

- A COSPLAY GUIDE for everyone -

THE BOOK OF TEXTURE MAKING



Dominique Wolkener
- The Dodo Cosplay -



- This book was written by a native German speaker. Please keep this in mind while reading.

Thank you for your understanding and I wish you much pleasure! -



Dear reader,

Welcome to my colorful world of creativity! My name is Dominique and I am a passionate cosplayer since 2018. Together with my partner Marvin, we live our cosplay life.

Artistic activities have always been part of my everyday life. A crayon was the first thing that slipped into my hand as a child. Thus, my life path was steered early in one direction, and what can I say : it is a path full of creation and freedom!

To create something with my hands from nothing was, and still is today, a very fascinating quality for me to master. This skill has always been relatively easy for me. Don't get me wrong, I am by no means presenting myself as the best artist in the world (this is impossible anyway as the world is full of talented people).

Thanks to my passion for art, I invested a lot of my time in it and learned a lot.

Of course, setbacks were also part of it. What many people do not want to admit to themselves : without mistakes, you do not learn.

However, this can be very frustrating when you spend hours, days, and sometimes even months on a project and don't get anywhere. Believe me, my dear readers, I know this too well!

However, time also plays a big role. Sometimes you just don't have the time to invest in a big project. School, study or work take up a large part of our lives. In my studies it was often difficult for me to find time for cosplay. So it took a lot more time to learn new techniques and to dedicate myself to my art.

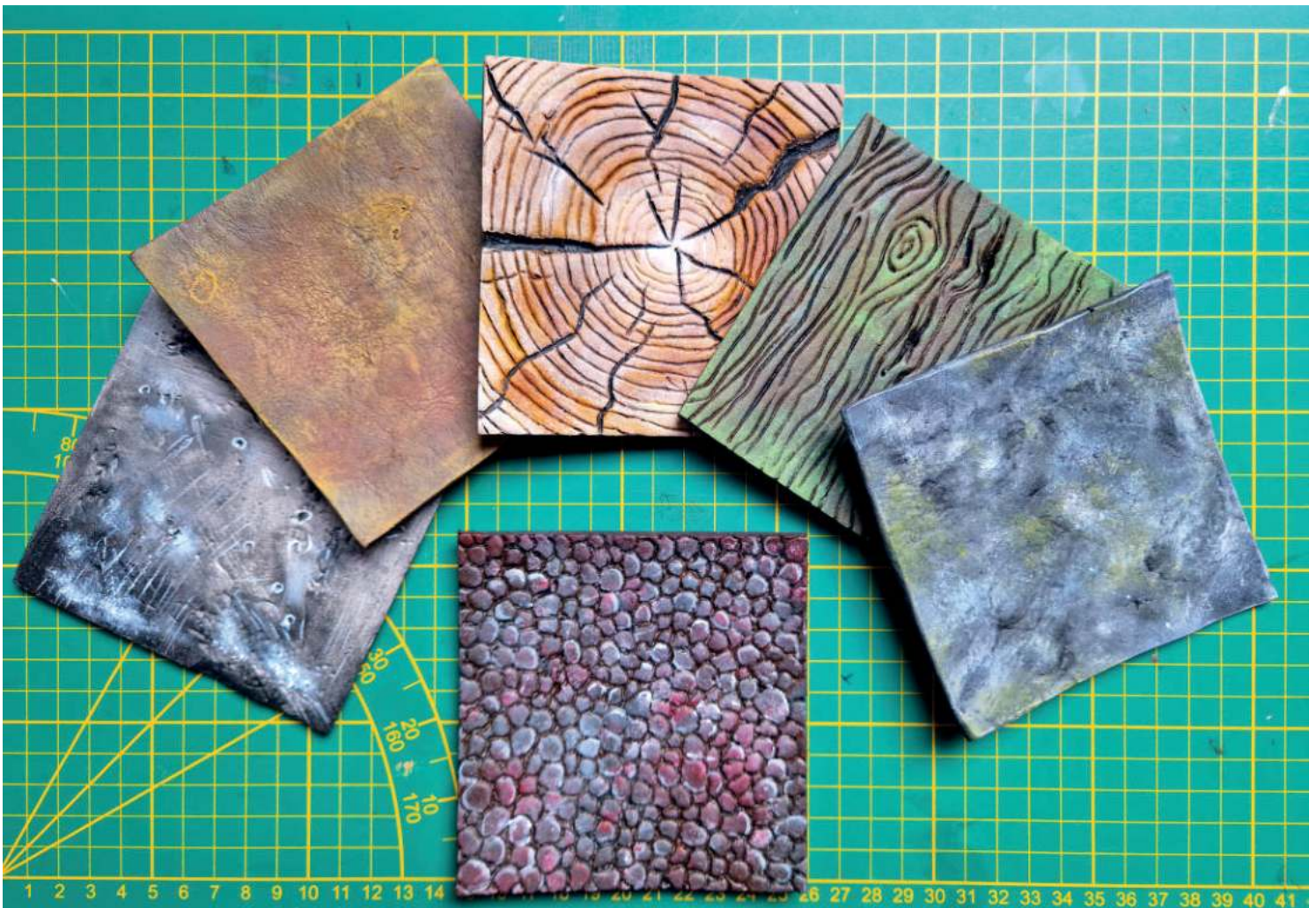
Through my work as a professional artist it is much easier for me to find time and try new things. Since I know this struggle, I have made it my mission to help other people with my knowledge.

About the book :

Over the years, it has happened quite often that other cosplayers have approached me and asked crafting questions, especially on the subject of making textures. I remember very well how difficult this part was for me at the beginning. Making a realistic dragon skin or wood out of EVA Foam or Worbla was not as easy as I imagined. This part gives the realism to the project when done correctly.

In this book, I will show you how to make 10 textures from EVA Foam and Foam Clay. Of course, there are many more materials out there, but I will limit myself to these two, otherwise this would exceed the scope of the book. I hope to be a helping hand for you. If you have any additional questions, don't hesitate to contact me personally!

Note : these are my personal techniques to make my art. Every artist has his own way of working.



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-Materials and tools -

Before we can start with the actual topic of the book, I will introduce you to the materials and tools I use most for my projects. As already mentioned, I will use only two materials to you. For each texture presented later, however, the corresponding tool will be introduced more in detail.

1. Materials you have to know :

EVA Foam

Do you remember those thin, colourful foam sheets you used to crafts with as a child? Well, that would be the best description for this material. They are soft rolls that can be shaped by heat into all sorts of forms. Their soft texture makes them very easy to use and beginner friendly. They are available in different sizes, thicknesses and densities.



Foam Clay

Foam Clay is, as the name suggests, a water-based modelling clay. It is a very interesting material for creating organic textures. It is very easy to use with a little water for a variety of projects. Perfect for a first approach to sculpting! Once dried, it cannot be deformed and has a very similar structure to EVA foam.



Worbla

Even though we are not using it for this book, I want to introduce you to this very important material a lot of people use for cosplay. Worbla is a very hard and thin thermoplastic sheet that becomes soft when heated. It's great for sculpture or detail work. Here you can distinguish the type by the different structures (grainy, smooth, transparent). When the mass cools down again, it becomes hard as a rock.



2. Important texture tools :

Now that we have discussed the primary materials, let's move on to the different utensils I use for texture work. It should be noted that not all the tools shown are used for every project. Which of the objects you use depends on your individual costume.



Heat gun

This is one of the utensils you must have. Heating EVA foam softens the surface. This makes it much easier for stamped shapes to stay on the surface. The heat gun is also used to "melt" the micro-particles after sanding the foam and to obtain a smoother and more even surface. I will explain this more in detail in the following chapters.



Dremel

With a Dremel you can not only sand the corners of your armour smooth, but also create great structures. This tool is very suitable for rough and organic textures such as old metal, wood or antlers.

When buying, make sure you have the small hand dremel with you. This will make your work much easier!



Soldering Iron

A soldering iron is an excellent tool if you want to incorporate smooth and precise textures, such as dragon skin or geometric figures. When buying, make sure that there is a temperature setting!

WARNING : do NOT use with Worbla as it will stick to the soldering iron due to the heat (R.I.P. my first beloved soldering iron)!



Sculpting tools

This is a mixture of different sculpting tools with different end parts. I use them mostly with Foam Clay or Worbla. You can find these for a reasonable price on the internet or even in a craft shop.



Stones

Yep, you've seen right! ! Stones can also be a great way to imitate a stone texture or old leather in your EVA Foam. Choose stones with a lot of edges and corners, this makes the processing much easier.

Where do I get these tools?

If you have just started cosplaying and didn't got any of these tools yet, here are some links where you can buy them for a good price on the internet:

Heat gun Wagner : <https://www.wagner-group.com/de/heimwerker/produkte-zubehoer/produkt/heissluftpistole-furno-300/>

Dremel : <https://www.dremel.com/de/de/p/dremel-3000-f0133000jp>

Soldering Iron : <https://www.amazon.de/dp/B08MLBDFHN/?tag=glv-21&ascsubtag=592c9151-966a-4438-b61b-031f3ec36372&th=1&psc=1&linkCode=osi>

Sculpting tools : <https://www.scarva.com/en/Scarva-Tools-Decorating-and-Clean-Up-11-Piece-Tool-Set/m-4059.aspx>

3. Last but not least, priming and painting :

Not only are the right tools important for a successful reptile or wood texture, but also the right painting! Only a properly executed paint job will give realism to your project. There are some small differences in the choice of colour that produce different results. An airbrush is very often used for painting. Since not everyone has this tool and I started without it too, I will show you how you can paint your projects with simple objects from your household.

Note ✨

I mainly use **acrylic paint**, because they dry quickly and are not as expensive as oil paints, for example.

Before you start painting, you need to apply a *PRIMER*. This protects your material and makes the paint adhere better to the surface. If you leave this step out, the colour will come off much more quickly over time. I won't mention the primer again in the texture chapter shown later, otherwise I will repeat myself on every page. So keep in mind that you always have to apply it before the actual paint job. There are different varieties, I present you the two that are used the most.

Plastidip

Plastidip is a spray primer which, when dry, acts like a protective membrane and forms a kind of "skin". Depending on the project, I recommend two to three layers. It is available in black and transparent.

Tip: use the black one for dark painting and the transparent one for light painting. It is easier to paint something from light to dark than the other way round ...



Flexbond

Flexbond is a primer that can be applied before painting or mixed with the acrylic paints and then applied. As the name suggests, the material remains flexible without the paint crumbling due to movement. This is interesting if you often have to put on and take off a piece of armour. Flexbond keeps the EVA foam supple.



Once the primer has been applied and is completely (!) dry, we can move on to the actual *PAINTJOB*.

Acrylic painting

I use acrylic paint 99% of the time, as it is an easy paint to handle. It dries quickly, is easy to paint over and is therefore very beginner-friendly. Here, it is important to pay attention to the quality. My personal favourites are the brands "Amsterdam" and „Magicfly“ , because they are affordable and good quality for their price. Of course, you can also use very cheap colours, but they won't last as well over time. Also, very cheap colours do not cover surfaces well.

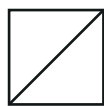


When buying acrylic paints, it is important to pay attention to two aspects:

1. Square : with the colour, it is not only important how thick and many layers you apply, but also the pigmentation of the colour. The more pigments, the more opaque. This is indicated by the square. Here is an overview of the meanings:



transparent
(very low
pigmentation)



semi - transparent



semi- covering



covering (very
high pigmen-
tation)

2. Stars/crosses : they show the light resistance, also known as „lightfastness“. This means that the fewer stars are shown, the less the colour will withstand the sun and fade quick. Therefore, the colors have to be protected from the light. Whether a star or a cross is depicted depends entirely on the brand .



sufficient



satisfactory



good



very good



excellent

Note

I recommend taking the semi covering as well as the complete covering for the density. You can always thin these colours a little if you want something more transparent. Getting a transparent colour denser is therefore much more complicated.

For light sensitivity, don't go below three stars. You might pay one euro or two more, but the bright colours will be bright longer.

Rub' n Buff

Another type of paint you can use for metallic effects is Rub n Buff. This is a type of wax, highly pigmented, that can be easily applied with a cloth or your finger. Perfect for metal textures!

Attention : when using a brush, the paint must be removed immediately afterwards, otherwise the brush hairs will harden!



However, the colour must be applied with something! Here I give you my three favourite *PAINTING TOOLS*:

Brushes

Very classic brushes are a must for painting. If you don't have any brushes yet, I would advise to buy a beginner's assortment in a craft shop. These are not very expensive and are ideal for the first crafting beginnings. It is always interesting to have a very fine brush for painting details.



Sponges

Kitchen sponges are great for tracing organic paintings such as bones, tree bark or stones. Because of their holey nature, they add their own texture while painting. Always rinse them well, otherwise they will become hard as a rock!



Old fabrics

If you have old fabrics, t-shirts or kitchen towels lying around, instead of throwing them away, you can use them as painting utensils. It's a great way to rub the paint on and make blendings (yep, mine have been through a lot haha).



Just as important as the primer before painting is the *VARNISH* afterwards the paintjob. This protects the colour you have applied with all your energy and love. You should not skip this step either if you want your project to be beautiful in the long run. Also keep in mind that you should apply this after EVERY painting! Here we also have different products to choose from:

Lukas clear coat spray

This spray varnish is easy to apply to your painted surface and dries relatively quickly (20-40 minutes). Here you have the option "matt" and "satin gloss". I recommend applying two to three layers for extra protection of your project.



Liquid high gloss varnish

If you want it extra glossy, I recommend these two products. Apply them with a soft (!) and wide brush. If you use a rough brush, you will see the brush strokes.

WARNING : make sure to use a water-based varnish. These ones are easy to clean with water. For other types you need an extra product to clean the brush (and you spend more money...).



- Safety first! -

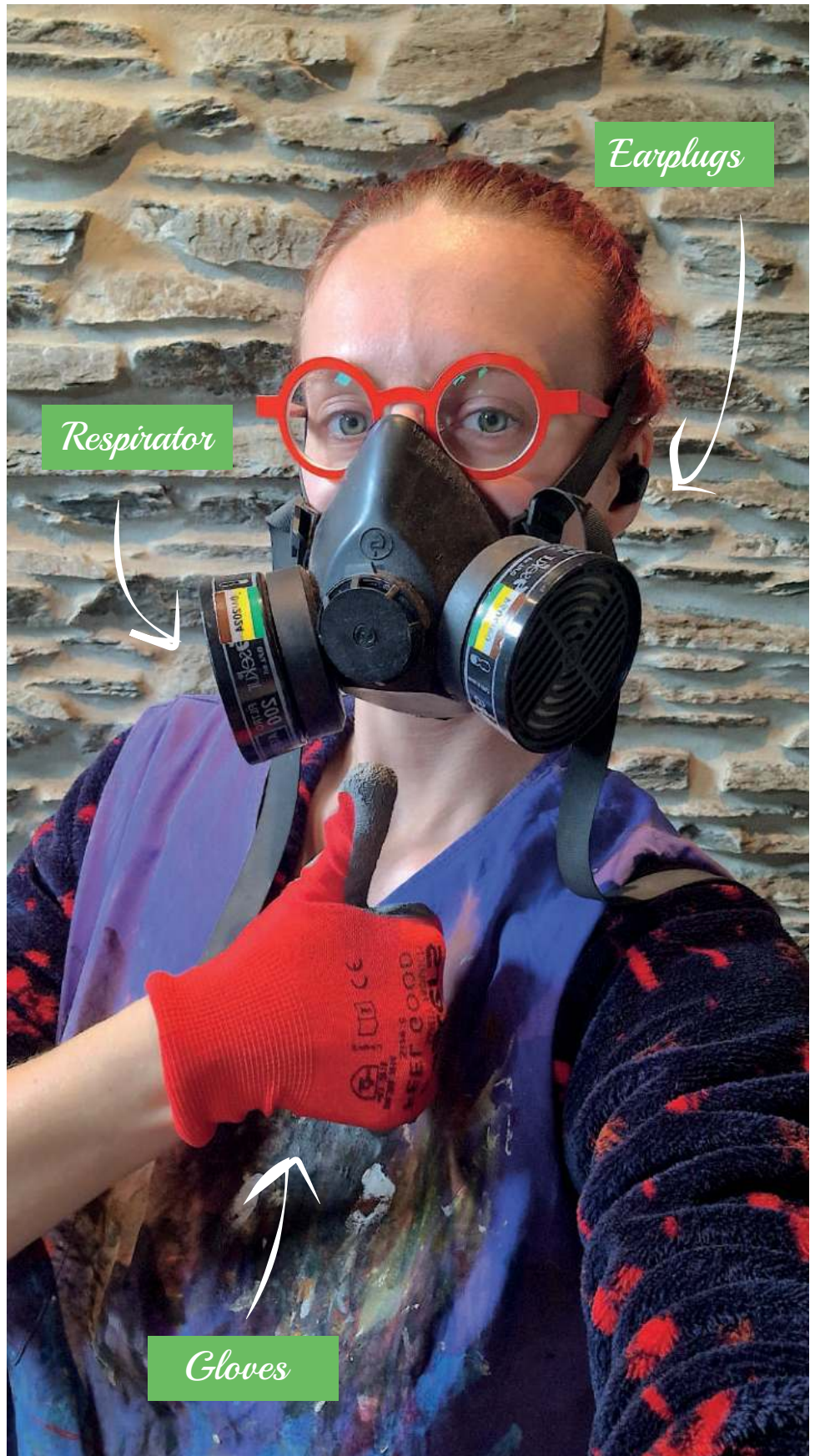
One last but still very important point is your safety!

