



## “PAINT-YOUR-OWNS”

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This guide is not intended to be definitive on technique, but rather to help those new to painting and perhaps provide some tips to more experienced painters. At the Windstone factory, we use airbrushes to create most of our production pieces and if you are an experienced airbrush user, hey, go for it, this guide is focused upon brush painting. The piece you have before you is a blank canvas - limited only by your creativity.

The following is a list of materials you will need to paint your new M. Peña figurine.

### **Necessary materials:**

- Acrylic paint (lacquers and oil based paints are not recommended)
- Brushes

### **Extra stuff that helps:**

- Acrylic retarder
- Acrylic mixing medium
- Antiquing medium or stain
- Sponge
- Masking fluid
- Paint palette or palette paper
- A variety of brush sizes

### **Materials explained:**

**Acrylic paint:** *Water soluble artist paint.* There are numerous brands of acrylic paint on the market today, ranging from inexpensive craft paint to more costly artist's paints. In general, more expensive paints will produce a better end result. Liquitex Soft Body Artist Color and Golden brand paints are both great paints. Golden brand paints have great coverage and vibrancy, Liquitex paints have a creamy application. For those on a budget, Delta Ceramcoat paints can provide good results as well.

**Brushes:** There are many types, shapes, sizes and materials available. Different shaped brushes will create different strokes, and the hair material determines how the brush will hold and apply the paint. We recommend synthetic brushes because they are easier to keep clean, less prone to breakage, and more resistant to damage from acrylic paint than natural brushes are. Brush shape is much the preference of the painter and you may find that one type of brush works better for you than another. For those unsure of where to begin these are our suggestions:



***Bright:*** This is a flat, rectangular shaped brush with short bristles that are usually set in a longer handle. They are very versatile and work well for applying broad areas of color, shading, and dry brushing.



***Flat:*** These are nearly the same as a bright brush, only the bristles are longer and more flexible. They are more maneuverable than a bright and are great for getting paint into more recessed areas such as behind the neck or under the wings.



***Filbert:*** The bristles in this brush are flattened but have rounded soft edges. This is an ideal brush for blending, or adding soft accents.



***Square wash:*** These are larger, flat brushes with squared off bristles. They work well if you intend to lay on large areas of paint.



***Round:*** These are brushes with bristles set into a cylindrical Ferrell (the silver metal thing that holds them) and draw to a point at the tip. There are many different round brushes. The smaller and sharper the tip the finer the detail you can paint. They are great for fine lines and for really hard to reach spots.

***Acrylic retarder:*** *Slows the drying time of the acrylic paint.* Acrylic retarder can be mixed with acrylic paint to slow the drying time. Acrylic paint normally dries very quickly which can result in streaky looking paint and can prevent the proper blending of colors. A retarder will give you more time to blend the paint before it becomes unworkable and can be purchased at an art supply store.

***Acrylic mixing medium:*** *Added to acrylic paint to thin it, instead of water.* There are a few companies that make acrylic mixing medium and you should look for a product that thins the paint without changing the color, and is mixable in any proportion. Use of water to thin the paint will make the acrylic more brittle and may cause it to flake off when dry. Acrylic medium dries clear and will make the finish more glossy.

***Antiquing medium:*** *Used to darken the recessed areas of the sculpture.* Antiquing can greatly enhance the look of your finished piece. There are many stains and antiquing agents available in the craft stores that may be suitable but we have not had a chance to test them all. The Windstone factory uses a stain that is not available to the consumer but we have tried DecoArt Staining and Antiquing Medium. This is a gel that you can mix with any color acrylic to turn it into a stain for antiquing and it works well. Enough retarder mixed into the paint can also work but is more difficult to control. To learn more, see the “antiquing” section.

***Sponge:*** A sponge is necessary for antiquing and is also handy to help wipe paint off of an area before it dries if you make a mistake. Natural sponges are more aggressive than cellulose and both have their advantages. Small sponges work best and a ½” or ¾” thick cellulose dish sponge cut into several pieces of about 2” x 3” is a good start.

***Masking fluid:*** *Liquid rubber you can brush onto an area that you wish to keep free of paint.* Masking fluid that can be found at art supply stores will keep the glass eyes clean and free of paint while you are working. When you are finished it can be peeled off cleanly. Masking fluids are made of latex and will not damage your Windstone figurine. You can also use this masking material to shield other areas of the sculpture you wish to keep free of paint or stain.

