



Behold Mr. Demonicus. The devil made Arnold do it

# HOW TO

## LATEX PAINTING TECHNIQUES, PART I: Painting a Latex Demon Mask with the Rubout Method in 42 Steps

By Arnold Goldman of The Monster Makers

Here is a fun little mask painting demo to show all of you **HorrorShow** readers just how easy it is to paint a latex mask. This is a new, original mask I have just finished. So, say hello to Mr. Demonicus and let's get started painting in liquid rubber.

A complete list of materials for painting latex masks can be found at [www.monstermakers.com](http://www.monstermakers.com) or in *The Monster Makers Mask Makers Handbook*. The images in this article are taken from an online video demo that you can view on [www.monstermakers.com](http://www.monstermakers.com).

**1.** The first thing you will need besides a fresh, unpainted latex mask is an airbrush. Pictured here is the industry workhorse: the Paasche H. What I like about this airbrush is that it can spray mask paint (which tends to be somewhat viscous) without clogging. And, it is a breeze to clean.

**2.** Getting right down to business, we begin by mixing up a base color. I am going for a pale, yellow/orange skin tone. I start with one part medium flesh Monster Makers Mask Paint and add a few drops of yellow and a few drops of purple mask paint. Mask paint is mostly comprised of latex so it can thicken. Adding a few drops of water per ounce helps a lot. Be sure to strain your paint as well. Window screen works great for this.

Start by transferring some of the paint into your paint cup.

**3.** Set your air compressor to at least 60 PSI. Mask paint requires a little more force than acrylics do, so we want to make sure we can push the paint through without any trouble. Unlike acrylic, mask paint sticks like glue to rubber and stretches with the mask. Acrylic paint will crack and peel. By the way, to spray mask paint you do not need a special air compressor; any 1 HP (horse power) compressor will do. The one I have is a hardware store special. Get one with a tank, though, so it doesn't run continuously and end up giving you a headache.

**4.** Start by spraying the paint evenly over the mask. Do not spray too close, otherwise you will get drips and the paint will dry very glossily. A distance of eight to ten inches is fine. Keep the airbrush moving until the mask is completely covered. Watch for light areas and repaint those spots if necessary until you have even coverage.

**5.** The paint will dry quickly but I tend to be a little impatient. So, I will just speed things up with my always useful hairdryer. With a hairdryer, you can expect the paint to dry within a minute. On its own, mask paint would normally take only about five minutes—but, I am happy to save four minutes anytime!





Some of the supplies you will need to paint your mask

**6.** One of my favorite painting techniques is the rubout method I learned years ago. For that, you'll need a container of rubber cement. Transfer a 4 oz. bottle into a plastic container. Oh, and by the way—rubber cement uses a nasty solvent, so be sure to wear gloves and use a proper vapor filter mask to protect yourself.

**7.** Here I am adding a small amount of Burnt Sienna oil paint. Mix this in until the color is rich and homogeneous. You will need to add some solvent to make it more fluid. My favorite non-toxic solvent is d-Limonene, which is made from oranges. An alternative is mineral spirits, which also works fine. Whenever possible, though, I like to go with safe materials. Mineral spirits will dry a lot faster, but it smells worse and is toxic. With d-Limonene, your mask will smell like oranges for about a week! Your liver will thank you, too.

**8.** Start with the back of the mask to test the color. Begin by taking a section of sponge and soaking up some of the rubout paint. Be sure to wear gloves since you don't want to get a lot of this on your skin. Use vinyl gloves and not latex, since the latex will decompose quickly whereas vinyl will not. Additionally, vinyl will not stick to the mask as you work.

**9.** Keep loading up the sponge and wiping the paint on. Spread it on well and try to keep it from pooling. Rubout paint dries very thinly so do not worry too much if this doesn't look so great. We are going to be wiping most of it off anyway.

**10.** Once you have the mask covered evenly, you can accelerate the drying time with a hairdryer. It should only take a few minutes. Rubout dries fast too, which keeps all of us impatient mask makers very happy!

**11.** Once the mask is dry to the touch, fill a cup with more d-Limonene or mineral spirits. Take a small rag and saturate it with the solvent. Now, *this* is where things get really fun. Start by carefully wiping the mask in a circular motion. Pick a spot on the back to practice. The object is to wipe away not all, but most of the paint on the high spots of the mask while leaving paint in all the cracks and crevices. This creates a contrasting effect that is ideal for accentuating all the little details that can be put into the sculpture.

