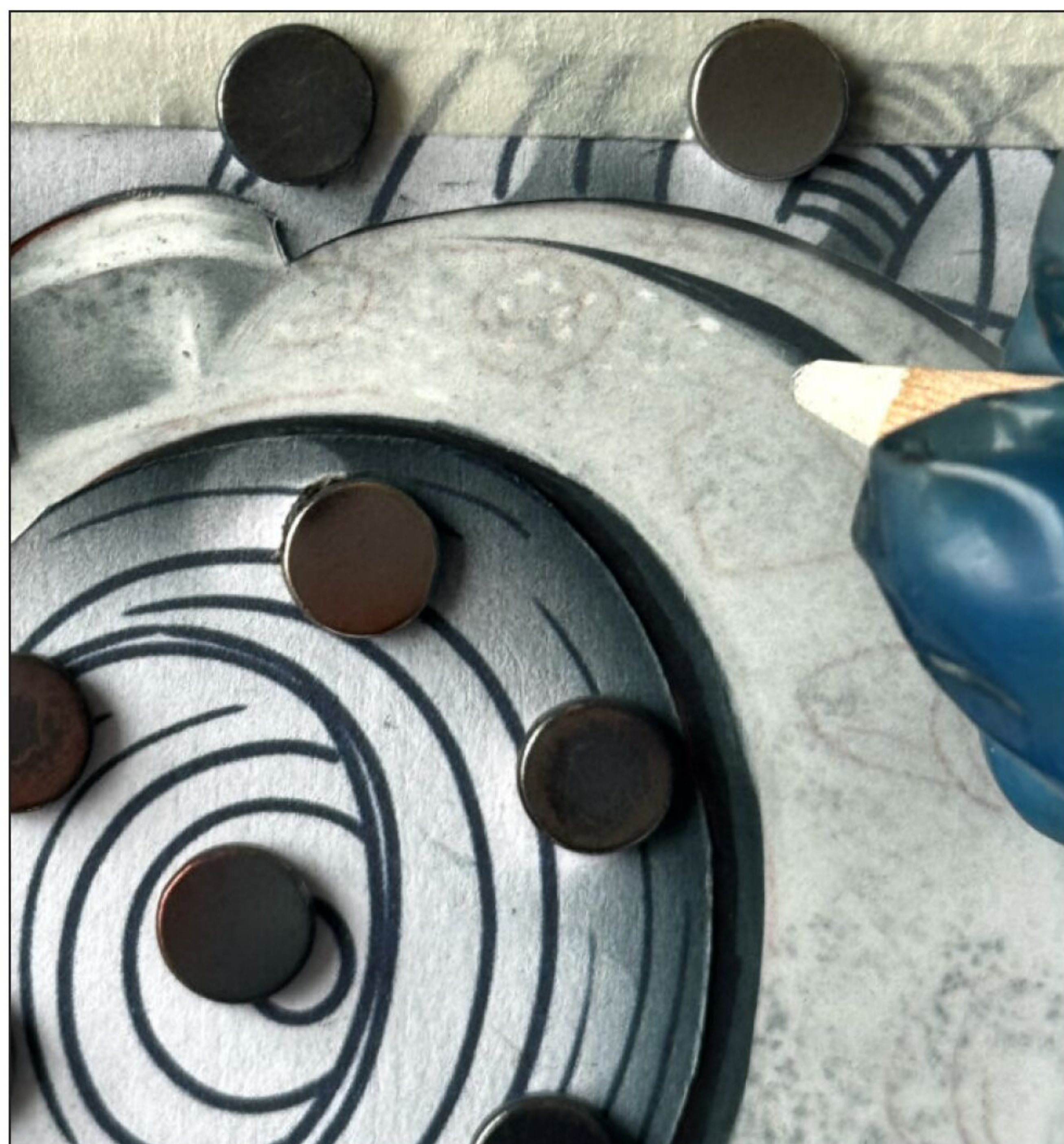
Highlights were refined using an eraser pencil, and deeper blacks were introduced to emphasize shadows and contrast.



08 The Ear Component's Unique Texture

It is important to mask the finished area again and again before moving on to the next part. The ear section needed a distinct material effect, so I mixed black, green, and white—similar to the background but slightly darker. A light

misting set the base tone, after which I added fine details using the eraser pencil. By stippling with the eraser pencil and adding successive color layers, I built up the realistic texture.



09 Tubes and Antennas

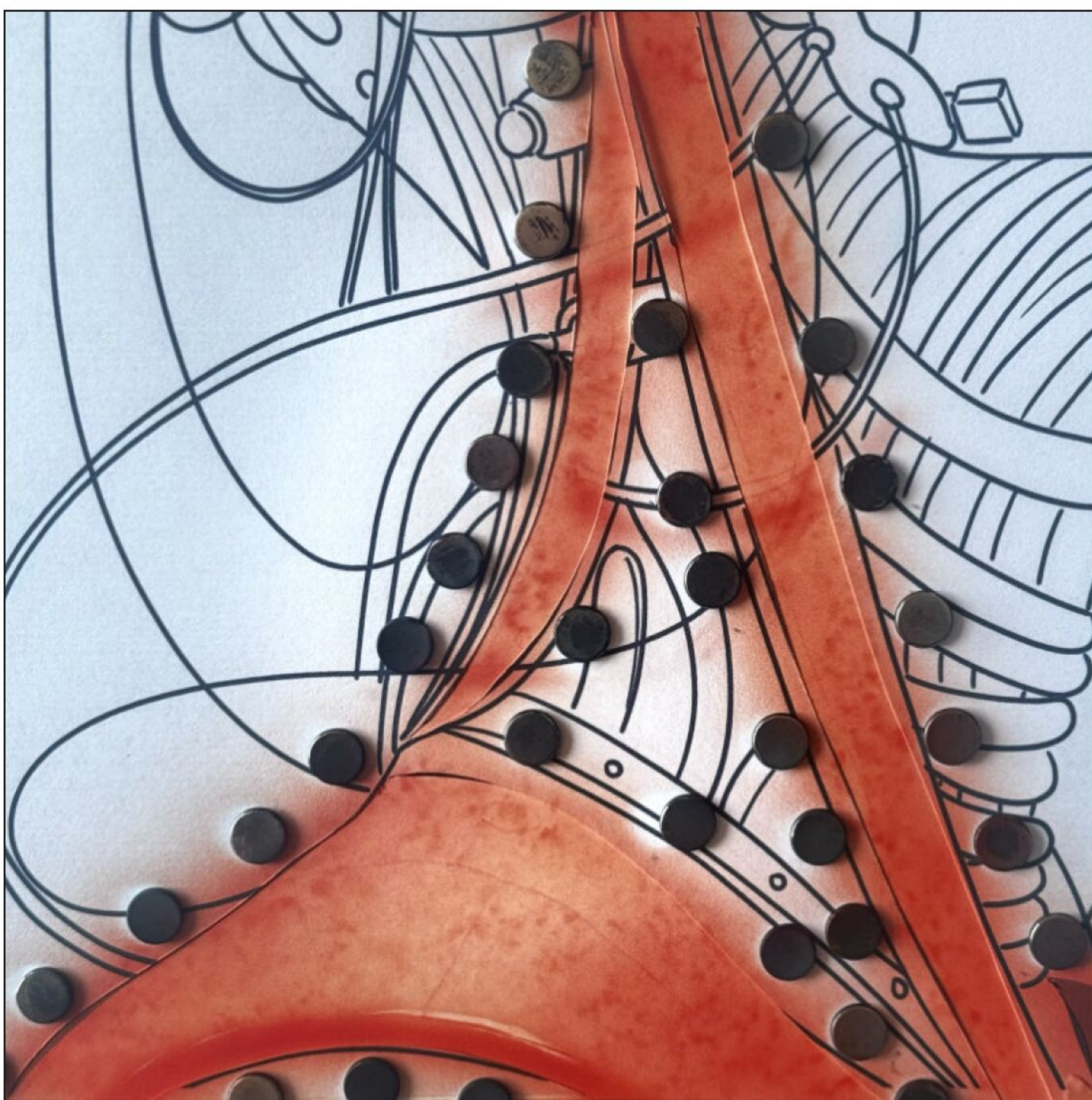
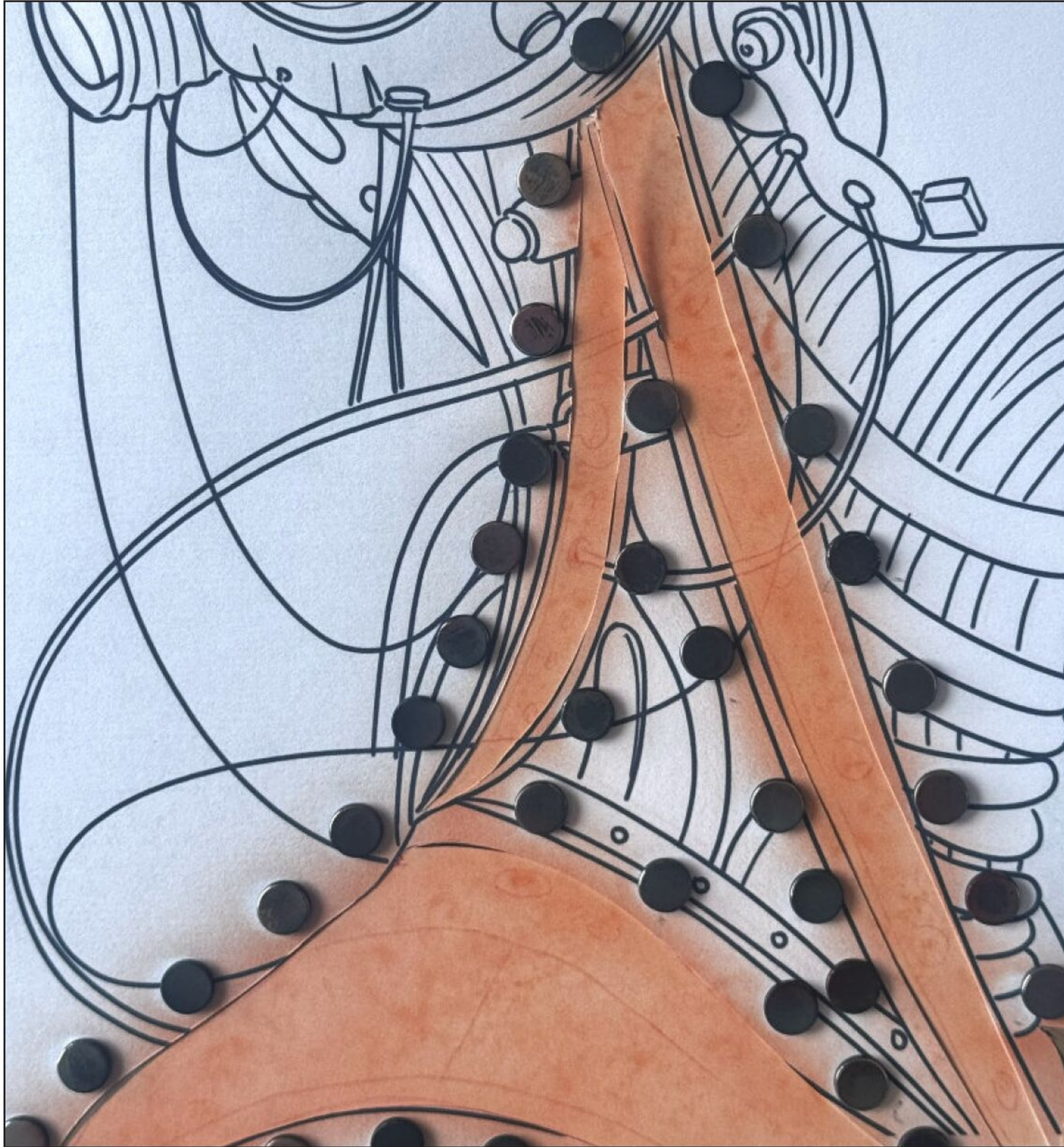
Since I was already working in the black color spectrum, I went ahead and connected the tubes and antenna parts, which I also used the eraser pen to give texture and highlights that give them their round shape.



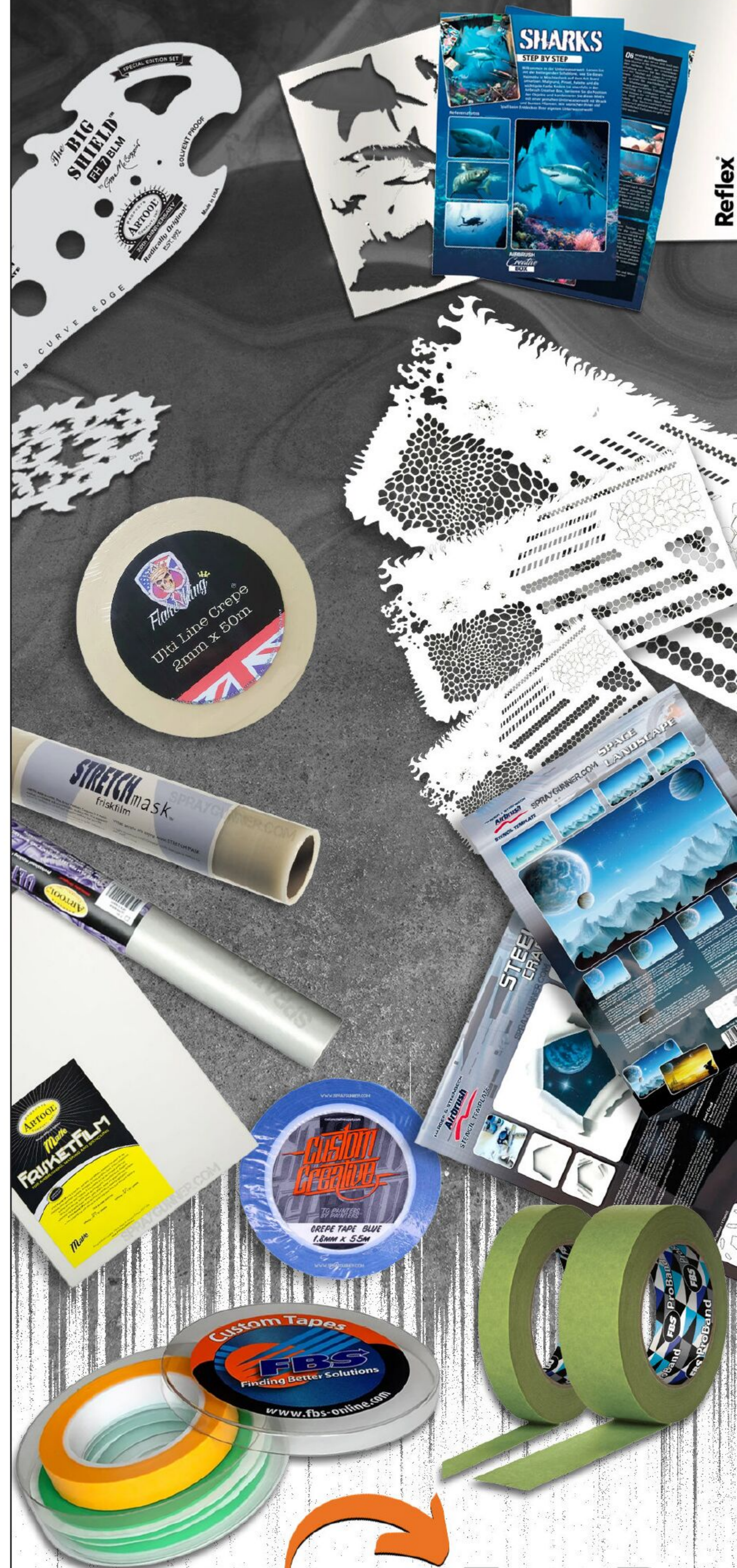


10 Neck and Shoulders

I masked the neck and shoulders before applying a glaze of red with a small amount of yellow. Using a skin texture stencil, I introduced a subtle grunge-like texture, adding an aged and worn effect. Blue-Violet mixed with the base tone was used for shadows, ensuring a smooth transition.



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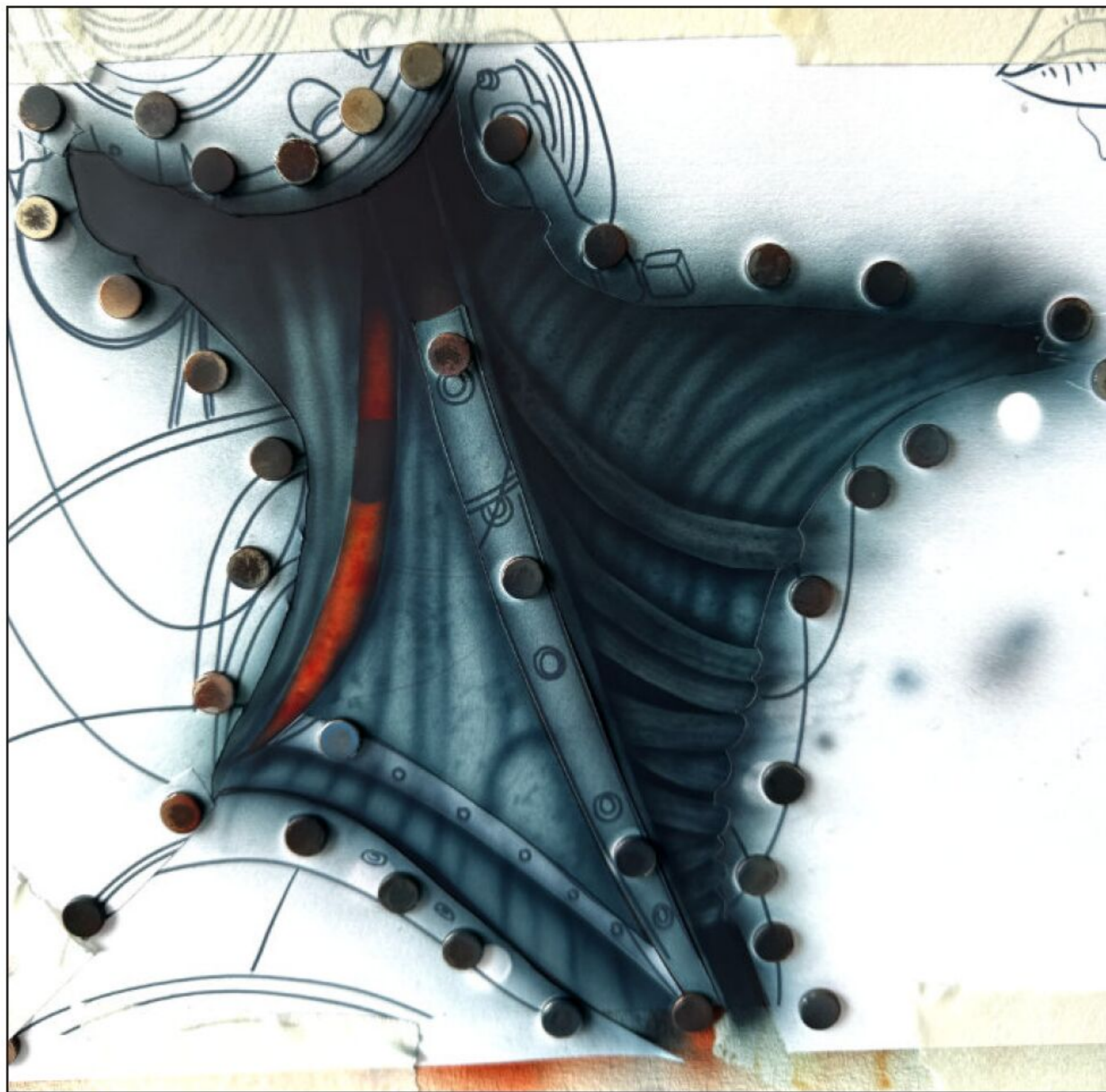
11 Buttons and Lamps

Additional elements — such as antennas and red buttons — were masked and painted separately for precision.



12 Detailing the Neck Structure

Using a similar mix as step 08, I masked and painted the horizontal neck ridges while carefully freehanding the vertical divisions. This area was also gradually freed from the masking, while areas that had already been painted were covered again for protection. A distressed effect was added using a stencil, with further refinement done via the eraser pencil.



13 Finishing the headpiece

Then I added cables and supplemented the antennas, lamps, and buttons with further details and highlights.



