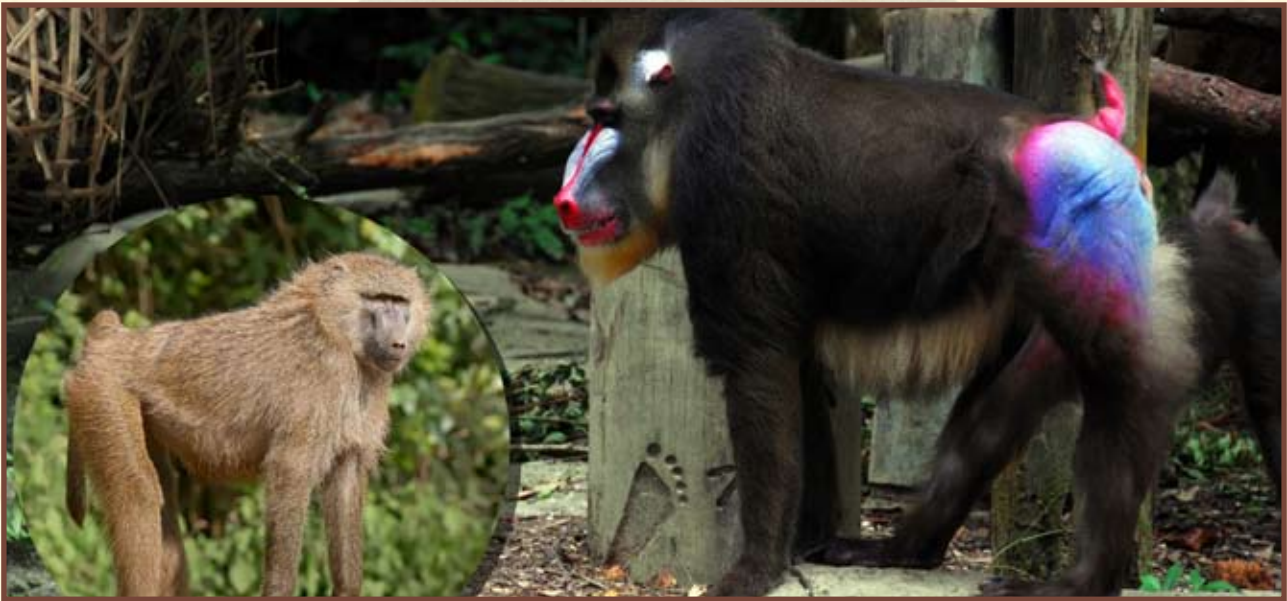


# PAINTING BABOONS



## BACKGROUND

Amongst the North Star Africa range are a number of useful animals, whether to use as creatures in their own right or as decoration on large base with human models. Being fond of monkeys I wanted to have a go at the baboons. For this article I am painting the pack of models *AA04 - Baboons*, which has three rather sedentary baboons in lifelike poses.

## PREPARATION

So I had to do some research, which mostly involved asking my anthropologist niece, “What do baboons look like?” From which I got a Niagara of pictures and other useful information, leading me to conclude these models looked most like Olive Baboons (who of course are not Olive!) from equatorial African countries, very nearly ranging from the east to west coast of the continent, which makes them ideal to go with the North Star Africa human models, a lot of whom hail from a similar area. The other pictures also gave me some other ideas... Mandrills they might be a bit of fun, how different are they from baboons? Could I convert these models to one of the most peculiar and colourful primates? Yes why not, they are so closely related to the baboons after all, but it would need some work, more of which later.

## CLEANING

These models required some “cleaning up” before painting. Using a scalpel and needle files I removed all the visible mould lines – these are the thin lines that run right around the model. Scraping the knife blade carefully along the mould line, as if you are peeling the skin from a potato, holding the blade at roughly ninety degrees to the surface. Finishing off the scraped surface with a small file to ensure that the area is all nice and smooth, but try not to destroy the texture of the fur as you go. As a final word on preparing models, please be careful when using any sharp modelling tools.

I then glued the models to a piece of scrap card ready for painting.

## UNDERCOATING

Undercoating is essential as it provides a consistent surface on which to apply the next coats of paint, and it shows up the detail on a model much more clearly than shiny bare metal.

## THE UNDERCOAT

For undercoating the baboons I used Humbrol enamel matt black. You want the undercoat to be as matt as possible so the detail on the model is easier to see. For an acrylic undercoat it is a good idea to use a matting agent, as acrylics tend to be naturally a bit shinier.