It is essential to wear your protective masks, glasses and gloves when crafting!

While sanding, microparticles of the material get into your windpipe. The same for airbrush color or spray : This can lead to breathing problems and later lung problems if you ignore the safety measures for a longer period of time.

How do I know this so exactly? Well, I was made aware of it at the beginning of my cosplay life by my own stupidity. For hours I inhaled the smoke while doing texture work. This was followed by weeks of tracheal irritation and severe coughing problems. My entire throat and the inside of my nose were fiery red. I think you can imagine the pain.... With that situation, I have learned for life!

Please learn from my mistakes and wear a good mask that keeps both micro particles and fumes from destroying your lungs. Look for filters on the mask when choosing. Here also applies: who saves money, has bad material. Rather invest 10 euros more in a high quality mask than later treatment costs at the doctor...



- Tips before we get started -

Before we finally start, I want to give you some tips that you can apply to any project. Remember them well, because even if I don't mention them in the texture chapters, these are important points to keep in mind.

Use multiple reference pictures

Before you start a project, take several different reference pictures to study the properties and texture carefully. You may not see all the details in one picture. The more references you have, the better you can work. I need to see exactly what something looks like in front of my eyes so that I can copy it. You can only internalise something if you have seen it before.



Heat gun for a faster drying process

While painting, you will often work with different layers of paint. It is important to let each layer dry completely before applying the next colour. Otherwise you will mix the colours together. This can sometimes take time.

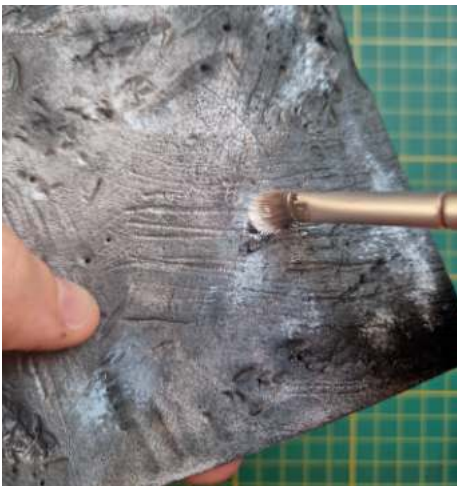
If you don't have time to let each layer of paint air dry, you can use a heat gun. But be careful: keep a distance of about 40 cm between your foam and the hot air gun (1). Wet paint will form small bubbles when heated to high temperatures (2)(3). You will not be able to get them out later. In addition, your hard-worked-in texture (if it has not been burned into the foam) can dissolve again if it is too hot.



Dark primer, dark paintjob - bright primer, bright paintjob

It is important to think in advance about which colour you will use for painting. If you have used a light-coloured EVA foam and worked in a lot of texture, and you are mainly painting in a dark colour, then it is an advantage to use a black primer. This penetrates into the deepest grooves and turns the light-coloured foam into black.

But why is this important? Well, if you leave the foam light and have to paint it dark, then you can have fun painting every little groove dark with the brush. This can take a long time. To avoid this, I recommend using an already dark base primer spray.



Brown painting on dark primer



Brown painting on bright primer



Painting technique : drybrushing

A word that you will find in almost every texture is "dry brushing". This refers to painting with an almost dry brush with only a few colour pigments left on it. As the name suggests, these pigments are brushed onto the surface. The colour sticks to the protruding corners and edges of the model. This technique is therefore used to create highlights.

It's only as complicated as you make it! ;-)

This is a quote from my former painting teacher that changed my entire way of thinking. When I first started painting, I didn't dare to tackle many objects because it seemed far too complicated. One day, my teacher sat me down in front of a black blanket placed on a black table, which I was supposed to paint. All I could see was the colour black. Completely overwhelmed on my part! How was I supposed to paint black only?

My teacher said to me at that moment, "Don't think about what it is, think about what you see. What shapes? Where is it lighter, where is it darker? Where is there shadow, where is there light? WHAT DO YOU SEE?"

From that moment on, I stopped beating myself up about how complicated it was. I began observing how the wrinkles lay, where there was more white, more grey. And before I knew it, I created a painting of a black cloth on a black table and you could actually recognise what it was straight away.

So if you want to build or paint something and you are overwhelmed with complexity, think about this sentence: what do you see? Forget what kind of object it is, but take a close look at what it looks like. What shapes, colours? What shadows, light? Is the surface rough or smooth?

Now you know all the necessary materials and safety precautions to start your texture work!

Reminder : for all projects, a primer must be used before the paint job and a varnish afterwards if you want your cosplays to be beautiful for a long time.

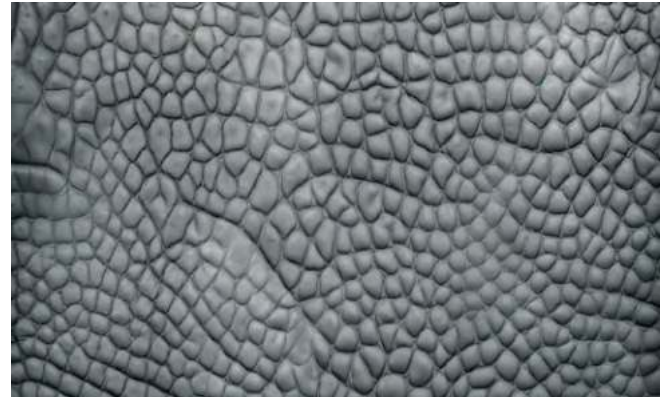
For each texture, I will list the necessary materials and tools. So you know exactly what you need!

Primer  *Paintjob*  *Varnish*

Dragon skin

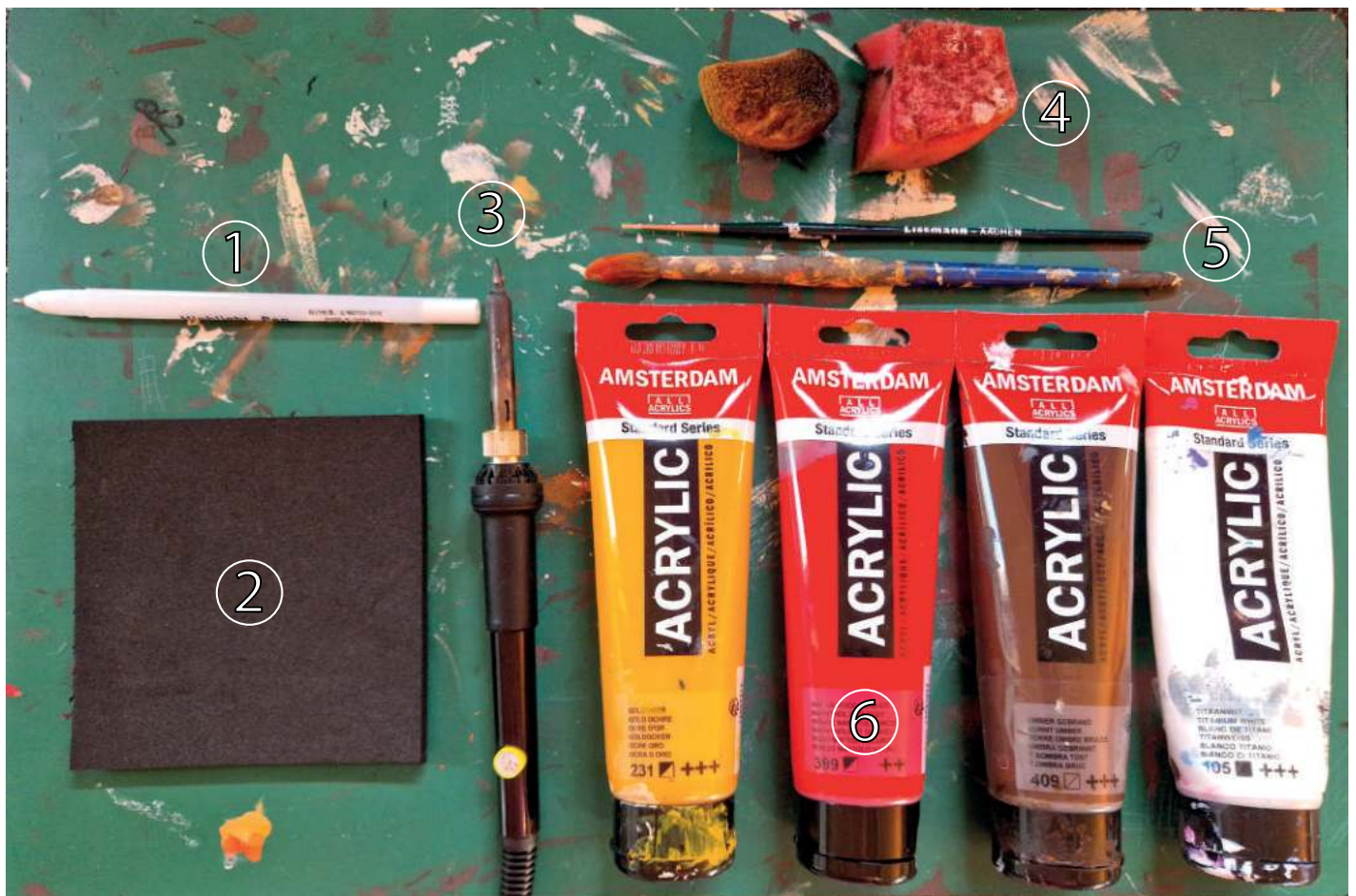
- Dragon skin -

Let's start with one of my favorite textures : Dragon skin! Through my Drogon cosplay, I have learned several techniques. I would like to introduce the one I used the most for this project.



Reference picture

Materials and tools you need :



1. White pen

2. EVA foam (low or high density)

3. Soldering iron

4. Sponges

5. Brushes

6. Acrylic painting (brown, red, ocher, white)

Step 1 : pre-drawing

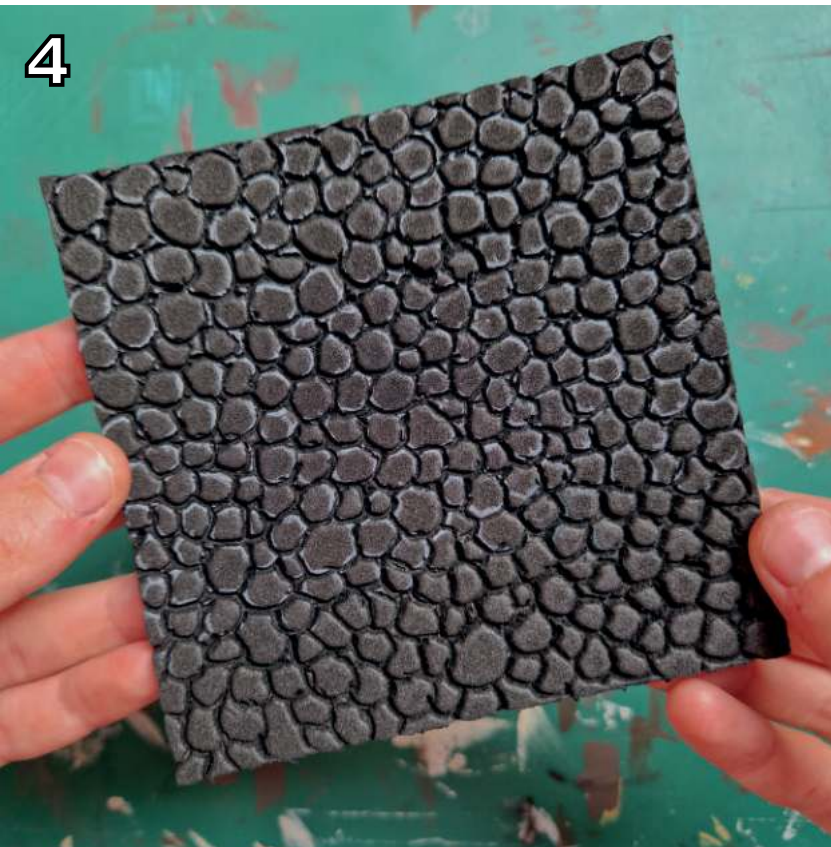
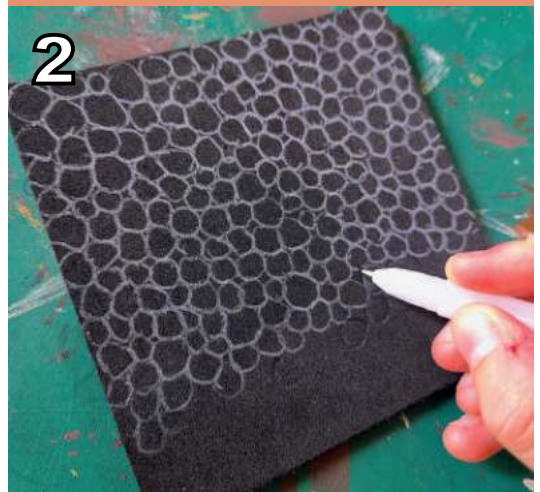
Draw irregular and misshapen circles directly next to each other with the white pencil (or with another lighter colour) on the EVA Foam (1)(2). These are your guide lines to create the texture later with the soldering iron in order not to lose the overview. They do not have to be the same size and can look "jumbled". Remember, nature is not symmetrical.

It is important that the circles stick close together and leave no gaps in between, like a real reptile skin.

Step 2 : burn in the texture

Heat the soldering iron to about 400°C. Now solder the pre-drawn circles one after the other till the end (3).

It is important to set a high enough temperature. If it is not hot enough, it will not draw clean and continuous lines and will get stuck. This will make your texture look rough and unfinished.



Note ✨

Reminder : During the burn-in, you will be directly exposed to the fumes. Always keep the mask on while working! Never work without, otherwise it will be harmful to your health!

Step 3 : start painting with brown acrylic

After you've sprayed your primer on the surface, you can head over to the paint job. In texture painting, we work with different layers of paint. This gives the realistic effect later. In nature there is not only one color, but many different color combinations. This is exactly the effect we are going to recreate.

Use a dark color (brown, black, dark gray,...) to create the basic background color with a sponge (5). You can also use a wide brush. That's how you prefer and feel comfortable with. To get the color into the cracks, use a slightly finer brush (6).

Note ✨

Reminder : it is recommended to groove a black primer so that the substrate is already dark before painting. It is a lot of work to paint the grooves from light to dark. This way you have less work.



Step 4 : highlighting with light grey and white

After the basic paint is now completely (!) dry, we paint the texture first with a light gray. It is important that the background color (in my case brown) still shows out and is not completely covered! Otherwise the layer effect will not come through.