14 Eyebrows and Eye Shadows

Now came the face: The eyebrows were shaped using a custom-cut stencil, with darker areas defined first. Gradual shading was applied with an airbrush gradient, and individual hairs were drawn using a dark brown watercolor pencil. For the eye shadow and surrounding area, I masked the eye and shaded using Burnt Sienna, incorporating highlights with the eraser pencil. Eyelashes were added last using a fine watercolor pencil for precision.



15 The iris

I cut the iris out of a mask while covering the surrounding eye and painted it with a mix of Cobalt Blue, Viridian, and White, carefully adding striations and reflections using an eraser pencil.

**16** Skin Tones

For the skin tones, I alternated between Lifeline Light Natural and Burnt Sienna to create natural warmth and shading. By holding a skin texture stencil slightly above the surface (about 3 cm), I replicated the subtle texture of synthetic skin.

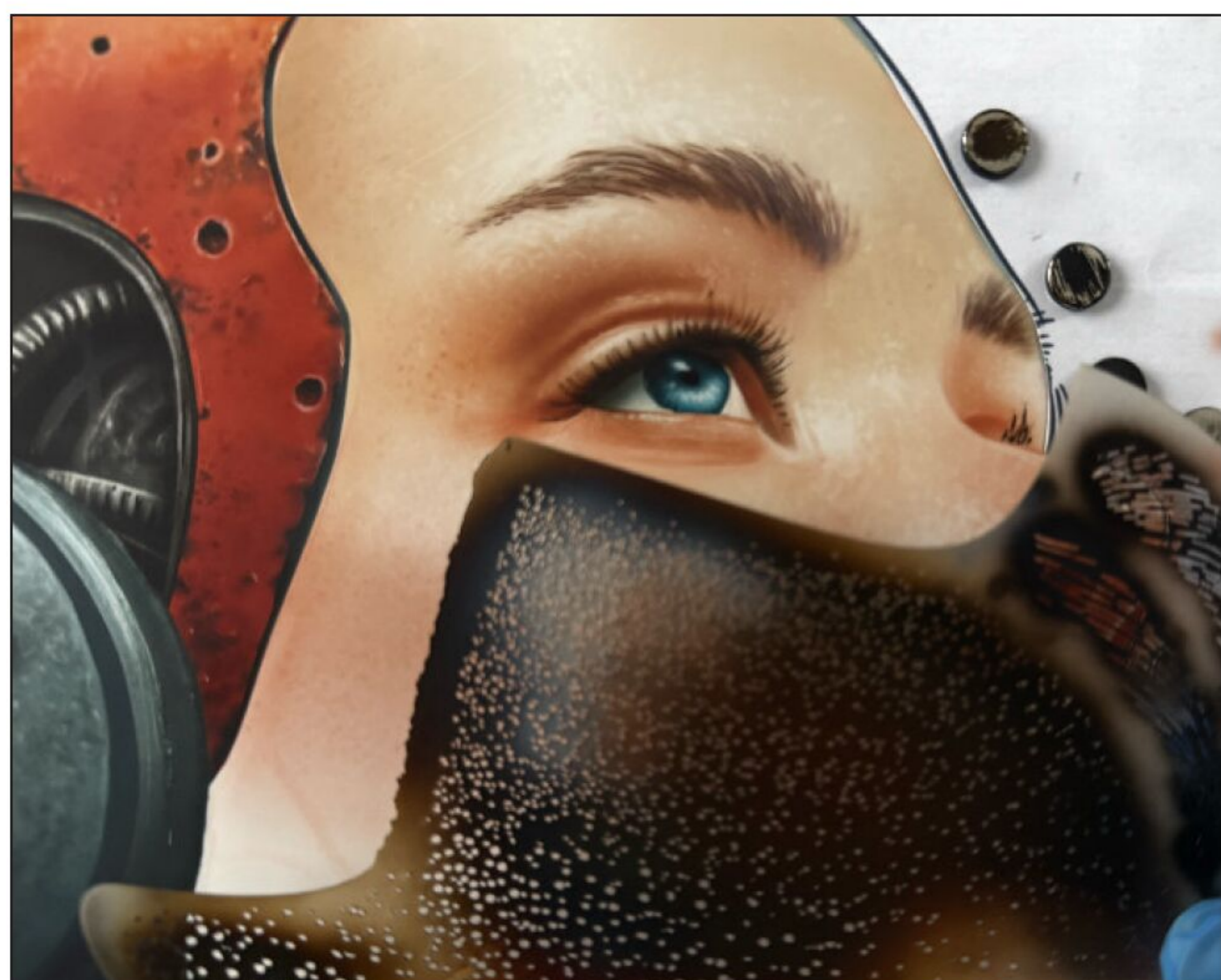
**17** Shading the Nose

I built up soft transitions using Lifeline Light Natural as a base, deepening the shadows with Burnt Sienna. I also used masking to round off the nose wing and nostril. The eraser pencil was used sparingly for highlights.

**18** Refining the Skin Tone

Applying thin layers of Burnt Sienna, I gradually developed the complexion. Shadows were enhanced with Sepia,

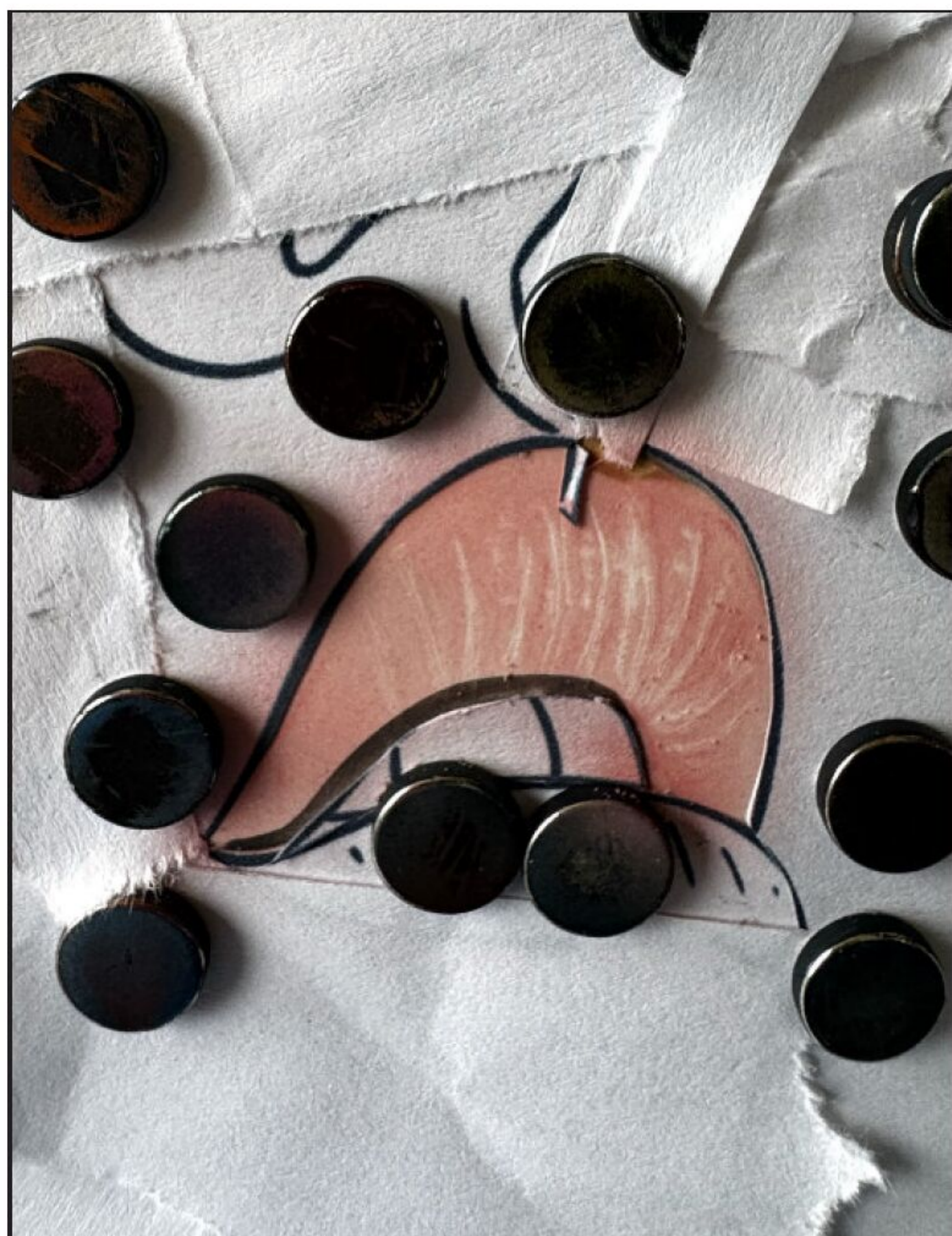
particularly along the cheekbones. Near the eyes, I introduced soft Viridian and blue glazes for a lifelike depth.



19 Lips

The shape of the lips was created again using masking. The base color was Lifeline Natural Lip, applied evenly. Highlights were lifted with an eraser pencil, while shadows

were built up using a red and black mix. A skin stencil was used subtly to add lip texture, while final touches included a blend of Lifeline Light Natural and Burnt Sienna for realism.



20 Latest additions and revisions

As a final step, I go over and refine any areas I want to clean up or improve.





21 Finished artwork

This tutorial demonstrates how a combination of masking, layering, and texturing techniques can produce a dynamic and high-detail airbrushed artwork. While freehand skills are invaluable, strategic masking and stencils offer artists greater control, allowing even those with limited experience to achieve professional results.



DANIELA FRONGIA



Daniela Frongia is an Italian artist currently living in the United Kingdom. She works full-time as a children's book illustrator and creates digital artwork using a Wacom Cintiq Pro. However, feeling the need to express herself more freely, Daniela recently ventured into the fascinating world of airbrushing after attending a workshop by Marissa Oosterlee.

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Zippo Warrior

With over 35 years of airbrushing experience, Italian artist Lorena Straffi is particularly drawn to small and valuable objects. In addition to luxury ballpoint pens, she specialises in Zippo lighters. Collectors from all over the world commission her

to create individual and unique designs. This is how the warrior design came about, which Lorena created using masking, fine airbrush work and brushwork on a surface measuring just 3.8 x 5.7 cm.

EQUIPMENT – ZIPPO WARRIOR

Airbrushes: Paasche V1, Iwata High Performance Plus HP-SBP with 0.2 mm nozzle, Iwata LPH80 spray gun

Paints: Poison Paint (solvent-based paints from Italy)

Other materials: Grey Oramask plotter film, Frisket masking film, graphite paper, scalpel, PPG D4000 2K primer

white, PPG D8238 HS hardener normal, pencil, sandpaper 1000-1500, silicone remover, eraser, PPG D880 two-component car clear coat

Substrate: Zippo lighter, 3.81 x 1.27 x 5.72 cm, owner: Knut Lorenz

01 Sanding the Zippo

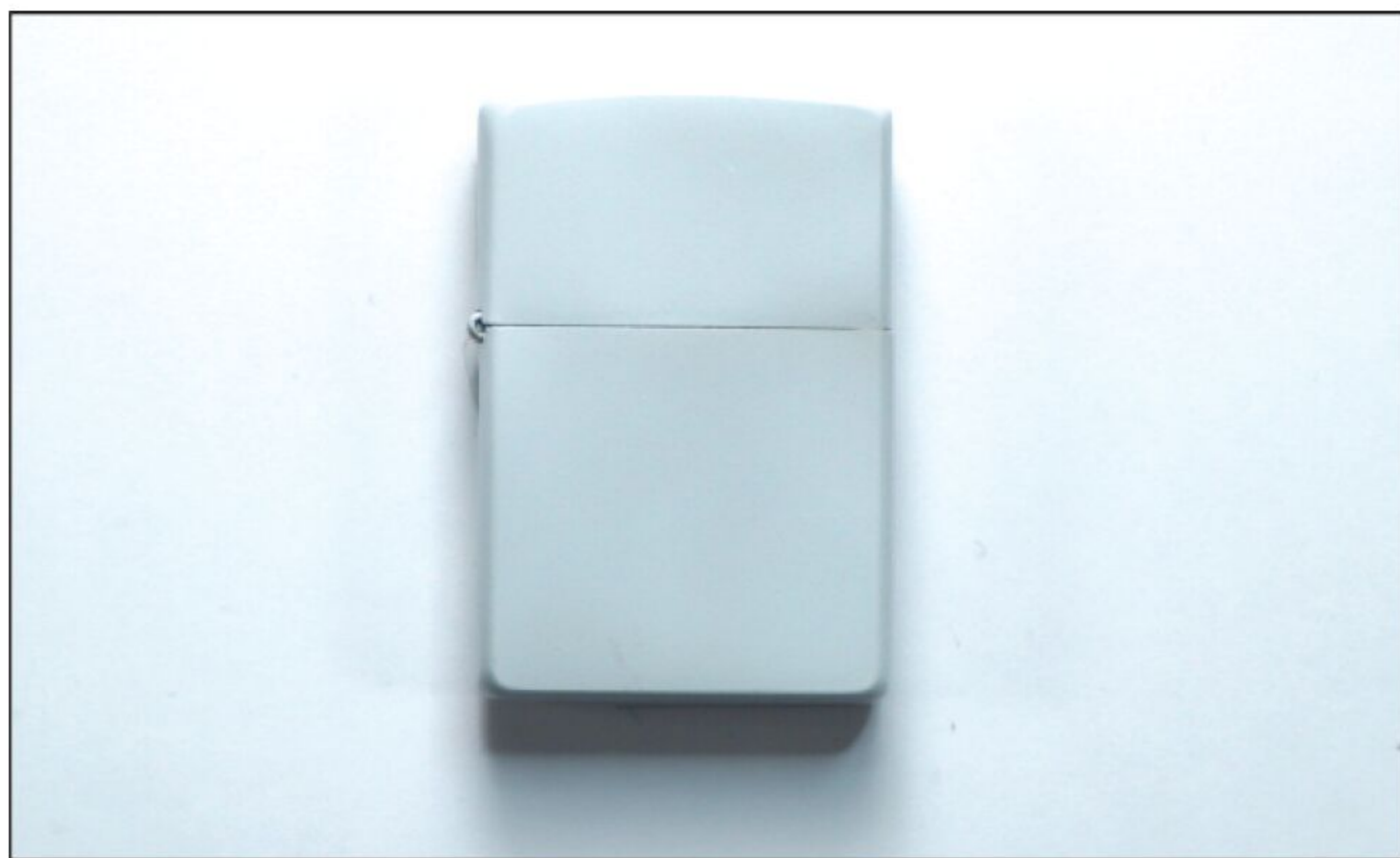
I start with an original Zippo from the Satin series, which is shiny on both sides. I sand it thoroughly with 220-grit sandpaper or similar. For faster results, I sometimes use a round sanding disc attached to an electric sander or rotary tool.



02 Primer

After thoroughly cleaning the Zippo, I apply a white two-component primer, which serves two purposes: it bonds

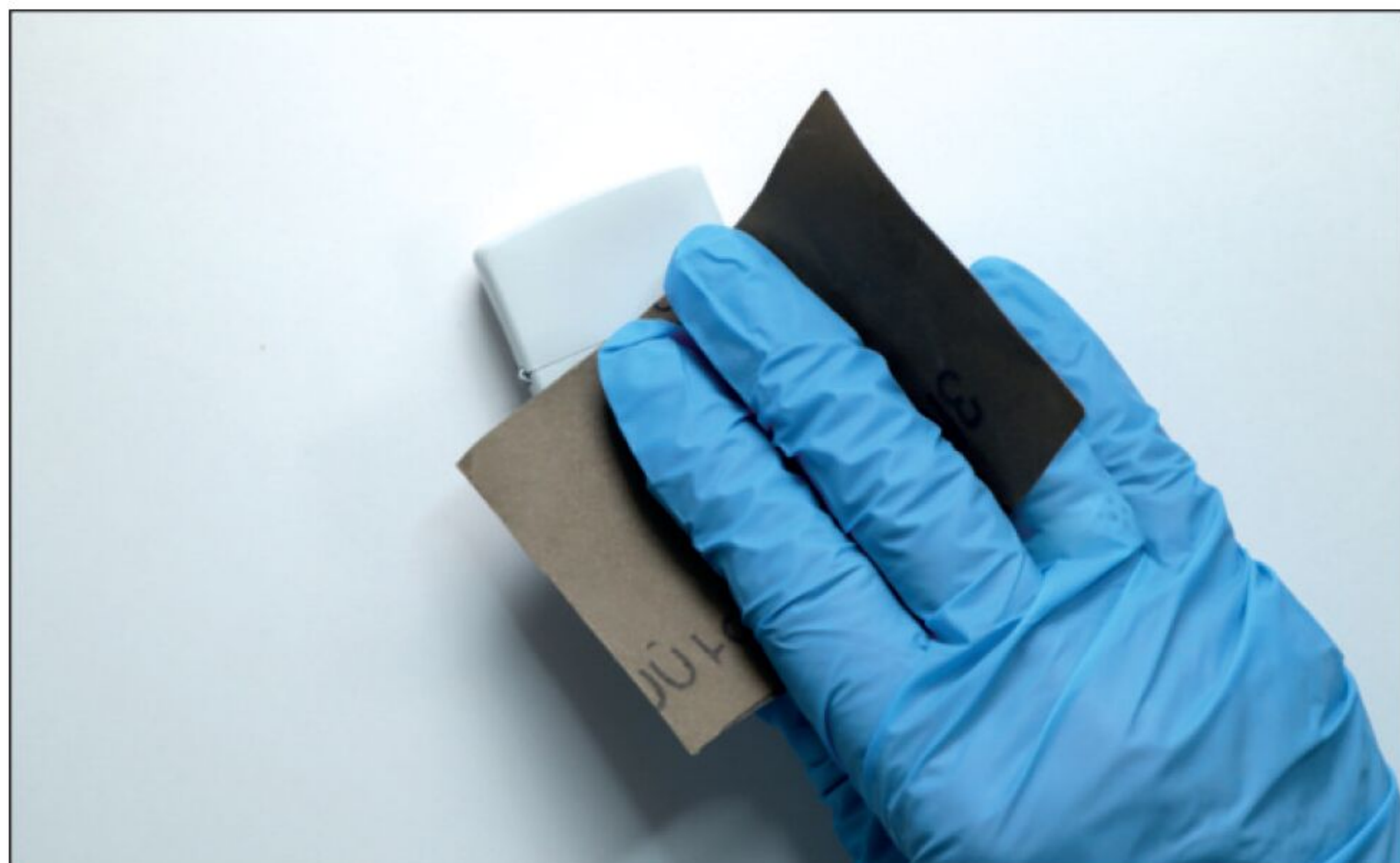
perfectly with the metal and saves me from having to apply a white primer for the airbrush work, as it is already white.



03 Sanding the primer

After applying the primer to the Zippo, I sand it lightly with fine sandpaper while it is still wet. I use 1000, 1200 or 1500 grit, depending on how smooth the primer is. If

you don't want any primer grains or unevenness, the surface must be as smooth as glass for high-quality airbrush work.



04 Clean the Zippo

Next, I thoroughly clean the Zippo with silicone remover to remove all residues.



05 Create a mask

I print out the reference image so that it is the perfect size for the Zippo. I transfer the outlines onto grey Ora-mask plotter film using graphite paper. Then I cut out the entire shape of the motif to be painted with the X-Acto knife and attach this mask to the surface of the Zippo.



06 Apply background

Then I started working on the background while the main motif was protected by the cut-out mask. I apply a light pastel colour with the airbrush, especially brown, which I have mixed with white to achieve an opaque colour with excellent coverage. Lighter, opaque base colours give you more control in the initial stages. I used two airbrushes for this project, a Paasche V1 and an Iwata High Performance Plus HP-SBP with a 0.2 mm nozzle, starting here with the Paasche airbrush.



07 Work out the texture

The background of the original design has a heavily edited, almost old texture. So I lightly sanded the airbrush paint to achieve this worn, weathered effect. I work organi-

cally (not too evenly) and add a little dark brown here and there to give the background more visual interest and depth.



08 Cut out skin areas

Using the same X-Acto knife and plotter masking film, I cut out the sections that will receive the skin tone in the next step.

