

# XENOPHILIA

## A Black Heart Alien Step-By-Step

by Rick Cantu



*Rick Cantu has been painting miniatures and model kits since 1985. In 2002, he was asked to join the writing staff of the hobby's premier modeling magazine, *Amazing Figure Modeler*. He has completed display work for numerous GK companies, as well as providing painted miniatures and figure kits to collectors around the world. His work has also appeared in *Spectrum*, *HobbyWorld* and *Airbrush Action* magazines, as well as on paint masters for companies such as *Sideshow*, *Diamond Select*, *ReelArt Studios* and *The Noble Collection*.*

*Rick continually hones his painting and modeling skills, always working to ensure his customer is completely satisfied. Rick's outside-of-the-box thinking and a little accident with alcohol (the rubbing kind, not the sipping kind) inspired this "alien" approach to finishing Black Heart's 1:1 scale xenomorph wall-hanger. Rick's demo of this technique at JerseyFest in 2012 inspired this article.*

*In this article, Rick demonstrates a very simple technique he uses to achieve a very complicated-looking, painted effect that even a novice GK artist can accomplish. Thanks, Rick, for making Black Heart look so good.*



When I was first approached about doing a painting demonstration on Black Heart's 1:1 scale Alien wall-hanger for JerseyFest in 2012, I was totally stoked! As a fan of the Alien creature design, I could not wait to get started. Black Heart's Alien was sculpted by Joe Simon and is based on James Cameron's alien warrior design from *Aliens* (1986). The xenomorph's black and blue coloring in the film was from the film's lighting. The actual color scheme consisted of brown tones. So, with that knowledge, the question was how to add a little *jazz* to that paint scheme to make the skin tones and the details pop?

I have been playing around with a texture technique which I found by accident with a sponge and some Alcohol. I thought it would be a perfect application to this piece. This can be used on any surface, but is most effective on smooth areas like the Alien head and its body).

There are only a couple of steps to this technique and they will be used over the entire model.



## COLORS

- Krylon Almond
- Golden Transparent Raw Umber Hue
- Over- reduced Payne's Gray (or GK Trans. PGray)
- Vallejo Black ( or equivalent)
- Golden Transparent Black
- GK Colors Ivory White
- Testors Chrome enamel
- GK Colors Acrylic Chrome

### Step 1

I used Krylon Almond as a basecoat for this technique. It is an enamel and does not react to the alcohol. You can achieve the same effect using an acrylic base, but make sure it is sealed really well. I start with the inner mouth, gums and tongue. This including the upper and lower jaws. Over the Krylon base, loosely mottle the Payne's Gray over the entire surface. You can use this as an opportunity to add veining and other detail to the inner mouth. Although it may not be seen when assembled, you will know it's there. Follow this with a loose mottle of the Golden Trans. Raw Umber Hue (RUH) over the surface areas. Last, use a tight mottling of the GK Ivory White over the entire surface of the inner mouth, gums and tongue.



Once this is dry, seal w/ Krylon Matte. At this time I would recommend painting the teeth of the tongue and lower jaw by basing them in an opaque black and when dry, sealing them w/ Krylon Crystal Clear. You can skip this step by using gloss black enamel or acrylic to basecoat the teeth. There are 2 ways you can go about painting the teeth of the alien's "tongue" and mouth: **One:** you can mask off the entire tooth area using Silly Putty and then gently spray GK Colors Chrome over the entire surface until you get that sweet chrome look. Or, **Two:** you can go the lazy route (as I did!) and just paint the base of each tooth using Testors Chrome; then airbrush all of the teeth using GK Chrome. Being careful with the Chrome spray will eliminate the need to mask the parts and will still give you a brilliant chrome look.

Work smarter, not harder.

Be sure *not* to overspray the chrome with Krylon Gloss. This will kill the look of the Chrome. The paint is pretty tough, but if you still feel the need to seal, use several coats of Future Floor Wax.



## Step 2

I started with the piping detail first, spraying a coat of Golden Transparent Black over the top of the piping detail, making sure to get the paint into the divides between the raised area. Using my 50/50 alcohol and water mix added to a paper towel (make sure it's a lint free brand), I gently wipe the paint off the surface leaving the lower areas black.



This is a very quick way of handling this kind of detail and can be used on dino scales, pebbled skin, etc. Next, using Golden Transparent Raw Umber Hue, airbrush a covering coat over the area you intend to detail. Allow the paint to “flash” for a few seconds, then apply a few drops of alcohol to a piece of sea sponge and gently dab the sponge on the paint.

You should start to see the paint react to the alcohol and begin creating some really cool patterns and spotting.



Continue dabbing with the sponge until you're happy with patterns that develop. If you find the paint breaking down and not creating the patterns anymore, simply spray on a bit more and repeat the process. Do this over the entirety of the head (*and on the hands if you have Black Heart's Deluxe Alien kit*).



Once you are happy with the look you have achieved, simply let the paint dry fully. However, if you're not happy after the paint dries, begin again! As you can see, this process is easy and very forgiving and allows you to achieve detail that would take you forever to airbrush or paint by hand.



