

AK Interactive AK525

AK Book AK525 FAQ 2 Fantasy Figures Painting Techniques User Manual

A Comprehensive Guide by Arnau Lázaro

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

This manual serves as a companion guide to the AK Book AK525 FAQ 2: Fantasy Figures Painting Techniques. Authored by Arnau Lázaro, this 320-page book is designed to provide comprehensive insights and practical methods for painting fantasy miniature figures. It addresses frequently asked questions and offers detailed explanations to enhance your painting skills, from foundational concepts to advanced techniques.

The content within this guide is structured to help readers navigate the book's extensive information, focusing on key areas and methodologies presented by the author. It is intended for both novice and experienced figure painters seeking to refine their craft.

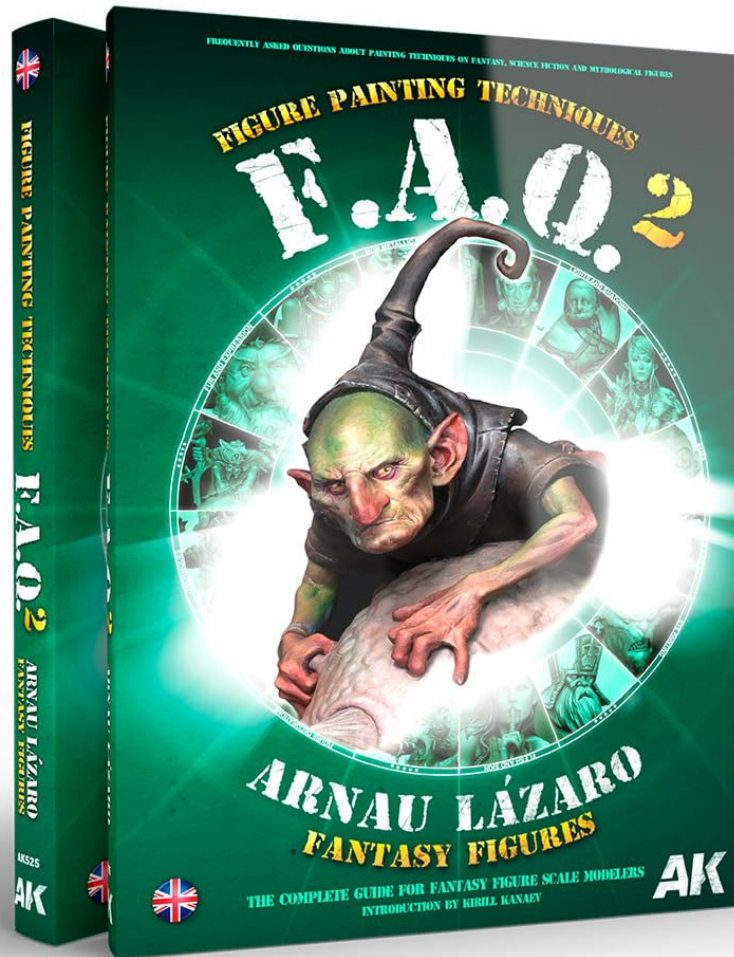


Figure 1.1: Front cover of the AK Book AK525 FAQ 2 Fantasy Figures Painting Techniques. This image displays the book's title, author, and a prominent illustration of a fantasy figure, indicating the subject matter of the guide.

2. UNDERSTANDING FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

Before delving into specific painting methods, it is crucial to grasp the underlying principles that govern effective figure painting. This section outlines the key factors discussed in the book that contribute to a successful and visually appealing miniature.

2.1. Key Factors in Figure Painting

The book emphasizes several critical elements that influence the final appearance of a painted figure. Understanding these factors allows for more deliberate and impactful artistic choices.

2.1

KEY FACTORS

What makes a good figure? It is a basic question for learning, and the answer is not simple, but we can divide into 4 main points those factors that can define it.

THE COLOR

With color we can compose and contrast, in short it is the first impact that we are going to receive from the miniature. The theory of color is very extensive and useful, although it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that color is the most important thing and get involved in a spiral of not knowing how to modulate our application of it.

We must keep in mind that color theory tells us about color characteristics, they are not rules or laws to be followed. The taste and the sensation that some colors produce in you are more important than the theory, but knowing it can help you to make some complex decisions or to improve certain points like the contrast that is so important in the miniatures.

Color is a very important point, but you can paint without having much knowledge and be guided by sensations and personal tastes while painting. The other points can be more decisive if they are developed, although color is undoubtedly the most grateful and fun of all.

THE TECHNIQUE

The technique is the ability we have to use the tools correctly and optimally, to transfer our ideas to our hand, it allows us to faithfully execute what we visualize in our head, so the less technique we have the more difficult it will be to capture what we want. It is important because it helps to paint at ease, not to get frustrated and to be able to explore.