**09** Skin and facial features

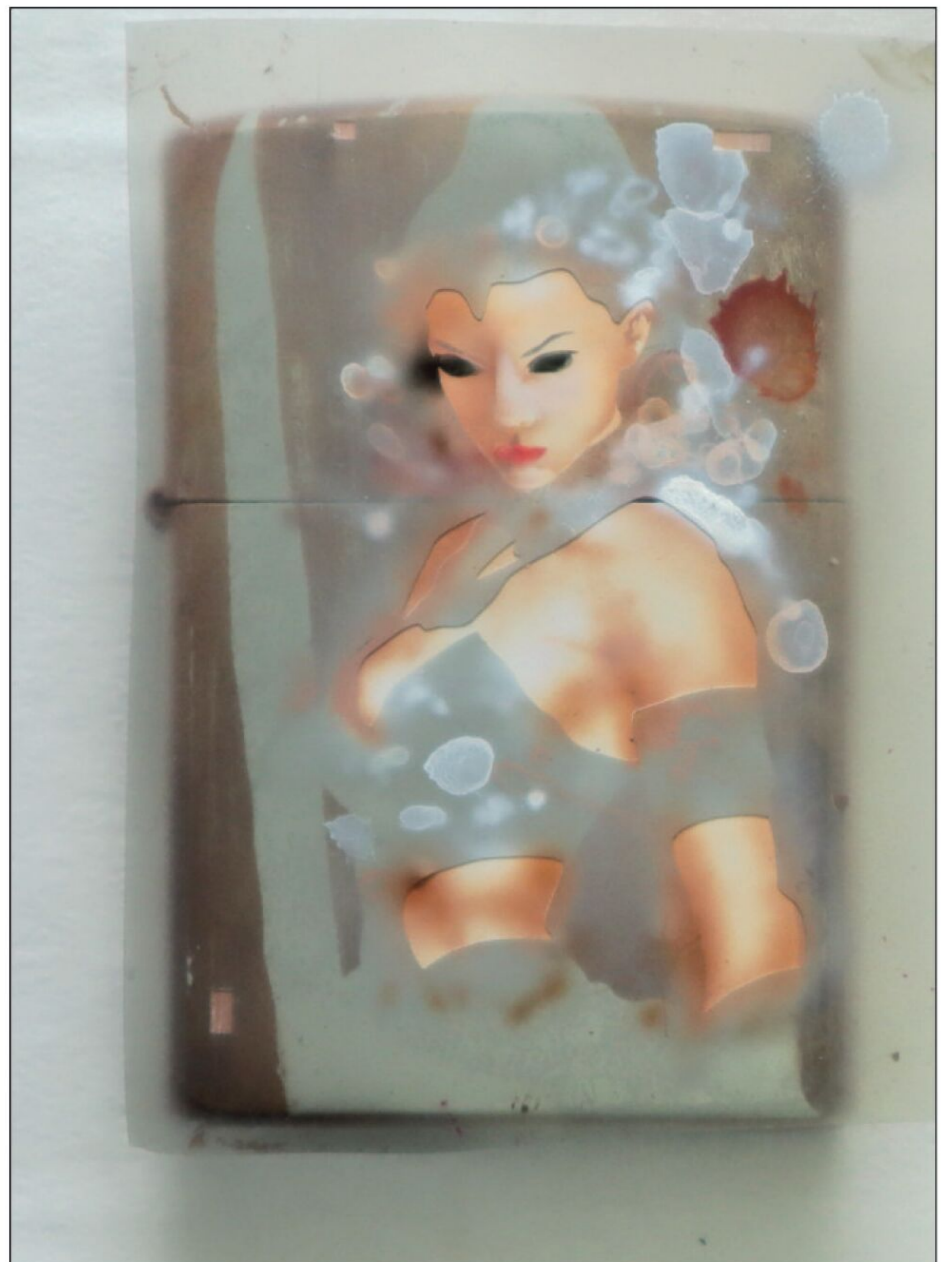
After applying a delicate flesh colour to the entire body and face with an airbrush, I cover the work with masking film and carefully cut out only the facial features – nose, mouth, eyes and eyebrows – to expose these areas for detailed work.

**10** Colours and shades

I spray the appropriate colours with the airbrush: a semi-opaque black for the eyebrows, white for the eyes and red for the lips. Then I remove the masking from the face and begin to build up darker areas all over the body with a slightly darker flesh tone. Remember that skin tones vary enormously and you can create countless variations. As this is a fantasy design, I use a natural flesh colour as a base.

**11** Refine the shapes

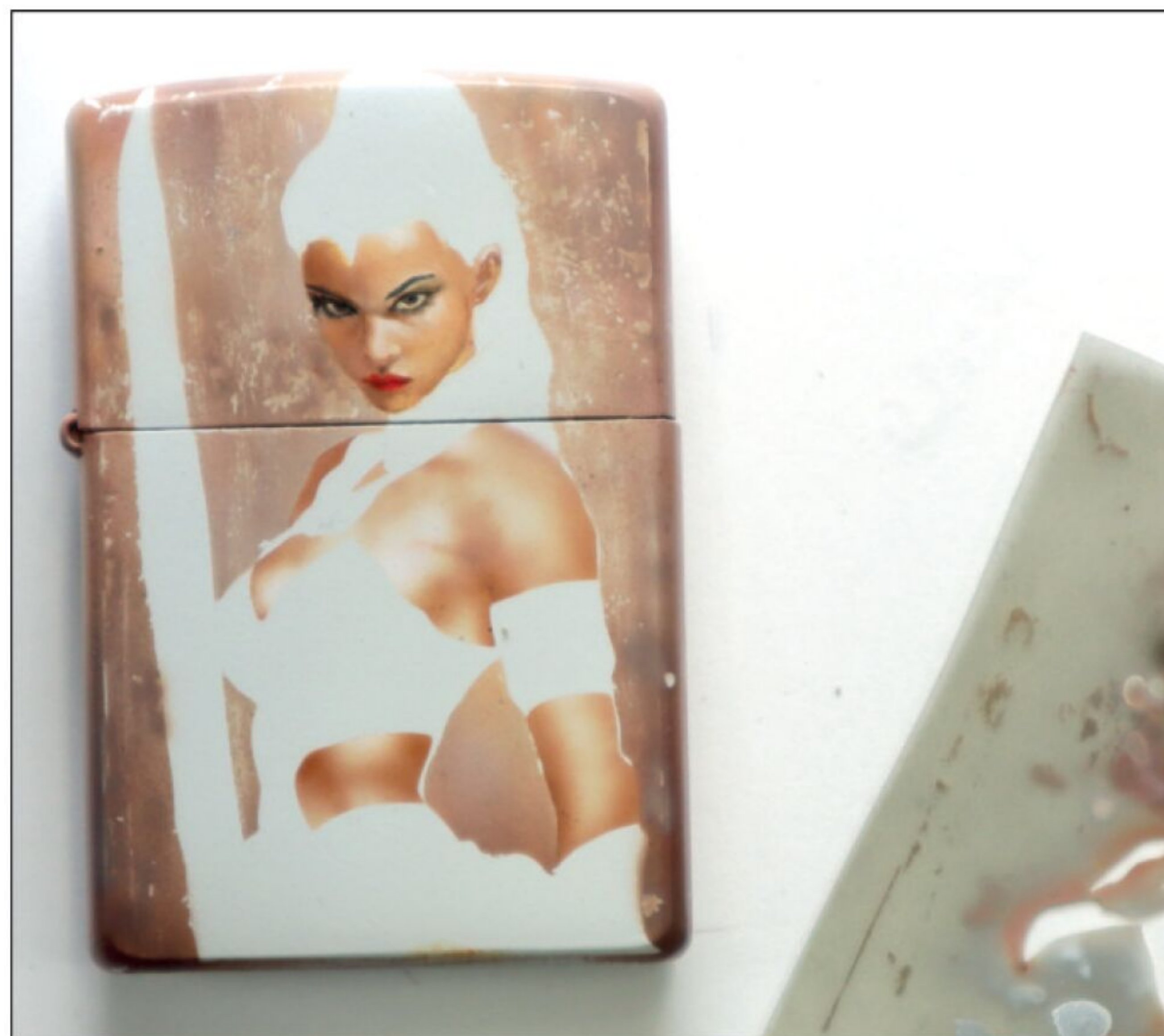
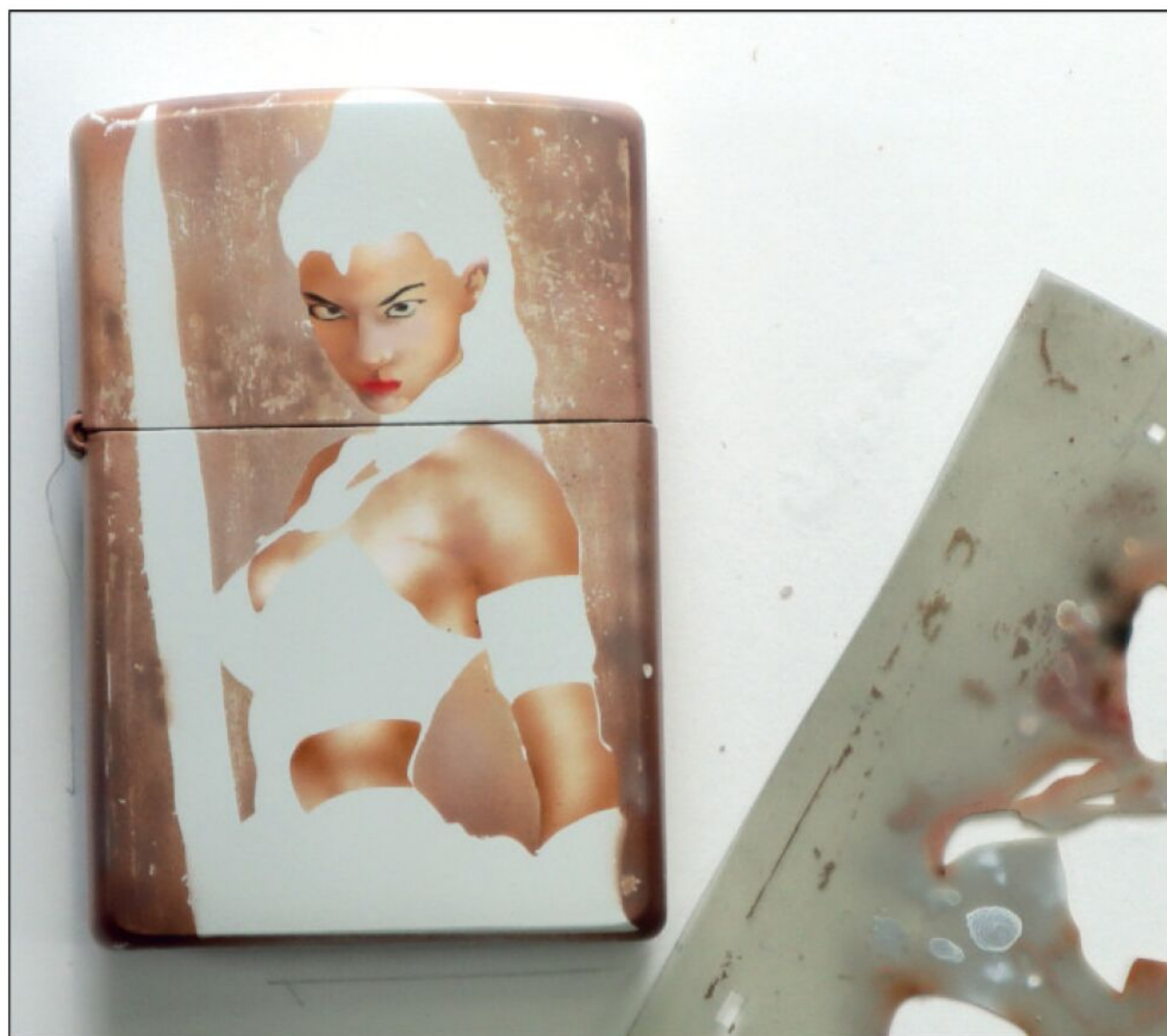
I reapply the mask to the face, cut out the eyelash lines precisely and apply them with semi-opaque black. I continue to build up the shadows on the body and then remove the masking film.



12 Don't worry!

Don't worry about any irregularities at this stage! We are still in the process of establishing the masking and base colours. All imperfections will be removed and the details will be refined at the end of the work. This is important

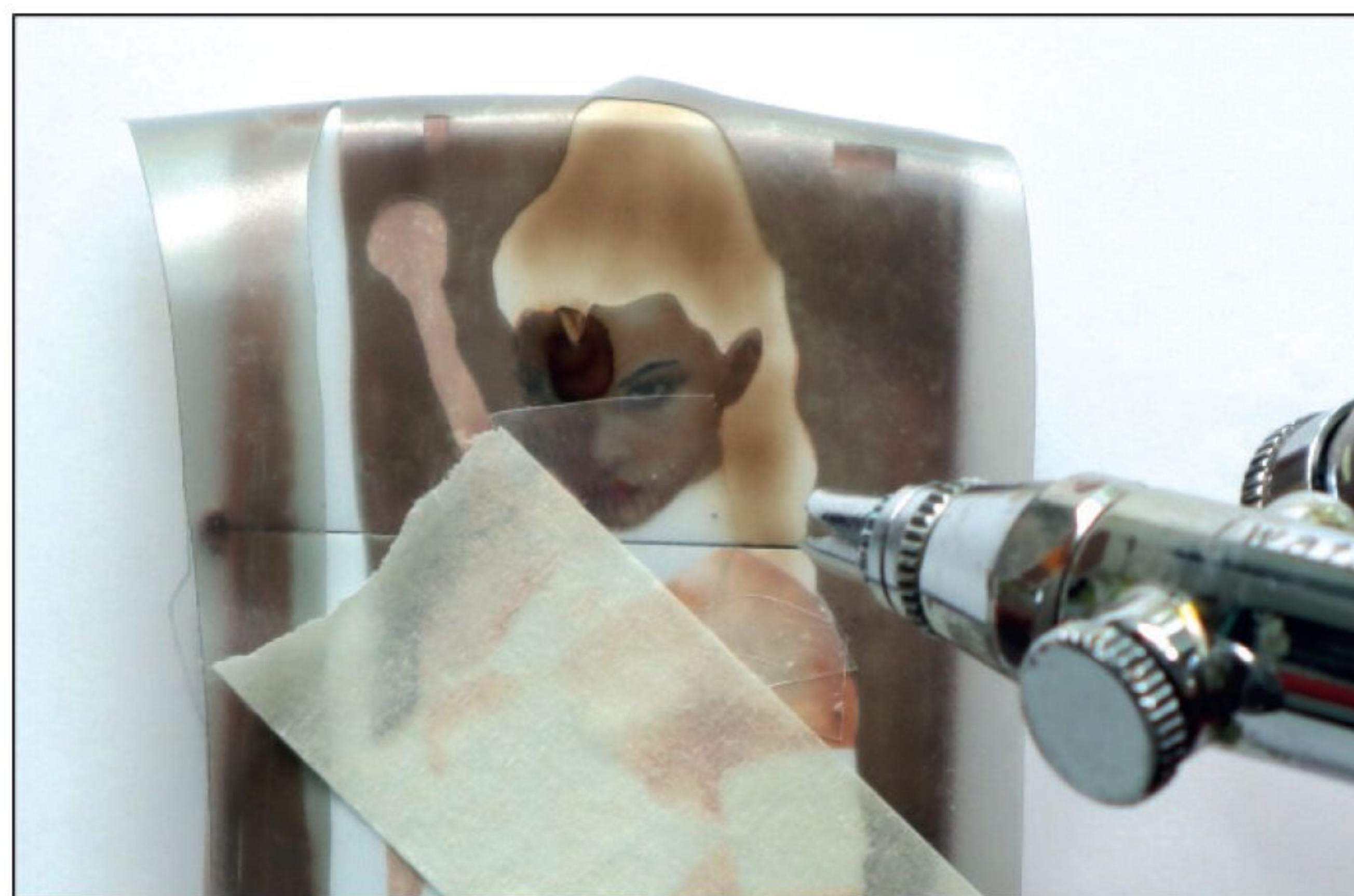
to understand – no one should get discouraged at this middle stage of the process. If you follow the right steps, the end result will be worth it.



13 Hair

I covered everything with masking film and only left the hair area open. I start with a light base colour. An important tip for beginners is to learn to paint with your airbrush, not just spray. I apply the airbrush strokes as if I were using a conventional brush, so that I don't just fill in the masked area evenly. That would look like a flat, dull coat of paint.

The masking foils serve two purposes: they form the shape boundary for our painting and protect the rest from overspray. Think of it this way: you have a hole in a piece of plastic, and the way you paint inside that hole makes all the difference. You have to paint deliberately and use your airbrush to create meaningful movements to make each area visually interesting.



14 Hair texture

Using the scalpel and eraser pencil, I add movement to highlight and texture strategic areas.



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15 Dark shading

I use masking again to protect the body while I continue to work on the darker areas. If necessary, I cut addi-

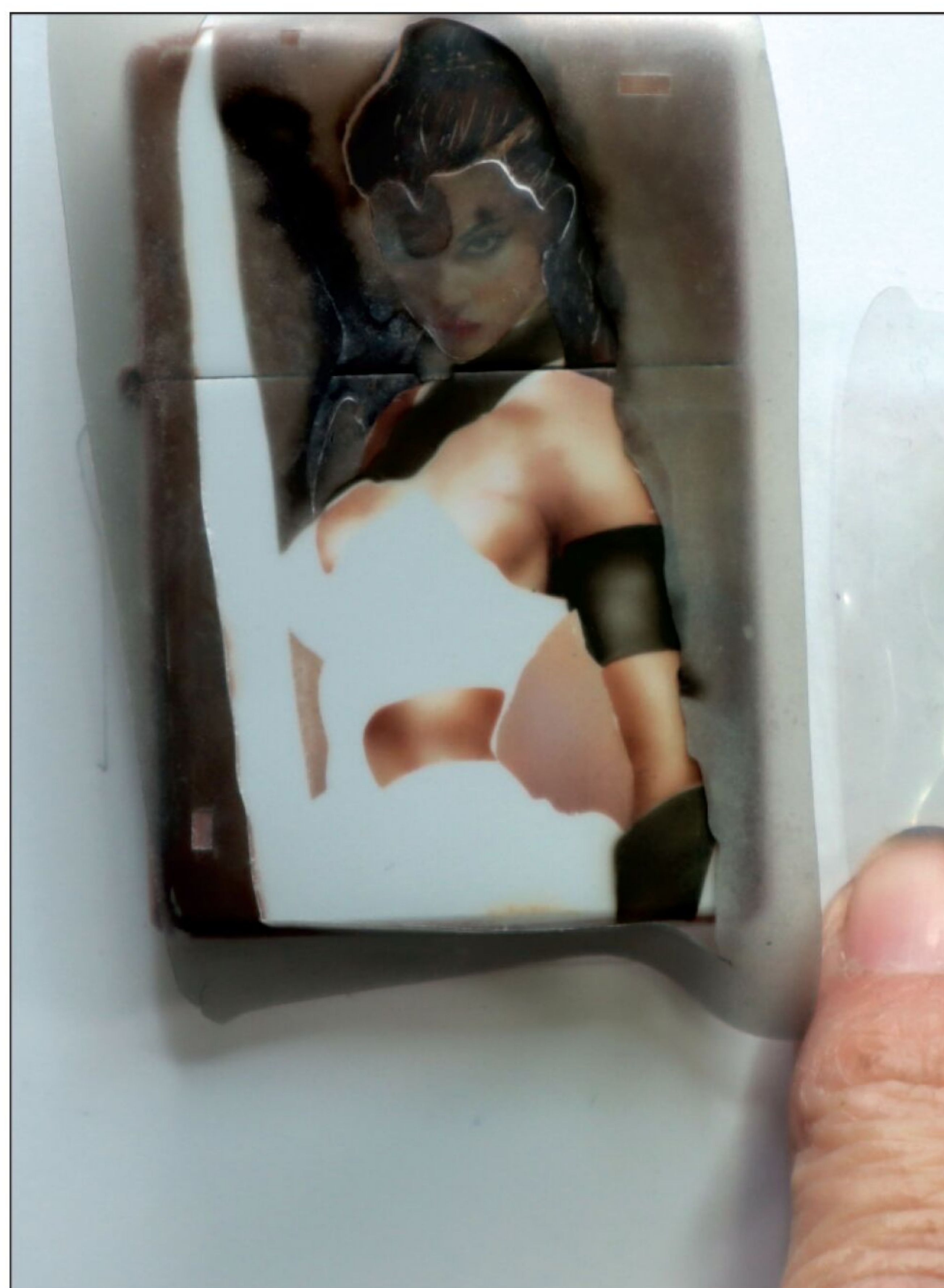
onal masks to create darker but precisely defined areas with clean edges.