**12.** Here is a close-up shot of an area on the back of the mask so you can see the effect in detail. I couldn't get a good shot of me wiping the mask, so you will have to use your imagination. Sorry, folks!

**13.** Here is another detail shot of the completed rubout on the back to show you the final effect.





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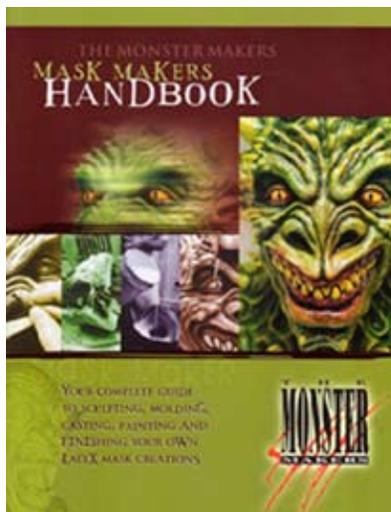
13.

**14.** During the rubout, the mask invariably will get saturated with solvent. This makes the latex very soft and floppy. But don't worry, we are going to drive off most of the excess solvent with... you guessed it—our trusty hairdryer. This will take about five minutes or so. The mask will stiffen back up a bit as it dries.

**15.** The point of the rubout is to create contrast; but, we don't want the contrast to be too strong. In order to soften the look, I will now go back and lightly spray some of the original mask paint base color over the rubout. Mask paint sticks well over the rubout paint and visa-versa. Here is an image of the base coat being applied back over the rubout.

**16.** You can see here that I have been careful not to spray my base coat on too heavily; otherwise, I would obliterate the rubout effect. The base coat paint is opaque, but if you spray it on lightly, the rubout effect will show through quite nicely. It does take a light touch, and remember to keep the airbrush moving with a light mist. If you mess it up, you can always just apply more rubout paint and try again.

**17.** Here is the finished rubout with the base coat lightly re-applied. The detail is all there but the extreme contrast is lost in favor of a much more subtle effect that is more pleasing to the eye. I like it! The rubout is a lot more work than just laying down a solid color, but it's worth it. If your mask has lots of detail, the rubout technique is a great way to show it off.



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**18.** Now that our base is down and dry, it is time to start the detailing. I like to start with the shadowing. For that color I mix up a brownish purple. I always test the color by spraying onto a piece of scrap paper first. This color will look great.

**19.** Here I am spraying color into the major low areas. I will begin around the eyes and work my way around the mask, paying particular attention to all the low spots. The idea is to paint in the shadows without overdoing it. You want the deep folds to have the most paint. As the paint leaves the fold you will want to feather the spray as the shadow transitions into the base color. This is what happens with shadows in even lighting conditions. Our goal is just to enhance—in an exaggerated, monsterish sort of way—what light does naturally.

**20.** I now carefully paint around the lips and gum area. The Paasche comes with three tip assemblies, so you will want to use the smallest tip available and thin the paint a little more with water. I usually stay around 40 PSI for detailing.

**21.** Here is a good medium close-up shot of the mask with the shading nearly complete. It takes some practice to get proficient with the airbrush, so, be patient. Again, it is a wise idea to test your spray pattern on a piece of scrap white paper before committing it to the mask. But, if you make a mistake, you can always spray over it and try again, so relax...and be sure to have fun!



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**22.** Once our shading is complete, we want to start on the highlight areas and anything lighter. I am going to paint a background color for the eyes, but instead of using straight white I want to add a few drops of our base color in the mix so it looks more integrated. Normally I would spray a lightened version of the base color over the high points of the mask. In this case, though, the rubout effect has left such a nice range of color that I don't think it will be necessary for this mask.

**23.** Once I am satisfied with the color, I lightly mist over the sclera part of the eye. If you need to flex the rubber to do this, feel free to reach in and push the eyes out. That is the great thing about painting with liquid rubber on rubber—everything stretches.

**24.** Next is the background color for the gums. We will ultimately be painting these red, so adding white as an undercoat allows the red to pop out with lots of intensity. Remember to first test your spray on some paper. You will need some dark paper this time for the light color.

**25.** Here is a medium shot of the gum white being finished up. It does take a steady hand and a light touch. Practice, practice, practice my friends! Thankfully, this airbrush is very easy to use, so most folks pick it up fast.