The gray color does not have to be applied completely evenly. In some places it may be more, in others less. Remember, nature is not symmetrical and perfect.

Do the same with a white color (8). Attention, always do only a little on your sponge/brush and carefully duplicate. Otherwise you quickly have large color spots and that is difficult to get off again.

Step 5 : let it be colorful!

This step is not an absolute necessity. It depends on which colours you want to use for your project. I was inspired by my Cosplay Drogon, as red is an important colour there (9). But it can also be any other colour, or you can leave the structure in its natural grey tones.

As with the greys, spread the red colour unevenly over your surface.

Step 6 : last highlights with white

Last but not least, we add a few highlights. Take a fine brush and outline some scales with white paint. This gives an even stronger 3D effect and realism (10).

Note ✨

Dilute the white colour with a little water. This makes it easier to apply and it is not too pigmented. The more water you add, the paler the white will be. So it's up to you to test and find the right intensity.





Note ✨

I used this technique to create 95% of my Drogon cosplay. If you've already started using this texture for your own project, you'll realize what a tedious process it is to create this structure.

It can be tedious and annoying to start the same or a very similar texture over and over again on every armor. However, you must not lose heart and always keep your goal in mind.

Maybe you could put the project aside after a while, because it just gets on your nerves. Maybe it is also good to take a break. Especially with repetitive projects it is important to take a break and have fun. If I managed to do that, then you can too!

*Manticore Pictures
By Alex Le Photo*

Find more about this project in my portfolio : www.thedodocosplay.be

Mossy Wood

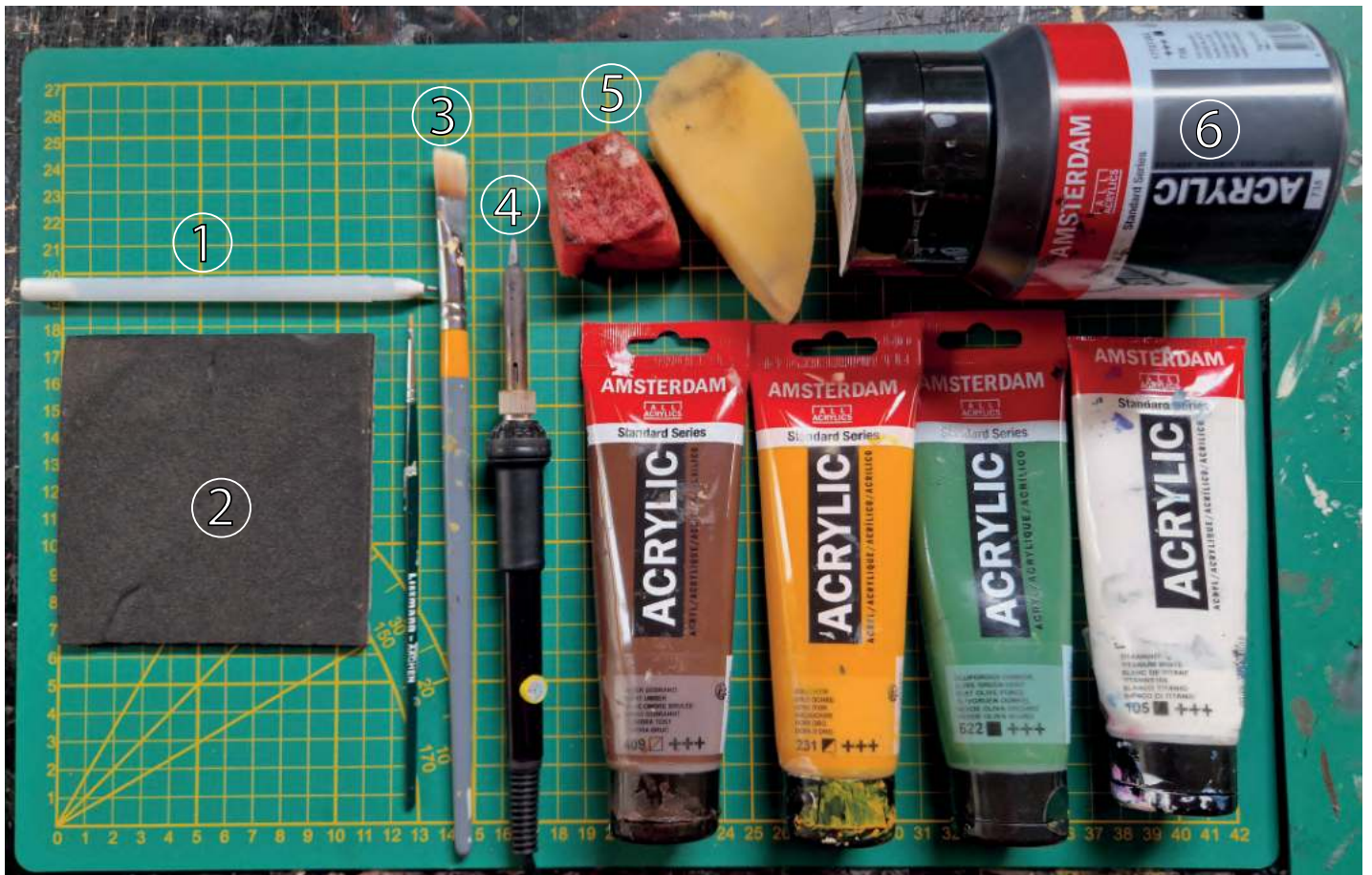
- Mossy Wood -

Wood is a very simple texture to learn. Making it is easy, even if you need a little practice for the paint job. I'll show you here exactly what you need to pay attention to and also you can make wood imitations for your projects!

Materials and tools you need :



Reference picture



1. White pen

2. EVA foam (low or high density)

3. 1 thick brush, 1 fine brush for highlights

4. Soldering iron

5. Sponges

6. Acrylic painting (brown, black, white, ochre or orange, green)



Step 1 : pre-drawing

It is best to use a reference image to create your wood texture. Depending on how a log was cut, the lines and pattern of the wood will look different.

Take a white or light colored pencil and trace the lines of your desired wood pattern (1)(2) .

Note ✨

Leave enough spaces between the lines, because the soldering iron will make the burned-in crevices a little thicker.



Step 2 : burn in the texture

Now use the soldering iron to trace the white contours superficially (3) . Make sure to burn in only slightly and not the entire thickness of the foam. Otherwise, you will have holes in your texture, and that will look unsightly.



Step 3 : basic brown underground coloration

As with the reptile skin, we must first apply a base color, which will serve as a foundation (5). As you may have guessed, we'll use brown for the wood texture. Again, I really like using the sponge, because it gives the wood that rough uneven surface.

I recommend applying two thick layers that some sort of the raised pattern occurs through the dried paint.

Step 4: dark yellow on top

After your two layers of brown are completely dry, you can add the next color. Use a dark yellow or ocher and dab in small amounts of the brown unevenly on your wood texture (6). Use here the drypainting technique.

Make sure that you always see the background color, do not completely cover the brown.



Step 5: highlights with light grey

Now we have to make our wood look old and rotten. For this, we use a light gray paint, which we apply unevenly on our wood texture (7).

It's possible that the two last applied layers (ocher and gray) look blotchy. If this happens, use the sponge with the brown color again and cover the stains a little (8). The colors must have a smooth transition at the end and not be next to each other like stains.

Note ☆

We all know that wood is brown. But if you look very closely, you will notice many different colors of wood, which can be very different due to the climate. The paint job depends on what kind of wood you want to depict. In my case, it's an old musty wood that has been exposed to a lot of moisture.

Step 6: last but not least, add some moss !

What makes an old musty wood? Right, a little moss must not be missing, of course! Use a dark green color and apply it only in several areas (9). It is of course up to you how much "moss" you want to apply to your texture. Just remember, the brown should still be able to shine through.

Note ↗

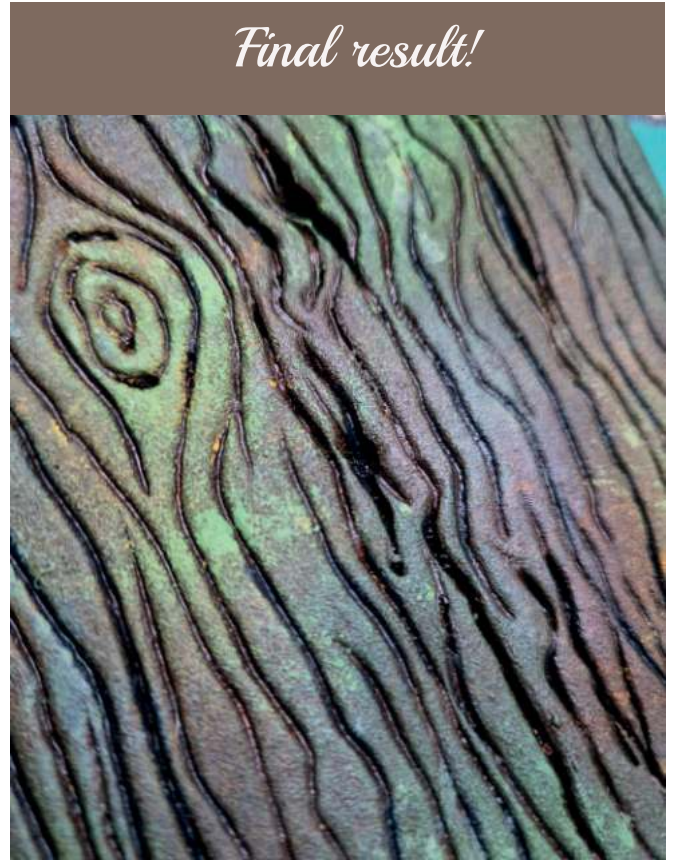
Play with the different shades of green. Older moss has a dark green color, fresh has a light one. After you have applied the dark green, use a slightly wider brush to apply a light green dab (10). The brush gives you more control of the application of the color than the sponge.

Step 7: don't forget to darken the lines

Trace the burnt lines with a black paint. This gives more depth to your texture and makes the colors stand out more. That's an optic effect a lot used in painting (11).



*You can apply the same techniques for wood with other patterns and colors.
There is a variety of possibilities!*



Final result!

Same technique, different pattern and colors :



swag

Note ↗

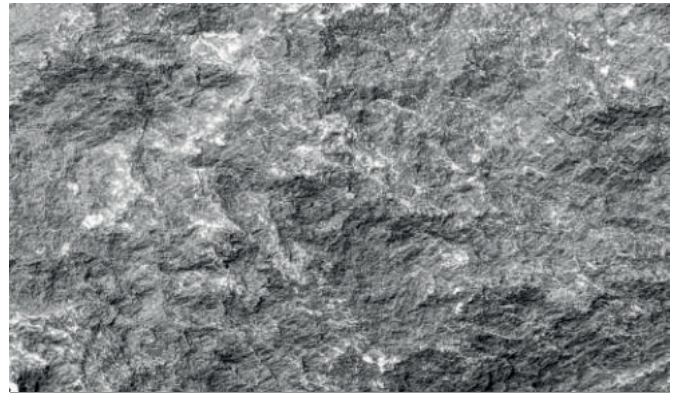
We made most of our male druid's weapon from this texture. Even though many geometric shapes can be seen, the painting technique for wood was mainly used here.



Stone

- Stone -

Stones is a really pleasant texture to create, because you make it with the help of real stones. What could give a better stone texture than real ones? I will show you here how to make it!



Reference picture

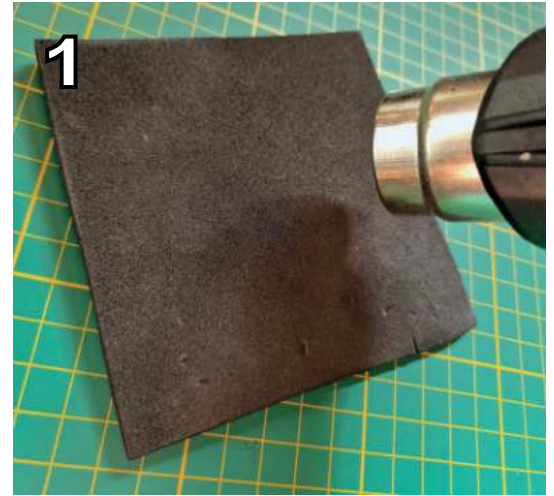
Materials and tools you need :



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Heat gun | 4. Sponge |
| 2. Stone (use a stone with a lot relief) | 5. Acrylic painting (black, white, grey, ochre) |
| 3. EVA foam (low or high density) | 6. Brush (use a slightly wider, but hard one) |

Step 1 : heat it up

Heat the EVA foam well to soften it (1). It must be heated properly so that it takes the shape of the stamp (in this case the stone). If it is not hot enough, the impression will only be slightly visible. The hotter and softer the foam, the clearer the stone imprint will be.



Step 2 : go stamp the rock!

Use the stone as a stamp for the texture (2). You have to press firmly to get the impression. Sometimes you have to repeat several times to get a good texture. Hold the stone firmly for a few seconds while pressing it into the foam. The material needs time to take the shape of the stone, so be patient (3)(4).

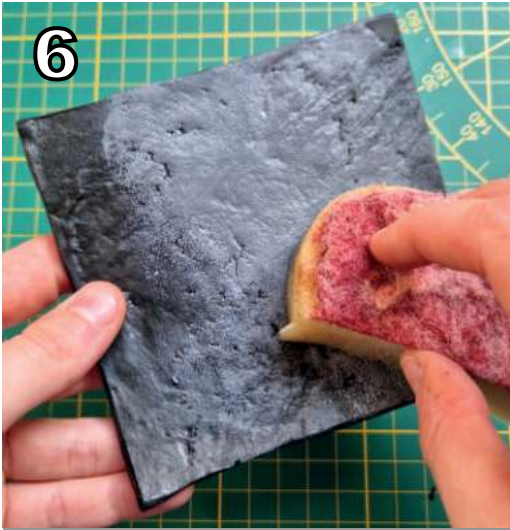


It depends on using the right stones. Do not use smooth ones. Use large stones with a lot of relief and indentations, because this will give you a nice realistic impression later. The rougher they are, the easier they will be to work with.



Note ✨

Here, above all, a lot of patience is required. The whole thing can take a while until you get it right. You have to reheat the foam again and again because it cools quickly and no longer accepts the stamp well. Be careful not to heat the already impressed areas directly, because the impressed texture will dissolve. You have to press again and again with the stone to get a complete texture at the end.



Step 3 : basic coloring with grey

As we did before with the other textures, we first need to apply the base color with the sponge. I chose a gray to mimic the classic stone coloration. But as always, the color depends on your project.

Apply a thick even layer grey over the entire texture (6). Feel free to apply two coats to create a natural relief by letting the thick layer of paint dry.



Step 4 : shading with black

Now let's bring some life to our stone! Use a black or very dark gray color and dab it carefully over your gray base painting (7). Important : the background gray must remain dominant. Do not apply more black than gray. The black is used for shading and not for overpainting the first layer!

Step 5 : highlights with white

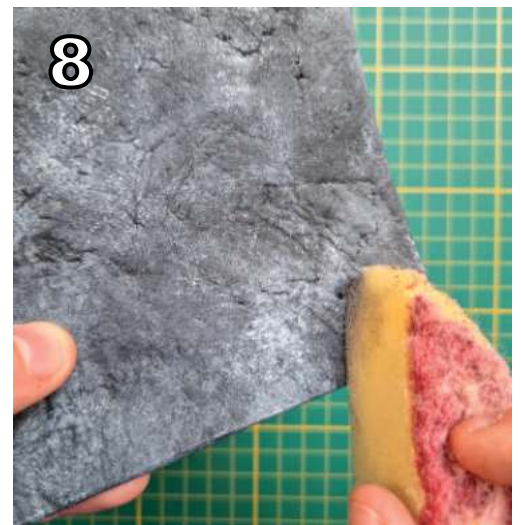
When everything has dried, take a white paint and dab it unevenly over the stone texture (8). Again, do very little on your sponge. The paint should be applied almost "stroking" and gently. Do not press firmly or you will create unsightly stains.