16 Arm and neck jewellery

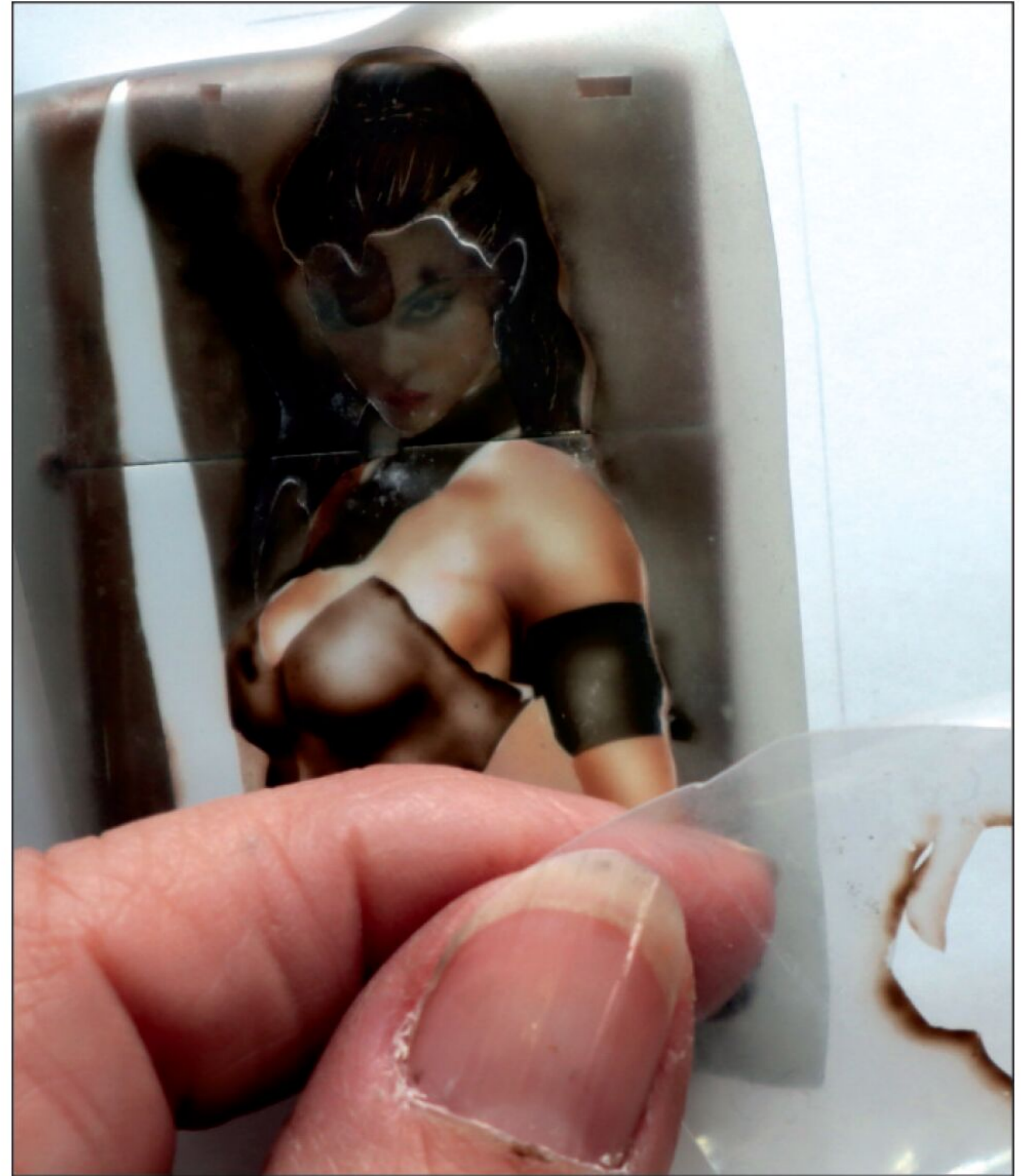
I cut out the neck and arm bracelet and arm guard elements and then airbrushed them with a fairly dark brown. As I've emphasised before, I work with the airbrush as I would

with a conventional brush – within the masked area, I don't just "spray" paint, I actually paint with intention and control.



17 Armour

I continue cutting out the remaining armour elements, including the sword hilt on the figure's back.



18 Adding highlights

Before turning my attention to the rest of the clothing, I use the eraser pencil to add highlights to the areas I have already airbrushed. This is important: you are not actually 'erasing' with this tool – you are creating texture, organic micro-details and subtle variations that prevent the surface from looking artificially flat.



19 Adjust the background area

Before tackling the last part of the outfit, I take advantage of general masking to protect the body and armour parts I've already finished and work on the background area between the arm and torso.



20 Clothing

Using the same system, I cut out the lower part of the outfit and airbrush it, carefully allowing the light to shine through in strategic places. I always use a gentle airbrush technique to build texture and bring movement to the figure.

Remember this golden rule: leaving an area completely flat is a sure-fire way to ruin an otherwise great airbrush painting.



21 Sword blade

For the sword blade, I first cut out the entire shape and then divided it into sections. I airbrushed the side that catches the light very delicately with minimal paint, while the

shadow side was worked in much more detail with darker tones to create depth and contrast.



22 Blade texture

I used the eraser pencil again to create a realistic texture and light reflections in the blade. These small details make metal surfaces look convincing.



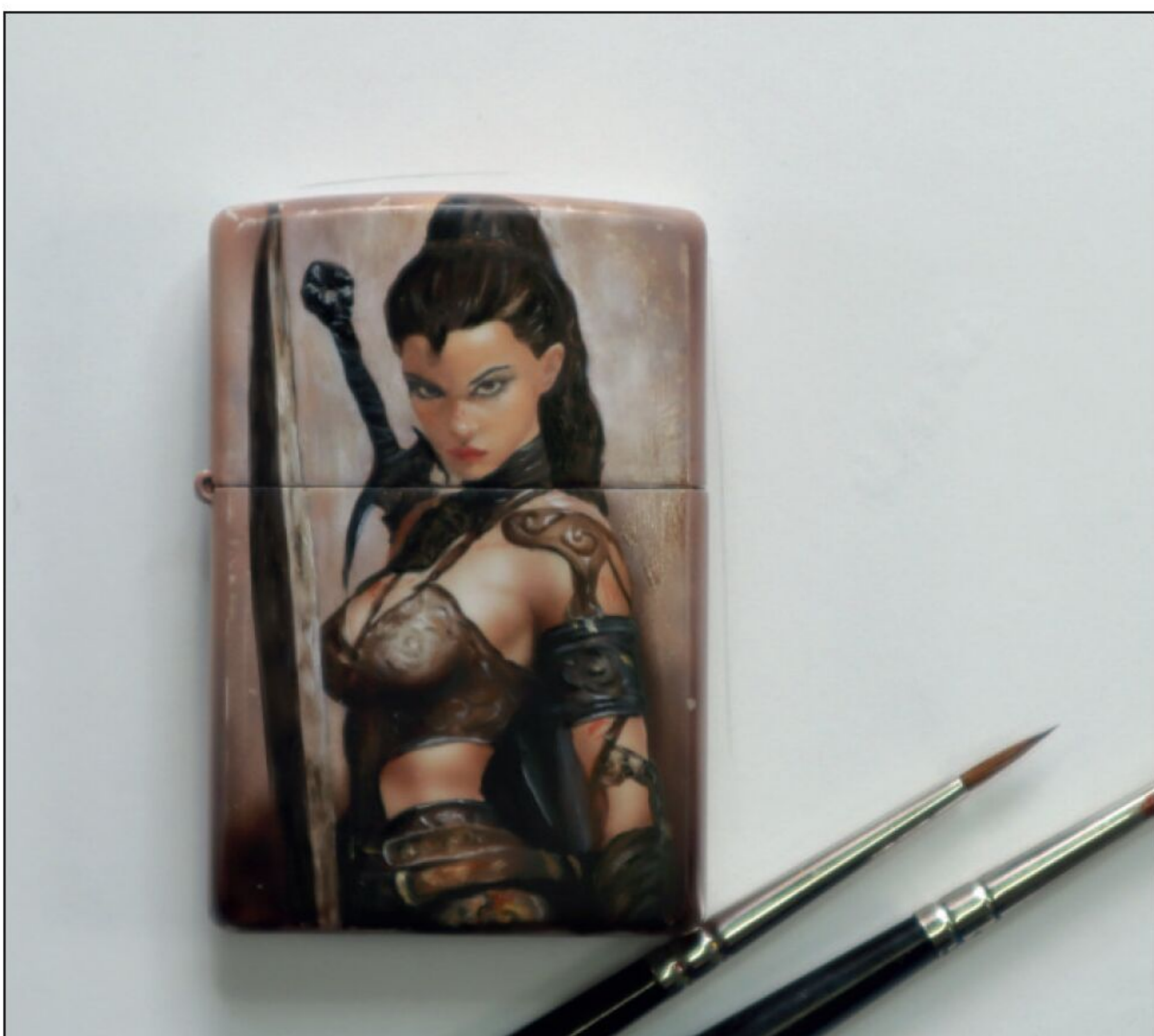
23 Optimise the background

I use the original full-screen mask again to protect all the work I've done so far. This allows me to further refine the background, which may have gotten a little oversprayed during the detailed work, or because I want to add additional gradient effects for more visual interest.



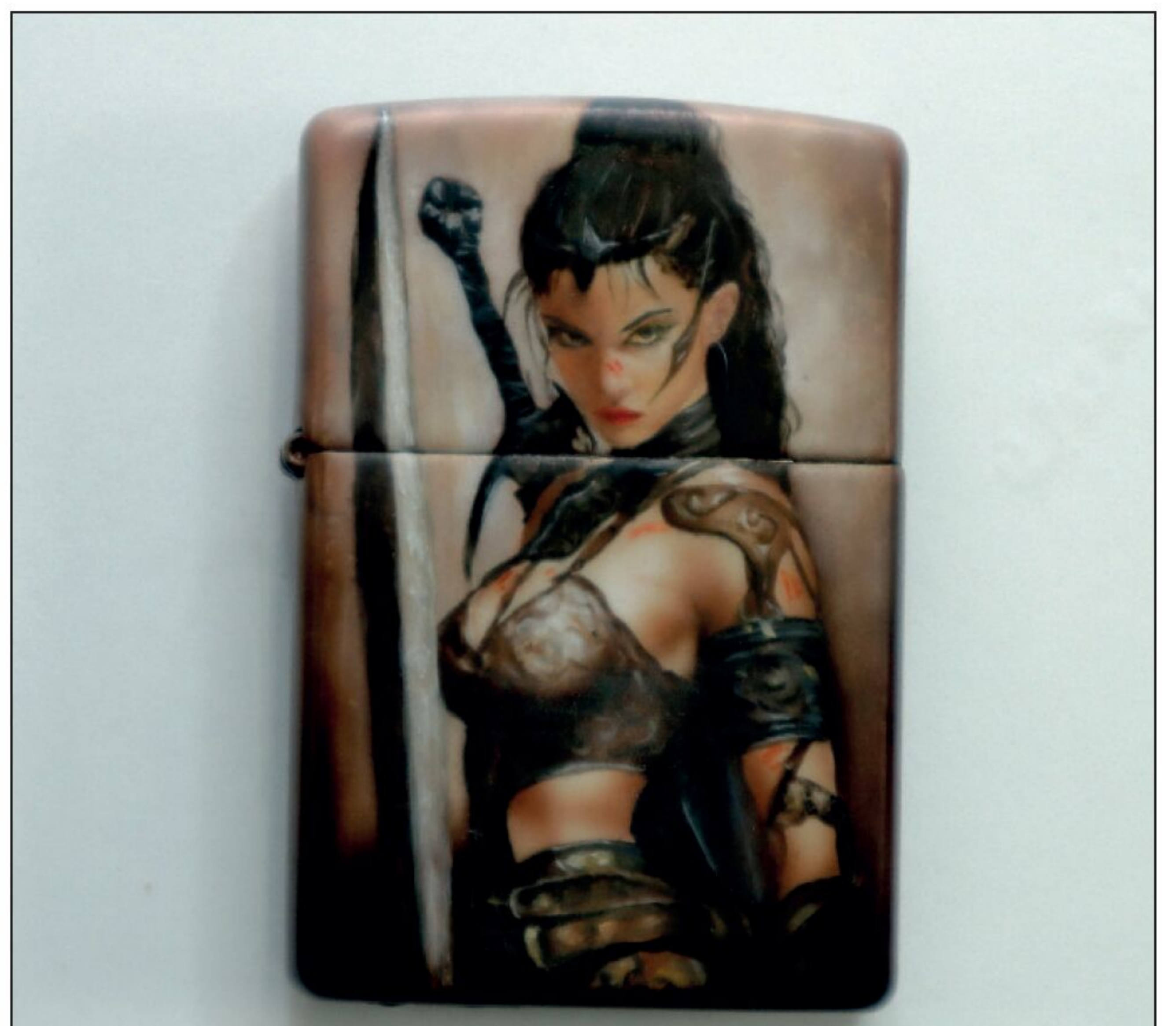
24 Brushwork

Now comes the crucial detail work. I switch to traditional brushes – fine 2-inch brushes – and use acrylic paints to refine all the smaller details and touch up any imperfections. This traditional brushwork adds an extra level of precision that is difficult to achieve with an airbrush alone.



25 Finished design without clear coat

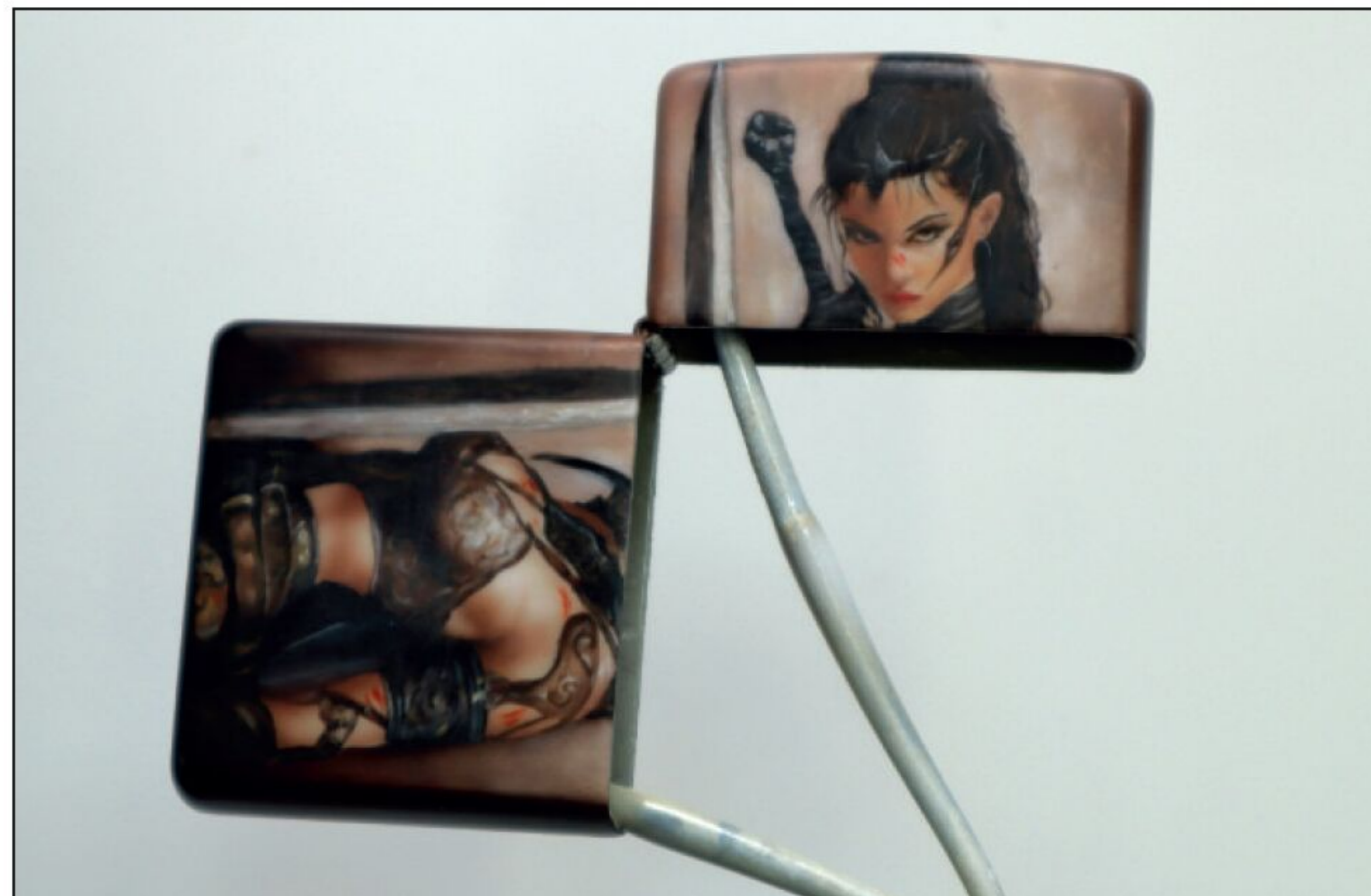
At this stage, the artwork looks a little flat and undefined due to the different layers of paint overlapping. Don't worry – this is normal! The artwork will change dramatically and become bright, vibrant and clear once the final coat of clear coat has been applied.



26 Clearcoating

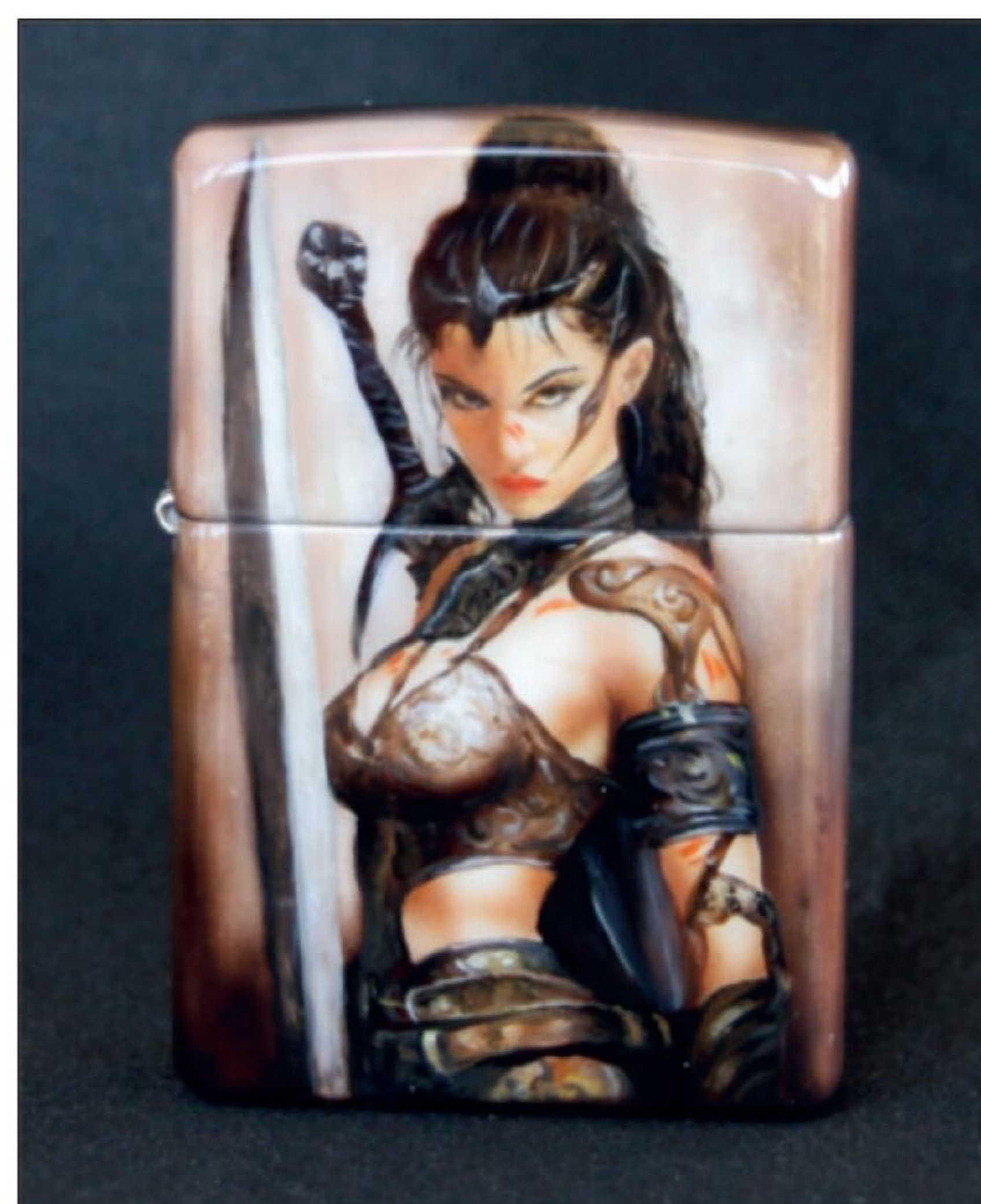
I coat the back of the lighter with black paint and attach a small hook so I can hang it up while applying the final coat of clear coat. For this crucial final step, I use PPG D880

two-component automotive clear coat, which I apply with an Iwata LPH80 spray gun – this professional equipment ensures a flawless finish.



