

# FILTERS



## A subtle addition

Thin shades of paint to blend and tone color • BY AARON SKINNER

**M**odelers often use thin paint on models in the form of washes – flowing darker paint into crevices and recesses to give the finish depth.

But there is another application for thin paint that can help define and blend colors, especially on monotone or flat color schemes. They're called *filters*: Their effects are subtle but, used as part of a layered finish, they can set a model apart.

Filters are very thin paint applied over large areas like panels and hatches. Rather than settling into recesses, the thin color tints the underlying finish, **1**. Selectively using multiple colors can provide subtle changes over the model – so an overall green

tank no longer has a uniform appearance. Filters blend previous paint and weathering, softening contrasts and tying the finish together.

A quick note about paint finishes and filters: It's best to apply them to a flat or semigloss finish. You want the paint to stay on the surface. Smooth gloss finishes let paint run toward the edges (perfect for washes). Also, as with washes, use paint and thinner that won't affect the underlying paint: If you painted the model with acrylics, artist's oils or enamels and turpentine work well; if you painted with enamels, try thin acrylics.

Here's a quick guide on how to apply filters.



**1** Filters tint the base coat without obscuring the color. Notice how the olive green color is altered by the translucent covers of red and yellow as well as how the two filters combine to create more tints.



**2** Paint and thinner are all you need: I painted Tamiya's 1/35 scale SU-122 with Model Master Acryl, so I'm using artist's oils thinned with Turpenoid. There are ready-mixed filters available from Mig Productions.



**3** Filters should be thin. Mix no more than 5 percent paint into the thinner. Otherwise, it will act more like a wash. A soft, round brush works well to apply filters.



**4** Stroke the brush against the side of the container to remove some of the thin paint but leave the brush damp.



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Brush the thin paint over the surface. Try to keep it relatively even, but it doesn't have to be perfect – irregularities reinforce realism.



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I painted only the starboard side of the SU-122's fighting compartment here to show off the effect. To blend everything, the first filter may be applied over the whole model.



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After an hour, the first filter has given the SU-122's armor a slightly warmer tone than surrounding areas. Additional applications will increase the intensity. It's hard to go far wrong with filters. The paint is so thin the effects of each layer are subtle.



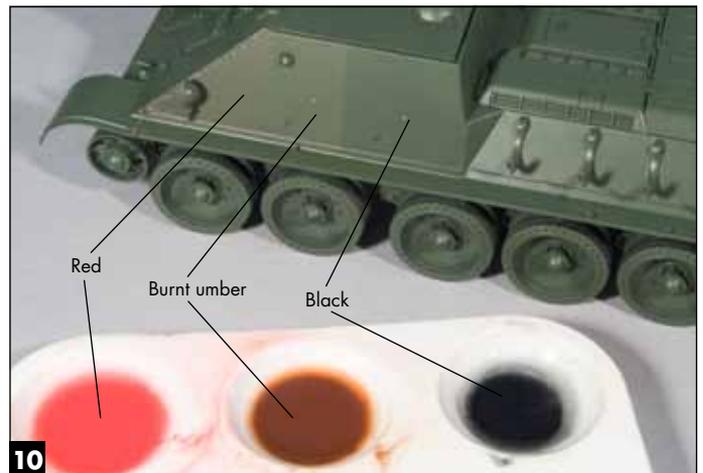
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Remember, you want the color to tint the entire surface, not gather in corners. Here, some of the orange has collected in a hollow on the SU-122. Don't panic ...



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... After blotting the brush mostly dry, hold it up to the puddle. The bristles will draw up the excess liquid. Remember, until you clear-coat this layer you can manipulate and correct the filter using a brush damp with thinner.



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Try different colors for different effects. On the fighting compartment's port side, I applied red, burnt umber, and black filters. Effectively applied, filters enhance realism. **FSM**