

HOW TO USE ARMORED KOMODO CHROMAFLAIR PIGMENTS (LIKE A GUNPLA PRO)



COURTESY OF

Created by [Instagram.com/nerd_vs_everything](https://www.instagram.com/nerd_vs_everything)

The first step is to pick a kit that you'd like to give the Chromaflair treatment to. I'd suggest something you're not scared to mess up but is also a sturdy, simple kit such as a High Grade or SD.

For this tutorial we will be using the HG 1/144 Grimoire from Gundam Reconquista in G.

However, it should be noted that applying these pigments isn't too challenging so ultimately you should pick whichever kit you like the most!!



Next, we'll have to make sure we have all the right tools to complete the job. Just remember that Armored Komodo recommends their own line of primers/paints but will recommend Vallejo products when theirs are not available. I chose to use the following because it's the most readily available, but I'll be sure to list other substitutes when we get to those steps.

- Tools:
- Mr Surfacer 1000
 - Tamiya X-1 Black and X-2 White
 - Vallejo Metal Varnish
 - Vallejo Airbrush Thinner/Flow Improver
 - Armored Komodo Chromaflair Pigments
 - A silicone brush
 - A soft bristle brush
 - Paper towels/Newspaper for a work surface. (Pigments are messy!!)
 - Tamiya Acrylic or Lacquer Thinner



HARO! HARO! DON'T FORGET GLOVES FOR THE PIGMENT!! HARO! HARO!



Prepping the surface for paint is one of the most important steps for achieving a great metallic paint job. Be sure to clean all the nubs and gate marks off the piece and thoroughly wash with soapy water.

Washing the pieces isn't always necessary but it doesn't hurt!



Be sure to achieve a full smooth coverage with your primer. I was in a hurry and decided to use a spray can which limits my ability to control the pressure of the paint. With good technique, you can achieve similar results to an airbrush, but you should opt for an airbrush when possible.

Armored Komodo recommends their own primer but any gray primer will work in my experience. A glossy gray might even give better results!

The primer will show you all the scratches and imperfections in the plastic. For best results, correct these surface problems such as scratches or mold lines by sanding them out and reapplying the primer. Every scratch or blemish will be magnified by the glossy/metallic paints that follow. Its extra work but it'll pay off later!



Before we start spraying our base colors, we need to determine which base color to apply and Armored Komodo has a great way of letting us know. If the Chromaflair jar has a black label than its meant to be applied on gloss black paint and if it has a white label than its meant to be applied on a gloss white paint.



**BLACK LABEL =
GLOSSY BLACK BASE**



**WHITE LABEL =
GLOSSY WHITE BASE**

The Armored Komodo Chromaflairs I will be using on the Grimoire are as follows:



Supernova Red for the knife
Wabi Sabi for the tan body parts
Heliconia+ for the black body parts
Chrome Black for the backpack

PREP > PRIME > **BASE** > GLOSS > PIGMENT > DISPLAY

I thinned my paints (Tamiya X-1 Black and X-2 White) with a roughly 1:1 ratio using Tamiya Lacquer thinner. I then airbrushed these paints around 15 to 20 PSI through a size .38 needle; starting with light coats and building up to heavier coats.

Armored Komodo recommends using Vallejo Gloss White and Black for their Chromaflairs (when their own paints aren't readily available) but I've found that Tamiya works just as well and is available at more local hobby stores near me. From my experiments, most gloss acrylics work well but lacquers can be hit or miss.

Let the paints cure in a dust free environment for at least a few hours. I let mine sit overnight to be sure the paints had hardened fully.



Don't be too upset if your paint doesn't come out ultra glossy! Some of my parts didn't either but the gloss stage of the process will help alleviate this a bit. The chromaflair pigments will still look great thanks to their color-shifting ability but they'll look even better on high gloss parts!



The next two steps are the most time sensitive in the whole process. The trick to making the Chromaflair pigments adhere to the surface is to apply them to a still tacky acrylic clear coat which means you'll now be working inside of a limited time frame.

As always, Armored Komodo recommends their own clear coats but suggests Vallejo Metal Varnish as a substitute.

