

MAKING COLORED TISSUE

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Published in the January 2012 Issue of the NFFS Journal, Don DeLoach, Editor

Every scale Free-Flight builder has faced this same dilemma; sometimes the range of color available in tissues simply won't match your scale documentation. To paint the model seems like a burden you really don't want to negotiate. But, even those of us with minimal airbrushing skills, indeed can come up with virtually any color required, and with a minimum amount of effort.

First, aside from an airbrush and compressor (the air brush need not be an overly fancy model, just of good quality), we will use a friendly paint. Winsor & Newton Designer's Gouache comes in a tube as a paste form. There are many colors available, and all are water soluble. The paints mix well, give brilliant colors and clean out of the airbrush nicely with tap water. I also use plain tap water to thin the paint for application. The paints are available at artist supply stores. It may seem pricey, but a tube of gouache goes a long way.

Next, get together enough frames to paint several sheets of tissue. You may as well make plenty while you have everything out, and besides, when the inevitable time comes to repair your ship, you'll need some tissue that matches. Frames can be made from a variety of materials, wood, metal, etc. They can be purchased as picture or window frames. I like Ralph Kuenz's idea of simply cutting an opening through an appropriate size piece of rigid cardboard. At any rate, whatever material you choose make the frames large enough to accommodate a full size sheet of tissue.

After you have attached the tissue to the frame with white glue, watershrink it and allow it to dry. Now apply several light coats of paint. If water droplets begin to appear you've applied a bit too much. No problem, let your work dry thoroughly and proceed to complete painting. It does not take much paint to bring the color out. Keep in mind the weight factor and shoot for the type of tissue that will display your model's lovely structure after it is applied. By the way, I use a good quality white Japanese tissue available at Joe's Hobby Centers in Dearborn, Mich.

Because the paints are water soluble, they will need to be sealed. Use Krylon Crystal Clear 1301 Acrylic spray coating to do this. It is available in spray cans at your local hardware store. If your model requires a dull finish use Krylon No. 1311 Matte Finish spray coating. An even dry coat over your paint will adequately do the job. Now simply remove the tissue from the frames and it is ready to be applied. I use thinned white glue (50/50) to attach the tissue to the airframe. For neatness sake be careful about the amount of glue you use. The tissue can be water shrunk after it is applied. Use a spray bottle and just allow the fall- out from the spray to come into contact with the tissue. Personally I just let nature take its course to do the shrinking process. There is enough humidity in the air here in Michigan to eventually give you a smooth cover job. If you like, another coat of the clear Krylon may be applied after completion of your covering to homogenize the finish although it probably isn't necessary. However, it will cover any dull spots from excess white glue. Just be sure you mask off anything you don't want to spray. Any foam parts should be covered and sealed with tissue as the spray will attack and destroy foam. As a final note, rather than using dope to apply markings such as registration etc. to the model, apply 3M Spray Mount to the back of the tissue markings for application. 3M Spray Mount Artist's Adhesive is available in spray can from at your artist supply store. I have also seen it at Kinko's Copies.

I have found using the airbrush in this manner to be enjoyable and fun, I hope you do too. Good flying.