**26.** Now to the pentagram. We are doing a demon mask, right? So why not go all the way? What can I say—the devil made me do it. So, let's make this insignia stand out. First we will need a dark background color. I want the pentagram to look like it was seared into the flesh like branding an animal, so we are going to use black to simulate charring. I spray this liberally over the pentagram and surrounding area.

**27.** Once the area is dry, we are going to take some white mask paint and stipple it on lightly over the high spots of the insignia and surrounding fleshy areas. We are going to cover the white with red, so we want to hit all the high areas without getting any white into the low spots.

**28.** Here is a close-up of the area with the white stippling finished up. See how all the high spots jump out once the paint is applied? We want the symbol to stand out and this technique guarantees that it will be noticed.

**29.** Next, we change cups and switch colors. We will paint all the red areas at one time. First we will do the edges of the eyeball. This really takes a steady hand. Because the mask is sitting freely on a stand, this allows me to hold my painting hand steady while I carefully paint the red halo.

**30.** Next comes the gums. I will spray over the white area which pops the red. If you get some overspray here, don't be too concerned; we will be painting over the teeth anyway. Try to keep the overspray away from the lip, though, unless you want those to be red as well.

**31.** And now the insignia. Watch as this magically comes to life. The areas of white which the red hits immediately stand out. Any overspray falls into the black recessed areas and gets lost in the background. Isn't that just the coolest effect ever? It's very fun for sure, and it gives me lots of cool ideas for painting other mask designs.

**32.** Next I will switch to black again and spray the iris color. While I'm at it, I'll carefully spray some black around the gums and teeth to make them stand out.

**33.** After I paint the black over the eyes, I decide that I do not





like the effect, so I spray some of the base color lightly over the black to create a different effect. It looks cool, so I keep it.

**34.** Here is a close-up shot of the final effect. I could leave it that way. It looks a little like cataracts—which is neat—but I think I'll add another touch: slitted pupils.

**35.** Since some precision is needed here, I will first draw a guide line with a pencil to help with my paint stroke. My hand is a little shaky today so I will need all the help I can get.

**36.** Next I use some black mask paint and slowly apply a fine line following my guide line. I do the same for the second eye slit. Hold it steady there, Arnold!

**37.** Speaking of steady, the teeth demand the calmest of hands. I grab the smallest brush and apply more white with some base color added. I love to paint teeth and eyes because that is when the mask really starts to come to life.

**38.** The last thing to do is apply the gloss. We will be using two different compounds. For the insignia, gums, and overall protective coating, I will use our popular gloss compound called Perma-Wet. I love this stuff because it sticks like glue and stretches with the mask while making it super glossy. Pictured here is a container of the magic elixir.

**39.** You can paint the gloss light or heavy, as long as it does not pool. Like the mask paint, the gloss dries fast. But I like to speed things up whenever possible. Notice the mask has a slight overall sheen to it from the Perma-Wet gloss coating. The insignia and gums have a heavier application.

**40.** The final step in finishing the mask is to gloss the eyes. We could use the Perma-Wet, but I want to use a heavier gloss, so

I choose five-minute epoxy. Five-minute epoxy comes in two parts which have to be mixed together. You can find it in tubes that dispense the epoxy evenly for mixing. I will add a little concentrated yellow latex colorant to the mix to add some additional interest to the eyes.

**41.** You have a limited amount of time to work, so you will need to move swiftly when applying the epoxy. To add some time you can add a few drops of acetone to the mix. This will add a minute and make the epoxy go on a little thinner. This is the moment when the mask takes its first real breath of life.

**42.** Here it is—the finished Demonicus mask (see page 40.) Although this was a quickie sculpt and paint job, I think it came out well. Painting masks can be anything from basic to very elaborate depending on how much time you want to spend. As they say, sometimes less is more, and sometimes more is... well... more *and* better. It all depends on the subject. For extra detail you can spend hours and use inks as well as rubouts and mask paint. 🍷

In conclusion, there are lots of different techniques to share, and in a future issue we will demonstrate the Iwata airbrush with inks. So, stay tuned to **HorrorShow** for more demos, and thanks for letting me indulge myself. I can't think of many things more fun than making and painting rubber monsters. It has been my passion for many years. Now that I am in the groove, someone give me a lump of clay. I am ready to go again!

*For more info on latex monster mask making and mask painting, please visit [www.monstermakers.com](http://www.monstermakers.com).*

