

PAINTING A CUSTOM RAIDERS FIRE HELMET



AirSick

Helmets are one of the most popular pieces of canvas for airbrush art of all types, but its pretty rare to see a custom fire helmet. This was a really cool project and we couldn't resist sharing the steps that we took, and the process with you guys! This is a real Captains helmet which was painted for a Fullerton, CA Firefighter as a gift from his friends and family for the holidays. We are very excited to have been a part of this project, and we hope that you all enjoy this step by step!

Lets get started!

STEP 1



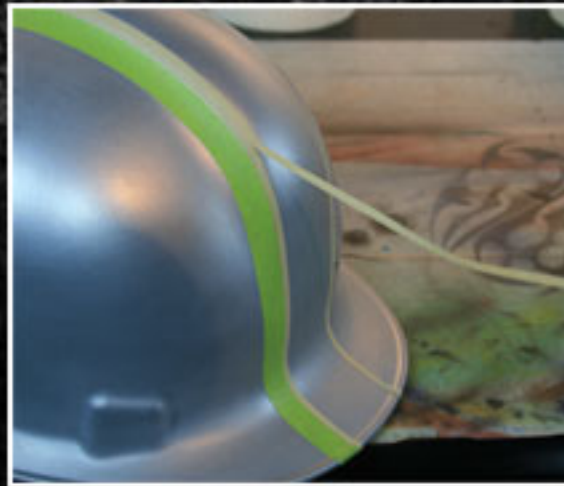
We start by properly prepping our fire helmet and getting ready for our base coat. Since the helmet is made from a heavy plastic, we start by spraying 2 coats of adhesion promoter (BULLDOG brand) to ensure a proper bond for the silver base. With the adhesion promoter set, we base the helmet with HoK Orion Silver (BC02) (STEP 2).

With the base coat set, we move on to the black stripe, a signature of the Raiders football helmets. We are using 1/4" fine line tape to lay out the stripe (STEP 3)

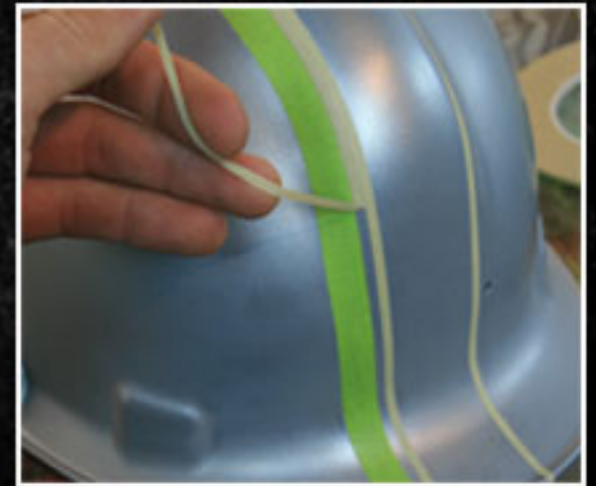
STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



We decide to go with a triple stripe to add a little more interest to our helmet. Laying out fine line tape is an art form in its self, be sure to take your time and check your measurements to ensure perfect spacing and alignment. When the stripes are layed out, we mask off the rest of the helmet to avoid any overspray while we airbrush the stripes (STEP 5). We then remove the tape and masking (STEP 6)

STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7



In situations like this, having access to a plotter really comes in handy. We plotter-cut the logo using a Roland GX-24 and Avery Paint mask. This step requires careful measurement to ensure that the logos are evenly spaced on both sides

STEP 8



With the logos placed, we proceed to mask around them both, being careful to ensure that there are no gaps between the paint mask and the silver base coat

STEP 9



Additional masking around the logo. It is always better to be safe than sorry with masking. Take your time to ensure the safety of your hard work

