

AIRBRUSH PAINTING TECHNIQUES



The complete
"how to"
modelling guides

Osprey Modelling Manuals

Airbrush Painting Techniques

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Airbrush Painting Techniques

Introduction

Widespread acceptance of the airbrush, that time-honoured tool of the commercial artist, has revolutionised the painting of models of all types. Using a range of compatible paints, modellers with good airbrush skills are able to create the most intricate detail finishes to an extremely high standard of uniformity and colour integrity, generally easier than is possible with 'standard' paintbrushes. Most top quality models feature an airbrush paint finish, even if only as a background to final decoration by other methods.

Arguably, by avoiding the one major drawback of hand painting – that of creating brush marks and irregularities of paint – the airbrush is now as important to the discerning model maker as the adhesive with which to attach the component parts. The expanding international range of airbrushes, with their necessary compressors and ancillary nozzles to produce ever finer sprays, means that they are available to almost everyone.

Although a top quality brush can be a costly investment, it should last a very long time and today even the modest pocket at the younger, less experienced end of the model fraternity is well catered for by economical 'starter' brushes. In this manual we show some of the many possibilities that finishing with an airbrush offers modellers with widely differing preferences.



AIRBRUSHES AND COMPRESSORS

The introduction of the airbrush revolutionised model-making, allowing a level of paint quality most people could not hope to achieve with a brush. Today, they are at their technical peak, and an indispensable part of the modeller's toolkit. There are many different types, so it is important that you choose carefully and get one that is designed for modelling.

Originally airbrushes used for modelling had a rather cumbersome tank underneath; the paint was sucked up and expelled by means of a single-action expulsion system. Later, models with smaller tanks on the side were developed, but the most recent variants recommended by most model makers are airbrushes which, like those designed specifically for drawing, have their tank attached directly to their expulsion mechanisms with a more versatile double-action system.



Airbrushes are an essential tool for painting German camouflage, which uses colours with softened and blurred edges. With an airbrush the degree of colour intensity can be controlled closely: from soft and very broad markings, to fine lines.

This aircraft has been completely painted by airbrush; the drawings, the stars and all the shapes were prepared separately, and then cut into adhesive masks.



1/72 scale model. In spite of its small size, with a bit of practice the markings can be easily reproduced with perfectly detailed edges.



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AIRSPRAY ADVANTAGES

There are few models for which the airbrush cannot be of help. It will perform numerous tasks, from basic painting to picking out small details and subtle patterns, such as dust and dirt on an aircraft, irregular camouflage effects on tanks and vehicles and metal effects. In experienced hands, airbrushes can be used for drawing detailed markings and emblems, thus allowing models to be completed accurately even if authentic transfers do not exist. With properly



The airbrush is ideal for covering large flat surfaces or applying soft, transparent paint.

drawn and handled templates, it is possible to obtain any kind of decoration; so, proper handling of the airbrush together with an understanding of colour are key to producing models with a top quality finish. However, the equipment will not work on its own: practice makes perfect and it must be borne in mind that the contribution of the ordinary paintbrush is still indispensable.



With good control, even the edges of the colours can be painted freehand.



Colours can be painted uniformly, even difficult whites; subtle dirty marks on aircraft can also be conveyed.





Colour is uniformly achieved with an airbrush on a clean factory-fresh model.



In contrast, this motorcycle has been used hard in bad weather – both finishes are possible thanks to the airbrush.



The general paintwork and the effects of wear and tear can be achieved thanks to the unique qualities of the airbrush: the basic white can be made perfectly uniform and ready to take numerous transfers.





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SPRAY GUNS AND AIRBRUSHES



The simplest type of airbrush is a needless spray gun.

This Tamiya pistol is a direct development of the spray gun, and now comes with a needle and an interchangeable nozzle.



