

THE BEAR & THE BRUSH – 2025

MINIATURE PAINTING

A STRUCTURED AND EXPLORATORY LEARNING GUIDE

Two plans to choose from - guided and exploratory

Not everyone learns the same way. One plan guides you and opens up later, the other encourages exploration.

Personal growth and philosophical questions

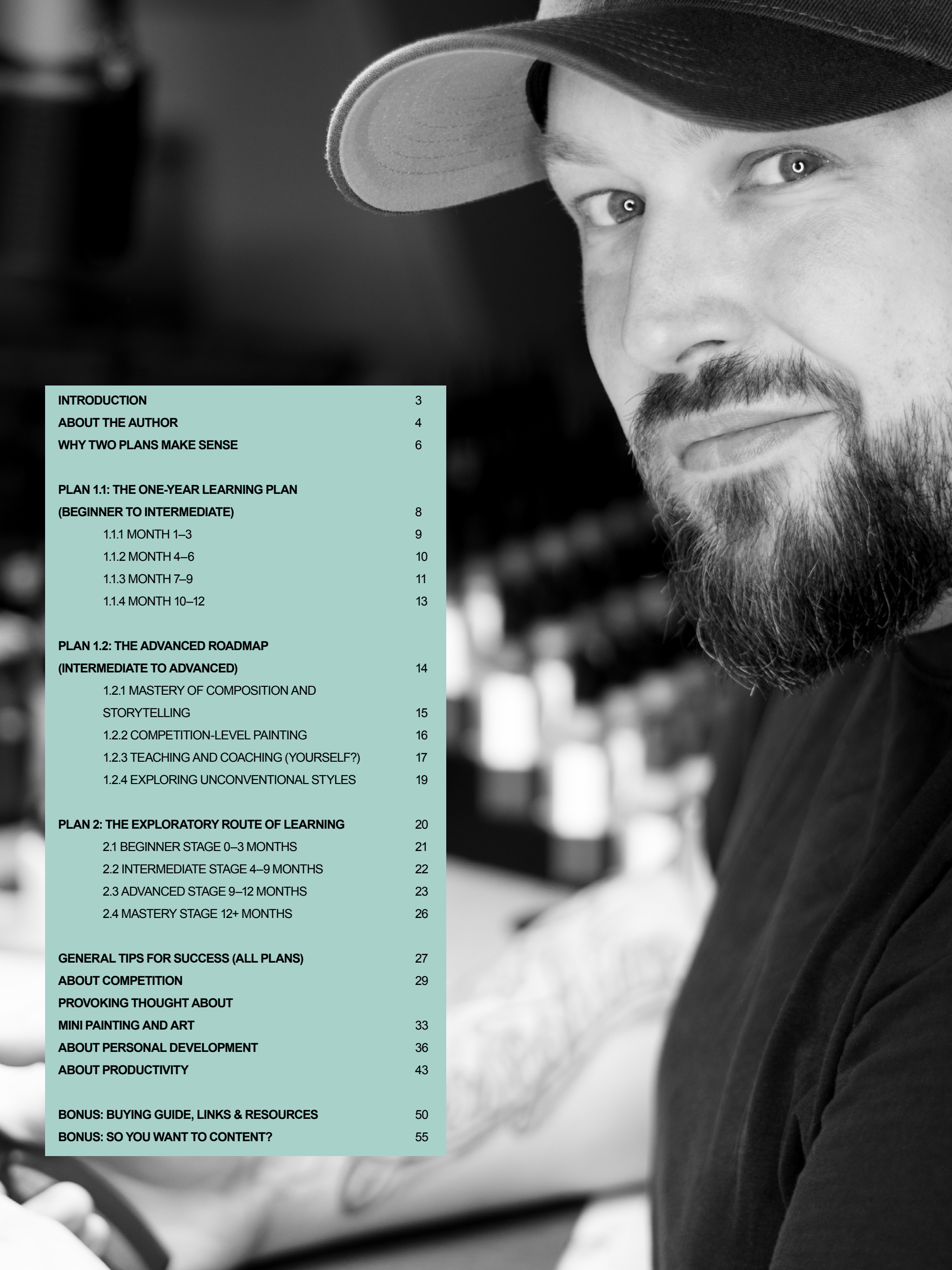
This ebook also tackles some philosophical questions like why we compare ourselves to others.