STEP 10

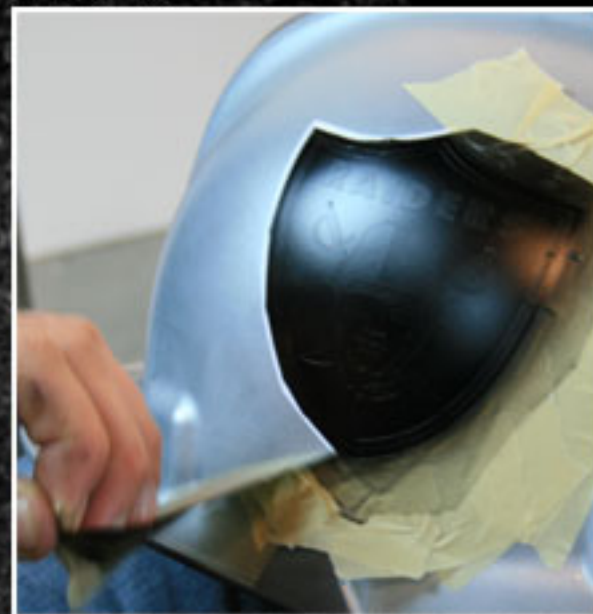


To avoid the possibility of any overspray we mask a large section surrounding the logo and prepare to airbrush the logos

STEP 11



STEP 12



STEP 13



We airbrush multiple light passes with the black (BC25) (STEP 11), this will keep the coverage of paint consistent and smooth, this also ensures that the paint will not build up too heavy around the paint mask creating peeling and other problems when the mask is removed. When the black paint has set, we begin to remove the masking to reveal the logo (STEPS 12 & 13)

STEP 14



Being very careful, we begin to remove the paint mask from the inner-logo (STEP 14)

The Paint mask works great to produce clean lines and high detail (STEP 15)

STEP 15



STEP 16



With the logos finished, we begin the process of completely masking them, to keep them protected from the remainder of the project

STEP 17



We closely follow the contours of the shield with fine line tape, being as precise as possible

STEP 18



STEP 19



With the outer lines of the shield masked, we cover the entire logo with masking material and proceed to cut around the contour of the logo with a fresh razor blade

STEP 20



Because we will be airbrushing realistic flames on a light colored base coat, we begin by establishing the flow and form of the fire with a layer of dark smoke (STEP 24). This dark background will really boost the intensity of the flames

STEP 24



With the logo safe and protected (STEP 20), we begin preparing the paints needed for our realistic fire.

We prepare the following colors, mixed with intercoat clear according to manufacturer specifications: (STEPS 21, 22 and 23)

Apple Red Candy (KBC11)
Pagan Gold (KBC12)
Tangerine Candy (KBC08)

STEP 21



STEP 22



STEP 23



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STEP 22



STEP 23



STEP 29



STEP 30



STEP 31



We begin to paint in our flames. At this stage we are building the overall mass and flow of the fire. This first yellow layer will become the bottommost layer of fire when we are all finished up. The flames are "Sketched" out in a very organic and gestural way, this stage is all freehand airbrushing. We will use the AIRSICK "ARSON" stencils to tighten up the flame licks a little later

STEP 32



We want both sides of the helmet to have the same visual weight, but are avoiding keeping them symmetrical. We want the flame licks to appear completely random

STEP 33



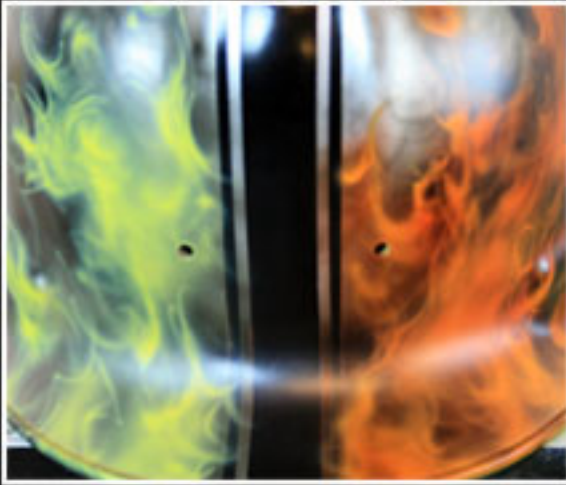
STEP 34



The fire begins to come to life with our first wash of tangerine candy (KBC08). Because we are painting on a light surface, we keep the overspray to a minimum, and only go over the previous yellow flames. (STEP 34)