### Step 3

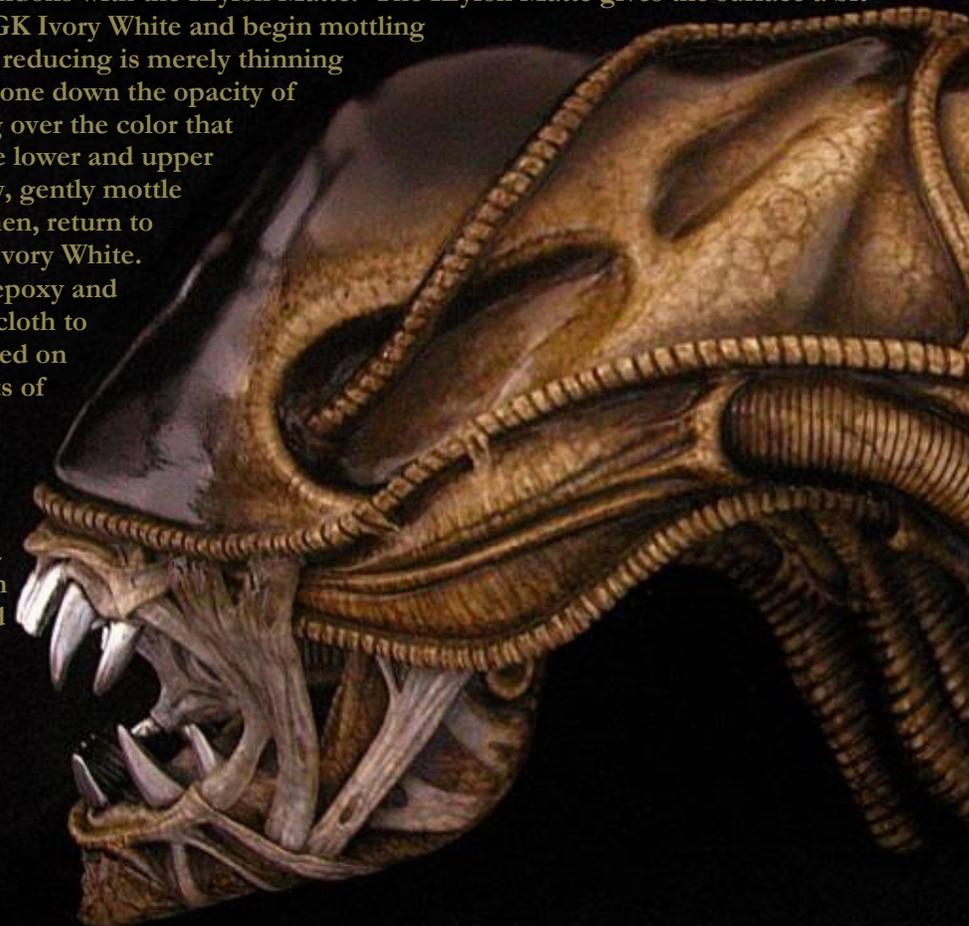
Time to connect the dots. If you're like me, you will want to add even more detail to the original pattern. Using the same trans. RUH, start connecting the dots and adding some subtle (and some not so subtle) mottling to the surface. You can add as much detail as you see fit. Continue this over the entire skin surface including the lips and the piping. When you're done detailing, seal your work with a couple of coats of the Krylon Matte. When dry, add some additional dark shading to the head using Golden Trans. Black. Blend this down from the center of the head, gently fading into the detail. Concentrate the color into the middle and down the center of the head. You could also use an opaque black to do this last step. When all of this is dry, use a tack cloth to remove dust and overspray that may have settled on the surface. Now, spray the upper head using several coats of Krylon Crystal Clear.

Repeat the chrome painting technique used in Step 1 for the upper teeth and for the fingernails. I still used the Testor's Chrome, but I painted only the edges of the nails, and then masked w/ Silly Putty to spray the GK Chrome. This eliminates the need to be precise with your masking. And, this technique can be used anywhere on any kit. Remember, once this is done, do NOT spray the Krylon over the top of any chrome areas. It will discolor and you will have to paint that area again.

### Final Step

Spray the inner surface of the clear mouth tendons with the Krylon Matte. The Krylon Matte gives the surface a bit of tooth to hold the paint. Over-reduce the GK Ivory White and begin mottling and generally brightening the surface. Over reducing is merely thinning the paint a bit more than normal. This will tone down the opacity of the Ivory White and allows a gentle blending over the color that follows. Carry this color blend down into the lower and upper jaw where the tendons will attach. When dry, gently mottle and shade using the Trans. Raw Umber. Then, return to the gentle blending using the over-reduced Ivory White. Glue the tendons into place using 5 minute epoxy and then paint the joints. When dry, use a tack cloth to remove any dust and overspray that has settled on the surface. Spray the areas with several coats of Future Floor Wax.

The patterns and textures that you'll get will have your friends convinced that you spent a great deal more time and effort on your Alien than you actually did. And, there is no good reason to allow them to think anything else.





Have fun.

Rick