***Paint palette or palette paper:*** A clean surface to mix paints on is a must, as dust and particles will cause imperfections in your final paint job. You can mix acrylics on virtually any clean, smooth, nonporous surface. Plastic, metal, or glass palettes work well or just use an old yogurt lid. Palette paper has a waxy finish that will not absorb normal amounts of paint and can be discarded after use. Just be aware that once acrylic dries, it is difficult or impossible to remove from some surfaces.

### **A note before you begin**

The finished pieces created at the Windstone factory are painted with an airbrush and, while the look of an airbrushed piece will differ from one done by hand painting with a brush, we don't want anyone to be discouraged by this. With some patience, a brush painted figurine can be just as glorious as an airbrushed one, and much more detailed! Everybody is welcome to share their finished pieces, thoughts, and ideas!

Your new Windstone figurine is cast from a gypsum mineral stone that is stable, archival and should last a lifetime, however, it can be broken, chipped, or scratched if knocked against a hard object, so handle it with care.

### ➤ **Step One: Planning**

You will find that a little brainstorming and planning beforehand will result in a much nicer finished piece. Consider where you want the darkest and lightest areas of paint, whether you want to do a complex pattern or if you want to achieve a simple, clean color. If you don't know anything about color theory, please click [here](#). Designing coloration is possibly the most important aspect of painting you will face and close attention paid to color and design patterns in nature won't hurt either.

### **Some thoughts about colors**

The following is not meant to be a guide for what color to paint your new piece, just some pointers to keep in mind. While color is a very personal thing, you are creating a work of art and some attention to the basics of color theory will pay off.

#### Basic color theory (without all the technical terms):

A color wheel is the best visual reference of color theory, and a great thing to have on hand, especially if working with students or kids. By mixing the three primary colors, red, yellow and blue, you can get almost any other color except. The secondary colors: orange, green and purple are created by mixing two primaries. Red and blue create purple, red and yellow create orange, and blue and yellow create green. You'll notice that these secondary colors are sandwiched between the originating two hues on the color wheel. This creates a great visual reference for mixing color. Find a color on the color wheel that you like and create that color by mixing its two neighbors to either side (i.e. green is neighbors with both blue and yellow on either side, so yellow plus blue make green).

The color wheel is also great for finding harmonious colors. You will always have an easier time blending and creating a smooth transition when you blend from one color to its neighbor. For example, if you want the wings of your piece to fade from one color to the next, say from green to another color, look at the color wheel. Green will transition far more smoothly into a blue than it will into red.

If you want a bold, striking look, consider placing complimentary colors next to each other. Complimentary colors are directly opposite one another on the color wheel. They will not transition easily into one another, but will stand out when placed next to each other. A green figurine with red eyes (red and green are complimentary) will be bolder than a green figurine with blue eyes. Be aware that when compliments are mixed together, they will darken each other.

Cool colors: These colors tend to be more calming and visually quiet. They tend to make a surface recede. They are blue, purple, and green.

Warm colors: These colors tend to be visually bolder and will seem to bring a surface forward. They are red, orange, and yellow.

### ➤ **Step Two: Protecting the eyes**

The next step to painting your figurine is to protect its eyes from stray paint. Masking fluid brushed over the eyes works well. Remember that the masking fluid will keep paint off of all the areas it is applied to, so be sure to apply it to only the surface of the eye, or wherever else you don't



want paint. Use a cheap brush and make sure you wash it afterwards. Allow both eyes to completely dry before continuing.

If you don't want to buy masking fluid, you can carefully cut small pieces of masking tape to cover the eyes. Take your time and make sure the eye is completely covered. Masking tape can soften and move around on the eye if it gets wet. Use caution when painting but, if you do get paint on the eye, you can carefully scratch it off with the side of a sharp tool, or toothpick when it is dry. Note: you must not let paint build up around edges of masking material or the paint may peel off around the eye when you remove the masking material.

### ➤ **Step Three: Painting**

The next step is the actual painting process. It would be difficult to describe an exact step-by-step process, which will be as variable as your creativity and imagination, so instead we will go over some tips and techniques.

#### *Mixing and applying colors*

As a general rule, when you mix your own colors, always mix more than you think you will need. If you run out before you have an area painted it will be very difficult to re-create the color exactly as you did the first time, and this will result in a patchy look. Besides, you might find you need to touch up an area after it dries! If you have leftover paint you can put it in an airtight container to keep it wet and workable.

