

Painting a Wood Duck Secondary Feather


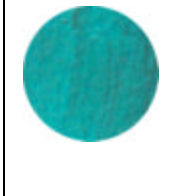

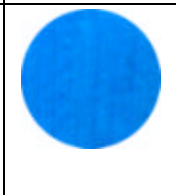



Reference Photo: Wood Duck Secondary Feather

The blending techniques used for this feather require you to prepare your paints a few days in advance. Each color will be mixed with a retarder medium, and the water in the acrylic paint will be allowed to evaporate out. This action produces slow drying colors that mimic oil paint. A hair dryer will be used to dry the paints after blending colors.

Color Mixes

Pre-mix the following colors, each in its own small container. Plastic condiment containers or divided plastic palettes work well for this purpose.

	<p>Off-White: Titanium white with a touch of burnt umber.</p>		<p>Iridescent Aqua: One part phalo blue, one part phalo green, two parts iridescent blue, two parts iridescent green.</p>
	<p>Sable: Two parts carbon black and one part burnt umber.</p>		<p>Iridescent Blue: One part phalo blue, two parts iridescent blue.</p>
	<p>Raw umber.</p>	<p>Instead of using iridescent paints for the above colors, you may substitute iridescent powders.</p>	

To each of the paint containers, add an amount of retarder/blending medium equal to the amount of paint. Stir the medium into the paint and let the containers sit uncovered overnight. This action will allow most of the water in the paint to evaporate. Re-stir. If the paint becomes too thick, add a bit more retarder medium. Allow the paints to sit uncovered for another day or two, adding more retarder as necessary. The paint should attain the consistency of a smooth thick syrup.

Brushes

A variety of brushes may be used for the blending process including filbert brushes, Pat Godin / James Co. style blending brushes, or small fan brushes.



Painting Instructions



1. Seal the carved and textured feather with spray lacquer. Glue a 1" piece of dowel to the back of the feather, to act as a handle. This avoids touching the surface of the wood while painting.



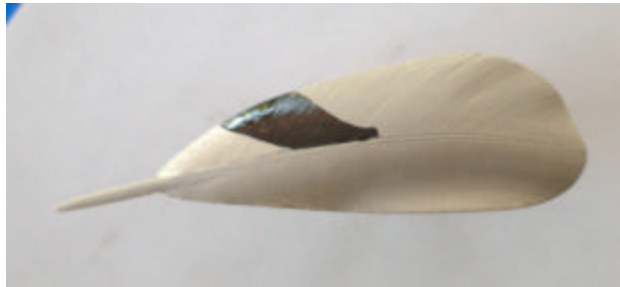
2. Brush the surface of the feather with gesso or primer to provide a consistently colored background for painting. I have tinted the primer with raw umber.



3. Using off-white and raw umber, mix up three values of brown on your palette— light, medium and dark. Refer to the reference photo at the beginning of this document for mixing the correct values.



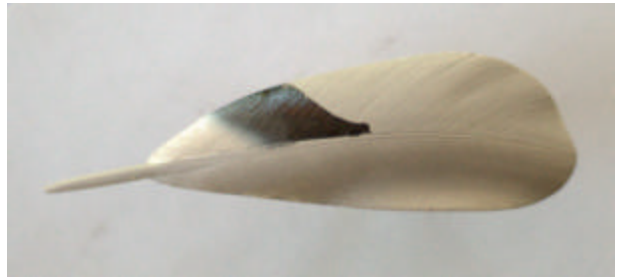
Apply these three values of brown to the bottom of your feather as shown above.



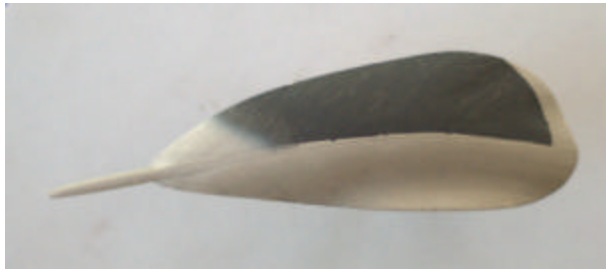
5. On the opposite side of the feather,at the base of the quill, apply the lightest value of brown. Apply sable next to the light brown as shown.

4. With a blending brush, blend the three values of brown together to make the bottom side of the feather appear 3-dimensional. The feather recess should appear darker while the area next to the quill, the area near the base of the quill and the upsweep should appear lighter.

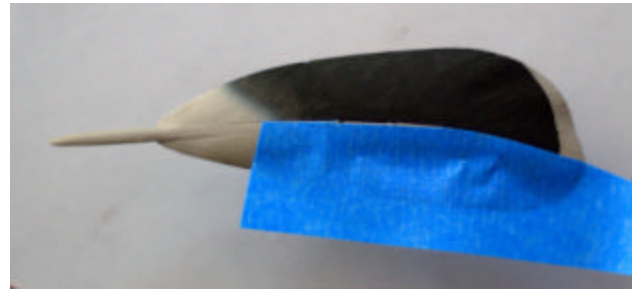
When you are satisfied with the blending, dry the paint with a hair dryer until the shine on the paint goes away.



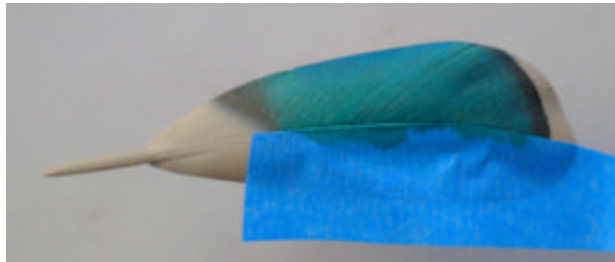
6. Using a blending brush, blend the light brown and sable colors together as shown.



7. Finish painting the upper part of the feather with sable as shown. Leave the tip unpainted, as white paint will be applied to that area later on. Dry with a hair dryer. If you have to apply a second coat of sable for a consistent dark color, apply a second coat and dry it again.



8. To protect the bottom side of the feather, apply a piece of masking tape along the quill line. Make sure the tape is securely fastened to avoid leaks underneath.



9. Apply iridescent aqua to the dark side of the feather and blend it in to the sable color.



10. Remove the tape and make sure none of the iridescent color has leaked to the other side. If it has, remove it with water and a brush. Dry the iridescent paint. If necessary, apply a second coat.



11. Blend in some blue iridescence at the edge of the feather and in the wavy depressions then dry. Paint in the white edging and the quill. The sable quill blends in to off-white at the base. The tip of the quill blends to gray. Dry.



12. Using thinned carbon black and a detail brush, color in any feather splits. Using a wash-to-water technique, add shadows to the white edging where there are wavy depressions. Dry.

13. When you are satisfied with your painting, brush a gloss varnish over the quill. Finally, spray on a protective layer of Testor's Dull Cote. Break off the painting handle and glue on your pin finding.