Productivity ideas to boost hobby engagement

You only learn from picking up a brush and painting - This book wants to encourage you to do so.



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INTRODUCTION

Miniature painting is a craft that connects creativity with discipline. It demands focus, a calm hand and the patience to see progress unfold one layer at a time. Some people come to it from tabletop gaming, others because they enjoy small, detailed work or want to express ideas through color and light. No matter how you start, painting miniatures teaches you to slow down, pay attention and build something lasting.

This book will not overwhelm you with endless techniques or theory. Instead, it gives you a clear structure for learning, improving and staying motivated. You will learn how to practise effectively, find reliable resources and recognise what really moves your skill forward. The goal is not to copy other artists, but to develop your own process. One that fits your rhythm, your tools and your level of focus on any given day.

The world of miniature painting can look chaotic when you first step into it. There are thousands of techniques, hundreds of paints and more tutorials than anyone could watch in a lifetime. Every painter you meet seems to have a different approach, a different brush, a different opinion. It can feel impossible to know where to start. The good news is that you do not have to learn everything at once. This hobby rewards patience and steady repetition far more than speed. You build skill one small step at a time, one model after another, one correction after another.

Miniature painting is, at its core, about rhythm.

You prepare, you paint, you pause, you look, and you begin again. Over time those simple cycles turn into confidence. You start to see how color behaves, how light changes a shape, how a single highlight can bring a figure to life. The more you paint, the more the process itself becomes the reward. It teaches focus, calm and persistence, qualities that reach far beyond the hobby table.

To make the learning curve easier to handle, this book gives you two complementary ways to improve. The first is a structured One Year Learning Plan. It breaks progress into clear and achievable stages and focuses on one area at a time such as brush control, texture, light, composition and presentation. Each phase builds on the last so you can see measurable results without guessing what to practise next. You can follow the timeline exactly or stretch it to fit your own routine. The pace is flexible, but the sequence gives you direction.

The second approach, called the Exploratory Route, is designed for painters who prefer freedom over structure. It invites you to follow curiosity wherever it leads, to experiment with new materials, techniques or color ideas without worrying about whether they fit the plan. You learn by discovery, by observing what works and what does not. Keeping notes, photos or short reflections helps you recognise patterns in your progress. This path is less about order and more about creative flow.

Both methods work. Some people start with structure and later move to exploration, others do the opposite. You can switch between them at any time. What matters is that you keep painting, keep paying attention and build habits that make practice sustainable. This book will point you toward reliable sources such as artists, tutorials and tools so you always know where to look next. The goal is to learn the right thing at the right time without drowning in information.

At its heart miniature painting should stay enjoyable. It is demanding, but it should never feel punishing. Mistakes are part of the craft; every rough blend or crooked edge teaches control. Nothing you paint is wasted if you take the time to look twice.

As you move through the chapters ahead, treat this book not as a rule set but as a companion that helps you focus, measure your growth and rediscover why you wanted to paint in the first place.



WHY TWO PLANS MAKE SENSE

Learning a craft like miniature painting is a personal process. Everyone learns differently, and there is no single best way to improve. Having both a structured plan and a more open, exploratory route gives you real flexibility. You can decide which approach fits your temperament and the way you absorb information.

The structured plan works best for painters who like direction and visible progress. It divides the learning curve into small, manageable goals so you always know what to practise next. This method is especially useful for beginners who might feel overwhelmed by the number of techniques and tools available. Starting with fundamentals such as brush control, basecoating and shading creates a stable base that makes later experiments more effective. Each stage builds on what you learned before, turning small improvements into a sense of steady progress.

Other painters prefer to learn by doing. They enjoy trying things out, seeing what happens and adjusting as they go. For them, the exploratory path is a better fit. It leaves room to follow curiosity and to learn through experimentation. You can focus on specific techniques like Non-Metallic Metal or Object Source Lighting, or you can start a creative project and figure things out along the way. This kind of practice builds intuition and keeps painting enjoyable even after years in the hobby.

Both paths are designed to work together. Structure gives you clarity when you need focus. Exploration gives you freedom when you need variety. You might start with the structured plan to build your basics and then move to the exploratory route to develop personal style or tackle larger projects such as dioramas or army schemes. Used together, they form a complete learning system that grows with you.

