

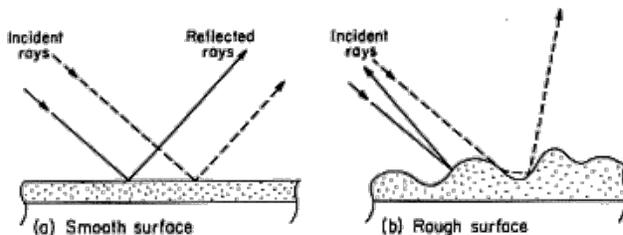
Rockin' Crystals

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Painting crystals requires patience and careful blending. Make sure you check your model for any mold lines and wash with soap and water before painting. For the bones models, we do not have to prime. But if you use natural crystal or metal, I would recommend priming.



If you look at crystals in nature, you'll find the color tend to be most pronounced at the tips. This is due to impurities or cracks in the stone structure as the crystal forms. Notice how each facet or surface is a separate plane and shades differently than the adjacent plane. Some crystals are more translucent, others have more internal cracks, and the cleaner the structure, the more easily light is able to pass through without scattering.



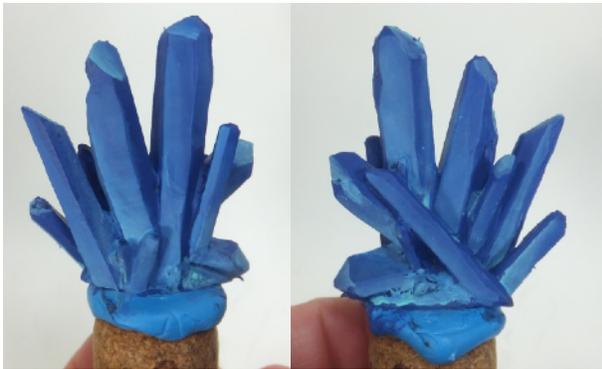
Since crystals are usually flat planes, the reflection of light follows the first diagram, but remember that the next plane over is at a different angle, so the light won't reflect back to our eyes the same. I paint crystals similarly to how I approach NMM. Smooth blending helps create the illusion of a smooth flat surface. Just like a sword blade, the edge is a sharp highlight. Since all crystals have some impurities and rough bits, adding a few hatch lines toward the end also can help sell the effect.

One thing I'd recommend when practicing crystals is to go to your favorite shopping site and search for cheap rough quartz crystals. Don't pay more for fancy mood aura crystals! You should be able to buy these in packets of 20-50 for not too much, and they're fun to incorporate into your minis. You can also save old plastic sprue and use a sharp knife to make your own crystals. I also make some out of fimo or sculpey.

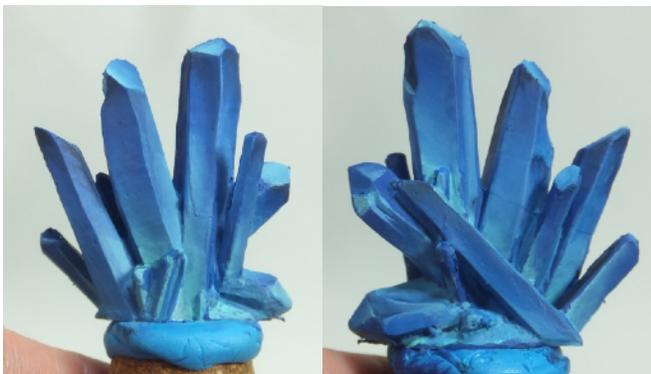
How to paint crystals, a step by step:



Step 1: Basecoat crystal. I tend to start either with a midtone or a dark color and shade up from there. Make sure it's smooth and even. Check for any bare patches. This is usually where I find all the mold lines I missed earlier during prep.



Step 2: Start to add some of our highlight color to the base of the crystals. Shade each face as a separate plane. Think about how the crystal will come together. Just like with metal, setting a dark next to a light help show contrast. There is a strong cheat factor in that while I want the dark color near the top, I'll sometimes fudge the placement of the highlights to ensure the next facet over is different. Some surfaces can be relatively flat or uniform color, while other can have gradual transitions of color. Variety helps sell the effect.



Step 3: Start to add in some of our dark color to the tops of the crystals.



Step 4: Paint the sharp edges. Use the SIDE of the brush, and slide it along the edge using a white or off-white. This can be a tough step, especially if the crystal edges are soft. You can always go back and clean up the lines with your dark color.



Step 4: I will often glaze another color at this point over the whole surface. It may change the color of the crystal and it helps smooth out the blending. I clean up all my lines and corners as well. The sharper the edge, the more it looks like crystal. This is the part where I do a lot of pushing and pulling between my edge lines and the surface to make sure I like how it looks.



Step 5: I add a few hatch marks or lines, showing other hard edges or cracks along the face of the crystal. I also often add a hot spot of white at some corners, just to add variety.