Step 6 : ochre makes the moss

The colour of stones depends on the place where they lie and also on the weather. I chose a stone with a little dried moss on top (yes, I like to incorporate moss!).

For this you use ochre. Because of the grey background colour, ochre shimmers slightly greenish. But you can also use a green colour directly, or you can skip this step altogether.

You know the process by now : apply a little to the sponge, carefully apply the colour in a few places, and it's done (9)!

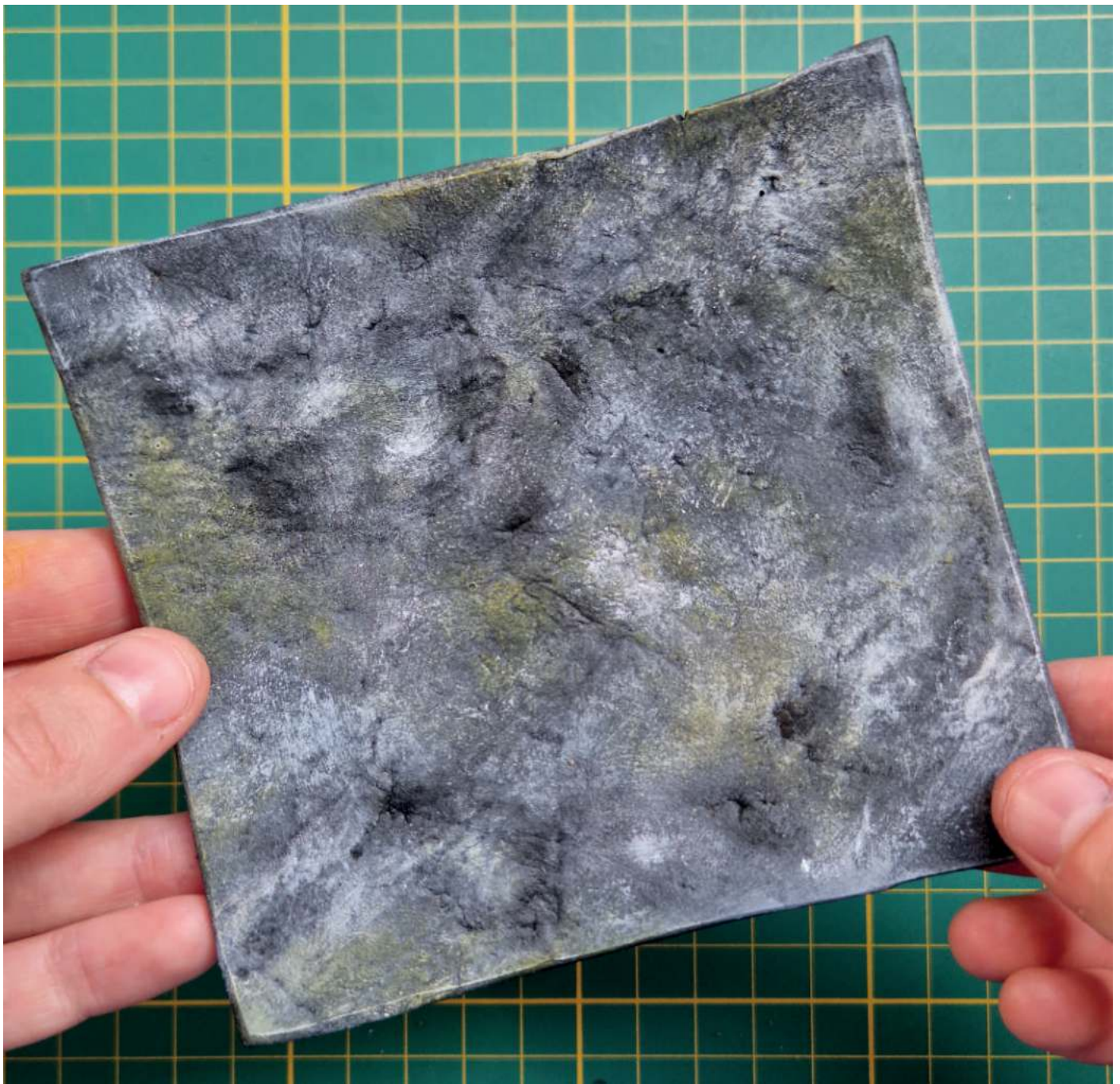




Step 7 : relief makes the realism

Finally, we take our black paint again and darken the indentations with a hard brush and the drypaint technique (10). As I already explained with the wood texture, we play with an optical effect here. When we darken „deep“ areas, the lighter ones automatically stand out. This gives an enhanced 3D effect.

Final result!



Old leather

- Old leather -

Fabrics and textiles are often very expensive, especially if they are leather or imitation leather. However, you are not obliged to spend hundreds of euros/dollars on it, if you can make your own leather texture from EVA foam!

In addition, it's easy to make. I'll show you how!

Materials and tools you need :



Reference picture



1. Heat gun

2. Stones

3. Sponge

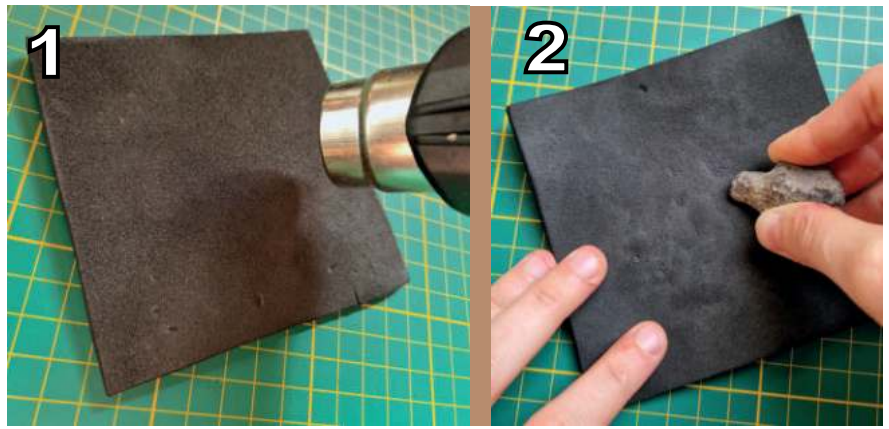
4. Brush (use a slightly wider, but hard one)

5. EVA foam (low or high density)

6. Acrylic painting (dark brown, light brown, ocher, white)

Step 1 : stamping with rocks

First, heat the EVA foam with the hot air gun (1). As with the stone texture, use a small stone to press in the first structure (2). Reminder : the Foam must be well heated to stamp the shape of the stone. Otherwise, the imprint will be seen only slightly.



Note ✨

Do **NOT** heat the foam again at this point, otherwise the wrinkles will disappear and you have to start all over again with the procedure!

Step 2 : go wild with the EVA foam!

Here we do something that may seem a bit strange at first: we "knead" the EVA foam to create wrinkles in its surface (3)(4). This is the typical structure of old and used leather. Our "leather" should end up looking like it has been through a lot.

Turn it energetically in all directions. Knead, pull, twist, squeeze. Let your emotions run wild! ;) That's by the way my favourite part.

Do not be afraid to destroy it, it is a resistant material. The harder you treat it, the more the wrinkles will be visible.





Step 3 : primer for adding texture

You need to use primer for every texture, but here it makes sense for a special mention. Apply a thick primer (flexbond in this case) with a brush, as this will automatically give you a little relief when you apply it and it's dry (6). Do not apply smoothly, make it unevenly and patchily as you see in the picture.



Step 4 : basic brown color

Leather comes in many different colours. I'll show you a natural colour here, in this case brown.

Apply the brown acrylic paint to the surface with a sponge (7). In this case, more is more. It is important to apply a lot of painting, because this will impact the later processing. 2 - 3 thick coats of brown are a good start.

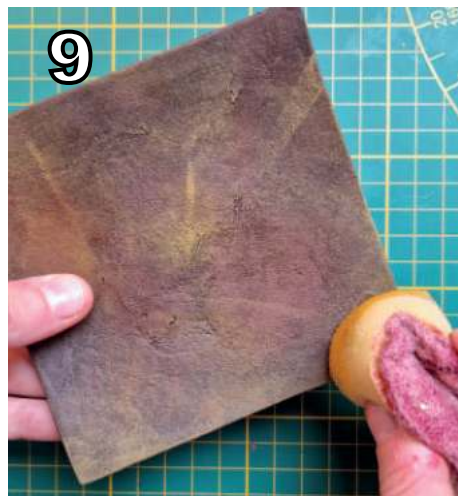


Step 5 : make it old with light brown

After your layers of brown have dried, you can apply the next colour. Use a lighter brown for this (8). If you don't have any at home, you can lighten the dark brown with a little white. As always, apply just a little on the sponge and gently smudge over the surface. The first layer must still be visible and not completely covered!

Step 6 : highlights with ochre

Add ochre in several places on the surface with the drypaint technique (9). Especially the folds are important to paint here so that they stand out more clearly. If you want to have more control over the painting, use a brush (10). This allows you to apply the paint more precisely.



Step 7 : go wild with the EVA foam, PART 2!



You remember when I explained that it's important to have a thick layer of paint? Well, when you bend paint on a material, it creases and wrinkles even more. Very annoying for other projects when it happens, but here exactly what we want to achieve!

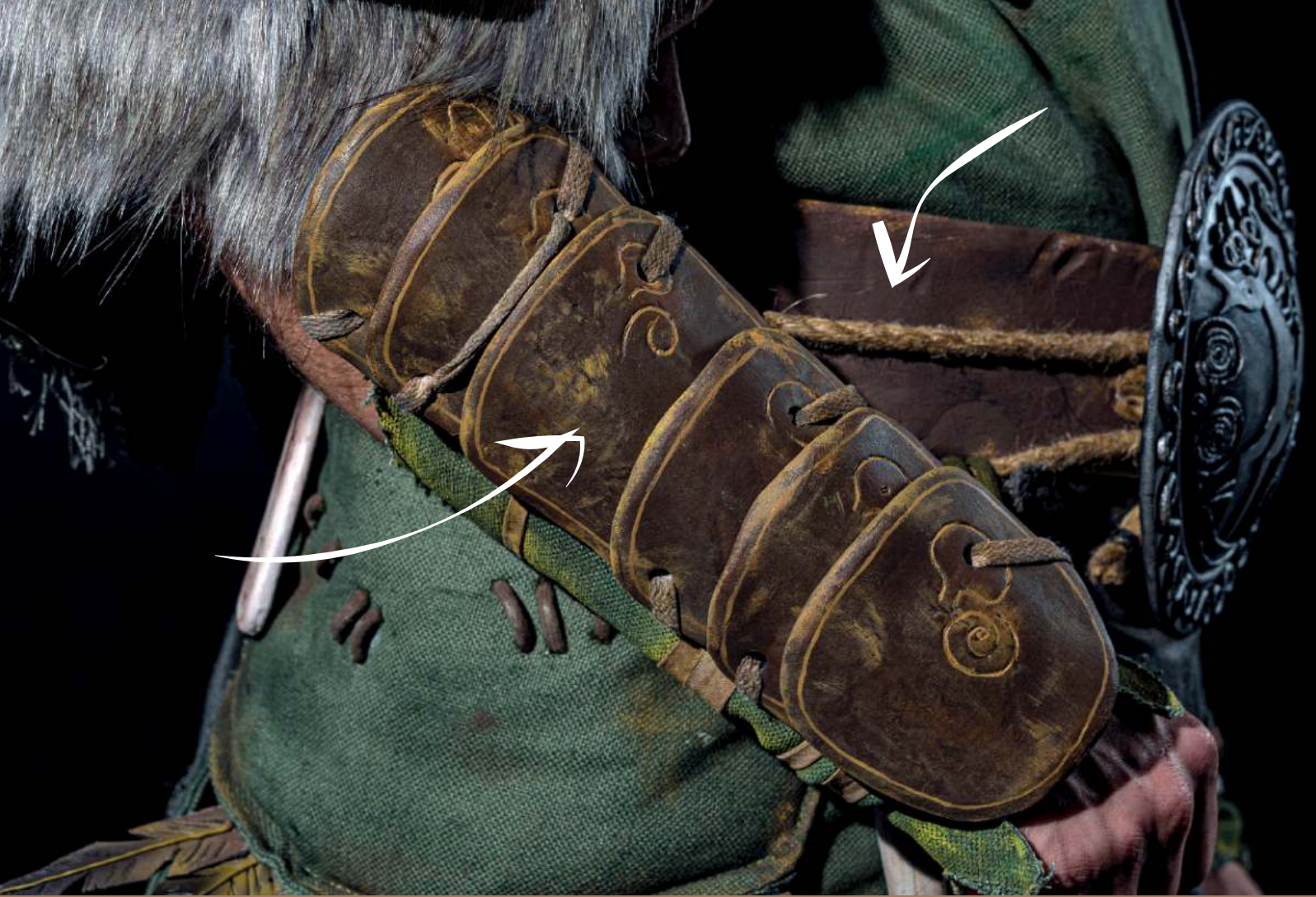


Take your texture in hand again and knead (12). Note, however, that the painted side must be kneaded inwards (14), otherwise there will be no wrinkles. Turning it outwards would smooth out the wrinkles again (13).



Final result!





Note ✨

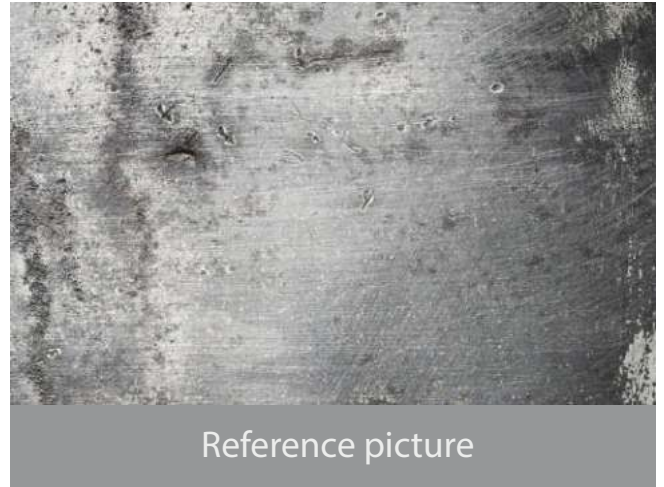
I used this texture for my Druid cosplay for the first time. There were many different elements that had to be made in a leather look. Instead of using real or faux leather, I decided to make it myself. And look what you can do with a little foam and colour!



Used metal

- Used metal -

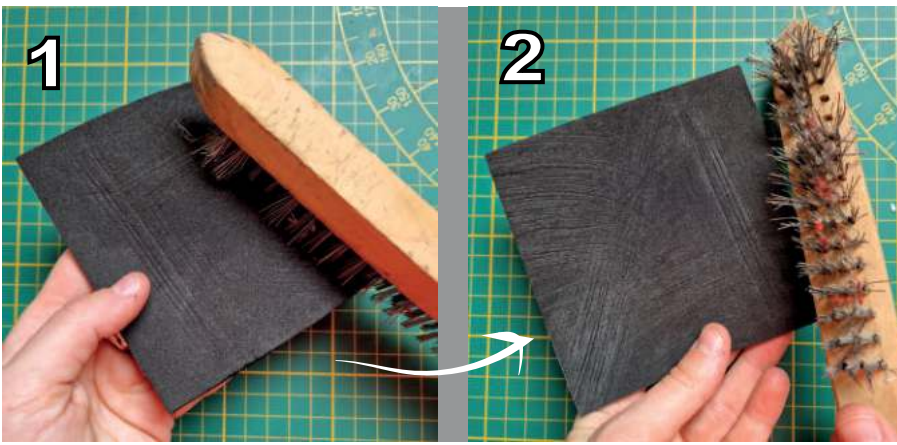
Metal is very interesting texture to make, but it takes a little practice. Even I have now and then still a little difficult to find the right color here. Because the goal is to have a painting that does not glitter, but appears metallic. Here I show you the way I always turn EVA foam into metal!