We proceed to add a layer of Apple red candy (KBC11). This really deepened and intensifies the flames. With this stage complete, we begin to stack another layer of flames on top, this process is what adds the depth and realism to this type of paint job

After Tangerine Candy Wash

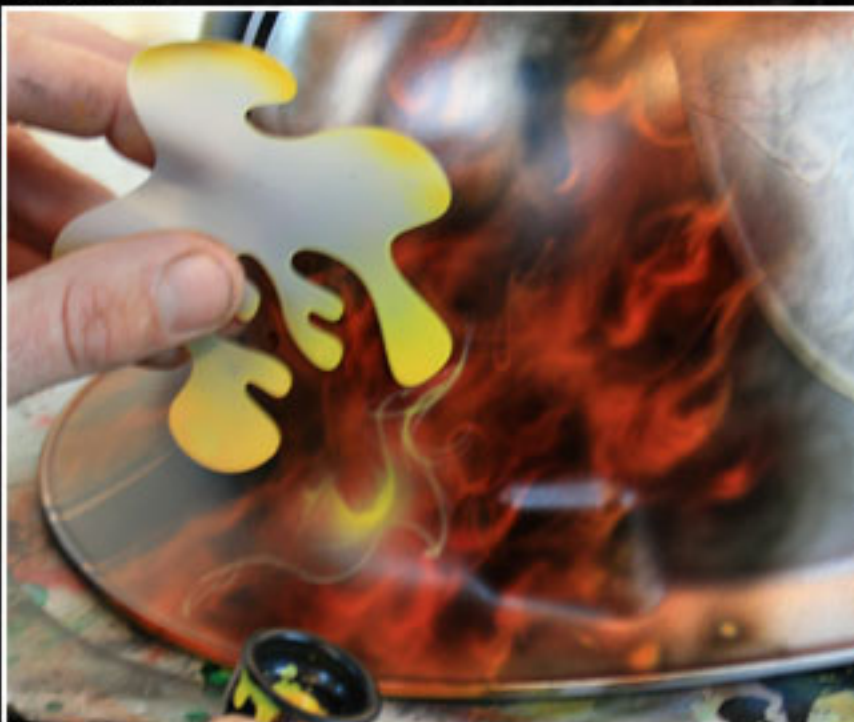


After Apple Red Candy Wash



With the groundwork laid for the fire, we begin a second layer. We want these flame licks to be much tighter and well defined so we reach for our trusty "ARSON - REAL FIRE STENCILS". The "ARSON" stencils come in sets of 6 templates, and provide a huge assortment of different curves, allowing the quick creation of realistic fire. The stencils are used to define the harder edges of the fire licks, leaving a much more defined flame (STEPS 35 & 36)