Extasy – Miniature's Den
WORK IN PROGRESS



PLAN 2:

THE EXPLORATORY ROUTE OF LEARNING

The roadmap you're about to follow offers an open-ended, exploratory approach to learning the craft, designed for those who prefer to discover their own pace and path as they develop their skills. While some learners thrive with step-by-step guides and clear milestones, others find their best growth through curiosity, experimentation, and creative problem-solving – and this plan is tailored for those who enjoy a more flexible, self-directed process.

What makes this roadmap so valuable is its gradual progression through key techniques, but it's not just about checking off skills. It's designed to give you the freedom to dive into areas that intrigue you most. The journey begins by laying a solid foundation in basic techniques such as brush control, paint application, and using washes and dry brushing to enhance detail. These early stages are all about getting comfortable with the tools, materials, and essential methods that will serve as the backbone of your painting practice. You'll experiment with paint consistency, practice assembling miniatures, and even learn to highlight with simple techniques that bring your miniatures to life.

As you move into the intermediate stages, the plan opens up into more creative territory. You'll be introduced to more advanced techniques like glazing for smooth color transitions and freehand painting, where you can add personal flair with intricate designs and details. You'll also begin to explore color theory, using contrast to make your models pop. This phase encourages not just technical growth but also the chance to start developing your own artistic preferences. Maybe you find yourself drawn to high contrast and bold color palettes, or perhaps you prefer subtle, layered shades – this is where you start to find your own style.

By the time you enter the advanced stage, you'll be ready to take on more complex challenges like non-metallic metals (NMM) and object source lighting (OSL). You'll experiment with lighting techniques that make your miniatures feel like they exist in a real, dynamic environment, casting shadows and glowing with dramatic effects. You'll also delve into storytelling through dioramas and basing, crafting not just a single figure, but entire scenes that communicate a narrative through composition and detail. This phase is where your personal style truly starts to emerge, as you pull together everything you've learned to create miniatures that are not just well-painted but are also deeply expressive and artistic.

This roadmap doesn't rush you or lock you into a rigid curriculum. Instead, it encourages you to play with different methods, revisit past techniques with fresh eyes, and embrace both successes and challenges as part of the learning process. Along the way, you'll get the chance to try out weathering techniques, battle damage, and more, helping you simulate the wear and tear of combat on your miniatures. In doing so, you'll push beyond the boundaries of traditional miniature painting and begin to explore more abstract, experimental approaches.

Ultimately, this plan will guide you not just through the technical aspects of miniature painting, but also through the process of developing your artistic identity. Whether you're aiming to paint for competitions, tell stories through dioramas, or simply experiment with colors and styles in your own way, this roadmap gives you the tools and inspiration to grow into the miniature painter you aspire to be. You can expect a balance of technical skill-building and creative exploration, with the flexibility to choose the techniques and styles that resonate most with you.

As you progress, the plan will lead you toward mastery, teaching you not only how to paint miniatures but also how to tell stories, express your unique artistic vision, and even pass on your knowledge to others. Whether you're building an army for the tabletop, creating a single showpiece, or venturing into surreal or hyper-realistic styles, this roadmap encourages you to explore your own path – making each step a personalized part of your creative journey.





Skulduggery Pleasant
SCULPTED by OGAREG

GENERAL TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. STAY CONSISTENT

Regular practice is the foundation of improvement. Whether you're just starting out or have mastered advanced techniques, setting aside time each week is crucial for steady growth. A routine helps you develop muscle memory, refine your skills, and stay motivated.

2. SEEK FEEDBACK

Sharing your work with others and seeking constructive criticism are vital for growth. Engage with online communities, post your work on social media, or join local painting groups. Feedback from experienced painters can offer valuable insights and push you to improve in areas you may not have noticed yet.

3. JOIN A COMMUNITY

Surround yourself with fellow painters by joining online forums, social media groups, or visiting local hobby stores. Being part of a community keeps you motivated, provides inspiration, and provides a space to exchange ideas, techniques, and support.

4. STUDY THE MASTERS

Look to professional or highly skilled miniature painters for inspiration. Analyze their techniques, color choices, and handling of details. By breaking down their approach, you can incorporate elements into your own work and develop a deeper understanding of the craft.

5. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Take photos of your miniatures at various stages of completion. This habit allows you to see your progress over time and helps you identify areas that have improved and those that still need work. It also serves as a motivational tool to look back and realize how far you've come.