Try thinning your paint with the mixing medium to dilute the color to make it more transparent and using the natural color of the sculpture itself as white to give a less opaque look to lighter colors. If you work from light to dark and build up the colors in thin layers you will have a much richer end result. This requires some patience. Be sure to let each layer dry before painting the next to prevent the paint from lifting back up when you paint over it. You will find that the mixing medium will give the wet paint a very subtle milky look but it will dry clear and often adds a slight gloss and increases the overall luster and richness of the color.

Acrylics dry rapidly, and your figurine will absorb some of the moisture in the first coat, speeding the drying time further. You can overcome this in one of two ways: by adding a retarder to the paint, or by brushing the paint on more thickly. The second method is not recommended, because you will lose some of the fine detail of the sculpture, and the paint may dry unevenly and create problems for further coats of paint.

When thinning your paint with a medium and/or a retarder, bear in mind the effects of gravity and surface tension. If the paint mixture is very thin and watery, the paint will have a tendency to drip or 'pool' into the lower, recessed areas of your piece. If you want to use this wash method, it is best to paint each side separately and lay the piece on its opposite side to dry. With experience, sometimes this effect is useful, but in general it tends to make a mess.

Find a good painting speed for yourself. It's important not to brush the paint on too rapidly or roughly as this will create air bubbles in the paint and will ruin the overall finish of the piece. At the same time it is important to remember that acrylic dries quickly so you may need to use a retarder in your paint to enable you to work at a comfortable pace. Just remember to wait for underlying layers to completely dry, unless you intend to wet-blend (see blending).

With the exception of a black base coat (which is the best base color for interference and metallic colors) it is best to work from light to dark. As a rule of thumb, light paint doesn't look good over dark paint. So start light and work towards dark. Keep the piece lighter than you want it to end up looking if you plan to use antique, because the stain will tend to darken everything.

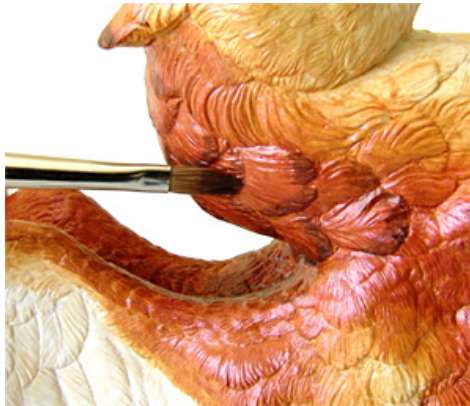


*building up color in layers*

### *Developing Details*

In general, it's a good idea to start simple (especially if this process is new to you). That is, block in all of your basic colors and do not worry about markings or patterns at the beginning. Try to work out all the colors as a whole first and get a good base coat that you are pleased with before you add any special markings, patterns, or other small touches. After you have the piece worked out as a whole you can further refine or define details with a smaller brush. Dry brushing (see blending further on) is a great way to add detail that will look natural. It is easier than painstakingly applying many fine strokes.

*dry brushing on feather detail*



### *Blending*



**Wet blending:** This is a little tricky to master, because as the name suggests, your paints must remain wet and, with acrylic paint, this is not always easy. Mixing your paint with a retarder will help tremendously. To blend with wet paint you will lay down one color and, while this color is still wet, take a second color on the brush and lay it next to the first color working the two together in the middle where they meet. Sometimes it's useful to have a clean but damp brush handy to blend colors; filbert brushes work well for this.

**Dry brushing:** This is a way to brush a color onto any raised surfaces of the figurine. This technique tends to work great on heavily textured areas, such as feather detail. You can do this to create an accent, or to build up color. To dry brush, you will want to load a somewhat firm-bristled brush (again, filberts work well) with thick paint, so that it doesn't flow into the recessed areas. The thicker the paint, the more it will tend to just 'stick' to the raised areas. Wipe most of the paint back off of your brush so it is "dry", and then draw it across the surface of the statue. The small amounts of paint remaining on the brush will adhere to the raised surfaces without flowing down into the crevices. Dry



brushing tends to look patchy and messy on smooth areas, so bear this in mind when painting. With dry brushing you may want to break the rule and try light over dark to give the effect of shadow detail in the low areas.

*gold dry brushed over brown*



**Glazing:** Glazing is the technique of taking a thinned transparent color and applying it over existing colors to modify the tone or hue of underlying color. This technique is usually used to deepen, darken, or make the colors richer. Glazing with a lighter color can be done, but it tends to wash the colors out and make the overall piece chalky looking. It is far better to start light and glaze to achieve a darker tone. Golden brand acrylic paints are great for glazing because they retain their vibrancy and rich tone even when thinned. To glaze, thin your paint (with medium, not water) until it is nearly transparent. Test this on a sheet of paper first, then brush it over the area you wish to glaze. Transparent color glazing over metallics can give a very deep, rich finish.