To improve it the key is to paint a lot, use the brush as much as we can, try to use the brush in different ways such as glazes, sketches or texture. Get your hand used to holding the brush in a way that we control it perfectly, not all grips favor good control. Paint with the 5 active senses, do not let the hand do what it already knows how to do and fall into the same repetitive process as always.

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VOLUMETRIC INTERPRETATION

The volumetric interpretation is more important once the barrier of technique is passed, it is what the masters refer to when they tell us to "put things in their place".

When we paint what we are doing is creating light. To give a quick example, when the figure is produced in black, the light is totally off, and when we paint it is when we turn it on.

Volumetric interpretation refers to where we put the lights and shadows with respect to the volumes that the sculpture presents to us or even those that we want it to have even though they are not sculpted.

It is what unites painting with sculpture, the better the interpretation plays with the figure itself, the better and more coherent the work will be, the more natural it will be to our eyes.

The light can be simulated as closed zenithal, directed, we can put more than one in the form of OS (Oriented Source Lighting) or simply an ambient one, but we will understand all of this according to how we interpret the volumes.

PECULIARITIES OF THE PIECE ITSELF

The last factor would be a set of characteristics that can enhance our work.

That it tells a story, that it is innovative, that it is striking for some reason or that it simply takes away any of the other 3 characteristics to the extreme.

It is the extra, the soul of the figure, the study behind it, the mime, the motive, etc. It is the most personal point and the one that does not need to study anything concrete but to get involved, to have the will to make it something special.

Mastering these factors requires a lot of time and effort, and it is not usually necessary for all 4 to be at their peak for a work to be good.



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Figure 2.1: A page spread from the book illustrating the "Key Factors" section. This visual includes examples of painted fantasy figures and accompanying text discussing fundamental aspects such as color, technique, and volumetric interpretation.

- **The Color:** Discusses color theory, selection, and application to achieve desired moods and realism. Proper color choice is fundamental to bringing a figure to life.
- **The Technique:** Explores various painting techniques, including brushwork, layering, blending, and glazing, and how to apply them effectively to different surfaces and details.
- **Volumetric Interpretation:** Focuses on understanding light and shadow to create the illusion of three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional surface. This involves careful consideration of light sources and how they interact with the figure's form.
- **Peculiarities of the Piece Itself:** Addresses how the unique characteristics of each miniature, such as its sculpt, texture, and intended narrative, should influence the painting approach.

3. CORE PAINTING TECHNIQUES

This section highlights specific painting techniques detailed in the AK Book AK525, providing an overview of their application and importance in achieving professional results.

3.1. The Sketch

The book introduces the concept of "the sketch" as a preliminary stage in figure painting. This involves planning the composition, color scheme, and overall mood before applying detailed paint layers. It is a crucial step for establishing a strong foundation and avoiding rework.

THE SKETCH

A sketch is a quick painting intended to study the composition or color of a work before going into more detailed or refined phases.

A sketch can be attractive or not, but what it does have to be is useful for the later stages of painting. It is not always necessary to make a sketch and there are times when we can have very clear ideas or it is a figure that does not need it. We start sketching when we do not quite visualize in our head what we want or to help us to see something complicated that we do not know if it will work.

Sketching is something you have to do if you need to do it, it's no use doing it because you think you should.

"An anecdote from when I first started painting: I went to a class for a couple of hours with Marc Masclans, he took the bust I brought and started feeling it out giving loose brushstrokes, sketching side lighting. I had never painted like that before, the little time I had spent painting with glazes or in a very careful

way and that seemed extremely difficult to me since it was necessary to fix it later.

When I went home I didn't sketch even once, my body didn't ask for it.

After 6 months or so, I wanted to make a slightly more complex right than I used to do and as I had no idea how it would turn out, I tried to sketch the lights and shadows quickly on the figure until it was more or less clear. I had made a sketch without thinking "I'm going to make a sketch", I just wanted to quickly see what I needed on the figure. At that point I understood the lesson 6 months later."

There is a difference between what is purely the sketch as a study concept and a way of painting something looser and with the first phases with the paint little diluted. That would be understood as a more direct or loose painting, the sketch is more linked to the study.



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1. This is an example of a sketch. The idea is to represent a sunset light coming in from behind, kind of from a window (not the light from a cell phone), very warm and with cutouts and cast shadows that will help to mark the direction of the light. This means that although it is a long way off, the effect can begin to be glimpsed.

Sketching helps us decide whether to go ahead with the idea or to know if it needs a lot of tug-of-war work and we need choose a more conservative paint job.



2. With "Valgaur the Golden Dragon" the idea is that the figure reflects the sky and the environment in general. We started to sketch the reflections of the sky in green, as they are influenced by the yellow of the gold. It is a very complicated effect that requires time.

In this case we finally decided to discard it, and make a much more conservative and simple approach with the metal barely having ambient reflections. Since it was a box art and time was limited, the sketch helped us to make the decision.

There are many other cases in which sketches serve to get to a point that is not clear at first, changing some things or adding others.