I brushed the paint on with a *Warpaints Small Drybrush* brush making sure I covered the entire model. Don't let the paint pool anywhere as this will dry very thick and could obscure details. Also watch out for any stray hairs detaching from your brush and sticking to the model during undercoating. Pull them off with tweezers before they become permanently attached! Take particular care not to clog up the face and fur, don't be afraid to go back and clear runs or blobs of undercoat off with your brush. I then let the undercoat dry completely before going on to paint the models.

## PAINTING

The figure painting follows my well known method of working from dark to light shaded from a black undercoat. This three or more colour painting method uses successive tones of colour (shade, middle and light) which are added to the model in layers, working up from dark to light. This creates a bold three-dimensional effect of shadows and highlights, the layers of colour giving greater depth and subtlety to the model. For the facial detail I used a *Warpaints Detail* brush and for the eyes I used an *Insane Detail* brush.





Above. The shade coat is a mix of Matt Black, Uniform Grey and Oak Brown.

## THE PAINT

I used *Army Painter* paints to paint the baboons, from the *Warpaints Mega Paint Set*, mixing up colours to suit my style and preferences. The *Mega Paint Set* provides an adequate range of colours for almost all needs, but you will often need to mix colours to get the desired results.

## DRY-BRUSHING

With so much well defined hair on show the best and quickest method to paint most of a baboon is a technique called dry-brushing. For heavily textured areas like hair, fur, and skin (especially on big creatures) dry brushing is an essential skill.

## THE TECHNIQUE

The term dry brushing is a bit misleading as neither the paint nor the brush is actually “dry”, just dryer than if you were painting normally. I used the *Warpaints Small Drybrush* brush for all the dry-brushing on the monkeys, which is ideal its angled bristles being especially useful.

## PAINT

When dry brushing the paint needs to have a thicker consistency than you would normally use. Load some paint on the hairs of a flat brush (or an old normal brush that you no longer use for detailed work) and check that you have the right amount by gently brushing it across your finger print or a textured paper towel. If the paint picks out the raised detail while leaving the indentations clear then you have the right amount of paint on the brush. If the paint fills up the indentations then you have too much, so wipe off the excess paint on a tissue.

Once you feel you have the right amount of paint, brush it gently across the detail on the model. The paint should hit only the raised surfaces, picking out the detail with each successive stroke and creating a quick and effective highlight. Dry brushing works best when you draw your brush at 90° to the surface you are highlighting, running across the creases or hair rather than along them. It is important to note that at each progressive stage the brush is loaded with less paint than before.

## OLIVE BABOON

The Olive Baboon is mostly the same colour all over, which is a light grey/brown which has a greenish hue when seen in the wild; the hair on the baboon's face, however, ranges from dark grey to brownish black.

## PAINTING THE FUR

The shade coat is a mix of *Matt Black*, *Uniform Grey* and *Oak Brown*. I dry-brushed this over the entire baboon, almost obliterating the black undercoat completely.

For the next layer I added *Skeleton Bone* to the above mix and dry-brushed over the model again, but leaving some of the shade coat showing.

I then added some more *Skeleton Bone* and went over the baboons again but this time very lightly just catching the tops of the fur.

## PAINTING THE FACE

I then painted the face *Matt Black* and tidied up around the model with the black. I then highlighted the face with *Matt*

Below. For the next layer I added *Skeleton Bone* to the above mix and dry-brushed over the model again.







Above & below. The face is highlighted with Matt Black mixed with Leather Brown, eyes are Desert Yellow.

Black mixed with Leather Brown. And then another highlight with more Leather Brown mixed in, and then a final coat with yet more Leather Brown added. The last touch was the eyes which are Desert Yellow with Matt Black pupils.



## MANDRILLS

The mandrill is an African monkey, closely related to the baboon and about the weirdest looking primate of the planet. They are now found in southern Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Congo. Mandrills mostly live in tropical rainforests and forest-savannah mosaics and they live in groups called hordes! They are a bit out of the right geographical location, but I thought their range might have been larger in the past than now.

The mandrill is perhaps the most colourful primate, having olive green or dark grey pelage with yellow and black bands and a white belly. Its hairless face has an elongated muzzle with distinctive characteristics such as a red stripe down the middle and protruding blue ridges on the sides. It also has red nostrils and lips, a yellow beard and white tufts. The areas around the genitals and the anus are multi-

Below. Extra fur added, using Greenstuff putty.

coloured, red, pink, blue, scarlet, and purple!