STEP 35



STEP 36



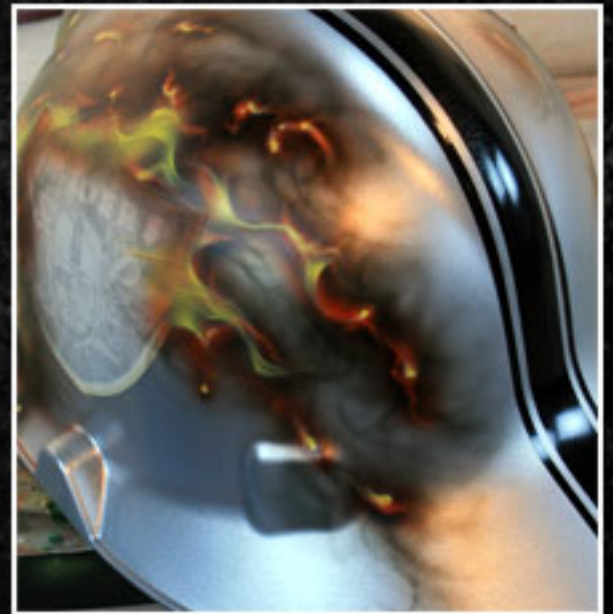
STEP 37



STEP 38

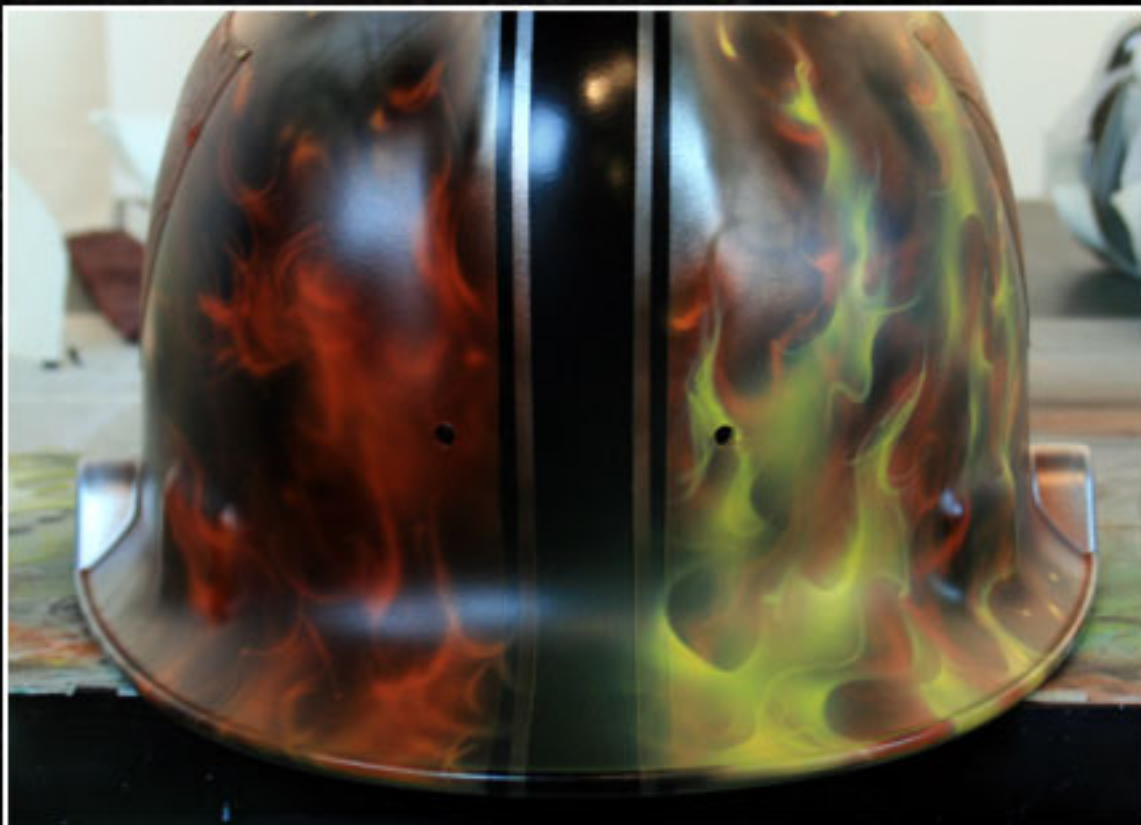


STEP 39



With the second layer of flames completed on one side of the helmet (STEPS 37, 38 and 39), we are ready to move on to the other side. Note, the interaction of the flames and the logo (STEP 39), we wanted the logo to appear as if it was a physical obstacle that the flames had to move around, and interact with

STEP 40



This shot (STEP 40) really demonstrates the entire concept of realistic flames. Layering the fire is essential to create a realistic look. If you stop with a single layer of flames, you will end up with a result that appears flat and dull. Working with multiple layers will give the illusion of movement and depth