Materials and tools you need :



- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Dremel | 5. Soldering Iron |
| 2. Steel wire brush | 6. Acrylic painting (black and white) |
| 3. EVA foam 5mm (low or high density) | 7. Rub' n Buff : Pewter |
| 4. Brushes | 8. Sponge |



Step 1 : steel wire brush for scratches

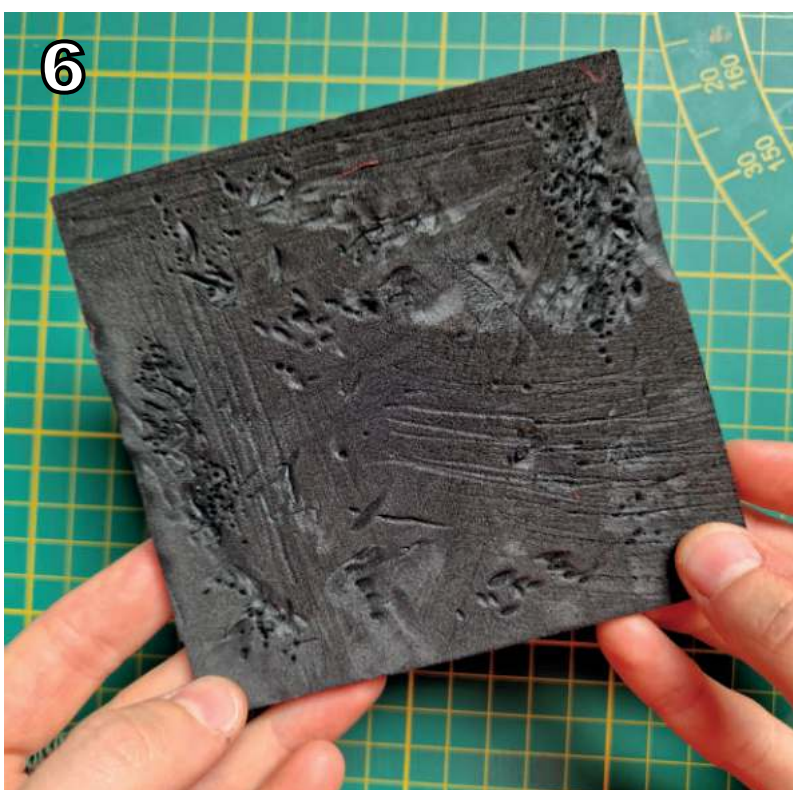
Used metal often has scratches on the surface. We recreate these with a steel brush. To do this, simply press the brush firmly on the EVA foam and rag it over the surface (1)(2). The scratches form immediately.

Step 2 : let's make some damage to the metal!

Metal has not only scratches, but also dents and broken places. We make these with the help of a Dremel. Place the Dremel head on the EVA foam and grind in the holes (3). These should look as irregular as possible, so that it looks realistic. Work sometimes more with the edge of the Dremel, and sometimes you can also take the entire width and create inking.

Step 3 : soldering iron for finer details

We used the Dremel to add the rough texture. To give it even more realism, we add some finer "damage" to our metal texture. Make small holes using the soldering iron next to the rough texture and also sporadically in other places (4).



Note ✨

There are many different attachments for the Dremel. I like to use one with fine sanding and not too wide for "damage work". This gives you more control for detail work.



7



Step 4 : metallic look with Rub n' Buff

To get the metallic effect, we need a metallic paint! Here you have to keep your eyes open when choosing a color, because not every metallic color is a good one. Many acrylic metallic paints have a very shiny glitter effect, which ends up looking like glittering silver. This is not the color we want, but a bright metallic gray. I recommend Rub n'Buff, which is not an acrylic paint, but a highly pigmented wax.

Apply just a little on a short hard bristle brush and spread the paint over the entire surface (7). Due to the high pigmentation you need only a single layer. The short brush makes the paint easier and more precise to apply than a long one.

Note



Be sure to use a brush that you won't want to use for other colors afterwards. This wax cannot be removed with water. When Rub n' Buff dries on the brush, it becomes dusty and you can remove it from the brush with your finger. However, a little paint always remains, which makes the brush harder.

You can also apply this paint with your finger, use a plastic glove!

Step 5 : shading with light gray

To create the used metal effect, we now work with different shades of gray. Take a light gray and spread it on certain parts of the texture with a sponge (8).

Attention : acrylic paint will hide the metal paint. It is important to not apply the next layers of paint everywhere, otherwise you will not see the shimmering effect later.

It is especially important to paint the dents and edges dark for a higher 3D effect. Again, use a short and hard brush for this (9). Don't use too dark gray for this part, because in the end it should look like real dents and not like black spots.

The contrast plays a big role here. If you use a very dark tone on a light surface, it will stand out much more. It's up to you to try it out.

8



9



Step 6 : more depth with dark gray

Where exactly shadow and depth is added to your texture depends on your reference image, of course. In my case, it gets darker on the sides. For this I apply another dark gray layer with the same brush to the already darkened light gray areas (10). Again, don't cover the light gray layer completely, but only a smaller area of the surface.



Step 7 : highlights with white

As always at the end, we bring a little luminosity to our texture with white (11). Take a close look at your reference image to see where the white areas need to be applied.

Tip: add a fingertip of gray color to the white, so that it is not too bright white and the contrast is not too extreme.



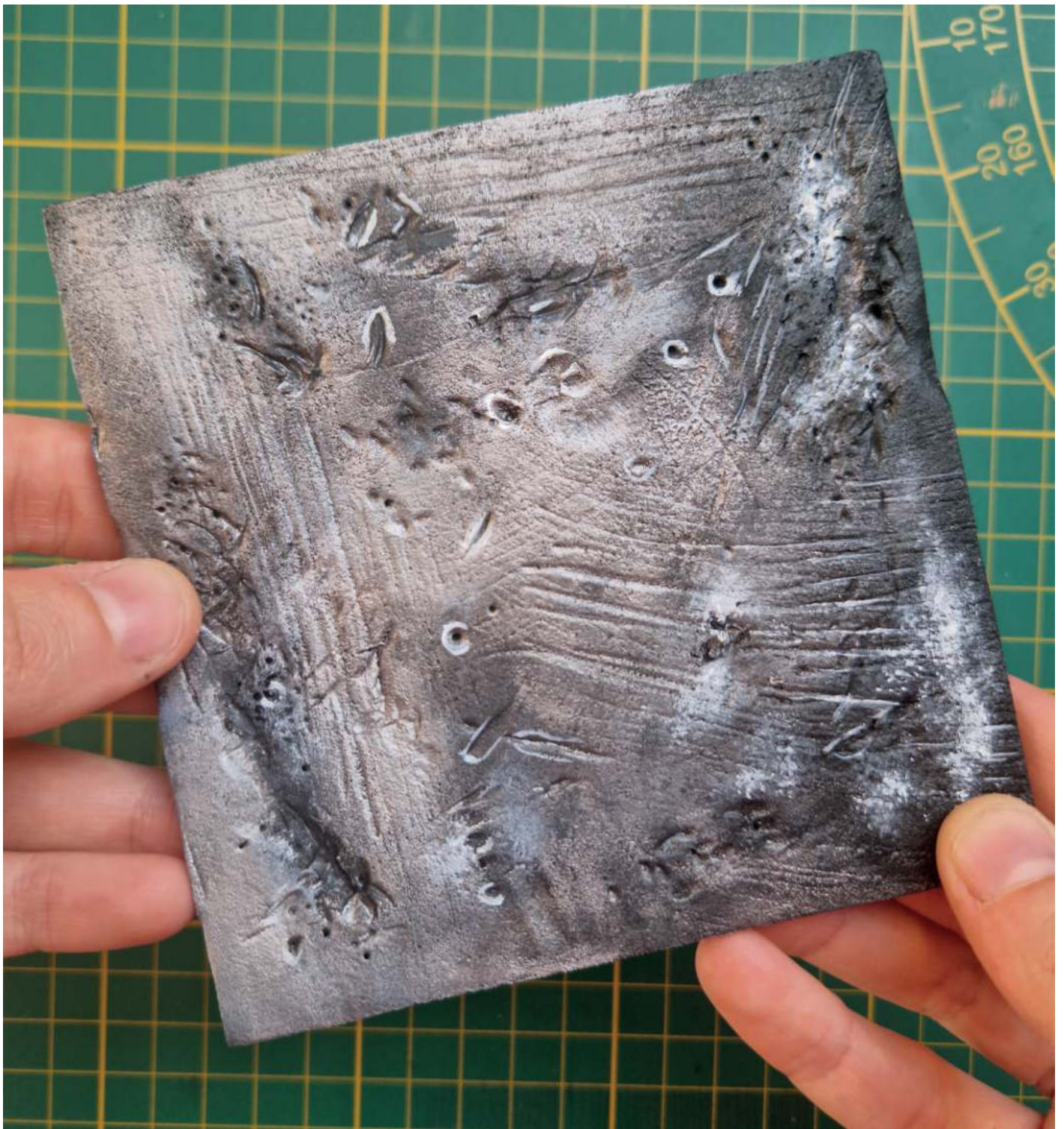
Step 8 : final brushstrokes for more realism

Last but not least, we outline the dents and edges with a very fine brush with some white paint (12)(13).

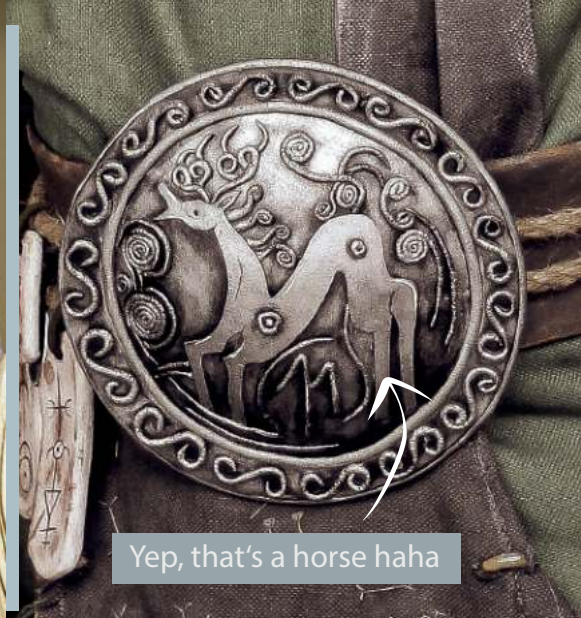
Remember when I talked about depth just now? Well, this step brings even more realism to a texture. This mimics the light reflections on your texture. Especially the small holes are important to outline to make them more visible.



The scratches can also be outlined with a bit of white paint to make them stand out more.



Final result!



Yep, that's a horse haha

Note ✨

I used this technique for many different projects, such as the two Druids of Diablo 4, as well as on the legendary weapon "The Guillotine" of the game Outriders.

This weapon was by far the most complex prop I've built so far!

More pictures here :

www.thedodocosplay.be



Feathers

- Feathers -

Now let's move on to a texture that I used 90% of the time for a particular project: feathers! There are many different shapes, sizes and colors of feathers. The texture was inspired by my cosplay, the Skytouched Shaman from Raid Shadow Legends.



Reference picture

Materials and tools you need :



1. Heat gun

2. EVA foam 5mm (low or high density)

3. White pencil

4. Dremel

5. Soldering iron

6. Brushes

7. Cutter

8. Acrylic painting (Magenta, violet, blue or the colors you want)

9. Hot glue gun

Step 1 : sanding edges with the dremel



First cut the shape of a feather on EVA foam (1). After that, it is important to sand the sides so that they are formed into a fine edge (2). This gives the typical shape of a feather. Note that there are many different feather shapes, here I refer again to the reference picture. The edges of the front and back of the EVA foam must be sanded to an even depth so that one side is not thicker than the other.



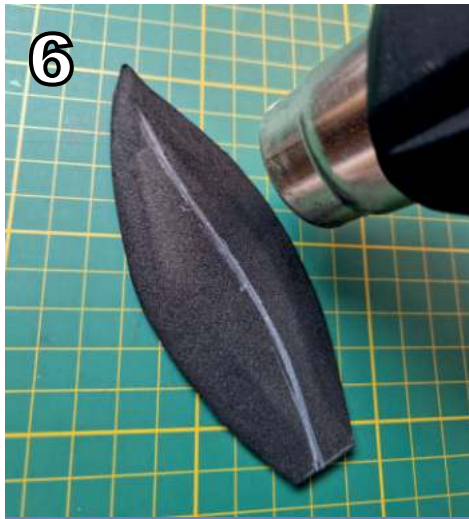
Note ☆

If you need to sand something coarse or a large surface, use a wide and coarse-grained sanding tool (3). This grinds away a lot of material due to its gritty surface. But beware: it will show no mercy when your fingers get in touch with it while dremeling. The skin is off immediately. Painful personal experience ...



BEFORE

AFTER



Step 2 : burn away small foam particles

Sanding (especially with the coarse sanding pad) creates small fluff and particles that look unsightly. To get rid of these and get a smooth surface, take the heat gun and hold it over it for a few seconds (5).

You can also run your finger over it after heating to smooth it out even more, but always be careful with your finger!



Step 3 : predrawing with white pencil

To make it easier for you to re-sand the shapes later, I recommend that you pre-paint the feather structure with a pencil (7). It is enough to indicate the lines so that you have an idea of how to trace the contour later.

Step 4 : sanding the texture

Now we come to the actual feather texture. Take the Dremel again and carefully trace the contours you drew before (8). You don't have to draw all the lines to the end and always work evenly. Remember, nature is never symmetrical and equal. Leave sometimes larger and sometimes smaller distances between the lines.

Attention: do not grind the center line, because there comes later the feather shaft!



Note ✨

For this part, I recommend the fine-grained narrow grinding wheel (9). In contrast to its coarse relative, this one penetrates more heavily into the foam due to its fine-grained surface and is therefore easier to work with more precision. You can decide for yourself how deep you want to grind the texture by pressing on the Dremel. But try to stay relatively superficial.



Step 5 : cut in some triangles

If you look closely at feathers, you will notice that they have these triangular edges. We recreate these by cutting the shapes with a cutter or scalpel (10). You can cut only one or two edges or more.

Step 6 : details with the soldering iron

If you want to add some very fine lines for your feather texture, you can take the soldering iron and carefully burn them in (11). Have a look at the temperature. The higher the temperature, the faster and deeper the soldering iron will burn into the foam. The lines will not look thin, but wide and thick. It is best to set it to a not too high degree (350 - 380 °C) if you want to avoid this unsightly side effect.

Step 7 : hot glue for the shaft

Every feather has the centerline, also called the shank. There are several ways to create it, but I'll show you the easiest method. Use a hot glue gun, carefully trace the white line and let it dry for a few minutes (12). This is a quick and easy way to add the last part of the texture. It is important to have a hot glue gun with a temperature setting. If the glue is too hot, it will be too liquid. At about 170°C it is hot enough to draw the line and hard enough to stay in shape.





Step 8 : basic color with blue

You can, of course, take the colors that you like. I have been inspired by my cosplay project for the paintjob.

Apply the base color (in my case the blue tone M011) with a wide brush (14). Make sure it's a soft brush, because one with rough bristles will leave lines in the paint. Apply one to two layers, depending on the color you use.



Step 9 : shading with dark blue

I now give the nib a little shadow touch at the bottom. For this I mix the previous blue tone with some purple and black, so that a nice dark blue emerges from it. Take a short wide brush with hard bristles and apply the color with the drypainting technique. (15).

Step 10 : highlights with magenta color

To give the feather a final touch of color, I paint the tip and sides of the feather with a little magenta color (16). Make sure that there is a clean transition between the magenta and blue (also called ombré painting). Be careful to avoid that the colors look like they're set next to each other. In the end they should have a nice transition from light to



Step 11 : last stroke on the shaft

Last but not least, we paint the shaft of the feather with a little light blue so that it is nicely visible (17). To do this, mix a little light blue with white and apply it with a thin brush over the dried hot glue.





