

SNAPSHOT

PAINT A TATTOO ON A FIGURE MODEL

SMALL DETAILS can often be where we challenge ourselves the most. When finishing painting a Sabot miniatures Viking bust, I learned that archeologists believe tattoos were common among Vikings. Satisfied with the face, I tried giving the warrior a bit of ink on the arm.

By Robert Raver



1 The arm of the bust is a separate piece. I stopped short of the highlights and blending, but otherwise completed painting the flesh colors.



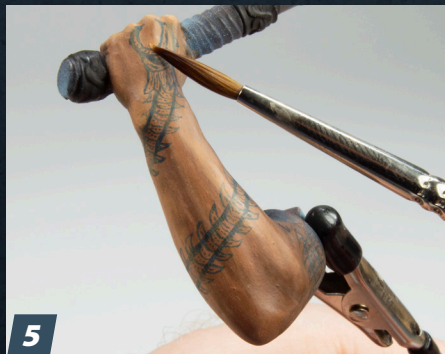
2 Since the arm was a separate piece, I painted a Viking dragon tattoo wrapped around it. Using a colored pencil, I sketched the outline. Note: The painted acrylic skin was dry when adding the tattoo. The water-based colored pencil will blend under acrylic highlights.



3 Use a size 0 brush to paint over the outline, then add details. Work slowly, keep the brush loaded with paint, and avoid brush strokes by maintaining a properly formed brush. I corrected some mistakes with a dry brush; others became part of the design.



4 Getting the tattoo to look right on the bent elbow portion of the arm took trial and error. Luckily, the sleeve will hide the part of the arm that connects to the bust and cover up that particular blunder.



5 The tattoo looks too stark against the skin at this point. I made a filter from the middle shade of the skin color and applied it to the recessed areas. This helped to blend the flesh tones and the tattoo.



6 I then applied a second filter made from a lighter version of the skin color to create a highlight. I completed a few passes with lighter mixes each time. In this case, I added a bit directly onto the tattoo to lighten it.



On the finished bust, the arm is more in the background, so the tattoo is not immediately obvious and does not draw your eye right away when you look at the finished piece. This is perfect for a tattoo intended to be an extra detail, not a central detail. But for those who take a closer look at other angles of the finished piece, the tattoo pops out. It is an extra finishing touch that helped build my painting skills and rewards those who look more closely. **FSM**