STEP 41



STEP 42



We duplicate the process on the reverse side of the helmet (STEP 41). Then another wash of Tengerine candy (KBC08) is applied over the yellow flames (STEPS 42 & 43). This pushes our second flame layer back, and we get ready to add our final layer of tight flame licks

STEP 43

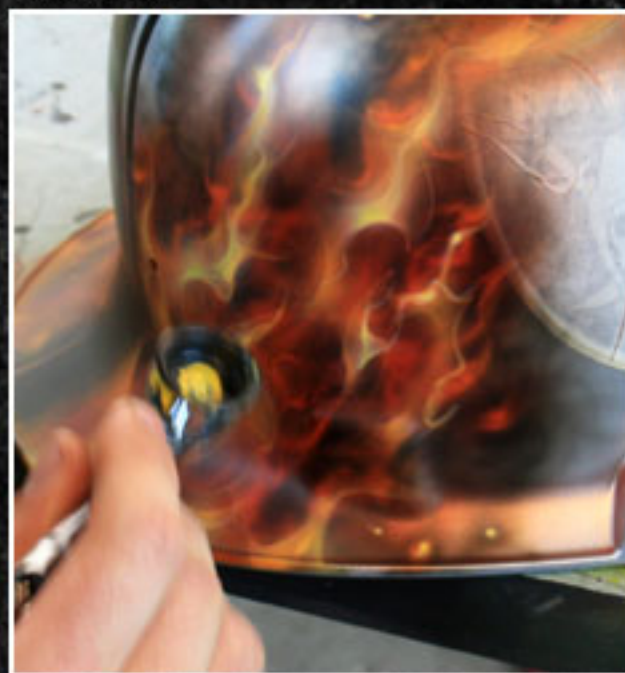


STEP 44



To keep the flame licks nice and tight, we use our "ARSON" stencils again for this final layer (STEP 44). The stencils are a great help, but we are still using quite a bit of free-hand airbrushing as well (STEP 45) to keep our flames organic and flowing. Relying too much on the stencils often result in flames with obvious repeating patterns. Repetition should be avoided

STEP 45



STEP 46



Small flying sparks, and glowing embers are great elements to include. Here we are adding small sparks coming off of the flames

STEP 47



Here is the final result of our three layers of flames. We are ready to move on to the final color wash for the helmet



We add a final layer of Pagan Gold Candy (KBC12) over all of our fire (STEP 48). This final step is really amazing, it changes the entire look of the fire. The top flames become a brilliant yellow gold, and the flames beneath become deeper and more intense.

With the helmet finished, we are ready for clear-coat, and to assemble the custom leather shield that was made for the helmet.

We hope you all enjoyed this step by step, and were able to take away some good information and ideas from it. Be sure to check out the next page for the completed and assembled helmet

AIRSICK STENCILS

STEP 48





FINISHED HELMET

FINISHED HELMET (SIDEVIEW)