Initially I thought it would just be a matter of painting the baboons in a mandrill colour scheme, but after looking in to it a bit more I realised the mandrill is quite different from your standard baboon. Mostly they have a bigger mane and hardly any tail (a point which I missed initially); this makes them quite distinctive, even before the outlandish face make up!

## CONVERSION

Not too tricky, I added some extra fur in appropriate places, using Greenstuff modelling putty. As you can see I forgot to remove the tails, which I should have done at this stage. Once the putty had cured I undercoated them as I had the normal baboons. It was at this stage I realised that they needed to lose those tails!

When the undercoat was dry I remove most of the tails, leaving just a stump and re-undercoated the tail area.







Above. Most of the tail is removed, leaving just a stump.

## BODY FUR

The shade coat is a mix of *Matt Black*, *Uniform Grey* and *Angel Green*. I dry-brushed this over the entire mandrill, obliterating the black undercoat completely. For the next layer I added *Ash Grey* to the above mix and dry-brushed

over the model again, but leaving some of the shade coat showing. And then added more *Ash Grey* and did the same again. Lastly I then added some more *Ash Grey* and went over the mandrills again but this time very lightly just catching the tops of the fur.

Below. The shade coat obliterates the black undercoat completely. The next layers build up the fur colour finishing with a highlight that went over the mandrills but this time very lightly just catching the tops of the fur.



## BELLY FUR

For this I started with *Desert Yellow* as a shade, then added *Matt White* to that for the next layer, and working up to pure *Matt White* in successive layers.

Below. For the belly fur, is started with *Desert Yellow* as a shade, the *Matt White* is added to that for the next layer, and working up to pure *Matt White* in successive layers.







Above & right. The Red starts with Dragon Red as the shade colour, trying to follow what a real mandrill looks

## FACE & REAR

It really is worth looking at lots of picture for this sort of project. I usually print out some relevant pictures if I have no book reference to hand (which I didn't).

## THE RED

Starting with *Dragon Red* as the shade colour, I did all the design, trying to follow what a real one looks like. I then mixed *Matt White* to the *Dragon Red* and highlighted the design, then mixed more *Matt White* to that mix and highlighted it again, the red on the mandrill is really rather pinkish.

## THE BLUE

The blue shade colour is a mix of *Deep Blue* and *Crystal Blue*. For the highlights I added *Matt White* in three successive layers.

like. Then Matt White is mixed to the Red and used to highlight the design, then more White is mixed to that and used to highlight again.



Below. The blue shade colour is a mix of *Deep Blue* and *Crystal Blue*.







Above. The head fur, Shade layer; *Uniform Grey* mixed with *Matt Black*.

## HEAD FUR

I did the fur on the top of the head a slightly different colour than the body fur. Shade layer; *Uniform Grey* mixed with *Matt Black*, followed more *Uniform Grey* in that mix, and finished off with a highlight of pure *Uniform Grey*.

## BEARD

Shade layer, *Desert Yellow*, then a mix of *Desert Yellow* and *Daemonic Yellow*, finished with a highlight of *Desert Yellow* and *Daemonic Yellow* plus *Matt White*.

## EYES

Unlike baboons, you can see some of the whites of the mandrills' eyes, and the iris is a very distinctive burnt orange. So I used *Matt White* for the whites, *Lava Orange* for the iris and *Matt Black* for the pupil, fortunately the eyes are a bit oversized on the models making them a little easier to paint than would otherwise be the case.

## VARNISH

Make sure all the paint on the model is thoroughly dry before commencing varnishing.

## GLOSS

The models were then given a coat of Humbrol polyurethane gloss varnish and set aside for 24 hours to dry completely. Be careful not to let the varnish pool, especially under the kilts and between the spears. You don't need a very thick coat of varnish.

## MATT

Then they were given two coats of *Anti-Shine Matt Varnish*. Be even more careful when painting on the matt varnish.

When applying the matt, brush it out well from any nooks and crannies where it is likely to collect and pool.

## BASING

Now normally I would base up the models to finish them off, but that is going to be another article later!



Below. Eyes, unlike baboons, you can see some of the whites of the mandrills' eyes, and the iris is a very distinctive burnt orange.