#### *Using Interference paints*

Golden brand and others make paints called “interference colors.” These can create some really amazing effects. If an iridescent, opalescent, or metallic look is desired, you can achieve it with these paints. Interference paints come in many different colors, and using them can really be fun. You need to be careful with them though, because if you apply them incorrectly they will turn milky looking.

Interference paints will have vastly different appearance depending on whether you paint them over a light color, over a dark color, if you thin them, or if you mix them with other paints. When painted on a dark color such as black, you will get more of the color itself (i.e. interference blue will look very blue, with a bit of shimmer). When painted on a light color, such as white, you will experience more of the ‘flash’ of the paint (i.e. interference blue will look white, but the iridescence will look blue tinted). The effects, therefore, can either be very bright, or very subtle. Any clear overcoat will affect the look of these colors also.

Interference paints need to be thinned before using them. If they are used right out of the bottle they will leave a milky look and your paint coverage may be uneven. Mix them with a clear mixing medium, and brush them on in one or two thin layers. You will get a nicer result this way. Not to mention that this makes it easier to control how much interference color you apply!

*an example of interference paints over both white and black bases, respectively*



### *Black Base Coat*

A black base color is the best choice when you are using a metallic, an interference color, or are painting a dark colored creature. Eye-catching results can be obtained by layering thinned metallics upon a black base coat.

### **A few final words about painting**

If you leave any part of your figurine unpainted, you should brush several coats of clear acrylic paint over this area. Give special attention to the underside areas of your figurine, such as the belly and throat as the undersides tend to be more absorbent and will take antique more readily than the top sides unless they are well sealed. Mixing medium works well for this as it dries clear and will provide the protective benefits of the acrylic. It will also help to keep the unpainted areas clean, provide a non-porous surface for any finishing sprays you may add, and will ensure that the overall finish is even.

Remember that, as long as you do not apply the paint too thickly to your figurine, if you are completely unhappy with the paint job you've done, you can always repaint it. Bear in mind though, the more paint you apply, the higher the likelihood of losing the fine details carved into your Windstone figurine.

*Most important:* Test the compatibility of all paints and clear sprays before applying them to your figurine. Incompatible paints may not dry correctly and remain tacky or may react by puckering or wrinkling. The best way to test for compatibility is to paint a small area on some other object, or on paper, before painting on the figurine. Always try the layers of paint there first. After the acrylic paint is thoroughly dry, small areas such as the nails or beak can be safely painted with some solvent based metallic paints, such as Deco brand liquid metallic markers or nail polish, but test for compatibility first.

### ➤ **Step Four: Drying**

The paint needs to completely dry before you can antique or clear-coat it. Drying time varies depending on the amount of retarder used, the thickness of the paint, the number of coats, humidity, and the kind of paint you used. Drying time takes anywhere from 24 hours to two weeks (if paint is applied heavily). Your painted figurine should be non-tacky and hard to the touch when it is dry. Note that some of the metallic, iridescent, and interference paints tend to take longer to dry than others. Use of different paint brands over each other may cause tackiness and interfere with drying.

➤ **Step Five: Antiquing: Making the details stand out by darkening them with paint**

*Note: For our purposes antiquing refers to creating shading with stain. Antiquing, in its most basic form, is the wiping of a darker color into the recessed detail of the statue to give it more depth and form (this will create shading and make the statue look more life-like).*

Antiquing is optional, and it takes a little courage to do the first time. See the photo examples of the same piece both with and without antiquing. The end effect should be subtle.

*the same piece: before and after antiquing*



**Before you antique:**

Make sure that the eyes are still masked and that your figurine is fully dry. Also be absolutely sure that any unpainted areas of your statue are coated with a clear coat of acrylic paint, or the antique will make a real mess of those areas.

To choose what color to antique with, consider the overall color of your figurine. It is usually best to antique with a color just a little darker than your paint. A white colored statue might look good when antiqued with a grey or dark cream color. A brown one might look best with a burnt umber antique. Sometimes there will be areas of your figurine that are very different in color, such as a white next to a deep brown and it may be necessary to antique these areas separately. Experiment.