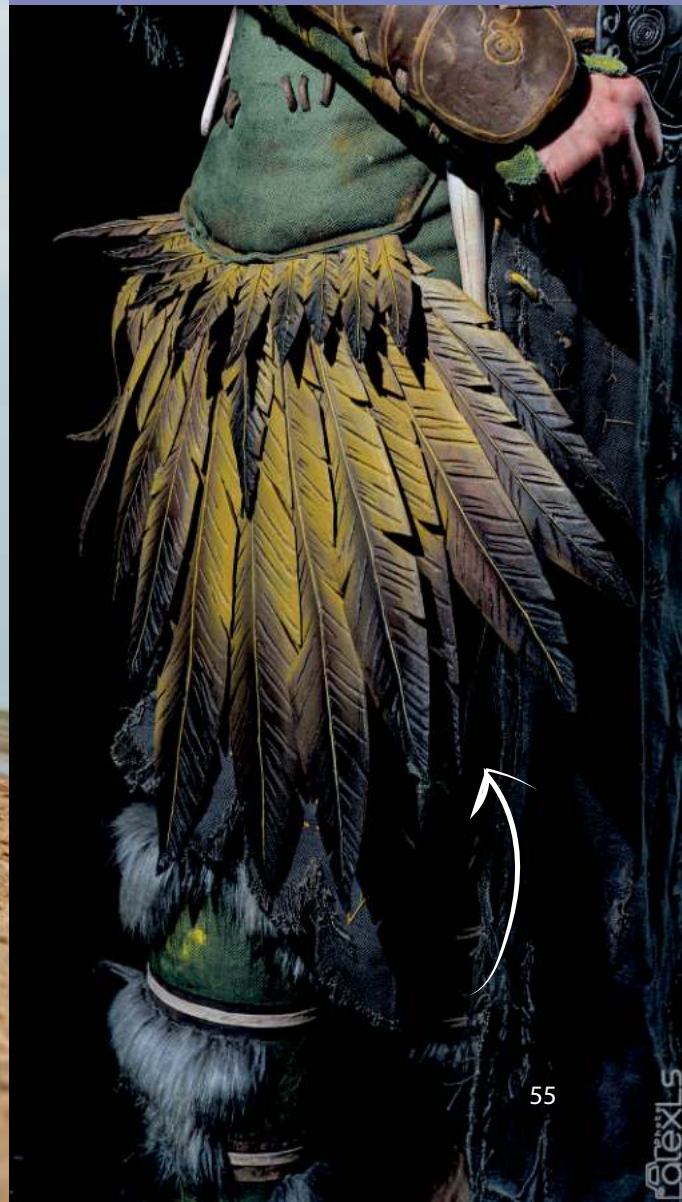
Final result!



My most known project, for which I built a whole bunch of feathers, is my Skytouched Shaman from the video game "RAID : Shadow Legends". In all honesty, I did not count the feathers... There are just too many. I think after 50 pieces I stopped counting.

The Druid from Diablo 4 had as well a little amount of feathers.

This serves as an example to show you what you can create from a single texture! It often takes a lot of motivation and patience, but if you keep at it, you can create some great projects!



Bones and skull

- Bones and skull -

Now it's getting spooky! One of my absolute favourite textures is bones and skulls. I am a big horror fan and am fascinated by the human (and also animal) body. Even though they are scary for many, bones are part of life. Since I also feel very connected to the forest, I can connect this texture well with both horror and nature. Or simply as a beautiful and eerie Halloween decoration!

To give you a better and simpler idea of the texture making, I made a skull for you!



Reference picture

Materials and tools you need :



- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Sponges | 5. Dremel |
| 2. Foam clay | 6. Brushes |
| 3. Sculpting tools | 7. White pencil |
| 4. Soldering iron | 8. Acrylic painting (black, white, brown, ochre) |



Step 1 : build the skull base out of EVA foam

As a base, I first made the skull out of EVA Foam (1). For this, I used the patterns from Kamui cosplay. This was already perfectly constructed for my skull base, so this time I didn't have to make my own template. I made a few changes to it so that it had my desired shape, but you can keep the original template design as it is. You can find this template on her website.

Step 2 : hiding glue lines with Foam Clay

If you are a „professional“, you don't need this step. Once you have found the right glue technique, you won't see the lines later. But if you are like me and you don't know how to glue it correctly (lol), then I recommend this step (2).

Apply foam clay over the lines to hide them. Don't use too much clay or you will end up with a "bump" over the lines. The aim is to have an even and smooth (at least as smooth as possible) skull surface. For this step, you can either use your fingers or a flat modelling tool to spread the clay and press it smooth (3)(4).

Use a little water to make the modelling clay very soft, so that you can spread it better. **Warning** : if you use too much water, you will get a sticky paste you won't be able to work properly with.



Note ✨

To put all chances on your side to see as few glue lines as possible from the beginning, the right glue is the keyword : **Contact Cement** (5). This glue is applied thinly on both sides that are to be glued together, let it dry for 2-4 minutes and the sides will stick together immediately. This is where the name comes from, it sticks after coming into contact with its contra side.



Step 3 : sculpting eye sockets

Now we come to the actual texture work. First of all, we need to bring life to our skull. If you look closely at the reference image, you will see that we need to do some sculpting.

Let's start with the eye sockets. We already have the holes, but we need more (literal) depth. The eye sockets are pushed a little further into the skull. This is exactly the effect we are now creating. We don't need glue to fix the clay, it holds by itself after working.



Form a finger-thick „sausage“ (don't eat it haha) out of foam clay and place it around the eye socket (6). Now pull the edges of the Foam Clay outwards and inwards on the yellow Worbla with a finger (7). Do not add water at this point, because without it you have more adhesion to the clay and can spread it better.

Once you have spread all the clay around the eye, you can use water. The water softens the clay and makes it easier to spread.

Note ✨

To get the transition from foam clay to EVA foam base clean, you have to use a little more water and press harder to distribute the modelling clay on the edges (8). This way, the transition is almost invisible later on the EVA foam.

Now use this technique for the nose and cheekbones too. It is exactly the same principle!



This is how it should look after editing.

One thing I would like to say: if you don't get it right from the start, don't be sad or give up! My first projects with Foam clay looked anything but worth seeing. It took me a few months to learn the trick of working with it correctly.

It is a material that opens up many possibilities, but can be a stubborn opponent at the beginning. Get to know the material and give yourself a chance to test it for the first time. Oh, and don't be too hard to yourself! :)



Step 4 : adding the texture with sculpting tools

Now that we have given our skull volume, we can create the actual bone texture. One part is applied while the clay is still wet, another when everything is dry.

Before working in, we let the clay dry for about 5 minutes (when the surface is slightly matt, it's good). If it is still very wet, the modelling clay will mark the structure very well.



I first use my finger and press the clay in a little (10). This gives the first rough structure. Then use the tools you see in the photos. You can use them to work in dimples, cuts and other irregularities into your skull (11)(12)(13).

Note ✨

If you don't have any of these tools at home, you can alternatively use a fork, knife or toothpick.



Step 5 : sculpting teeth and jaw

15



Note ✨

You can easily model the teeth out of foam clay (15). They must be completely dry (between 24 and 48 hours) before you glue them on. If you glue them on while they are still soft, the teeth will mix with the modelling clay that you apply later and you will end up with very funny looking teeth...

Before modelling the jaw, let the clay around the eye sockets dry for one night. As the foam clay is still very soft and can deform with every wrong push, you risk some unattractive deformations.

Here it is a very similar principle to step two. First, glue the teeth to the jaw. Form a „sausage“ and place it at the end of the EVA Foam (16).

Again, spread the edges of the modelling clay over the jaw (with your finger or a tool, whichever you prefer) (17).

16



17



18



Take a good look at your reference picture to see what the skull looks like (remember : „what do you see?“). If you notice that you have used too little clay to form the volume, you can use a little more to adjust the shape of the jaw (this applies to all areas) (18).

Now you can use the water again to make the ends of the clay and the EVA Foam merge nicely. Remember: at the end you should not see the transition!

19



Finally, take a tool with a sharp edge or a pointed tip and draw the lines into the modelling clay (19). This represents the root of the tooth that is in the jaw.

Do not go too deep, it should only suggest the root of the tooth.

Also put some foam clay BEHIND the teeth so that the gaps disappear. You can create an interesting paint job in that spot later.



Step 6 : drawing the bone suture

After the entire skull has dried for at least one day, we come to the next step.

A very characteristic feature of the skull is the bone seam (latin „sutura“). If you want to depict the skull scientifically and realistically, this seam must not be missing! Look at photos or drawings of skulls, especially the back of the head, there you can see exactly where these sutures are located.



Draw the „sutura“ on the skull with a white or light-coloured pencil (20)(21). These serve as guide lines to make it easier to engrave with the soldering iron.

Step 7 : engrave details with the soldering iron

Heat your soldering iron to the highest setting (mine is 450 °C). I don't know if this is the case with all soldering irons, but mine has to be set to the highest setting so that you can burn into the foam clay cleanly and without problems. It sticks faster in clay than in EVA foam.

Now trace the white lines and engrave the bone seam (22).

Also use the soldering iron to add some other textures, such as a cut in the bone or refine some lines already sculpted before (23).



A little scientific knowledge anyone?

A suture is a connective tissue seam between two skull bones and holds our skull together. The skull has 22 bones that are held together by a total of 33 sutures!



Step 8 : dremel for the last texture details

Use the Dremel to grind some bumps on the upper jaw up to the eye socket. This brings out the teeth even better and to add the finishing touches. Do not grind too deep. Set your Dremel on a light setting and carefully and slowly grind in the bumps (24).

Note



Use a Dremel head that has a fine grain and is pointed towards the end (25). This allows you to grind in nice round areas without cutting into unesthetic edges (as would be the case with the other two already shown).



There are also bumps in the bone on the back of the head. You can also apply these with the Dremel in different places. Do not press the bumps in too hard, but only a few millimetres (26).

Sand the sutures gently so that they don't look too „perfect“. This creates a realistic and organic look (27).

All the steps shown above can also be used for the lower jaw, in exactly the same way.



28



29



Wow, that was a lot of work, wasn't it? You can already be very proud of you, because this isn't the easiest texture to do.

Well, rest for 5 minutes, because we're not done yet!

Now we're going to bring life to our skulls: grab your paint and brushes, now it's time to paint!

30





Step 9 : basic paint with beige

Now, we can FINALLY start the paintjob. Mix a little ochre paint with white to get a light cream colour. Apply this with a sponge, dabbing over the entire skull (31). Dabbing will automatically give you a nice rough texture.

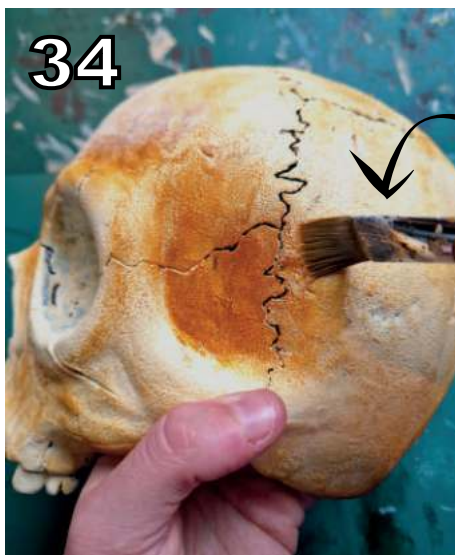
I recommend two to three layers to make the black background disappear completely.

Step 10 : ochre for a used look

Once the creamy white base colour has completely dried, we start with the first highlight colour. We want our skull to look as if it is a few years older. To achieve this, we use either ochre or a very light brown with a yellow touch.

Apply the colour very thinly with a sponge. Pay attention to the transitions so that the ochre colour blends gently into the white (32) (33). In some places, however, you can leave a few darker patches of colour. This makes the whole thing look more organic.

Take a good look at your reference picture to see exactly where the darker areas on your skull are placed. You can of course take inspiration/help from the pictures here in the book. Remember: the white colour should always remain dominant and peek out from under the other layers of colour. Do not cover the base colour with the others!



Note ✨

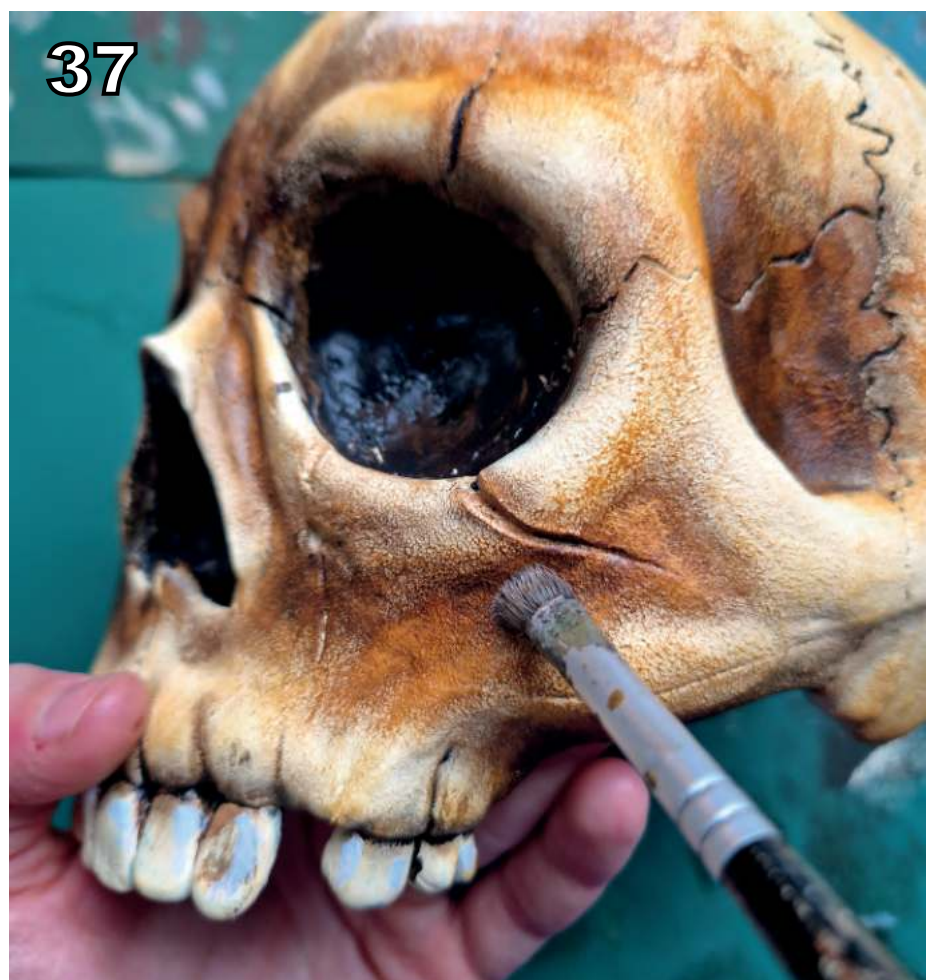
If you realise that you only want to paint a certain small area and the sponge is painting too much at once, you can also use a wider brush for this step (34). I always like to alternate between the two utensils. Again, only apply a little colour (=dry painting). The sponge is very good for applying paint to large areas, the brush for finer work.

Step 11 : dark brown for shading

To create the important depth, we have to work with dark tones here too. Paint the entire eye sockets with a very dark brown colour (35). Depending on the type of acrylic paint you use, you will need to apply two to three layers to achieve a nice homogeneous and covering colour.

Now use a short hard bristle brush to apply the dark brown colour where you applied the ochre layer all over the surface (36). This will give our skull more 3D effect and realism. The ochre layer should still be clearly visible here too and not be covered by the brown. Lightly indicate the brown colour over cuts and indentations to make them stand out more.

Paint the transition between the teeth and skull. The gaps between the teeth dark brown to black. They should look really dirty and old (37)(38)(39) ! As if you haven't brushed your teeth for weeks (ok, I admit that was disgusting, but at least you'll understand what it's supposed to look like in the end haha).





You can let off steam with the dark colour, especially on the back of the head. You can apply the acrylic colour from the end of the skull to the middle of the head in an ombré look to make it look old and dirty (40). Free choice whether you want to use the brush or the sponge.