PROVOKING THOUGHT ABOUT MINI PAINTING AND ART

These thought experiments and questions push you to examine deeper aspects of miniature painting beyond technique and aesthetics. They encourage you to reflect on the purpose of art, the role of the artist, and the ethics of creative expression. Engaging with these questions can help you develop a more nuanced understanding of your hobby and expand your creative and intellectual boundaries.

1. THE SHIP OF THESEUS PARADOX IN MINIATURES

Thought Experiment:

Imagine you repaint a miniature several times, each time stripping the paint, changing its details and applying new techniques. At what point, if ever, does the miniature stop being the “same” miniature?

Philosophical Question:

Does altering a miniature’s appearance fundamentally change its identity? Where is the line between restoration and transformation?

2. THE ROLE OF INTENT IN ART

Thought Experiment:

You create a beautiful display piece intending to enter it into a competition. However, the judges misinterpret your intention and praise it for reasons unrelated to your intent. Is the piece successful based on your intention or the audience’s interpretation?

Philosophical Question:

How much does the artist’s intent matter in the perception of art? Can a piece of art be “misunderstood” and still be considered successful?

3. OBJECTIVE VS. SUBJECTIVE BEAUTY

Thought Experiment:

Imagine two miniatures: one is painted with flawless technical skill but lacks creativity, while the other is creative and expressive but technically imperfect. Which one should be considered the superior piece of art?

Philosophical Question:

Can the quality of art be measured objectively, or is it entirely subjective? What role does technical skill play relative to creativity in art?

4. THE ETHICS OF DEPICTION

Thought Experiment:

Suppose you paint a miniature depicting a violent or morally controversial character. By beautifying and glorifying it through your art, are you implicitly endorsing the themes it represents?

Philosophical Question:

What responsibility does an artist have when depicting morally complex or controversial subjects? Can a miniature be considered unethical in its representation?

Age of Sigmar - Orruks
Painted for my collection



ABOUT

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

I ADDED MY TOPICS AS A
REFERENCE...

...to give you a clearer understanding of how the different techniques come together. By filling this guide with personal examples and insights from my own daily work, I hope to bring these concepts to life. More importantly, it will offer you a solid starting point – an example to inspire you as you create your own approach and plan.

Oldhammer - Bestmen Shaman
Painted for a friend





Star Wars Legion - Boba Fett
Painted for my collection

1. SELF-AWARENESS

GOAL

INCREASE AWARENESS OF YOUR OWN EMOTIONS, STRENGTHS, AND WEAKNESSES IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR CONTENT-CREATION JOURNEY.

ACTIVITIES

Daily Emotional Check-Ins

At the beginning and end of each day, spend 5-10 minutes reflecting on your emotional state.

Use prompts like:

- How am I feeling right now?
- What triggered this feeling?
- How did my emotional state affect my interactions today (online, with your audience, during content creation)?
- How can I respond differently in the future to manage similar feelings?

Strengths and Weaknesses Assessment

Evaluate your personal strengths and weaknesses as a content creator and miniature painter.

Write down:

Strengths: What do you do well in content creation, teaching, and communication?

Weaknesses: What challenges do you face in connecting with your audience or managing your emotions under stress (e.g. creative block, negative feedback)?

REFLECTION EXERCISES

Journaling Exercise (weekly)

Keep a journal where you reflect on moments during the week when you felt emotionally triggered (e.g. frustration with content not performing well). Note what you felt, why you think you felt it, and how you responded. What could you do differently next time?

Emotional Trigger Inventory (monthly)

Review your journal entries and identify patterns. Are there recurring emotional triggers (e.g. perfectionism, comparison to other creators)? Work on recognizing and managing them consciously.





ABOUT **PRODUCTIVITY**

GOAL

BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY AND FOCUS FOR MINIATURE PAINTERS BY IMPLEMENTING PRACTICAL STRATEGIES, STAYING MOTIVATED, AND ULTIMATELY ACHIEVING CONSISTENT PROGRESS WHILE ENJOYING THE CREATIVE PROCESS.