When you are ready to antique, get a clean container of water, some paper towels and a sponge or two. Wet your sponge and then squeeze as much water out of it as you can. It should be damp, but not dripping. Be aware that you may need to wash your sponge during the antiquing process and having a sink or bucket of water handy is a good idea. Antiquing is something that is time-sensitive, so make sure you have at least 30 minutes to an hour to spare.

Antiquing with a gel staining medium such as DecoArt stain medium:

This is a great product that makes antiquing your work much easier. It is mixable with acrylic paint of any color so you can properly match the color of the antique with the color of your paint. Mix up plenty of the color you want to antique with and don't add any acrylic mixing medium or retarder. Mix equal parts of the DecoArt stain medium (it's very thick, like a gel) with your paint until they are uniformly blended. Use a square wash or large flat brush to start brushing the antique onto your



figurine. You do not want to apply it too thickly, but it should be gently worked into all recesses. The idea is to work somewhat quickly as you will need to wipe most of the antique stain off before it dries. If the antique is too thick it will take a lot of wiping. Until you have a good feel for antiquing, it is best to work in small areas to prevent any problems.

Coat part of the figurine with the antique stain. When the stain is very nearly dry, take your moist sponge and wipe it across the surface to remove all the stain from the raised areas of the statue and leave stain only in the recessed areas. It's important not to mash the sponge into the statue too much or you will lift all of the antique back off. Also make sure that your sponge is not too wet, as it will cause the stain to run. It will take several passes of the sponge to remove the stain. You may need to rinse your sponge in fresh water and continue several times, depending on how thickly the stain is applied. The raised areas should finish clean of streaks.

The DecoArt stain remains 'open' and can be worked back off with some water and a little effort, but for the best result it is important to try and finish working the stain before it completely dries. If you feel your antique dried too light or you need to add more, you can go back over it a second time. It helps to wipe across the grain of the hair or feather detail, rather than in the direction of the details, the antique stays in the grooves.

*applying antique, then wiping it off with a sponge*



#### Antiquing with acrylics and retarder:

It is possible to antique with just your acrylic paint retarder and paint. Note that even with retarders antiquing with acrylics is tricky because they dry quickly and won't lift back off once dry. Therefore, if you want to antique this way, work only on small areas at a time, and work quickly. Nothing is more frustrating than to spend hours painting a piece, only to have it ruined by a stray streak or blotch of dried antique. Mix your acrylic color liberally with retarder, you want a good amount of retarder mixed in, but you don't want your paint too watery or it will be uncontrollable once applied. Work the paint on in small sections. Be aware that anywhere the paint is thin it will dry more rapidly than thick areas (even with retarder added), so keep a sharp eye on the drying time. Quickly wipe the acrylic antique off of the statue with the damp sponge as described in the preceding paragraph about antiquing. Repeat this process in small areas until you have antiqued the entire figurine.

*detail of antique in recessed areas*



### ➤ **Step Six: Clear coat**

After you finish antiquing (or painting if you decide not to antique), it's best to protect your newly finished piece from moisture and dirt with a coat of clear acrylic. Make sure that your statue is completely dry and is not at all tacky. The easiest way to clear coat your work is with a spray finish that you can get from your art supply or hardware store. Select a water based acrylic spray that can be used on non-porous surfaces, will dry clear, and is intended as a final finishing spray.

*Important: Check compatibility with the paint before spraying figurine.*

Make sure that the eyes are still masked off well, and follow the instructions on the back of your spray (which should only be used in a well ventilated area). The type of clear coat (matte or gloss) and the number of coats you use will determine how glossy or flat your finished piece will look. Note that a glossier piece will be easier to clean dust from than a very matte one.

You will need to let the paint dry thoroughly before handling it to avoid marring the finish. Sometimes this can take a few days depending on the number of coats and humidity. Your patience will pay off, you are nearly done!

### ➤ **Step Seven: Unmasking the eyes**

Once your clear coat is completely dry, it's time to remove the masking from the eyes. Use a soft blunt object, such as a wooden toothpick, to very gently and slowly peel and remove the mask. This will keep the eyes and paint from being scratched. If you find that the mask covered any areas that you had intended to paint, or lifted off any paint, you can carefully go back with a small, fine brush and touch these areas up.

*gently peel the mask from the eye with a toothpick*



### **More information:**

Be sure to visit the official Windstone website for news, updates, new releases, and more! You can find us at: [www.windstoneeditions.com](http://www.windstoneeditions.com)

Come back to the website for updates as we learn new techniques and more about what you need to know.

If you have any questions about painting these figurines, email us at [paintwindstones@gmail.com](mailto:paintwindstones@gmail.com).