Sometimes the colour may not be opaque enough, depending on which acrylic paint you use. If you want it darker or stronger, let the brown colour dry and apply the next layer. This will give you more texture and darker transitions.



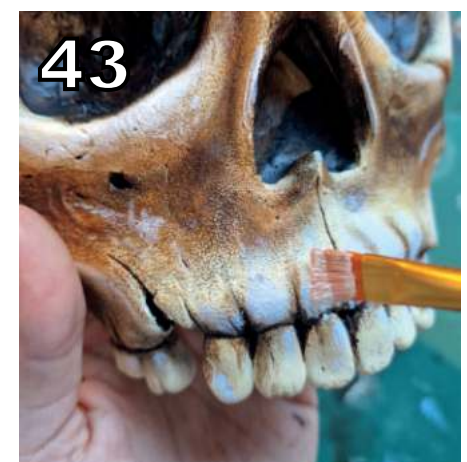
Note ★

If the paint already applied becomes too dry and you can't get the transition clean, you can take a little water and moisten the paint again. This makes it easier to spread the colour again (41).

Step 12: last highlights with white

To give your skull the finishing touch, we apply a little pure white colour to certain areas. Again, I looked at my reference picture to see exactly where the light falls. Because white colour = represented light (42).

Add the white colour as well around the eye socket, a little on the teeth, on the roots of the forehead and some areas on the back of the head (43).





Final result!





Note

This technique works not only with human bones and skulls, but of course also with animal ones.

Example: the druids from Diablo 4. I had to make three different animal skulls in total and got better every time. It's all a question of practice and time!



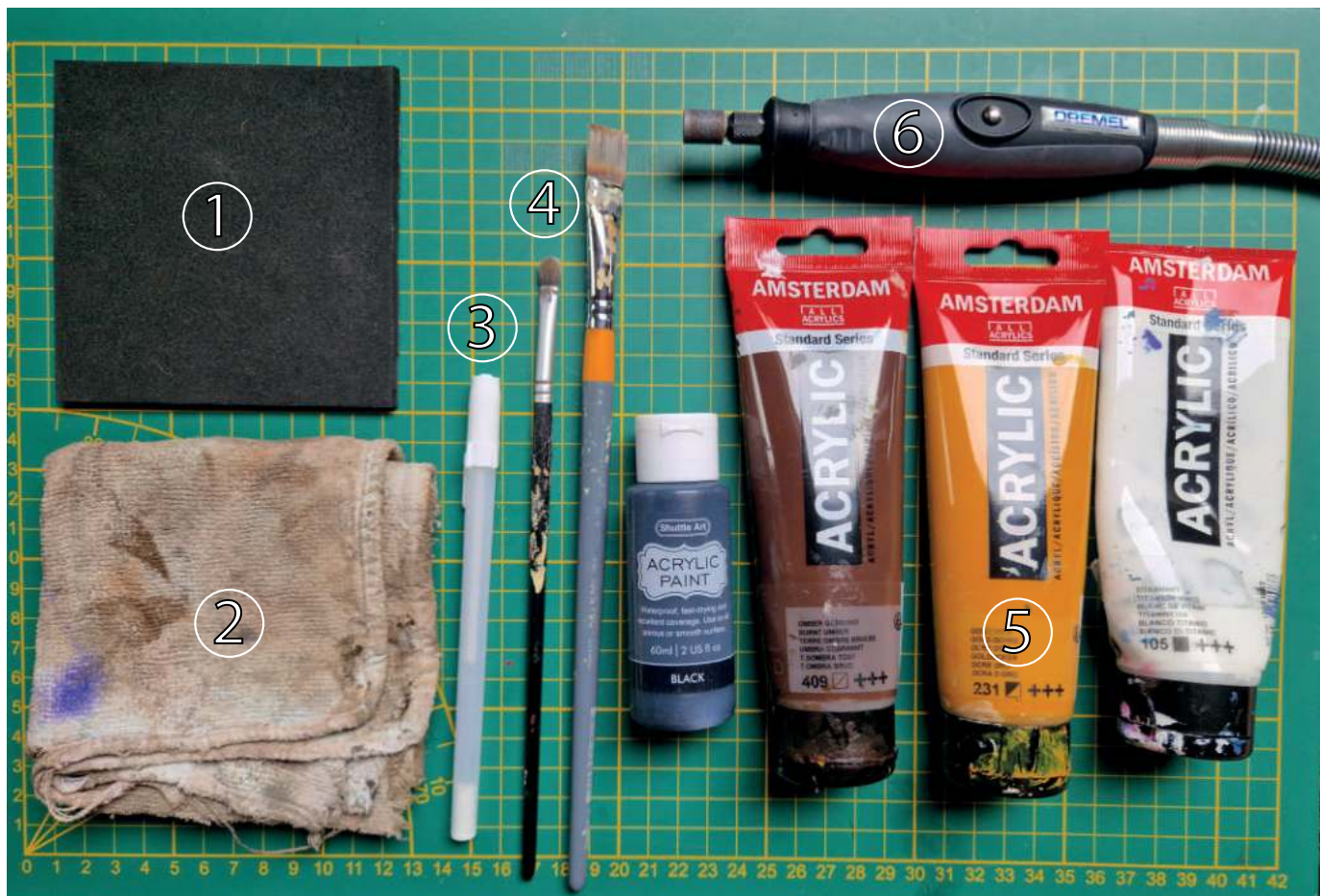
Horns : style 1

- Horns : style 1 -

Horns are one of the most popular textures in cosplay. You can find them in many different projects. It is therefore interesting to know how to make them.

I will show you two different textures. The first one is a very simple texture to make. Let's start with the first style!

Materials and tools you need :



1. EVA foam (low density)

2. Old fabric

3. White pencil

4. Brushes

5. Acrylic painting (brown, ochre, white, black)

6. Dremel



Before we can start the horn texture, we first need our base. I have recorded how to create this basic horn form in a little tutorial (1). Maybe you already know how to build horns. In case you don't, you can download it for free on my website :

www.thedodocosplay.be

Step 1 : contours with white pencil

First draw the characteristic dents of a horn on the EVA foam with a white or light-coloured pencil (2). These serve as a helpful guide for the next step. However, if you already feel confident with the tools, you can skip this step and go straight to the next one.

Step 2 : dremel for the texture work

Use the sander to trace the white lines you drew earlier (3). It is important that you remain very superficial and do not "drill" deep into the foam.

If you look closely at a horn, you will notice that it is mostly smooth, but still has slight grooves. For more maitrise over your Dremel, I recommend setting it to a slow speed (10 - 15).



Step 3 : basic painting with beige

As we did with the bone texture, we use a light beige for the background colour. Apply this with a soft and flat brush (5). I recommend two to three coats to cover everything.

Even though I think you've understood it by now, I'll repeat it again: make sure you let the first coat dry between each layer of paint.

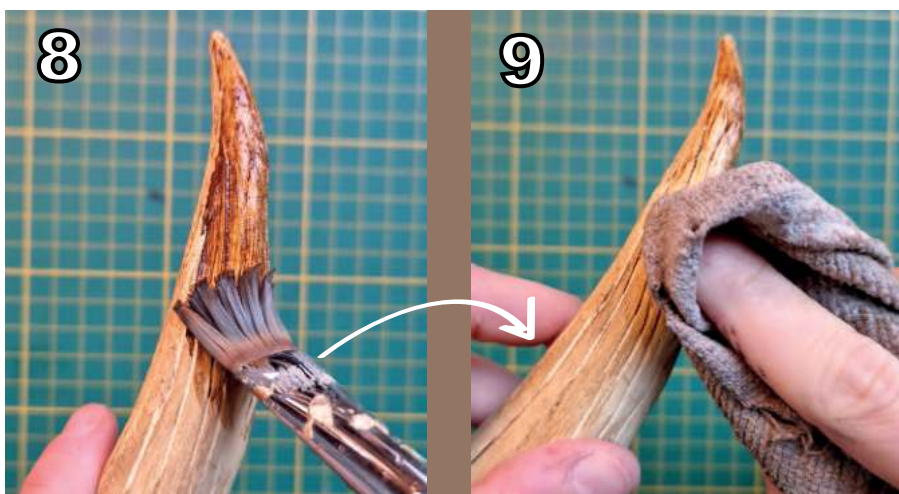


Step 4 : weathering with brown



To give the horn its worn effect, we use a cool technique. Dilute brown paint with plenty of water. Apply the diluted acrylic paint to the horn with a brush (6)(8). The colour must have penetrated into the grooves before we move on to the next step.

Now take a cloth and rub off the remaining colour or spread it over the surface (7)(9). Rubbing off the colour leaves a light brownish effect and the grooves are now coloured brown. Do this over the entire horn.



Note ✨

You have to work quickly here, because the thinned paint dries very quickly. If the colour has already dried and can no longer be rubbed in, don't panic! Moisten the cloth a little with water and rub it over the dried paint. This will allow you to work on it again. Incidentally, this technique also makes brushstrokes disappear.



Note ✨

You can also darken the tip of the horn with a little water-diluted black paint and thus make the grooves more visible.



Step 5 : last touches with the brush

For more targeted weathing, use a short hard bristle brush and apply the brown-black colour to certain areas of the horn (using the dry technique) . I particularly recommend the end, the tip and a few other areas.

To apply the colour, go both in and against the direction of the line texture. This gives you an additional effect that makes your horn look even more realistic (10)(11).

The tip of the horn in particular can be significantly darker than the rest of the surface. Don't hesitate to use a little pure black colour to darken the whole thing a little (12)(13).

Depending on the colour of the horn of your project, you will also have to use other colours and not just brown. However, you apply these in the same way as the other colours we have seen in this chapter.





Note ✨

I used this texture a lot for my Drogon cosplay (helmet, weapon and horns all over the cosplay) and for the animal skull of my Druid cosplay.

Fun Fact: Horns is one of the first textures I learnt and I've always loved making them. Especially because it is (in my opinion) a beginner friendly texture. It doesn't take much effort for a "wow" effect!



The helmet has almost 100 horns and spikes!

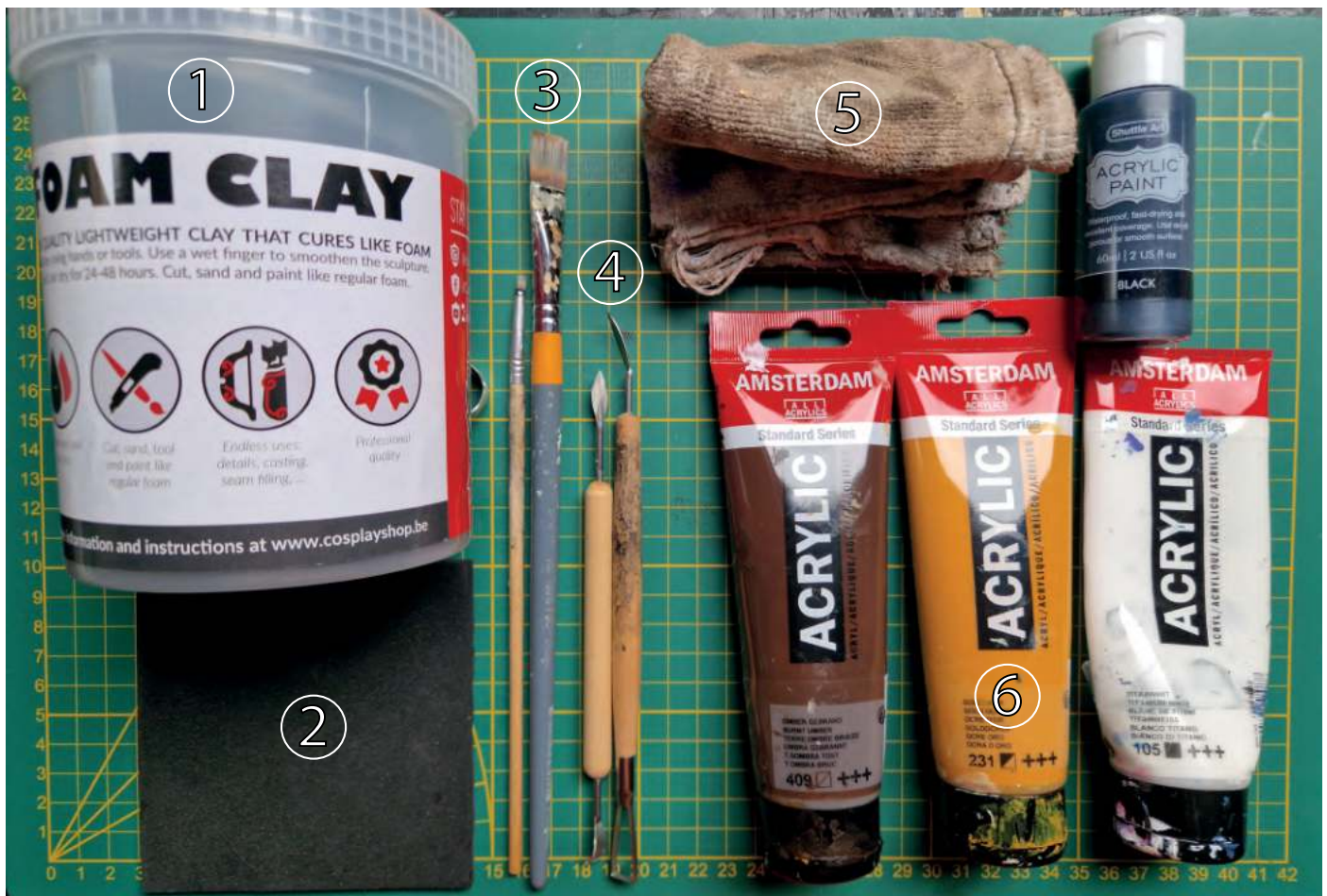
Horns : style 2

- Horns : style 2 -

The second and final type of horn is to produce an equally interesting texture, but requires a little more patience and time. Here I'll show you how you can easily recreate them!



Materials and tools you need :



- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Foam clay | 4. Sculpting tools |
| 2. EVA foam (low density) | 5. Old fabric |
| 3. Brushes | 6. Acrylic painting (brown, ochre, white, black) |



Before we can start the horn texture, we first need our base. I have recorded how to create this basic horn form in a little tutorial (1). Maybe you already know how to build horns. In case you don't, you can download it for free on my website :

www.thedodocosplay.be

Step 1 : foam clay for 3D effect

First we have to create the characteristic curves of this type of horn. To do this, we form "sausages" about 5-10 mm thick out of foam clay and place them around the horn (2).

Step 2 : sculpting tool to disperse the clay

Remember when we formed the skull's eye sockets? Here it is the same principle. It's best to use a flat sculpting tool to flatten the edges inwards and outwards (3). Not everything has to be nice and flat at this point. The main thing is to distribute the foam clay to create an organic look.

Note ☆

The finger has a larger surface area than sculpting utensils. It is better for pressing the distributed clay flat once you have roughly spread it out (4).



Now do this technique over the entire horn. The closer you get to the top , the thinner the hump have to be.



