

Customizing an OF Plastic or Artist Resin Model Horse into a Faux Metallic Patinaed Bronze

By Cheryl Farrens, BA, MS

FireHorse Designs and Photography

www.firehorsesdesigns.org

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Biographical Sketch: I began collecting model horses when I a little girl. My father would bring me back a Breyer horse every summer when he would travel from Rochester NY (where we lived) to visit his family in southern Virginia. My first model was the Breyer gray appaloosa FAS which I still have. I became interested in customizing models when I would break an ear tip or a leg of a favorite model. I became interested in custom glazing when my mother took a ceramics class and I discovered that there were horse-shaped hobby molds.

I was introduced into the world of model horse shows when I moved up to Maryland in 2000 and a student in my honors chemistry class, who knew I had Appaloosa horses, told me about a model show, MAR, held near Annapolis, MD. I then attended a show in Pennsylvania where I saw my first custom glazed Red Okie Clay; it was love at first sight. The rest, as they say, is history.

I have been the treasurer for NAMHSA and the executive secretary for RESS. Customs, artist resins, and custom glazes I have finished have won championships and placed at NAN. Recently I was experimenting with creating a faux bronze finish on porcelain and, being a scientist as well as an artist, I was curious as to whether I could adapt the technique to plastics. One acid-melted ear tip later I was successful. As a teacher and artist, I am always looking for new ways to create, and to teach, new methods so that others can use them successfully as well.

Abstract: Using a plastic model body, acrylic paints, metal fragments and dilute acid, at the end of this project you will have created a faux bronze customized model which can be shown in the decorator divisions of NAMHSA approved shows (photos 1 - 4). A somewhat different fired method can be used with porcelain (photo 5). A companion video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/CRWk-D1A1SQ>.

Materials and equipment: Plastic or ceramic body. Black acrylic paint or black gesso or black stain; Mayco brand Copper Metallic acrylic or Gold Metallic acrylic or Dark Bronze Metallic acrylic or Steel Metallic acrylic:

<http://www.maycocolors.com/index.php/colors/non-fired-color-products/magic-metallics-metals>

Mayco brand Green Patina or Blue Patina or Rapid Rust oxidizer.

Not all are needed but all can be used alone or together to achieve different effects. I use additional metal filings and stronger acids to increase the patina coloration changes; sealant as desired (Krylon matte suggested); dedicated brushes, polishing cloth, spray bottle. Safety equipment: goggles, gloves, respirator (if spraying acid patina).

Methods:

Body Prep: Clean up seams, splits, etc. and remove logo as desired. Clean body thoroughly with vinegar to remove any grease from fingers etc. Cracks may be filled with air dry clay, which can also be used to sculpt manes and tails with. I use Creative Paperclay.

Black undercoat application: Dilute the black acrylic or gesso or stain to the consistency of thin milk. Use a large brush and apply a thin coat to the entire body. I usually swirl it on to minimize brush marks. Allow to dry for 24 hours minimally if using acrylics or gesso; stains such as Duncan Bisq-Stain dry in minutes. Cover all areas as the faux bronze looks much more metallic against a dark background. I use a thin undercoat so as not to fill in the mold details of the model (photo 6). Check for rough areas; buff off and touch-up as needed.

Metallic undercoat applications: Aliquot out a small amount of Mayco product MM-102 "Copper Metallic" overcoat onto a disposable plate. Brush on a thin coat of the overcoat onto the prepared model. Some black will show through. Allow the overcoat to dry thoroughly otherwise you will just be moving paint around with your brush when you apply the second coat. Brush on a second coat and allow to dry thoroughly (photos 7 and 8). Check for rough areas; buff off and touch-up as needed.

Brush on a third application of the metallic overcoat. While still WET go to the acid patina step.

Acid Patina applications: The acid patina can be applied in various ways: by dropper, spray, brush or sponge. If spraying use proper safety precautions and wear appropriate personal protection equipment. Place the model on absorbent paper (I use a "puppy piddle pad"). Using a dropper or fan brush allow the acid patina to drizzle down the model from top to bottom. Allow to "marinate" for 30 minutes. I then apply more acid via spray or sponge or brush to areas that have not been treated previously. I also use a SOFT fan brush to move the acid around. After 24 hours, I inspect the model. At this point you can apply more of the metallic overcoat and then more patina multiple times until you achieve the look desired. Allow to dry for 24 hours (photos 9, 10, 11, and 12).

Final processing:

Check for rough areas; buff off and touch-up as needed. Once satisfied with the finish use a buffing cloth or your bare hands to give the patina a soft sheen. The patina may continue to develop for several days. To stop development, you may use a spray product such as Krylon matte fixative, Johnson Paste Wax or DecoArt DuraClear Varnish. This will seal out the oxygen in the air and stop the patina oxidation process. It will also protect the finish on the model (photos 13 and 14).

Photo 1. Customized Peter Stone Arabian Plastic Body.



Photo 2. Breyer Silver Plastic Body. Sculpted by Kathleen Moody.



*CM Silver to
Faux Bronze
FireHorse Designs 2017*

Photo 3. Breyer Cleveland Bay Plastic Body. Sculpted by Karen Gerhardt.



Photo 4. Hartland Regal Series Quarter Horse Body



*Faux Bronze on Hartland Regal Quarter Horse
FireHorse Designs 2017*

Photo 5. Breyer Esprit Porcelain Body (fired version). Sculpted by Kathleen Moody.



Photo 6. Breyer Smart Chic Olena body with black undercoat. Sculpted by Susan Carlton Sifton.



Photo 7. Breyer body with one application of metallic overcoat.



Photo 8. Breyer body with second application of metallic overcoat.



Photo 9. Breyer body with three applications of metallic overcoat and first application of patina acid.



Photo 10. Breyer body with two applications of acid patina.



Photo 11. Breyer body with two applications of acid patina.



Photo 12. Breyer body with two applications of acid patina.



Photo 13. Finished Faux Bronze Model.



Photo 14. Finished Faux Bronze Model.