27 Polishing to perfection

The final step is to polish to perfection. Once the Zippo has completely cured in the spray booth, I carefully wet sand it with 2000-grit paper and then use professional-grade 3M polishing compounds to achieve the glass-like, mirror-like shine that really shows off the airbrush work. I hope you enjoyed this simple step-by-step guide.



LORENA STRAFFI



Italian artist Lorena Straffi has been airbrushing since 1988 and professionally since 1990. The transition from hobby to profession was a natural development, driven by her deep passion for airbrushing. Her journey began with painting helmets, motorcycles and cars before expanding her work to companies where she led a team of airbrush artists. Together, they designed a wide range of products, from Malaguti scooters to Ducati tanks, Colnago carbon fibre bicycles, Saeco coffee machines and many others. Over time, she became interested in painting smaller and more valuable objects, from collectible Zippo lighters and luxury pens to fine jewellery. Together with her British husband John Dillon, Lorena mainly creates limited editions for high-end luxury brands. A few years ago, they also opened an airbrush school in the heart of Italy's Motor Valley, just five minutes from Lamborghini. Their courses are held in Italian and English.

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2025

SKATE DECK
PAINT CONTEST



SKATE DECK PAINT CONTEST

Coast Airbrush

For the first time since 2008, American airbrush retailer Coast Airbrush held another "Skate Deck Paint Contest" in December. The three winners impressed with their creative designs and perfect use of the required paint spectrum. From photorealistic design elements to classic automotive painting effects, they showcased the entire repertoire of airbrush techniques.

Chris Garcia



Jesse Spooner



Ron Espinosa



THE WINNERS

1st place

Mitchell Johnson
@airbrushaholic1

Freelance airbrush artist for custom and automotive painting

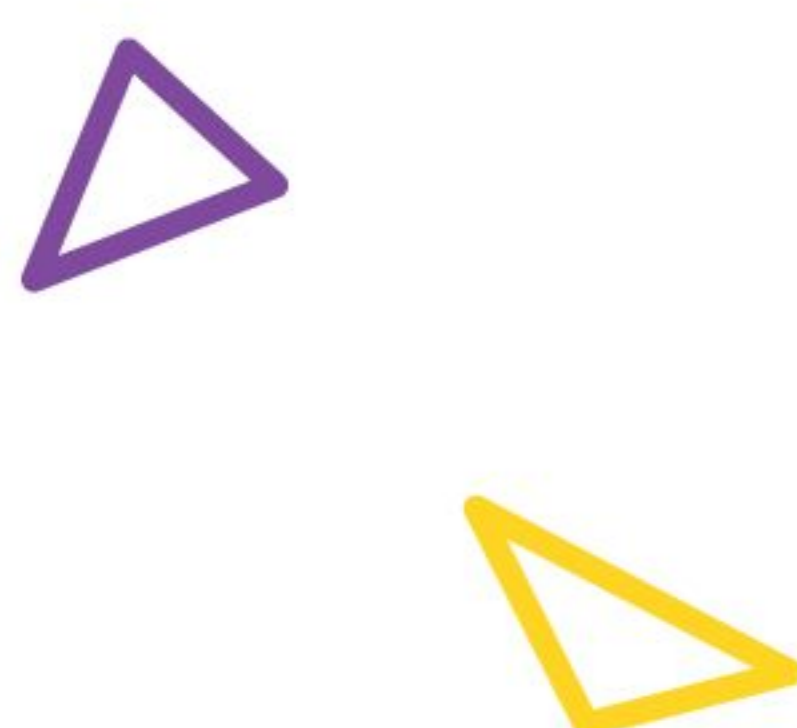
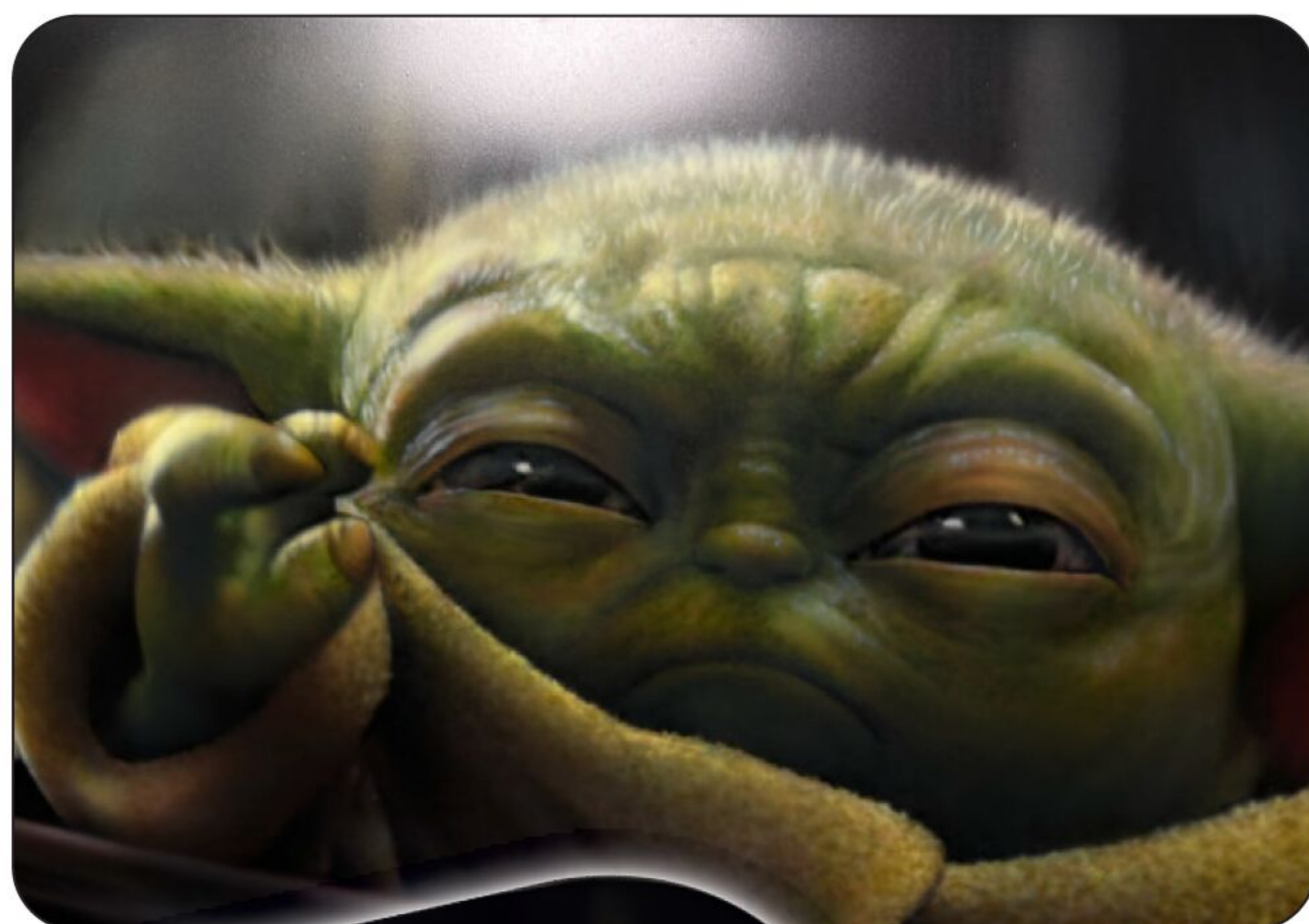
The board:

In the opinion of the jury, the design has everything that airbrushing is all about: foreground and background, in and out of focus creates depth, and the glow of light brings Grogu to life.

Paints used:

House of Kolor: S2-25 Jet Black, BC01 Solar Gold, PBC38 Limetime, KK14 Spanish Gold, S2-00 Trans Nebulae, UC21 Universal Acrylic Urethane Klear, RU311 Reducer.

Createx Colors: 4220 Deep Black, W089 Cream, 4601 Candy Pig. Yellow, 0065 Yellow Ochre, W030 Wicked White, 0014 Wicked Grey, 4213 Process Blue, 0004 Wicked Orange, 4204 Chrome Yellow, 0074 Burnt Sienna, 4237 Apple Green, 4206 Flame Red, 0022 Fluorescent Red, 0063 Carmine, 0010 Wicked Brown, 4012/4021/4020 Reducers, 4030 Balancing Clear, 4050 Gloss UVLS Clear.



2nd place

Edward Martinez
@airplayairbrush

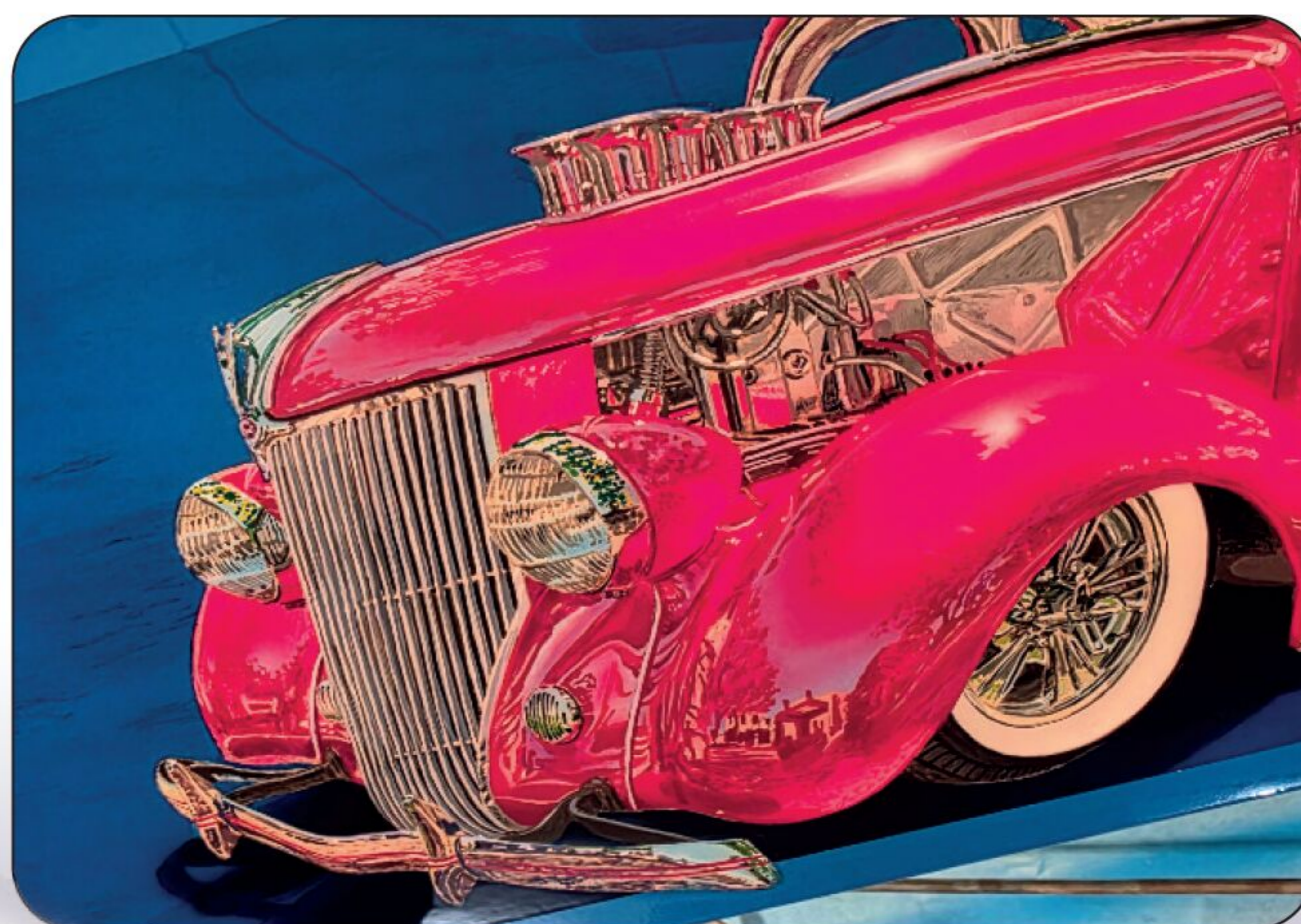
Has been airbrushing for 25 years, taught himself airbrushing and is a professional artist. In addition to airbrushing, he also creates wood and metal art.

The board:

Edward photographed the car he painted, which comes from Gilroy, California, himself at the 2025 Santa Maria Cruisin Nationals. Even though there wasn't enough time for the planned pinstriping, the design of the car with its complex reflections completely won over the jury.

Materials used:

House of Kolor, tapes from FBS, 3M, and Hydrobond, pinstriping brushes from Mack (Tidwell) and Kafka, Iwata spray guns and airbrushes W-100, RG-2, CM-C, HP-TH. Compressor: SILENT-AIR DUAL HEAD.



3rd place

Eric Sniadoski

@snick_01, www.spawk.co

Pinstriping artist, artist for hand-painted signs, wall design, motorcycle parts, and other objects.

The board:

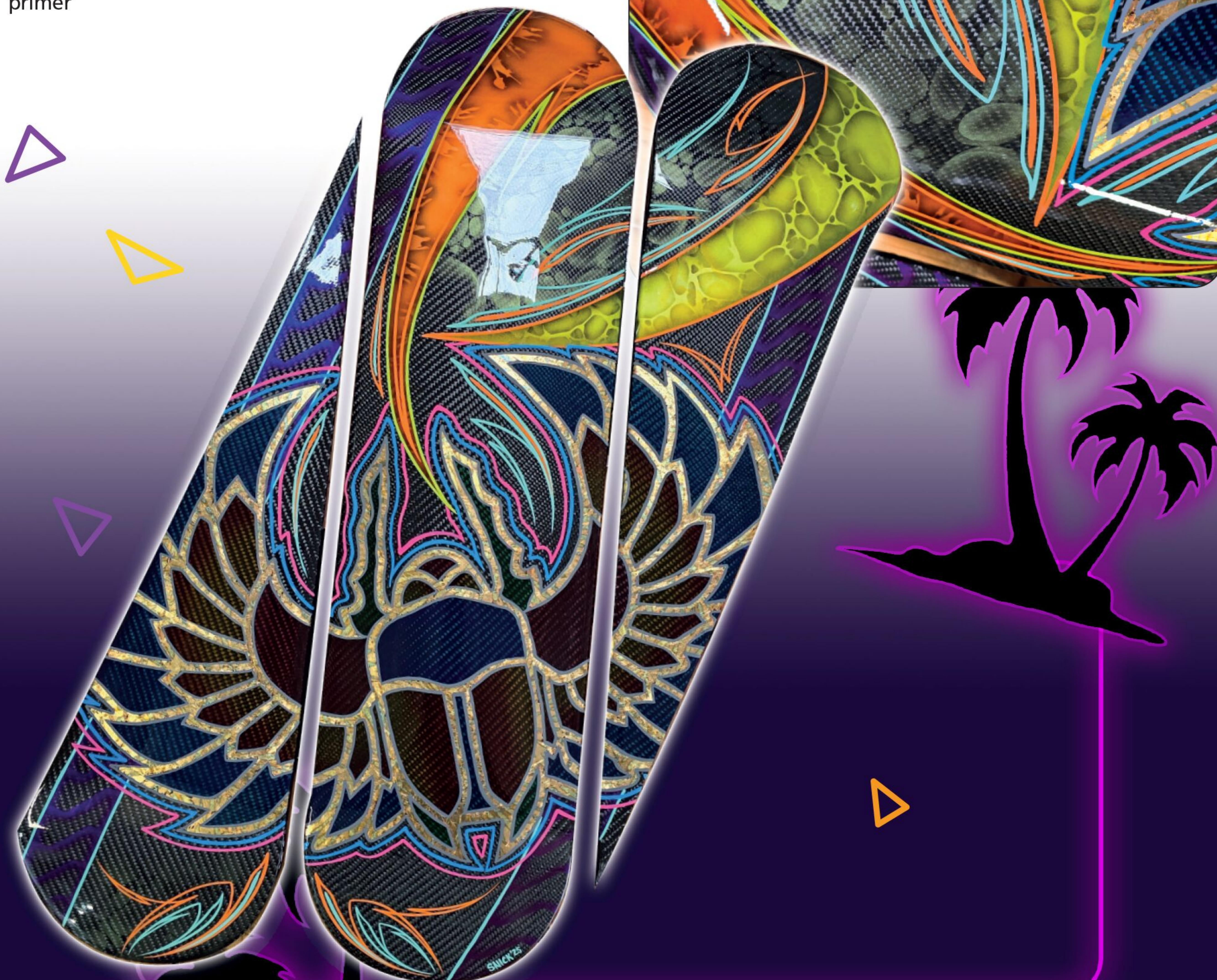
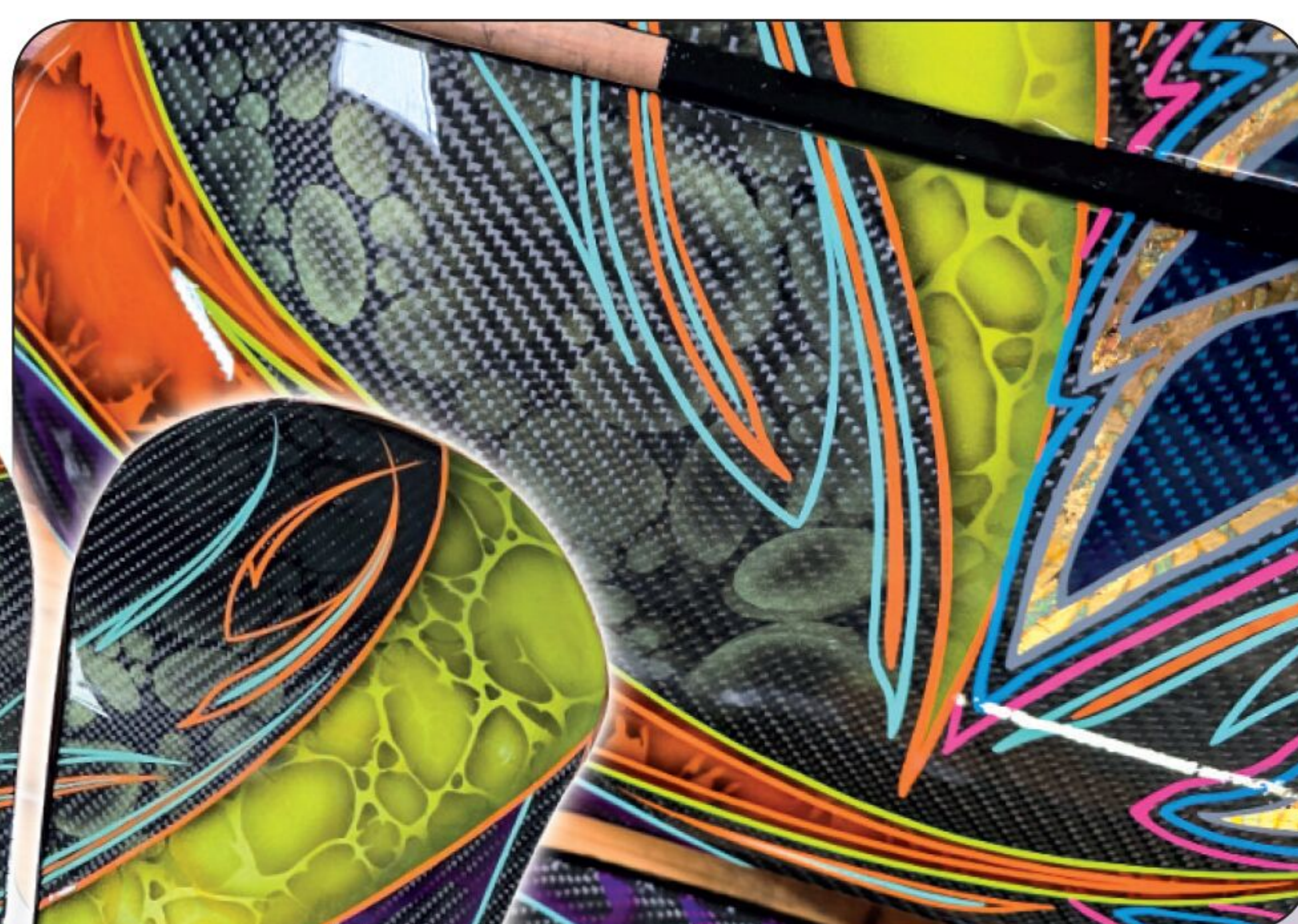
Eric transformed two skate decks into a work of art by splitting one board in two and arranging it with the second to form a trapezoidal triptych. He covered the surface of the boards with carbon fiber to create more possibilities for texture and color design.