From my experiences, you only want to let the clear coat cure for about 10 minutes. Once the paint stops looking 'wet' and becomes 'glossy' is right about when you'll want to apply the pigments. If you wait too long, the pigment will have a harder time adhering to the model. Conversely, if you apply the pigment too early, you could damage the sheen of the piece.

It will take some time to develop an eye for this but as a rule of thumb, I would wait at least 5 minutes after a heavy wet coat of Vallejo Metal Varnish.



I sprayed the Vallejo Metal Varnish using the same setup as the Tamiya paints but when thinning I added 2 drops of Airbrush Thinner and Flow Improver per 10 drops of Varnish.

I've seen some painters skip the gloss stage when it comes to the black based Chromaflair. When I skipped this stage, I found that the pigment had a hard time adhering to just the gloss black alone, but I've seen some painters have luck with it to great effect. If you do skip this stage, I'd recommend using Vallejo Gloss Black Primer as your base as I've heard that that gives the best results.

Ultimately, try new things and see what works for you!



Begin applying the pigment with the silicone brush. A little bit of pigment will give you quite a bit of coverage.

Just like normal brush painting, watch out for ugly brush strokes. Try to come up with a plan for how you want to approach the part. I like to think of it like I'm mowing a lawn. I go in a back and forth pattern to be sure I get full coverage.

The white based Chromflair seem to be a little fussier than the black based Chromaflair and will be less forgiving when it comes to not getting full coverage or making a mistake.



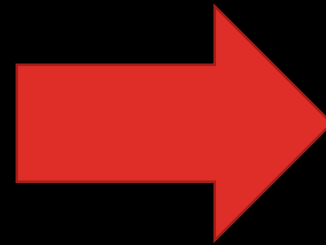
Check your progress by lightly brushing off the excess dust with the soft bristled brush. Check to see if you've missed any areas. Be sure to act fast since the Vallejo Metal Varnish will likely be losing its tackiness by now.

It's important to really plan ahead when applying these pigments. I recommend only varnishing a few pieces at a time and then applying pigment to those pieces. Then move on to varnishing another chunk of pieces and applying pigment to them. Repeat the process until all pieces have had their Chromaflair applied.

This process will require some practice before really having an eye for when to correctly apply the pigment. Even on my final Grimoire you will notice some inconsistencies specifically with the Wabi Sabi Chromaflair. Practice makes perfect!



Once you've gotten full coverage with the pigment, give the piece one final dust off with the soft bristled brush. At this point, the Varnish should've lost nearly all its tackiness.



HARO! SO SHINY! HARO!

Before moving on to the black based Chromaflair, make sure to give your silicone brush a nice wash in some plain old tap water.

If you haven't yet, airbrush the Vallejo Metal Varnish onto the black based pieces (Unless your using Vallejo Gloss Black Primer, in which case you can skip the gloss phase and begin applying pigment). Make sure that the Varnish still has the correct tackiness.

As I said before, the black based Chromaflair is a little more forgiving. Brush it on with the silicone brush while doing your best to achieve smooth and uniform coverage.



Using the soft bristled brush, dust off the excess just as you would for the White Based Chromaflair.

Once you've completed this process for all of the other parts of the model, let the Vallejo fully dry for a few hours. It should be okay to hold after an hour or two with no worries of rubbing the pigment off.

Waterslides can be applied directly to the pigment however you should make sure that your placement of the decal is near perfect, as excessive moving or repositioning of the decal can affect the finish of the pigment. When top coating, Mr Hobby's GX line of lacquer clear coats or Vallejo Metal Varnish give good results. Be sure to apply a light misting base coat before a more moderate coat to prevent ruining your finish!





PREP > PRIME > BASE > GLOSS > PIGMENT > DISPLAY

Keep in mind that this is just how *I* went about using the Armored Komodo's Chromaflair pigments but there's tons of other methods and tools that can achieve the same results or even better!! Try new methods and learn from your mistakes!! Whatever method you like the most is the best one!!





Thanks for checking out this tutorial and learning how to use an incredible new product along with me! Special thanks to Hub Hobby for carrying the product and to Armored Komodo for their Chromaflair pigments!

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