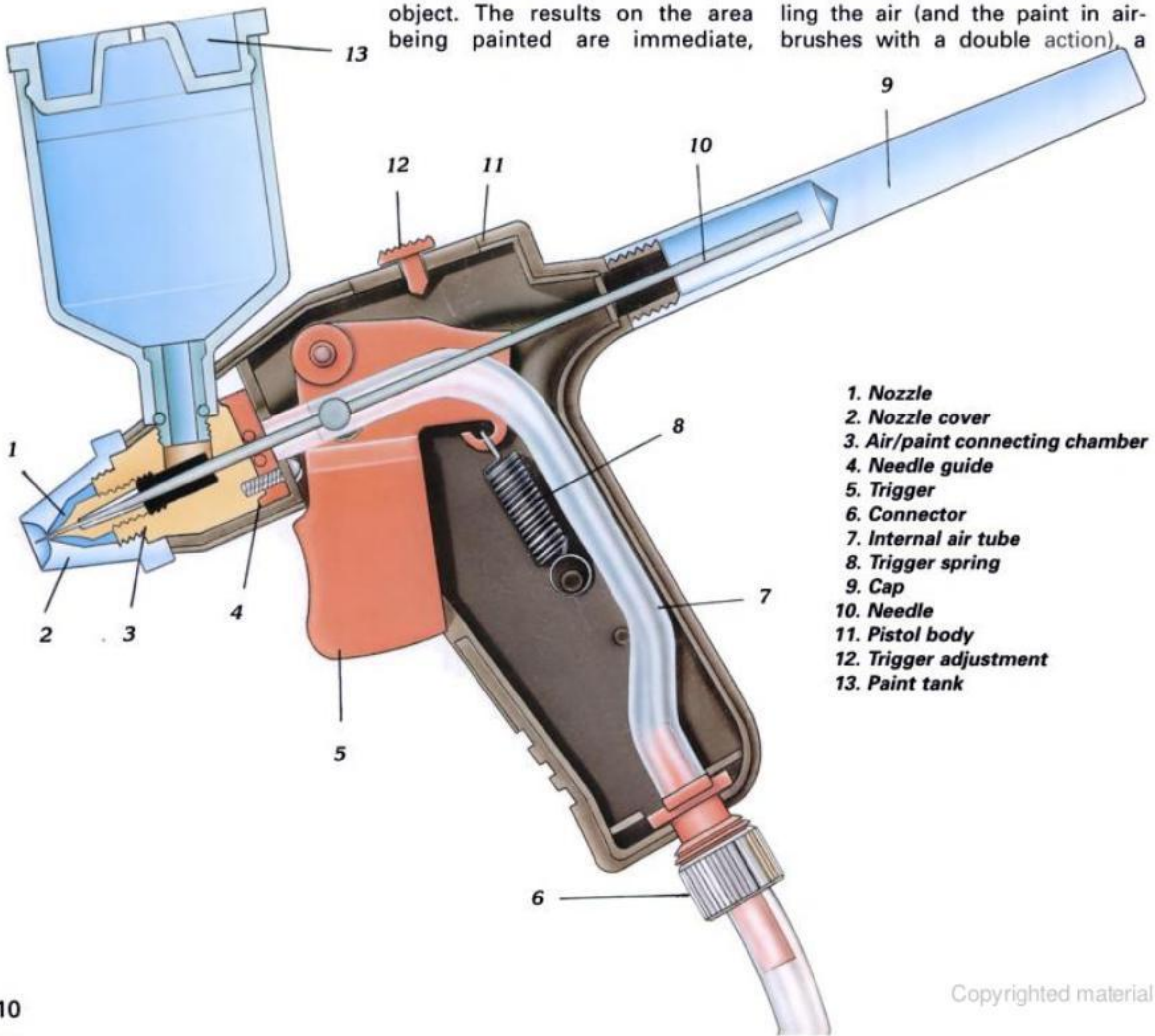
THE FIRST AIRBRUSH

The airbrush necessitates a radical change in the way of working. To start with, there is

no longer any contact between the modeller and his work – there is only a jet of air mixed with paint, which covers the kit. The intensity can be varied by moving the airbrush closer to, or further from, the object. The results on the area being painted are immediate,

although each airbrush is different in the way it lays down the paint.

At its most basic, the airbrush is an apparatus that mixes air and paint. It is a tube that carries the air, a device with a button for controlling the air (and the paint in airbrushes with a double action), a