Paints used:

House of Color: Orion Silver, Tangerine Kandy, Oriental Blue, Lime Gold Kandy, Candy Apple Red, Organic Green Kandy, Pagan Gold Kandy, Don Juan Rose, Green Go, UC21 Clear

Materials used:

Iwata LPH80, FBS tapes and masking, gold leaf, 1shot pinstriping paint, Alphanamel UV Clear, Mack brushes, Von Dano pro-series striping sword, Bulldog primer, India's abrasives, Dux primer



THE CONTEST

Airbrush artists had around 5 weeks to submit their skateboard designs to Coast Airbrush. The boards had to be purchased directly from Coast Airbrush, and another requirement was the use of paints or products from the House of Kolor, Createx, Lumilor, and/or Flake King brands. Three high-resolution photos were sufficient for the preliminary selection. The top 12 boards were then examined in person by the Coast Airbrush jury.

The central evaluation criterion was ultimately the effective use of color and supporting brands, but of course composition, innovation, execution, and creativity were also taken into account.

THE PRIZES

The Skate Deck Paint Contest was supported by brands such as Iwata, Createx, FBS, Trulers, Mack Brush, Anest Iwata, House Of Kolor, Lumilor, Skateboard Connection, and CSI. Accordingly, the winners were delighted to receive huge product packages related to airbrushing, which they were able to pick up in person at an open house event at Coast Airbrush on February 1.

Coast Airbrush

2025 SKATE DECK PAINT CONTEST

NOVEMBER 1ST - DECEMBER 15TH

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JUDGING CRITERIA
WINNERS WILL BE SELECTED BASED ON:
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 • STRONG COMPOSITION
 • USE OF SPONSORED BRANDS
 • UNIQUENESS & INNOVATION
 • OVERALL BAD-ASSERY

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS
ENTRIES MUST INCLUDE:
 • A LIST OF COLORS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS USED
 • THREE HIGH-RESOLUTION PHOTOS OF THE FINISHED DECK (SUBMITTED BY 12/15/25)

SUBSTRATE & JUDGING
 • JUDGING BY COAST AIRBRUSH AND A GUEST ARTIST PANEL (TBA)
 • ALL SKATE DECKS MUST BE PURCHASED THROUGH COAST AIRBRUSH

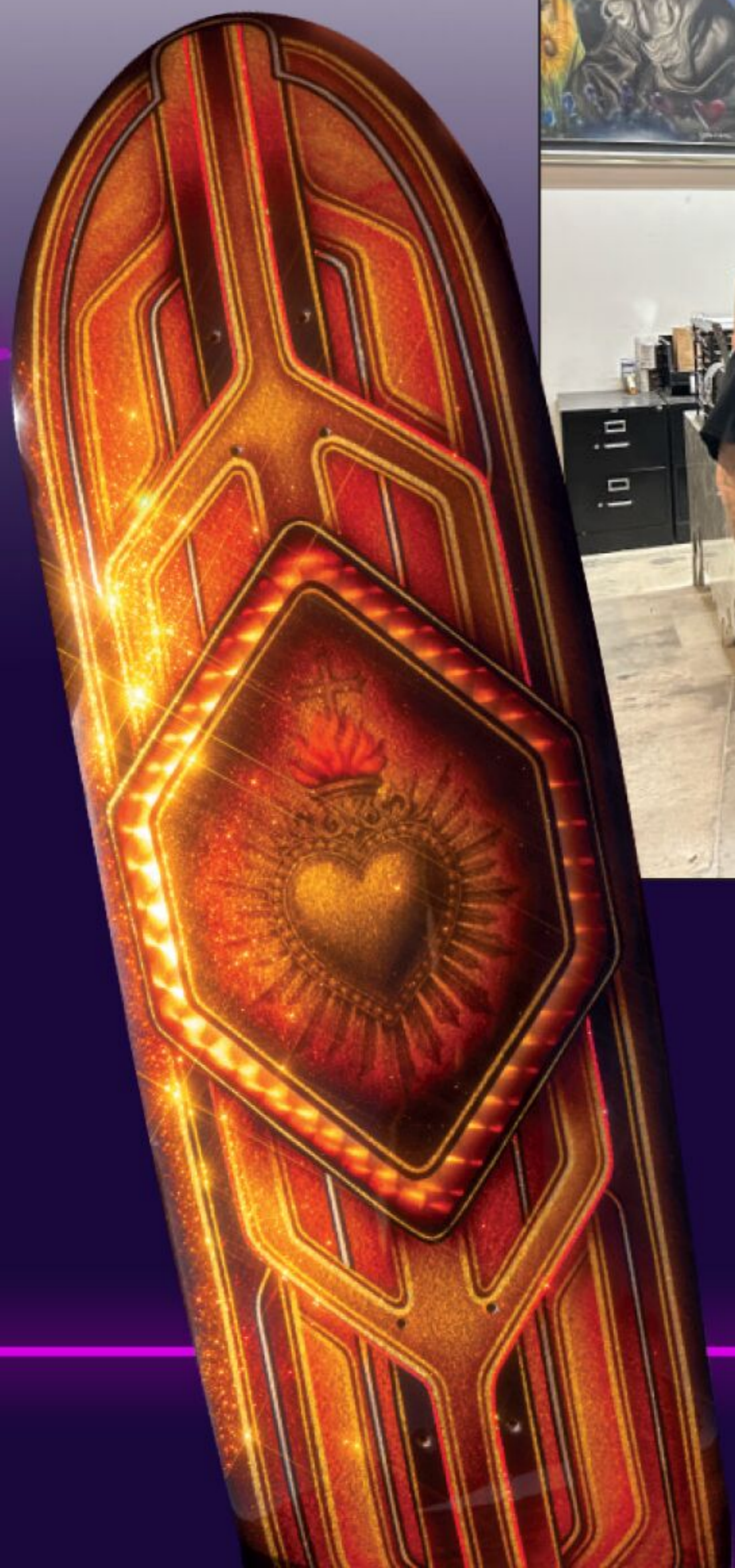
*[SPECIFIC DECK SIZE REQUIRED FOR DISPLAY AND PROMOTIONAL USE]

**1. GET YOUR BOARD
2. GET TO PAINTING
3. ENTER TO WIN!**

SPONSORS INCLUDE:
 MACK, iwata, Flake King, newart, SK8BRD, trulers, FBS, Lumilor, CREATEX, HOUSE OF KOLOR, CSI, ANEST IWATA



Isaac Espinoza



Jason Roofe



OTHER TOP BOARDS IN THE COMPETITION

Jason Roofe, Jeff Simon, Jesse Spooner, Mike Flores, Ron Espinosa, Tristan Koepfli, Vincent Luquin, Isaac Espinosa, Chris Garcia.

SKATE DECK PAINT CONTEST 2026

Following the huge success of the competition, shop owner David Monnig has already announced a sequel. Dates have not yet been set, but the rules are to remain the same.

All information can be found on the Coast Airbrush website and social media accounts.

www.coastairbrush.com

<https://www.facebook.com/coastairbrush>

www.instagram.com/coastairbrush

Jeff Simon



Mike Flores



Tristan Koepfli



Vincent Luquin





From stencils to stickers: hobby cutting plotters at a glance (market, technology, differences, and purchase criteria)



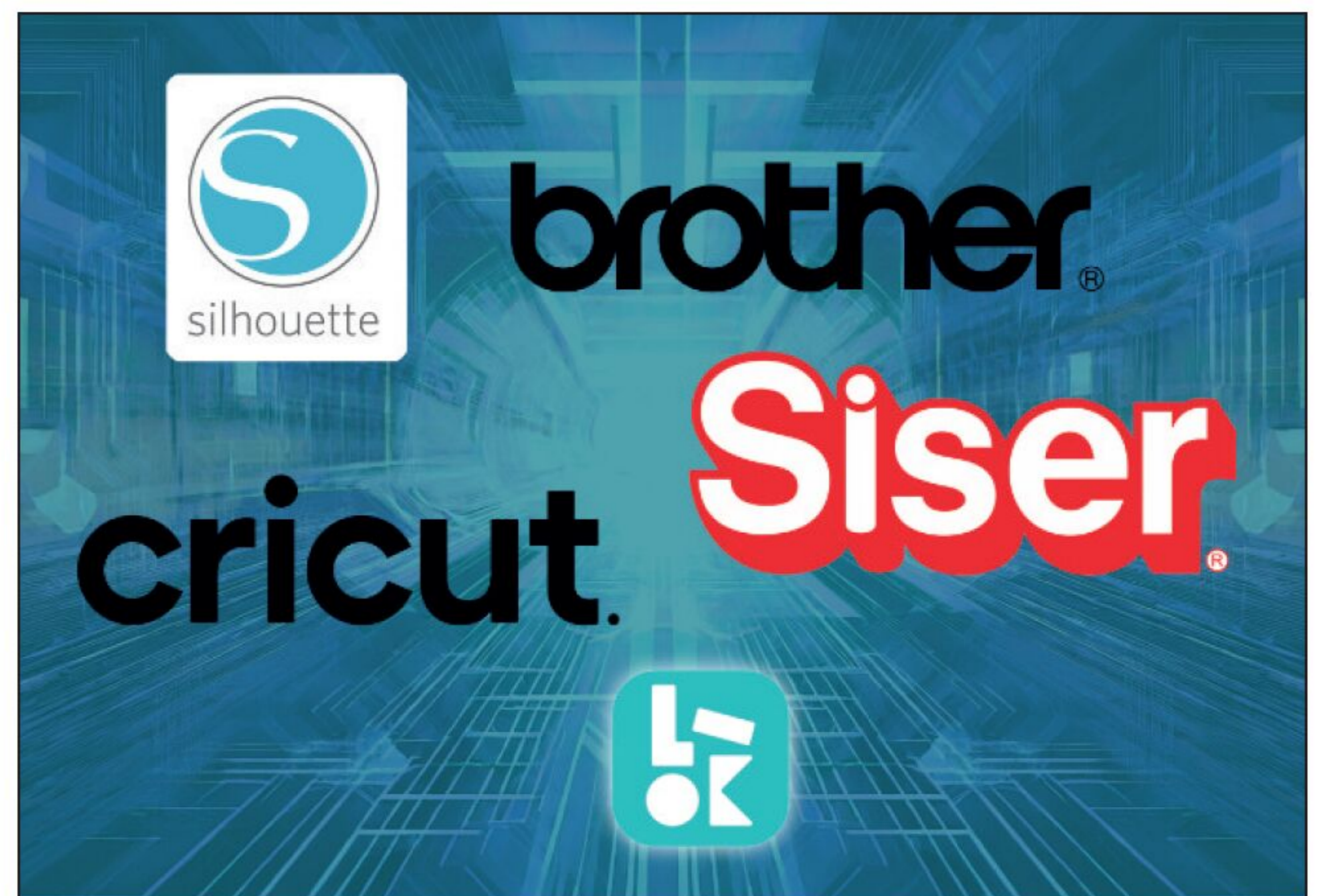
In addition to color gradients, working with stencils is another feature of airbrush technology. Stencils create edges, help beginners, and speed up the work process. Of course, you can cut a lot yourself with a scalpel, but when it comes to harder materials such as Mylar, cutting lettering is necessary, or the planned masking is simply too complex, then a cutting plotter is indispensable. This article highlights the current generations of devices, their technical differences, software concepts, features, typical price ranges, and application scenarios. We also show you how to get started with the plotter software, how to operate the devices, and how to create your own stencils.

Brands and development

In recent years, cutting plotters have evolved from complex lettering machines used in the advertising industry to versatile creative tools for everyone. What was once primarily intended for cutting films for advertising lettering on signs, shop windows, and vehicles is now used for textile finishing, model making, sticker production, prototyping, and even small series production. The market for hobby cutting plotters is correspondingly dynamic, with a clear focus on the two American manufacturers Silhouette and Cricut, the Japanese brand Brother, LOKLiK from China, and Siser from Italy.

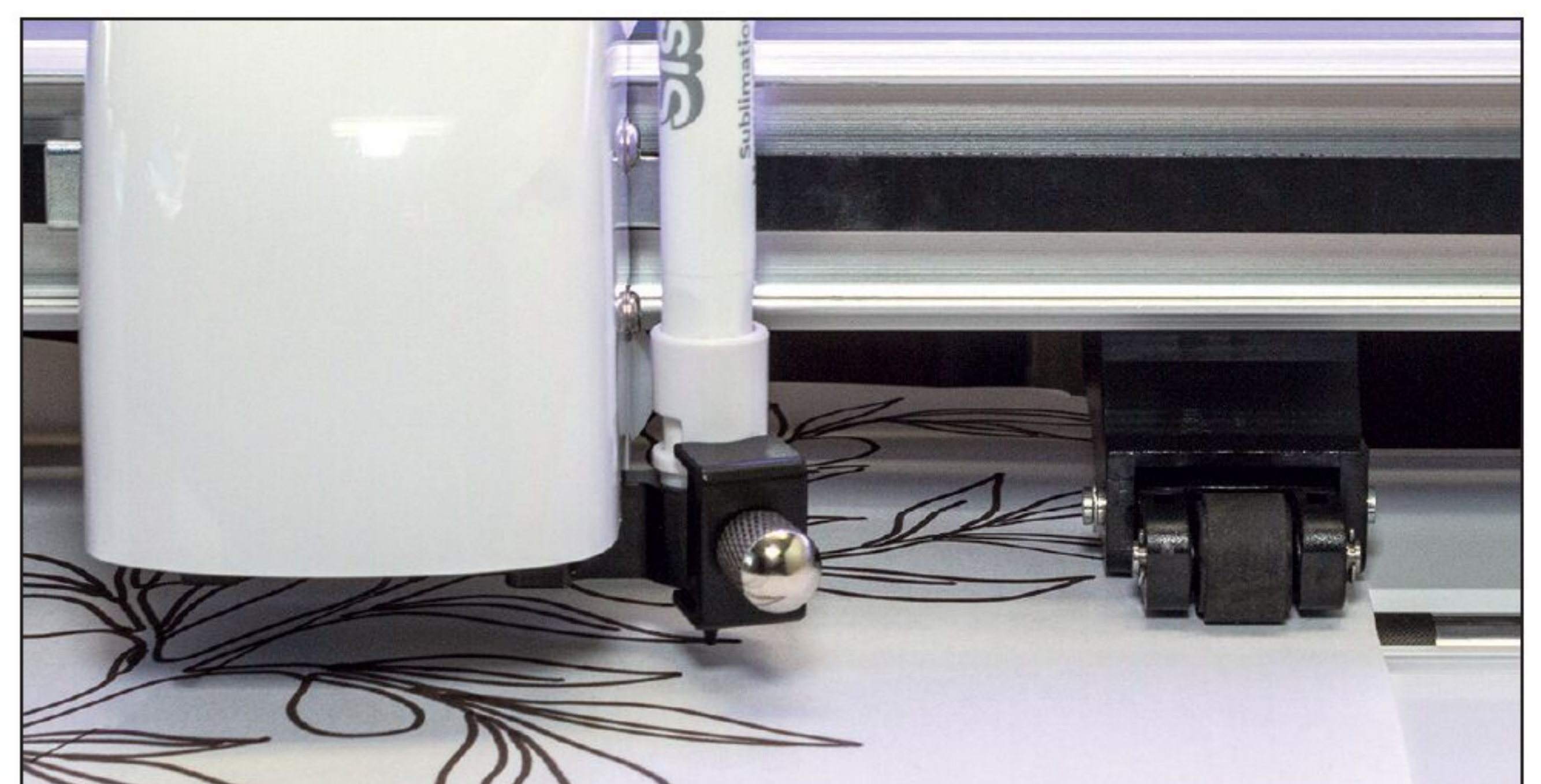
Range of functions: What modern hobby plotters can do

Basically, all of the devices considered here work on the same principle: a computer-controlled knife moves over the material and cuts shapes, text, or contours. However, the differences lie in the details – especially in cutting power, precision, material diversity, and additional functions. As a general rule, however, plotters with narrower cutting surfaces are less expensive. In other words, the wider the cutting surface, the more expensive the plotter. Hobby plotters usually use cutting mats on which the material to be cut is applied, but they also generally have the option of plotting from a roll. In terms of precision, all plotters are equally good and work extremely accurately. Compared to professional plotters, however, they are slightly slower.



While simple plotters mainly process paper, vinyl, and thin films, more powerful models are now also capable of cutting thicker cardboard, magnetic film, leather, fabric, or special transfer materials. Some devices also support drawing, embossing, or engraving tools, which significantly expands the creative scope.

Another important feature is print and cut: the precise cutting out of previously printed designs. This is where the systems differ significantly – both in terms of technical implementation and workflow. For example, you can use your own designs to create your own stickers.



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Silhouette: Maximum freedom and powerful software

Silhouette has been one of the most versatile suppliers in the hobby segment for years. Devices such as the Portrait, Cameo, and Cameo Pro series cover a wide range of applications, from beginner to semi-professional use.

A key feature is the Silhouette Studio software. Even the free basic version offers extensive functions for design, vectorization, and editing. Extensions can be purchased on a modular basis, for example, for advanced path editing or direct import from professional graphics programs.

Silhouette plotters score highly in technical terms with:

- a wide variety of materials
- optional special blades (e.g., rotary blades for fabric)
- wide cutting formats (depending on the model)
- wireless data transfer via Bluetooth
- compatibility with iPad and smartphone

However, the demands on users are higher: the software offers a lot of freedom, but requires a certain amount of training. Silhouette is therefore particularly aimed at creative users who value control and flexibility. This is why the Silhouette Portrait and Cameo devices are particularly popular among ambitious airbrushers.

Depending on size and features, current models usually cost between \$160 and \$550.