Step 3 : water for a better transition

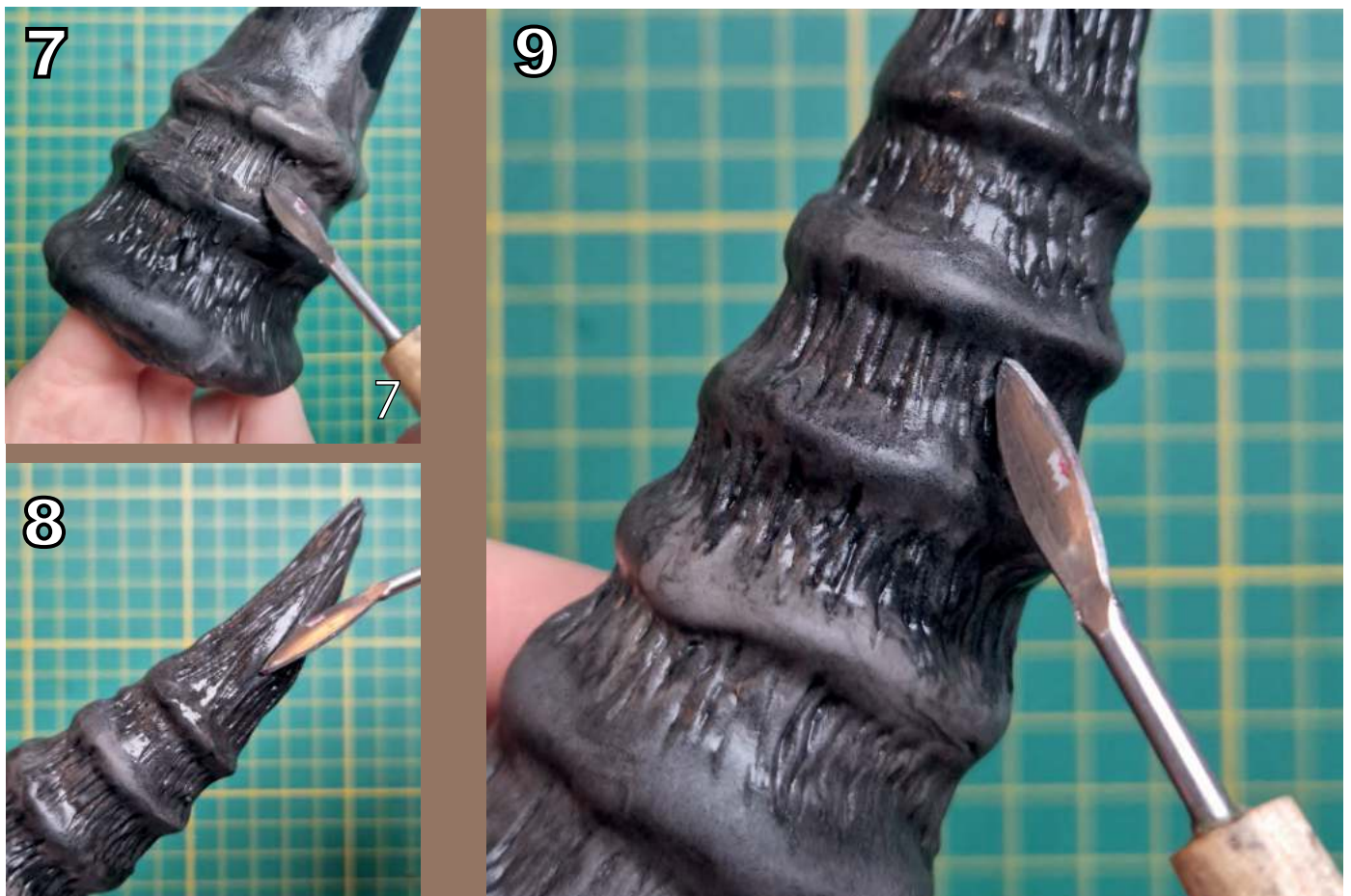
To get the transition from foam clay to EVA foam base clean, you have to use a little water and press harder to distribute the modelling clay on the edges. This way, the transition is almost invisible later on the EVA foam (5)(6).



Step 4 : add texture with a sculpting tool

As soon as we have worked on the basic structure of the horn with foam clay, we add the final texture. Use a sculpting tool to draw lines on the flat areas and the top of the horn (7)(8). Since the foam clay is still soft, it can be easily worked into the material. This is the typical horn texture that we all (or almost all) know. However, leave the bumps free and smooth.

To incorporate the texture better, let the foam clay dry a little and mold it into the foam mass again (9). I don't know exactly why, but if you create lines in the clay like this, then they become significantly paler when the clay is completely dry. So feel free to go over the texture again after it has dried slightly.



10



Step 5 : basic painting with beige

You should now know the principle from the previous textures: here again you mix some other with white paint to use a light beige tone as the background color. Move the brush towards the tip of the horn so that fine brush strokes can be seen. This gives an additional subtle texture to the smooth surface. Apply 2-3 coats (10).

11



12



13



Step 6 : weathering with brown

This step will take a while, because it takes time to paint the individual grooves up to the tip of the horn.

Use a small hard-bristle brush and apply a dark brown color to the incorporated line texture using the dry technique (11)(12). The brush should be relatively small so that you can apply the paint as precisely as possible. The wider the brush, the more paint you will apply in places where you don't want it.

The closer you go towards the tip, the more brown you can apply (13). The horn tip can also be painted the darkest. In the end, you should see a clean ombré look from light to dark. Always let it dry every now and then and apply a new layer of brown. This will make the tip a little darker in certain areas on the horn.

Step 7 : shadow work with black

Once you have painted the entire horn with the brown paint, use black paint and darken some areas (14). Still use the same brush for this. The tip in particular can be blacker than the rest (15). The black will significantly strengthen the ombré transition.



Step 8 : darken the background color

Finally, take a wide brush and dilute light brown paint with plenty of water. Apply this to the bumps to make the beige a little darker (16). Rub the paint with your finger to get rid of the brush strokes (17).







Note ☆

Yep, as you've probably noticed, I use my Diablo IV cosplays a lot in this book to show you examples. This is because the characters incorporate so many different techniques. And that is great!

I made a whole horn on my skull using this technique. This was the first time I've ever worked with this and it was anything but easy to start with! But with a little practice and patience you too can do it!

Antlers

- Antlers -

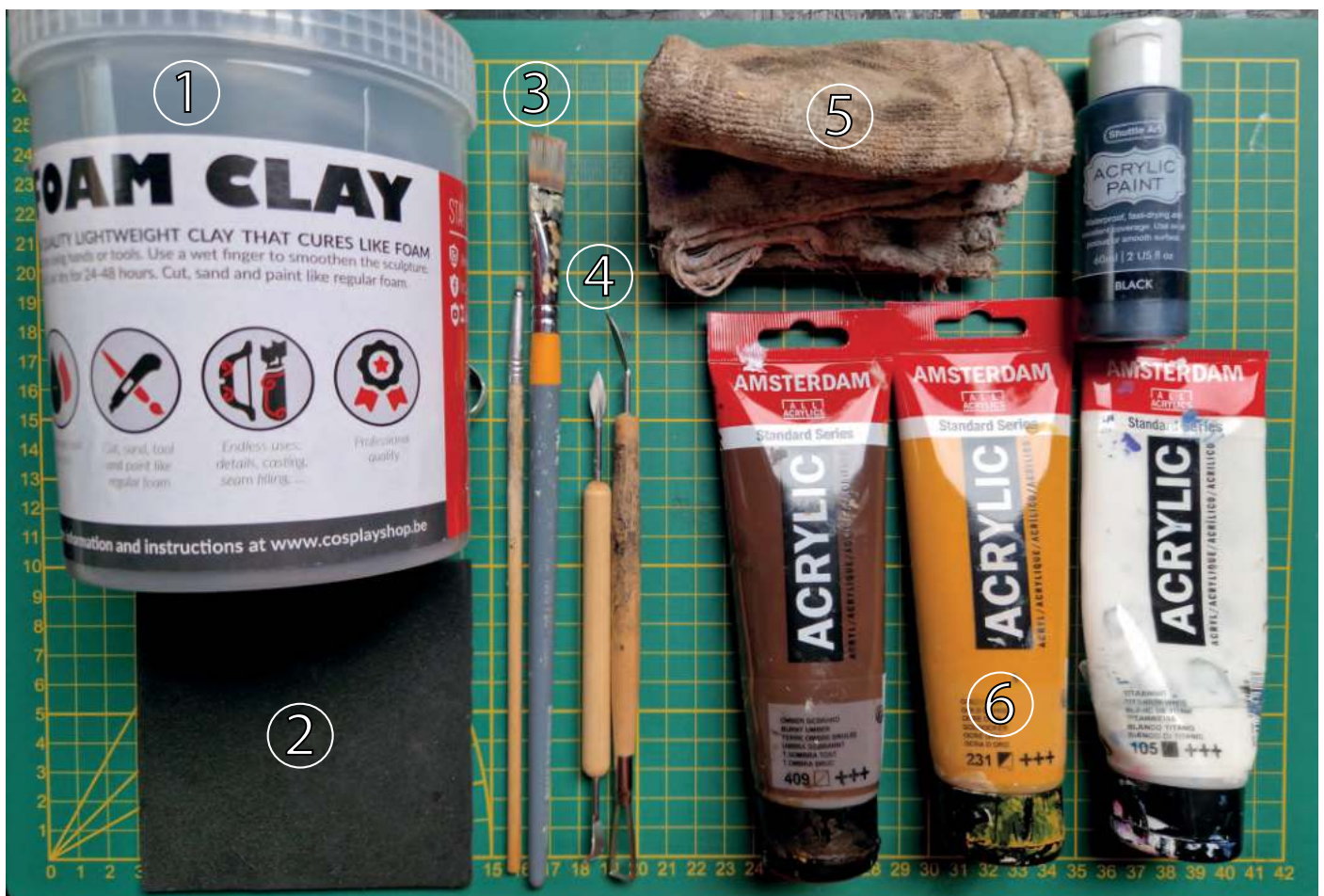
Now we come to the last and my my favourite texture: antlers.

They look very similar to horns, but have a completely different texture and are very exciting to design. I'll show you here how you can create them too!



Reference picture

Materials and tools you need :



- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Foam clay | 4. Sculpting tools |
| 2. EVA foam (low density) | 5. Old fabric |
| 3. Brushes | 6. Acrylic painting (brown, ochre, white, black) |



As with the horns before, we need a base to start the texture. This time I designed my own antler pattern. If you don't know how to make one yet, you can take a look at this one: www.thedodocosplay.be

Step 1 : sculpting the rose with clay

Firstly, we use foam clay to shape the so-called rose of the antlers. This is the part that is attached to the deer's head. Shape a "sausage" about 2 cm thick and attach it to the end. Again, pull the ends upwards to create a transition from clay to EVA foam.



Step 2: add texture to the rose

Once you have created a nice smooth transition, you can add the texture directly afterwards with a sculpting tool (in this case, it doesn't really matter which tool you use, the main thing is that it gives the effect you see in the picture) (3)(4).





Step 3: creating the antler texture

Now we come to the actual texture of the antlers. You will see that they are fun to make!

Use Foam clay again. Form a thin „sausage“ and hold it firmly at the end with your thumb and forefinger (5). Place it on the antler rose. Now pull the modelling clay upwards so that you get the shape you see in picture 6. This shape is created by the position of your two fingers in a sort of „triangle“.

Now do this all over the antlers, very irregularly. In some places, you can leave small lumps (7), as these can also be found on real horns.

Note ✨

You need to press a little more on the strips to make them hold. If some areas have come loose during drying, you can easily fix them with a little superglue. Normally, however, everything should stay in place.



Step 4: sculpting tools for grooves

Between the cavities of the "triangle sausages" , you can add a little clay up to about the centre of the antler base to make grooves with a pointed sculpting tool (9). Do not go higher than the centre, as we will be working with the Dremel here later (10).

Step 5: Dremel for deeper grooves

After everything has dried for about 24 hours, we can sand in the remaining texture with a Dremel (11)(12). This is the same principle as with the horn texture type 1, but here you can press the sanded lines a little deeper into the EVA foam.

Step 6: heat away small particles

Sanding creates uneven areas and small shreds that look unsightly. Use the heat gun to burn these off (13). But be careful not to hold the heat on the foam for too long.



Step 7 : let's do the paintjob!

The paint job here is exactly the same as the horn type 1. If you want more information, I invite you to have a look at page 73.

To make it a little easier for you, you can see the painting order below:







Note ✨

Probably my most known project to date using the antler texture is the male Druid from Diablo 4, which was the most challenging head piece I've ever built. It took me about a week to get the shape and texture right.

The weapon, which consists of a large elk antler, was also made with this texture.



Find more picture about this projet under my website

www.thedodocosplay.be

*Bonus :
self dried moss*

- Bonus : self dried moss -

Well, to be honest, this is not really a texture.

However, self-dried moss is a great material that you can use for your projects! Industrial moss looks very artificial and real moss is expensive. So I learnt how to make my own, and it's free too!

Here I'll show you a very simple method for drying your own real moss and bringing a little nature into your projects.



Some important informations you need to know before collecting the moss:



- Not every type of moss is suitable for this. Some disintegrate into their individual parts after drying, which is impractical. The two best types for drying are : **leaf moss** (1) and **peat** moss (2).
- Preferably try to use moss that grows on stones or tree trunks. Moss on the ground is full of soil and will cause a lot of dirt.
- Very important: when you go to collect moss, NEVER take a lot at once from the same place! Nature needs to recover from this. Only take a little bit at a time from different places.
- Some mosses are threatened with extinction and are protected species. These are strictly forbidden to pick! Find out beforehand which species you can take without hesitation. Here is a list of a variety of moss species and their current status :



www.rote-liste-zentrum.de/en/Moose-Anthocerotophyta-Marchantiophyta-Bryophyta-1769.html



Step 1 : heat water

Firstly, we need to bring a kettle of water to the boil at 100 °C (3).

This is important, because we can't just put the moss in a corner and dry it. There are many microorganisms and bacteria that need to be eliminated first.

Otherwise your moss will go mouldy.

Step 2 : pour the water over the moss

As soon as the water bubbles, it is hot enough and can be used for step 2.

Now pour the boiling hot water over all of your moss (4). You should be generous with the water to make sure that all the moss is soaked in it.



Step 3 : squeeze out the water

Leave the water to cool for about 10 minutes. It is still very hot and you could burn yourself quickly.

Once it has cooled down, carefully squeeze the water out of the moss (5). Try to get as much out as possible, as it will take less time to dry.

Step 4 : let it dry

Now comes the part where we have to be a little patient. The moss now has to dry, and there are two methods.

Variant 1 : if you're not in a hurry, the best way to dry it is by heating in winter or simply in the warm air in summer (6). This method can take between 1-3 days, depending on how warm it is and how thick the moss is.

Place the moss on a kitchen towel so that the moisture does not get into the heater. However, you should turn the moss regularly (about every hour) so that it can dry evenly on both sides.



Variant 2 : if you don't have time, you can also dry it in the oven (7). This has the advantage that the last bacteria won't stand a chance. However, it is not the most environmentally friendly and costs energy.

To do this, place the moss on baking paper in a baking tray. Please do not place double layers of moss on the baking tray, as the drying process will take longer.

I usually set the oven to 50 - 55 degrees with circulating air. Leave the door open a little so that the water vapour can escape and the moss dries more quickly. After about 10 minutes, you should carefully turn the moss over. It can take up to 2-4 hours in the oven.

And now you have your own home-dried moss at home! That was easy, wasn't it? You can soak it in glycerine at the end to preserve the colour, but I've skipped this step so far. It's your choice whether you do it or not.

To store it, I recommend putting it in a cardboard box where it won't get any light or sunlight. The light will cause it to fade and lose its colour over time. And then you can use it!





Note

I used a little moss for self-designed masks in the Mononoke style. The mask itself is made of Worbla and I wanted to add a touch of nature to this jewellery. The moss makes everything look much more harmonious and beautiful.

And here the book comes to an end. Thank you for you support!
I hope you were able to learn something and that it helps you for your
own projects!

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books at [@thedodocosplay](#) or [#thedodocosplay](#) !



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Dragon skin reference : <http://onlineresize.club/2021-club.html>

Mossy wood reference : <https://pixers.de/fototapeten/holz-textur-braun-alten-holz-hintergrund-mit-knoten-55611111>

Stone reference : <http://www.tonytextures.com/free-rock-stone-texture-photo-gallery/>

Old leather reference : <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/leather-background-texture-548901904>

Used metal reference : <https://depositphotos.com/de/photo/metal-texture-23597573.html>

Feathers reference : <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/331296116346844917/>

Skull reference : <https://www.amazon.com/Gifts-Decor-Grimacing-Realistic-36245/dp/B009LGCO40>

Horns - Style 1 reference : <https://www.arrowforge.de/Horn/Kuhhorn>

Horns - Style 2 reference : <https://www.afrika-exklusiv.com/Blessbockhoerner-Laenge-39-cm>

Antlers reference : <https://www.ryffel-felle.ch/wildtierfelle/2418-horn-geweih.html>

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