3. In this case the sketch is of the light emanating from the talisman in his hand. It is a light that diffuses concentrically and influences all the parts that are close to the hand. Making the sketch was useful to understand the direction of the light and see if it worked, and also to change the color of the clothes to help a little with the effect.

4. This figure was complicated because the light comes from the back, so the maximum lights are not in the main view. This complicates things, although it seems silly, since the attractive part of a figure is usually the light. This has a shadow area delimiting the back light and the magenta CSL in the middle of the figure. The sketch contains two lights to see if the result was attractive or not. We had to fight with it quite a bit when refining, to get it just right.



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Figure 3.1: A visual representation of the "The Sketch" section from the book. This image displays various painted figures, demonstrating how initial planning and color blocking contribute to the final detailed work, emphasizing the importance of early conceptualization.

Key aspects of sketching include:

- Establishing primary light sources and shadow areas.
- Blocking in main colors to define the overall palette.
- Identifying areas that require more detail versus those that can remain simpler.
- Using the sketch to guide subsequent layers and ensure a cohesive final piece.

3.2. Painting Metals (Non-Metallic Metal - NMM)

The book provides in-depth instruction on painting metallic surfaces using the Non-Metallic Metal (NMM) technique. NMM aims to simulate the appearance of metal using only non-metallic paints, relying on precise light reflection and shadow placement to create the illusion of shine and reflectivity.

METALS IN FIGURES (NMM)

The painting of the metal parts of the figures can be approached with simple techniques or with more complex techniques such as NMM. The simple techniques are very valid for small scales and can be realistic in large scales, but we have to take into account that a metallic piece has important characteristics that not only include color. In this chapter we will focus on the NMM technique.

The NMM technique represents the reflectivity of a metallic material with normal paints (without metallic pigments). It is an effect sought after by many artists for its great pictorial appeal. Nowadays the painting of a NMM in figures has improved a lot in very few years. Representing this technique requires a high level of understanding of volumes.

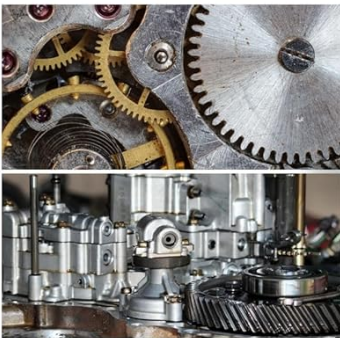
Simulating the behavior of a piece that reflects the environment is complex, so it is normal that this technique is difficult to control, but it is also very rewarding as soon as we get it right.

Metal parts behave in the same way as all other materials when they receive a light, the only thing that changes is the reaction, depending on how polished their surface is. The more polished, the harder and more faithful to reality will be the shines. On the contrary, the less polished, the more diffuse these reflections will be and therefore the more blurred the surrounding reality will be.

What can we do to get into NMM? There are a couple of things that can exponentially improve our success in it, the main one is to look for references.

If we are not looking for a particularly realistic style, we can rely more on comic references rather than on reality. If we are looking for hyperrealism the best thing to do is to look at real photographs. Kirill Kanaev's NMMs have a reflection and a search for real reflections. Other authors look for a less realistic finish, everything is valid as long as it is in the right context.

When we think of NMM, the first thing that comes to mind is often super reflective metals, with exaggerated brightness and very aesthetic shapes, but most pieces of this material in reality can be quite boring, depending on the specific material or the surrounding light.



Sometimes the reality may have little pictorial interest, or sometimes it is the opposite, so we usually choose metals that are more polished and that favor playing with reflections. Sometimes we will be interested in more matte metals and sometimes we will not be interested in the NMM overshadowing other parts of the figure.



It is logical for the general public to be impressed and praise bright, contrasting NMM. Simple and less reflective metals requires a lot of work to be interesting.

Many times if we paint simple metals with a single sheen or with little contrast, most of the surface can remain flat or "unpainted", as if we had not given the detail that we would give to a part with lights.

To add interest to pieces with little contrast, it is also necessary to work the areas that are "flatter" by giving them tones or making small shines.

NMM
SIMPLE METAL



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Figure 3.2: An example page from the book's "Metals in Figures (NMM)" section. This image showcases various fantasy figures painted with the Non-Metallic Metal technique, demonstrating how light and shadow are manipulated with non-metallic paints to achieve a realistic metallic effect.

Key principles of NMM include:

- Understanding how light interacts with reflective surfaces.
- Creating sharp contrasts between highlights and shadows.
- Using smooth blends to transition between tones.
- Considering environmental reflections to enhance realism.

4. PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS






For reference, the following are the specifications of the AK Book AK525 FAQ 2: Fantasy Figures Painting Techniques.

Specification	Detail
ASIN	B0C7N8CHCB
Publisher	AK Interactive
Language	English
Item Weight	3.54 pounds
Number of Pages	320 pages

This manual is for informational purposes only and is based on the content of AK Book AK525 FAQ 2: Fantasy Figures Painting Techniques.

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