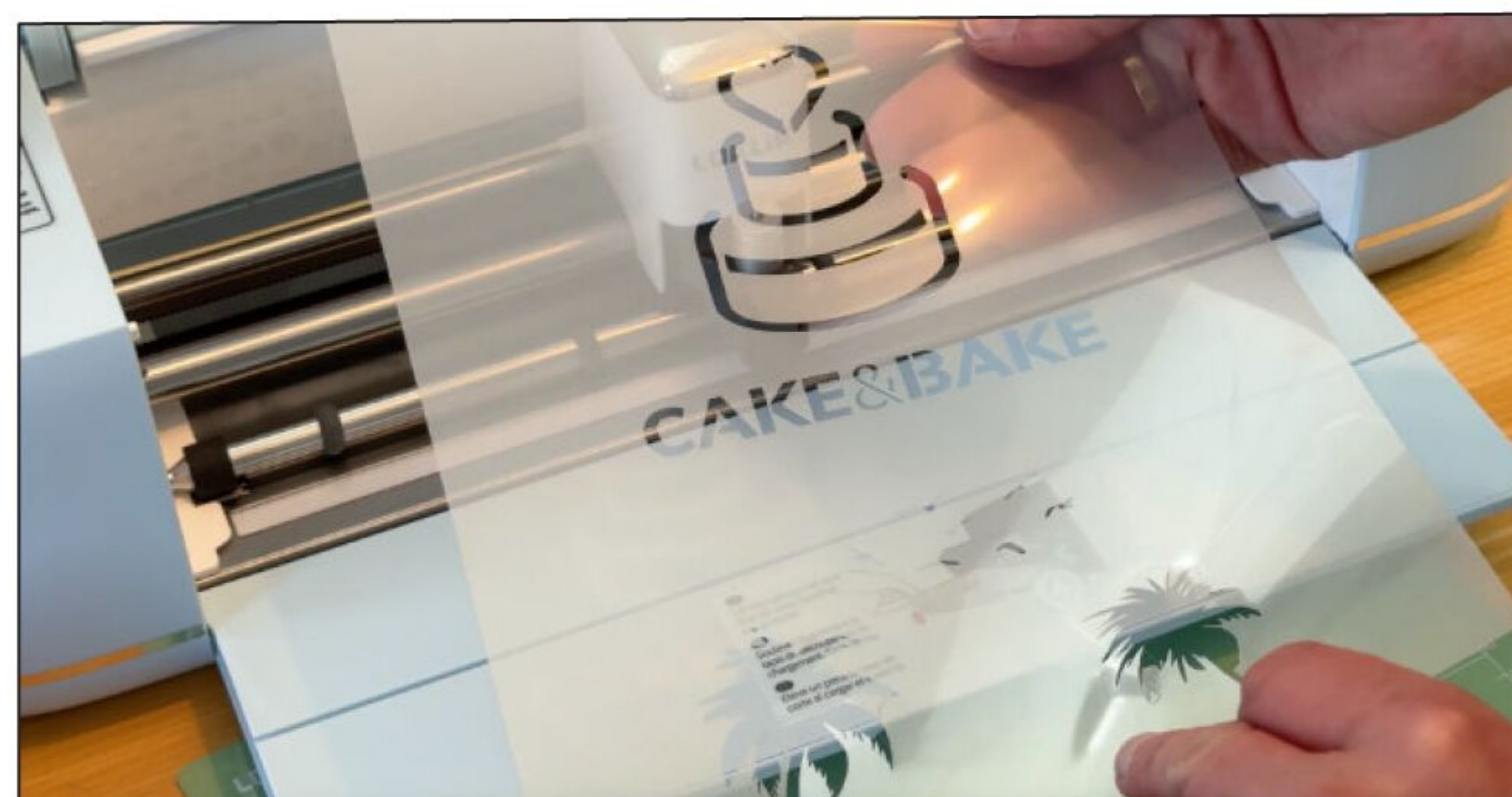
LOKLiK iCraft: Price-conscious entry level

LOKLiK is a relatively young supplier that is clearly positioned in the attractively priced hobby segment. The devices offer a solid range of basic functions and are aimed at users who are looking for a plotter for occasional projects but still want a 30 cm width.

In a direct comparison, the software and accessories may lack depth, but the devices impress with their excellent price-performance ratio. With prices ranging from \$200 to \$300, they are an interesting option for beginners or as a second device.

Typical features of LOKLiK iCraft are:

- Easy operation
- Basic software functions
- Support for many standard materials
- Quiet plotting process
- Easy adjustment of cutting pressure and depth thanks to a large material library
- Connection also via Bluetooth



brother®



Brother: Cutting with an integrated scanner

Brother occupies a special position in the market. The ScanN-Cut series differs fundamentally from most other plotters in that it has an integrated scanner. Templates can be scanned directly and cut without an external computer. This works particularly well with simple designs. More complex motifs should be created using professional software such as Illustrator, Inkscape, or Affinity.

Most of the operation is carried out directly on the device, supplemented by optional software. The range of functions is solid, albeit less design-oriented than Silhouette or Cricut. With the built-in touch monitor, you can control a lot without access to a computer: delete nodes, rotate shapes, change positions, and much more. Storing data on the plotter's integrated memory is also super convenient, especially if you want to plot your design at a later date.

A big plus for the user is that you don't have to worry about the material and the associated settings. Before cutting, the plotter checks the material using control points and adjusts itself accordingly. This makes the process from inserting the cutting mat to plotting extremely simple and pleasant, and the

This makes Brother plotters particularly attractive for:

- Users without design software or knowledge
- Working with existing drawings or printouts
- Precise cutting of printed motifs with automatic material recognition and cutting settings.
- Repeated plotting of the same design thanks to internal storage
- Compatibility with iPad and smartphones

cutting process is also particularly quiet. Transferring the plot data via Wi-Fi is a little more complicated, but once you have transferred it, you can store it permanently in the plotter.

Brother plotters are usually priced between €300 and €450 and appeal to users who prefer a self-sufficient, reliable workflow.





Siser: Precision for demanding applications

Siser is best known for its textile and transfer foils. With models such as the Siser Juliet, the Italian manufacturer specifically targets users with high demands on precision and speed.

The software is functional and technically designed, less playful than classic hobby plotters. Siser devices are therefore popular with experienced users, small businesses, and textile finishers. The speed is 600 mm/sec, which is significantly faster than the competition. Additional software features can be added through a subscription. However, it is recommended to prepare your projects in advance using professional vector software such as Illustrator or Affinity and then import them.

In terms of price, Siser is usually in the upper hobby segment at 400 to 500 euros.

The focus is clearly on:

- precise cutting quality
- stable mechanics
- Durability
- professional handling of foils and print-cut applications

Cricut: User-friendliness and ecosystem

Cricut takes a significantly different approach. Devices such as Cricut Joy, Explore, and Maker are consistently designed for ease of use and quick start-up. The target audience is hobbyists who want to achieve immediate results without a long learning curve.

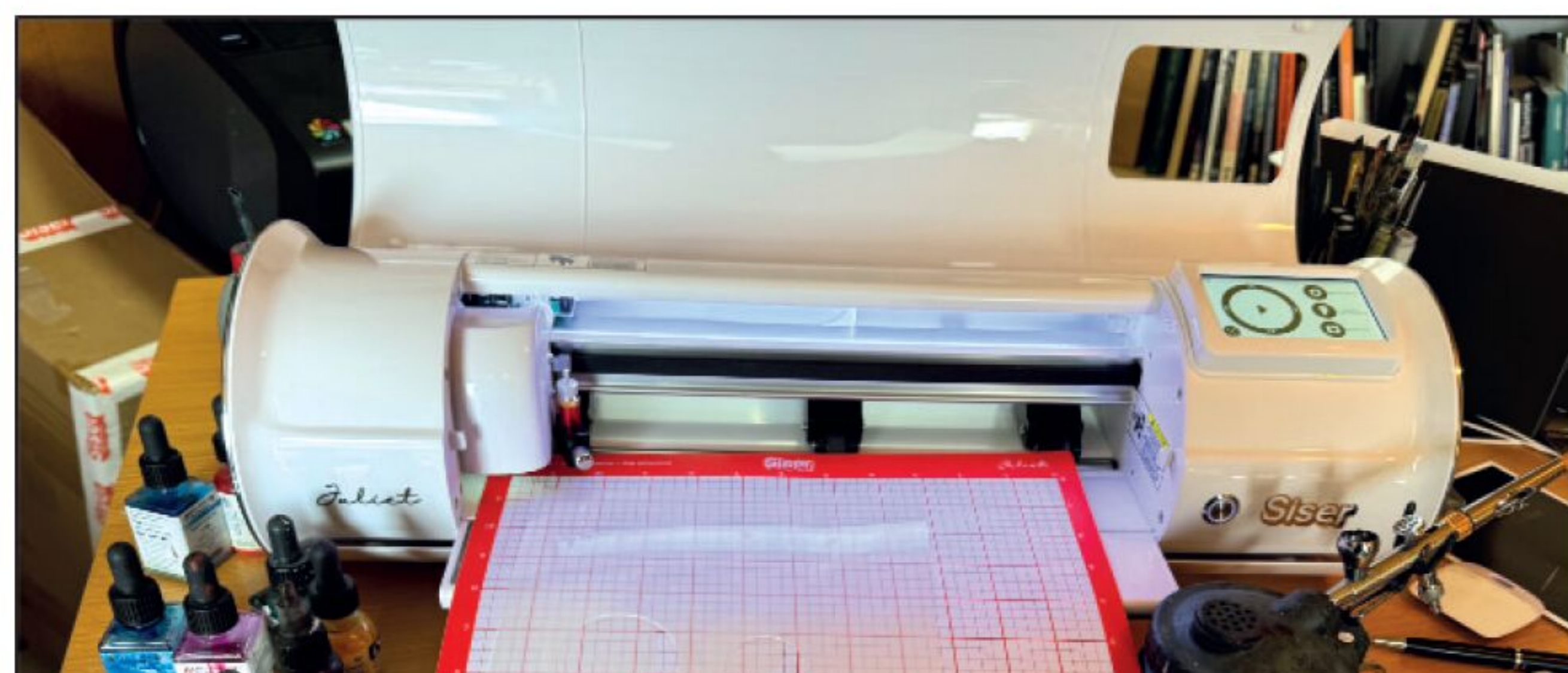
The Cricut Design Space software is heavily focused on cloud functions. It is intuitive, visually clear and particularly suitable for standardized projects. At the same time, the design scope is somewhat more limited than with Silhouette, especially for complex vector work. It is therefore advisable to use more professional software such as Adobe Illustrator or Affinity for creating complex template designs.

Cricut's strengths are:

- Very good user guidance
- Large community and project libraries
- Wide range of accessories and tools
- robust workmanship
- wide variety of materials

The greater dependence on online functions is sometimes viewed critically. For many users, however, this is not a disadvantage, but part of the convenient overall system.

Cricut's entry-level models start at under \$200, while more powerful models such as the Maker cost between \$400 and \$450.



From cutting mats to rolls – differences and applications

Templates up to A3 size can generally be created excellently with the cutting mat supplied by the respective manufacturer. If designs need to be larger and longer, rolled masking material can be used with many devices. The Silhouette comes with a roll holder included, while the other plotters can be retrofitted with one.

Cutting mats are available in different designs: on the one hand, there are different sizes and, on the other hand, different adhesives for the materials to be cut. Large cutting mats, e.g., with a size of 30 x 60 cm, help with the realization of templates up to A3 size. If you want to use paper as template material, it is important to use a cutting mat with low adhesive strength so that the paper is not destroyed. If the cutting mat no longer has sufficient adhesion, it must be replaced, otherwise the cutting result will not be satisfactory. Users often use a non-permanent spray adhesive to optimize the adhesive strength/adhesion again. When applying the adhesive, it is important to tape down the edges of the cutting mat so that no adhesive gets onto the transport rollers during subsequent use.

The cutting material is diverse – from paper, various vinyl films, flock and flex films, masking film to Mylar, foam rubber, cardboard, and thin wood. What the plotter cannot cut in one go, it can also achieve with several passes or special knives. Airbrush users typically use Mylar film as their material. To ensure that the template lies flat and is easy to cut, a thickness of 0.125 mm is generally used. With the Silhouette Portrait or Cameo, as well as the LOKlik iCraft, it is best to cut Mylar twice to achieve a clean cut. This can be easily set in the plotter software. It is best to try it out beforehand and adjust the pressure so that the cutting mat is not damaged.

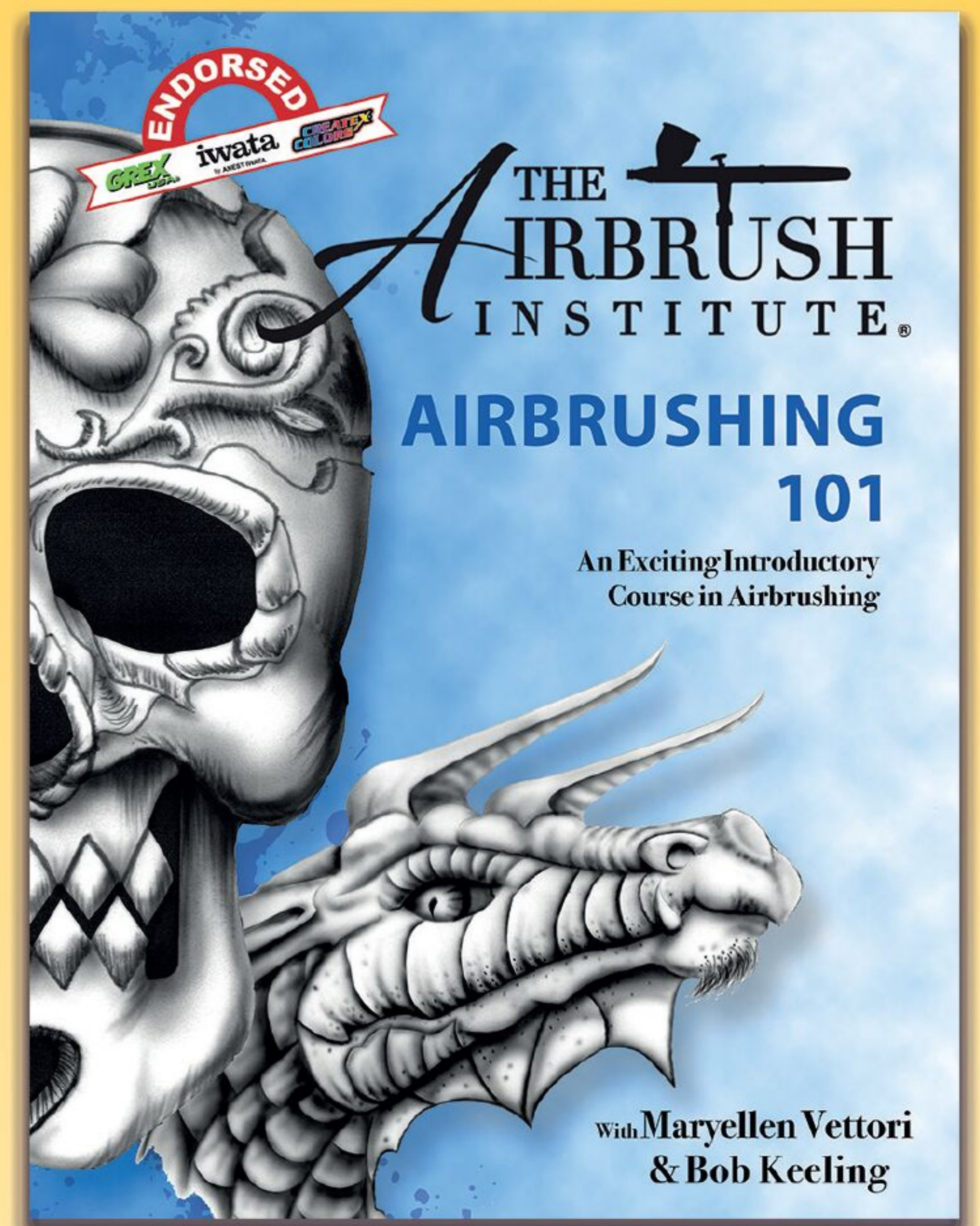


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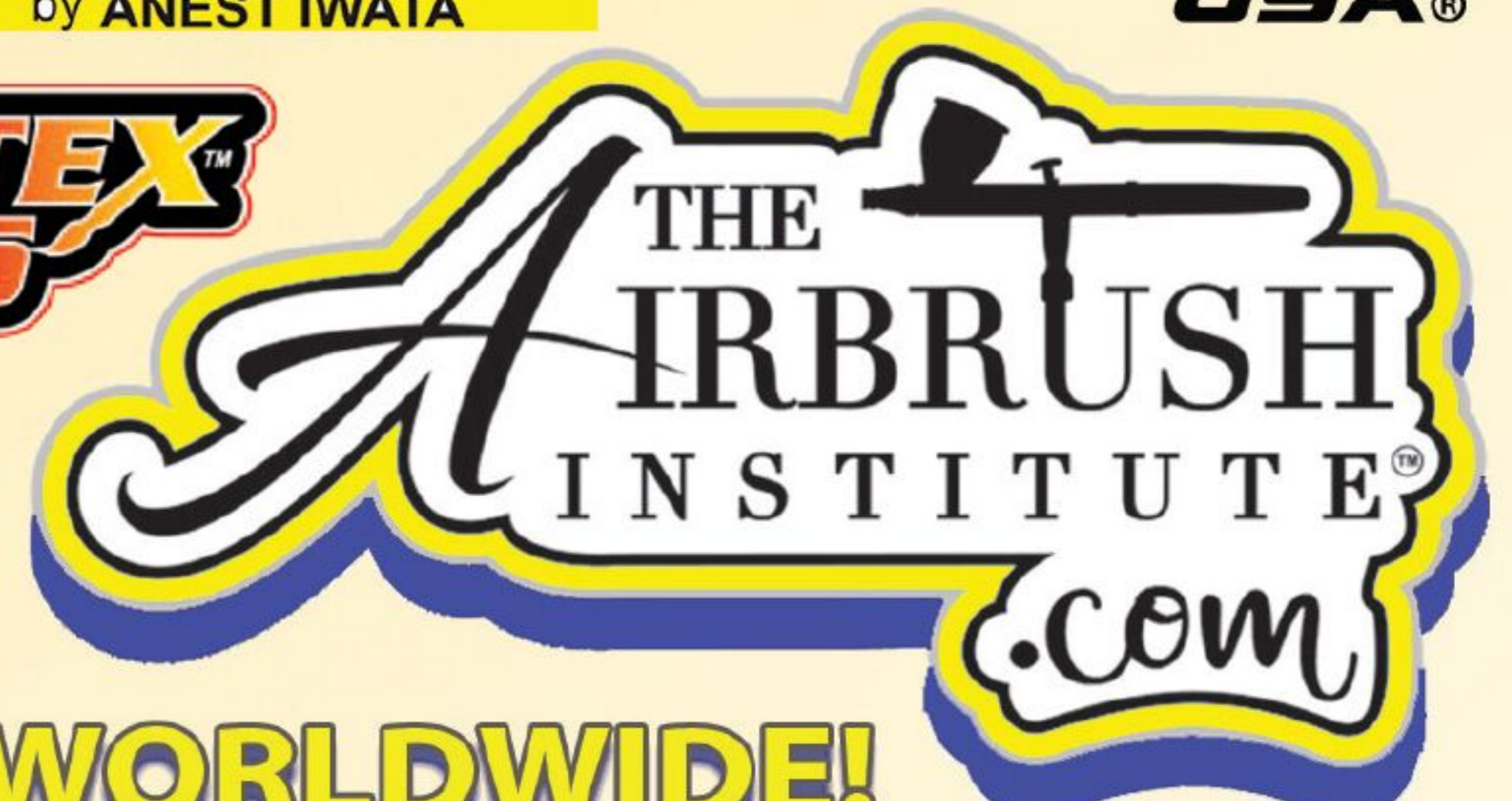
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Software as a decisive factor

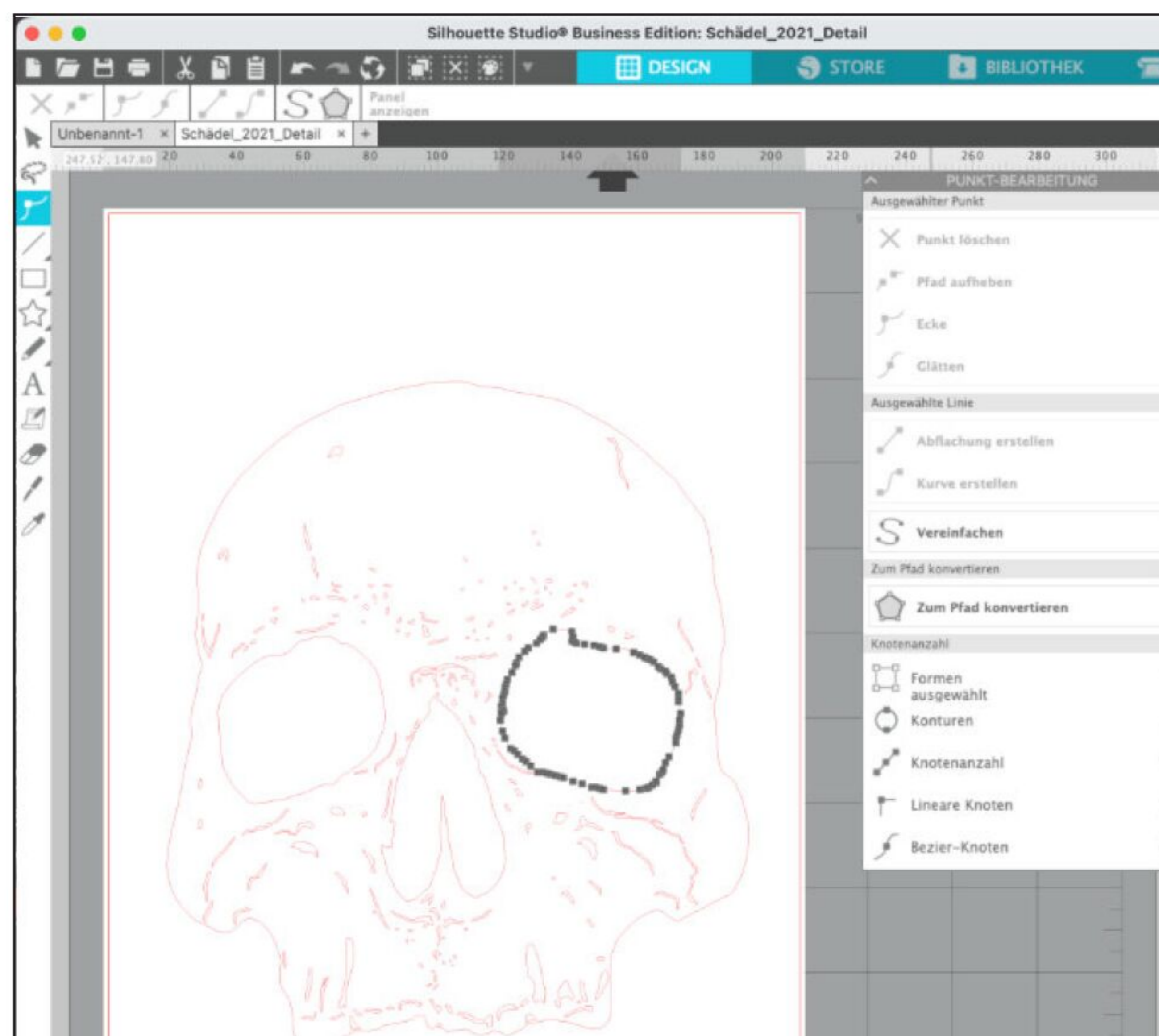
In addition to the hardware itself, the software is often the decisive criterion. While Silhouette offers maximum creative freedom with its free Silhouette Studio, Cricut scores points for user-friendliness in its app. Brother impresses with its independence from PCs, as the software runs in the browser or can largely be controlled on the built-in display. Siser offers technical precision and software functions can be added with a subscription. LOKLiK stands out for its price and simplicity. The software offers basic functions, which provides a good overview, especially for beginners.