THE ART OF STAYING PRODUCTIVE IN MINIATURE PAINTING

Productivity is often a challenge for anyone engaging in a creative hobby, and miniature painting is no exception. It demands both time and focus, with each brushstroke playing a crucial role in bringing tiny figures to life. While the results can be incredibly rewarding, the process itself can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially for beginners. Many people find themselves struggling to maintain a steady painting routine or getting stuck in creative ruts. But the good news? There are practical tips and strategies specifically geared toward productivity in the realm of miniature painting.

Whether you're new to the hobby or you've been painting for years, it's easy to fall into certain pitfalls: procrastination, perfectionism, burnout, or even just a lack of motivation. Perhaps you sit down to paint, only to realize that an hour has gone by, and you've barely done anything. Maybe you're juggling too many projects at once, or maybe you just can't seem to find the time between other responsibilities. This is where a strong productivity mindset can come into play.

Being productive as a miniature painter doesn't just mean painting faster – it means painting smarter. Productivity is about developing habits, setting goals, and knowing how to structure your time effectively so that you make consistent progress without feeling overwhelmed. It's about finding ways to stay motivated even when you hit a creative block, managing your workflow efficiently, and still enjoying the process. After all, painting miniatures is as much about the journey as it is about the finished piece.

The tips that follow are designed to help you establish a productive rhythm, no matter your level of experience. They cover everything from optimizing your workspace and managing your time to finding creative inspiration when motivation wanes. Whether you're painting for fun, improving your skills, or gearing up for a competition, these strategies can help you stay on track and keep the brush moving.