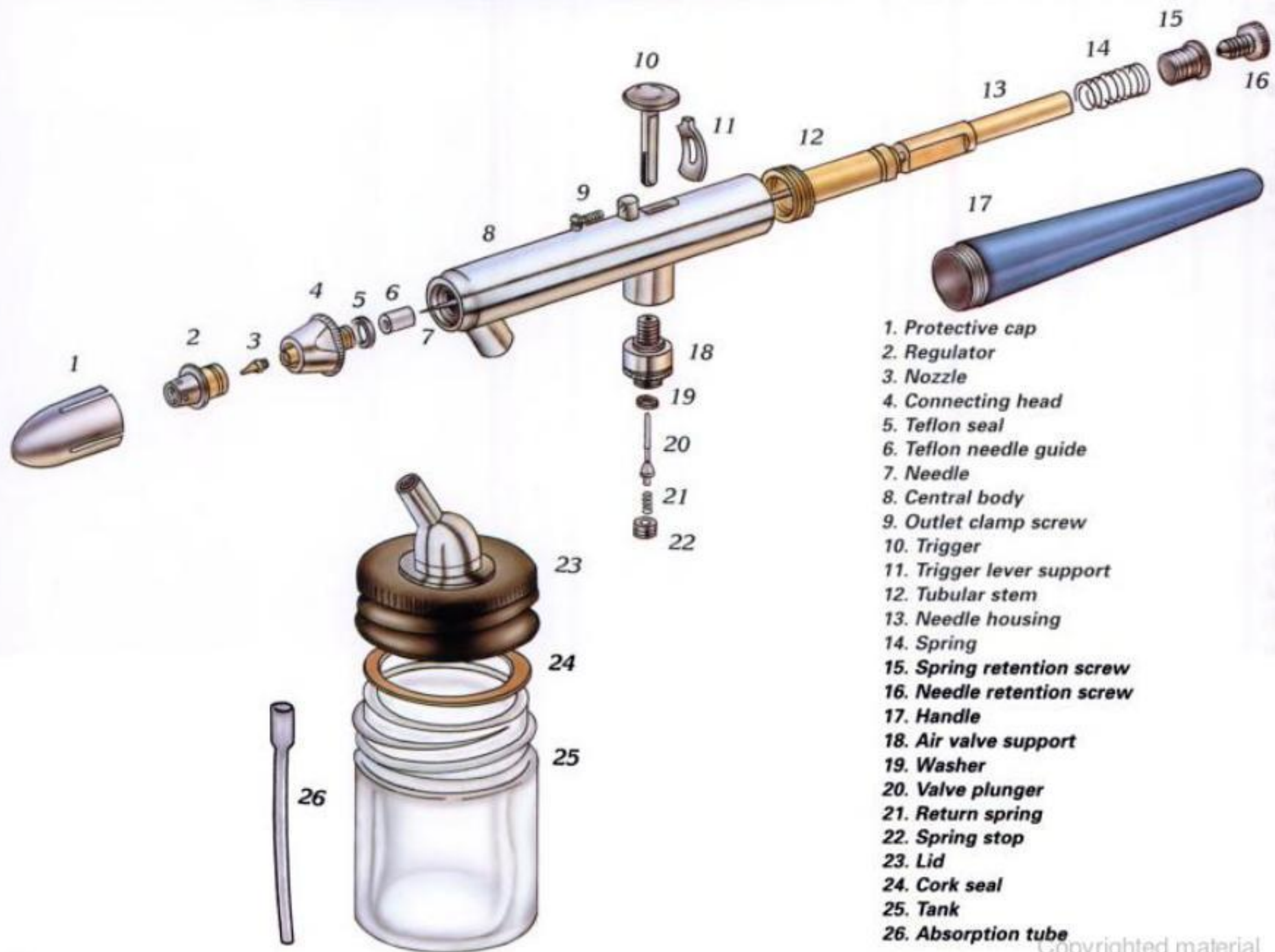
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Richpen, Firm Rock, Iwata: three double-action gravity-fed airbrushes with medium-sized tanks. They are practically identical; only the quality of materials is different.



outlet of paint remains fixed, and those that have a separate system, located on the rear, for this latter function. On this type of model it is, however, necessary to stop painting to change the flow of paint through a regulable needle. This type of airbrush is recommended as one of the best for beginners; it can be used for any type of paint and since the rate of flow of the paint is constant, it is simpler to handle. Single-action



1. Protective cap
2. Regulator
3. Nozzle
4. Connecting head
5. Teflon seal
6. Teflon needle guide
7. Needle
8. Central body
9. Outlet clamp screw
10. Trigger
11. Trigger lever support
12. Tubular stem
13. Needle housing
14. Spring
15. Spring retention screw
16. Needle retention screw
17. Handle
18. Air valve support
19. Washer
20. Valve plunger
21. Return spring
22. Spring stop
23. Lid
24. Cork seal
25. Tank
26. Absorption tube



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AIRBRUSH PAINTING **TECHNIQUES**

The correct use of the airbrush is one of the most important skills that must be mastered by a modeller, but also one of the most difficult. This book is designed to impart the techniques of using this effective tool quickly and easily. All three types of airbrush are examined and explained in simple terms, cleaning and maintenance is looked at, and one section even details how to build a compressor in order to save on starting costs. The title boasts an excellent section on actually using the airbrush, and studies in depth the painting of four different miniatures: a model four-wheel drive, a World War II American DUKW, a German Focke-Wulf 190 and a human butterfly. Clear photographs are taken of the painting process on each different model, showing all sorts of exciting techniques. Methods of lightening and darkening, representing camouflage and weathering and mixing exactly the right colour are all explained. A book that will suit both complete beginners and those wanting to get more out of their airbrush.

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