Those who design a lot should pay particular attention to:

- Vector editing
- Vectorization quality
- Import and export formats
- Offline use
- Smartphone and tablet connectivity
- Update and license models / additional costs

Ultimately, the software determines how efficient and enjoyable the creative process is. In terms of actual cutting performance, all manufacturers are similarly good.

Ambitious users also use external vector graphics software and export their projects in the appropriate format for the plotter software of the respective manufacturer. Free programs such as Inkscape or the equally free professional tool Affinity are recommended here. Those who do a lot of design work may also have access to commercial programs such as Adobe Illustrator or Corel Draw.



Conclusion: Which plotter for which user?

The ideal hobby cutting plotter depends less on price than on personal workflow. Beginners benefit from simple systems with clear guidance, while experienced creatives tend to opt for open, powerful solutions.

- Silhouette is suitable for creative frequent users with design requirements
- Cricut is ideal for comfort-oriented hobbyists
- Brother impresses with scanner integration and self-sufficiency
- LOKLiK offers an affordable entry point
- Siser is aimed at precision-oriented users and textile finishers

The market is diverse – and that is precisely where the strength of modern hobby cutting plotters lies.



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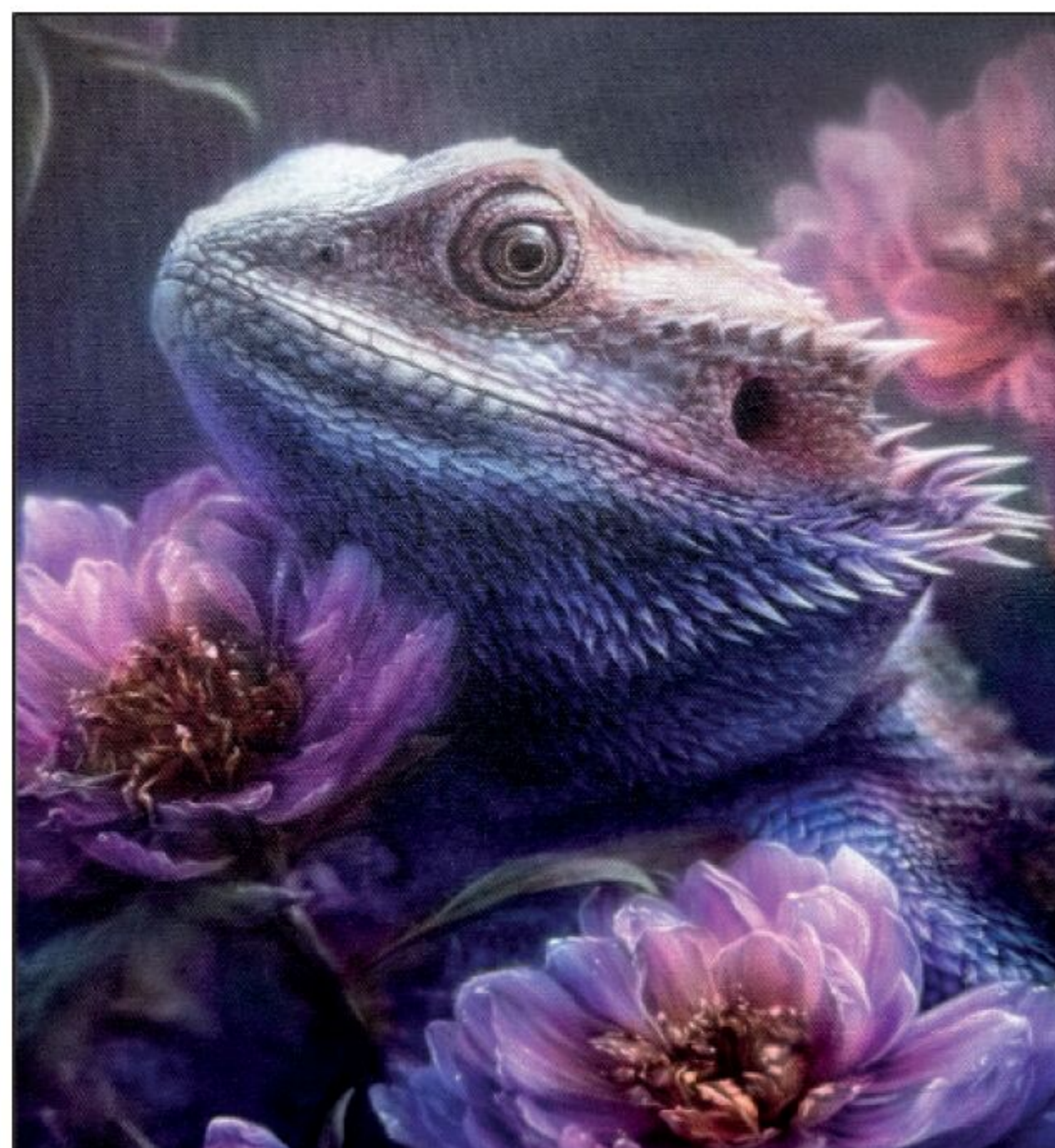
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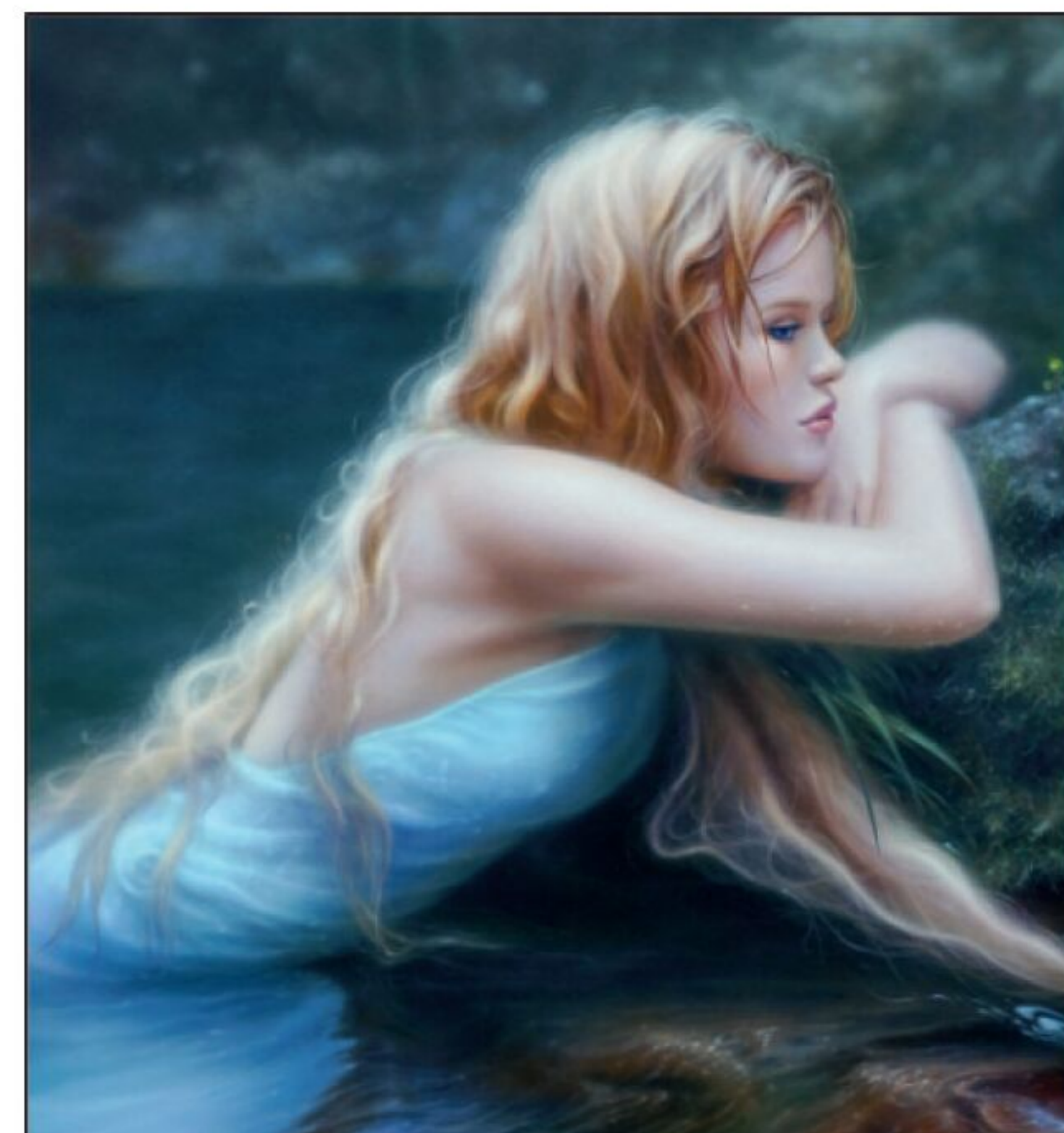
Preview

Airbrush Step by Step 80 will be available from June 26, 2026



The Blossom Guardian

The iguana blends tone-on-tone into the sea of purple flowers—as if it wanted to guard them. The work was created by New York-based artist Oleksandra Korolenko.



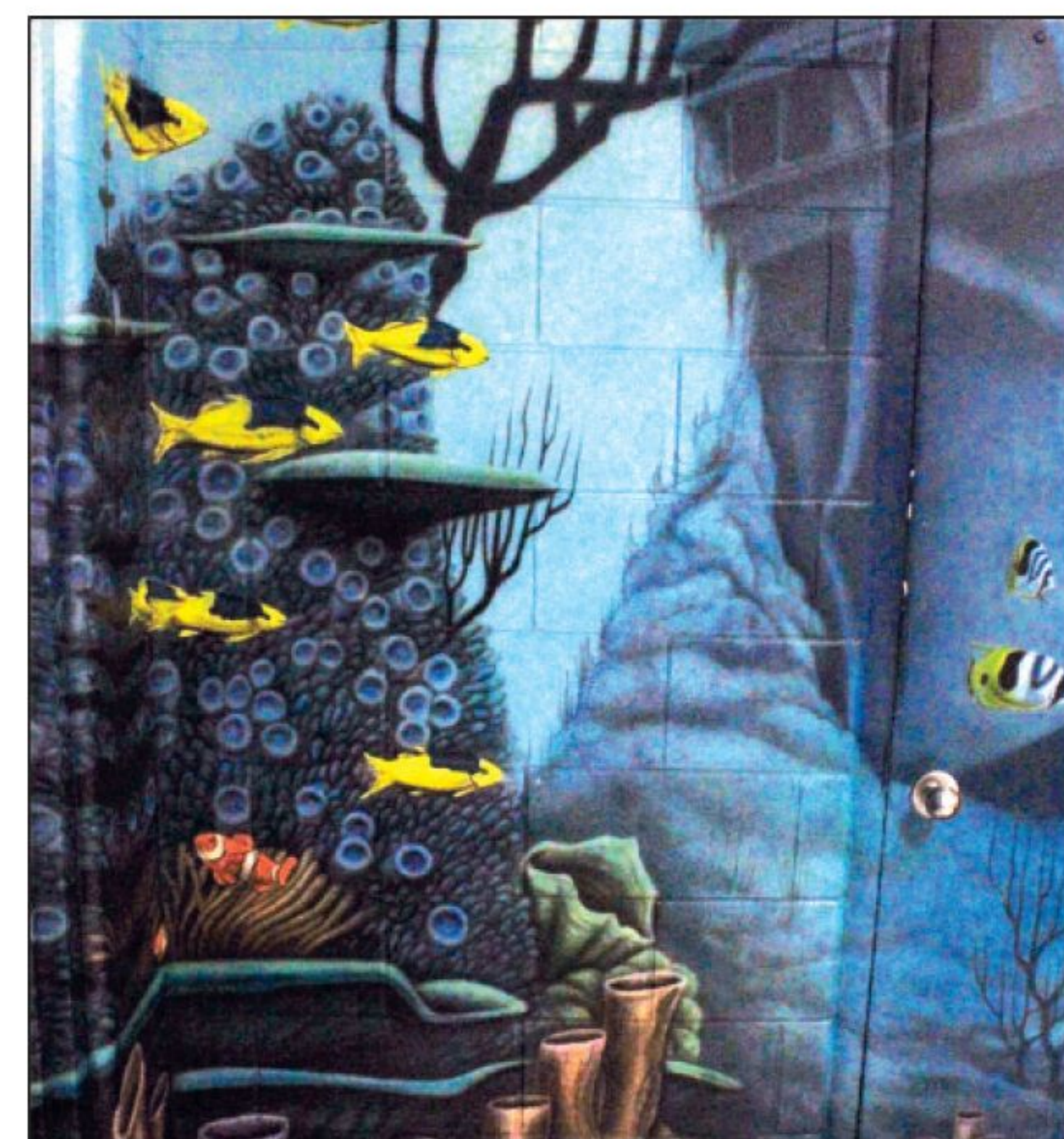
Flow of Time

Ukrainian artist Mitya Ka based his painting on the Neo-Pre-Raphaelite style. The river emphasizes the flowing shapes of the young girl's body and hair.



Roses and Ravens

Francisco Rioja Jerez's painting captivates the viewer with bright red roses and allows them to discover the nocturnal gathering of ravens in the moonlight.



Imprisoned underwater worlds

American Michael Wood is serving a life sentence in prison. A visit from his son encouraged him to decorate the walls of corridors, cells, and especially visiting rooms with colorful designs.



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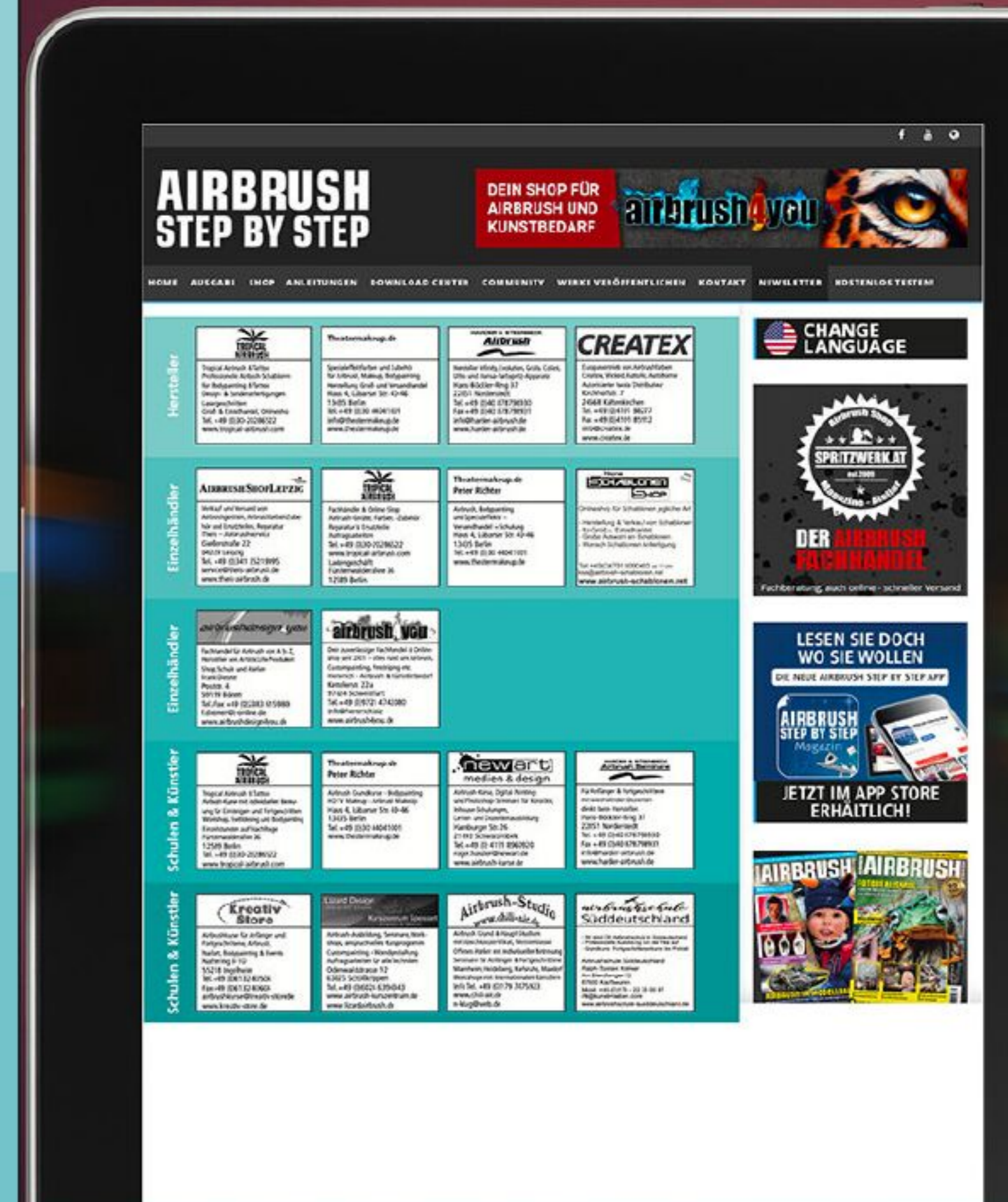
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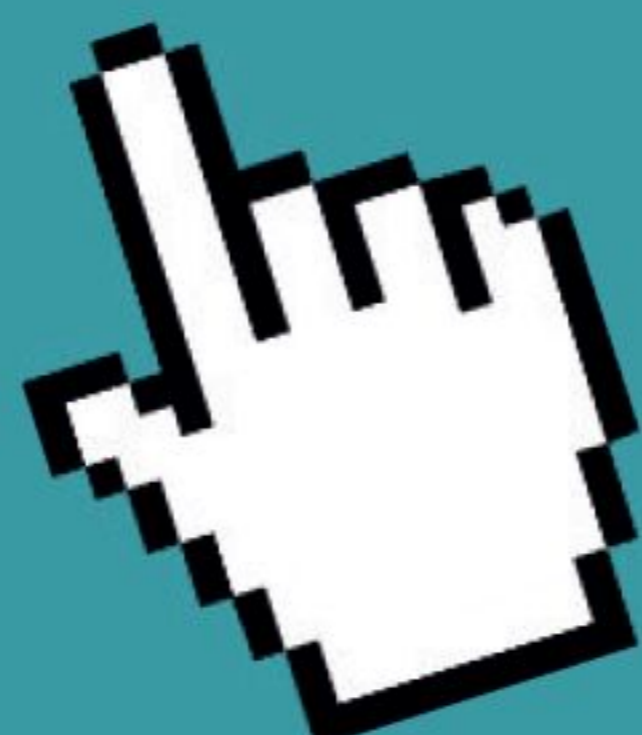
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