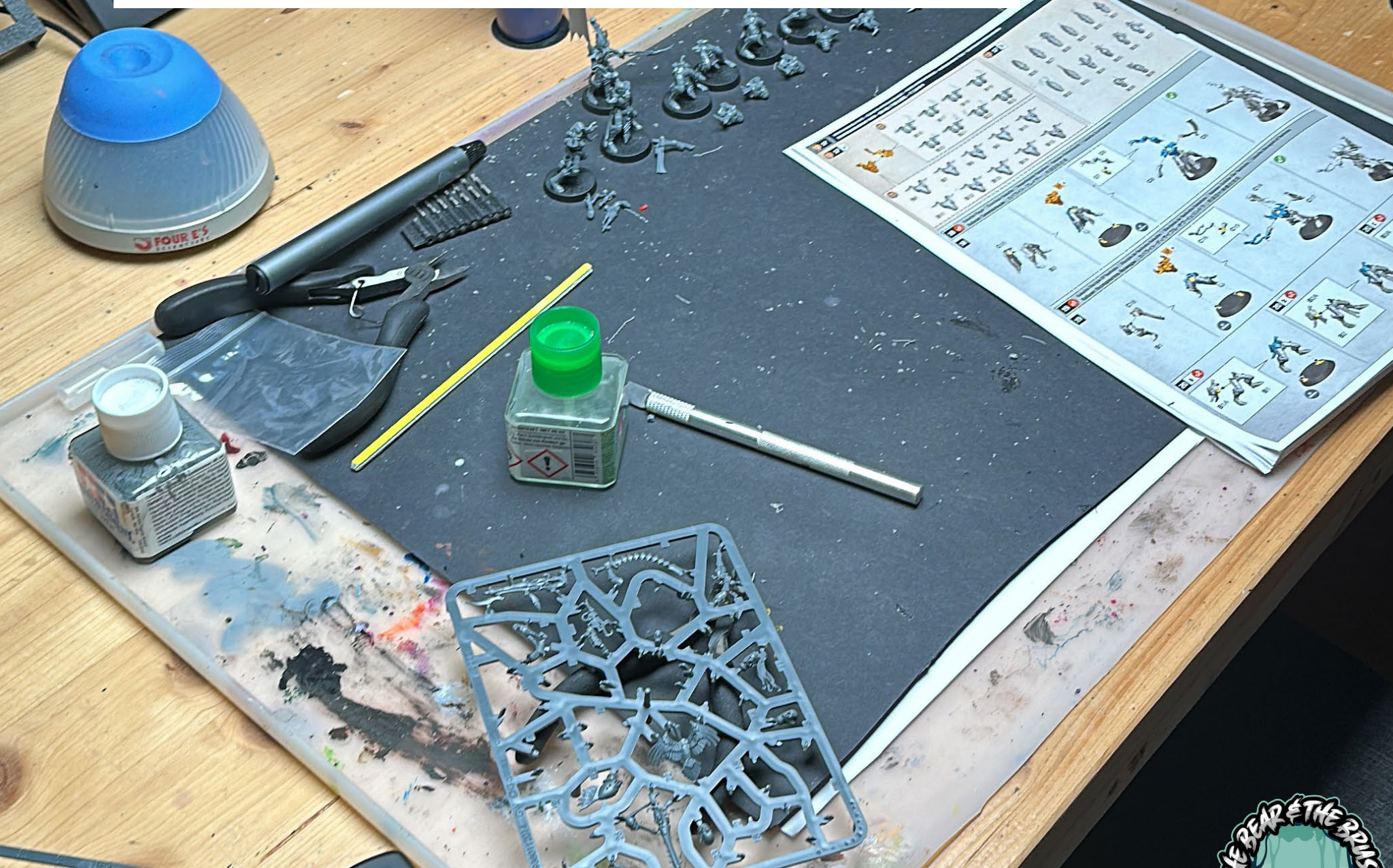


BUYING GUIDE

TOOLS I TRUST & RECOMMEND

Throughout this book, I've shared the techniques and approaches that have helped me grow as a miniature painter, and now I want to share the tools that make it all possible. The products in this buying guide are the same brushes, paints, and accessories I've personally tested and rely on every day in my own studio. These aren't just recommendations – they're tools that I've vetted for quality and effectiveness, ensuring they can help you on your painting journey too.

If you choose to purchase through the links I've provided, I do receive a small kickback at no extra cost to you. It's a simple way to support my work while getting the exact tools you need to build your skills and enjoy the hobby. Rest assured, I only recommend products that I genuinely believe in and use myself. Happy painting!



BUYING GUIDE

LINKS (AND CODES) FOR THINGS



Get 10% OFF your amazing
INTOTHEAM shirts with the code:

BEAR10

or this LINK: <https://t1p.de/4yx88>



Get 5% OFF at Monument Hobbies
with the code:

BEARBRUSH10



Epidemic Sound

**[HTTPS://SHARE.EPIDEMICSOUND.
COM/VZCG3I](https://share.epidemicsound.com/VZCG3I)**



BRUSHES

CHEAP

<https://amzn.to/3TSvFVT>

MY FAVOURITES

Raphael Serie 8404

<https://amzn.to/3XM4ygf>

PAINTS

BEGINNER PAINTS

<https://amzn.to/3N8142J>

<https://amzn.to/3Ne6bOR>

MY FAVOURITE PAINTS

Get 5% OFF at Monument Hobbies with the code:
BEARBRUSH10

AIRBRUSH

ESSENTIAL

Harder & Steenbeck Evolution Solo

<https://amzn.to/3Bl8zRi>

I WANT TO INVEST

Harder & Steenbeck Infinity CR Plus 2 in 1

<https://amzn.to/3BrZAOk>

TOOLS

COMPRESSOR

<https://amzn.to/3BoR1DY>

PAINTING HANDLE

Redgrassgames RGG 360 V2

<https://amzn.to/3ZLrgYL>

WET PALETTE

Redgrass Games V2

<https://amzn.to/3XQ0XxK>



HOW TO YOUTUBE

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FILMING, EDITING, AND CREATING CONTENT FOR MINIATURE PAINTING

If you're eager to share your passion for miniature painting with the world through YouTube, you're in the right place. While I may not have the largest following, I've been creating content for over a decade. I've learned a lot along the way, and I'm here to share all my insights with you – from filming and lighting to editing and audio, this guide will help you create videos that showcase your work and engage your audience.

This guide is based on a YouTube video I made about how to make YouTube videos for miniature painting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhXGlbGr5iA>



Star Wars Legion Storm Troopers
Painted for my collection





UTILIZE 100 IDEAS

Highlighted topics, both in **frustrations** and **skills**, revolve around key aspects of the miniature painting hobby that are visually stimulating and highly shareable. Popular topics include **advanced techniques** like fine detail work, blending, and Non-Metallic Metal (NMM), as well as niche-specific **desires** like earning income, recognition, and winning prestigious awards.

Videos addressing common **fears** and teaching **skills** like speed-painting, airbrushing, and realistic lighting can attract large audiences. Viewers love tutorials that help them achieve results quickly, overcome mistakes, or replicate high-quality, creative work.