**PRINTER
FRIENDLY**



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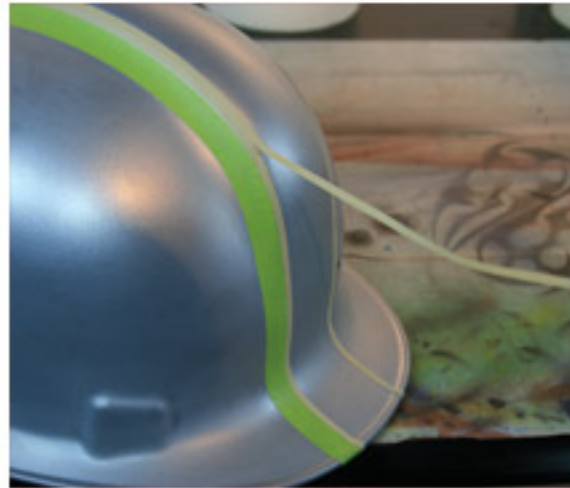
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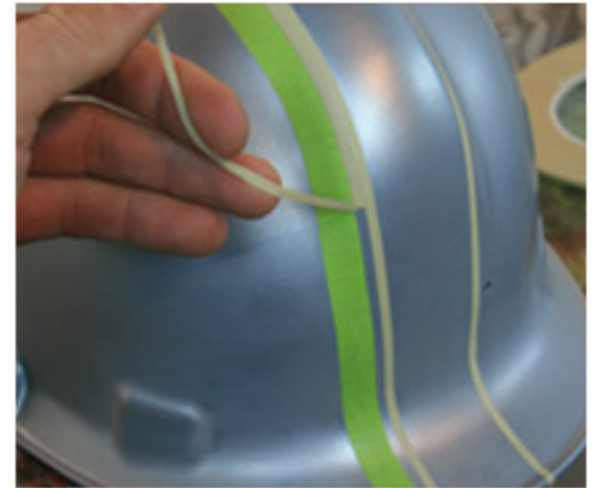
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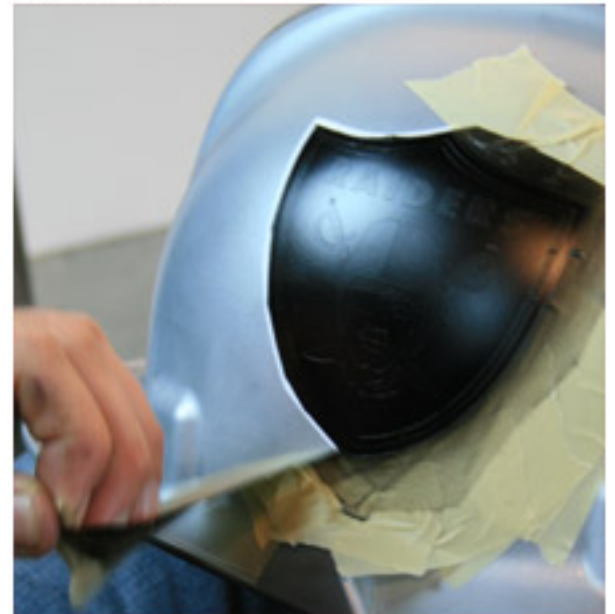


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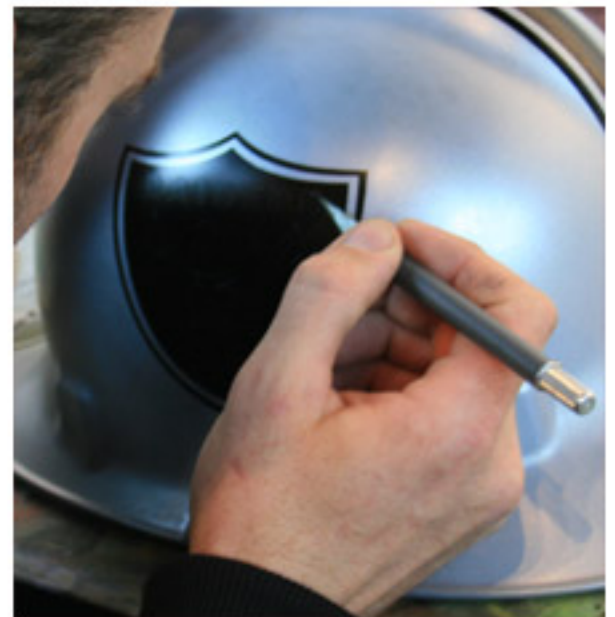
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STEP 23



STEP 25



The smoke coverage and movement is an important step in this project, as it will ultimately establish the flame density and movement

STEP 26



We add some wisps of smoke coming off of the logo as well. This will provide some interaction between the logo and the fire

STEP 27



When we are happy with the smoke on one side of the helmet we begin the process on the reverse side. We want to keep the smoke amount consistent on both sides of the helmet

STEP 28



With the smoke finished up, we wipe down the entire helmet with a tack-rag, or paper towel. This will remove the excess paint dust

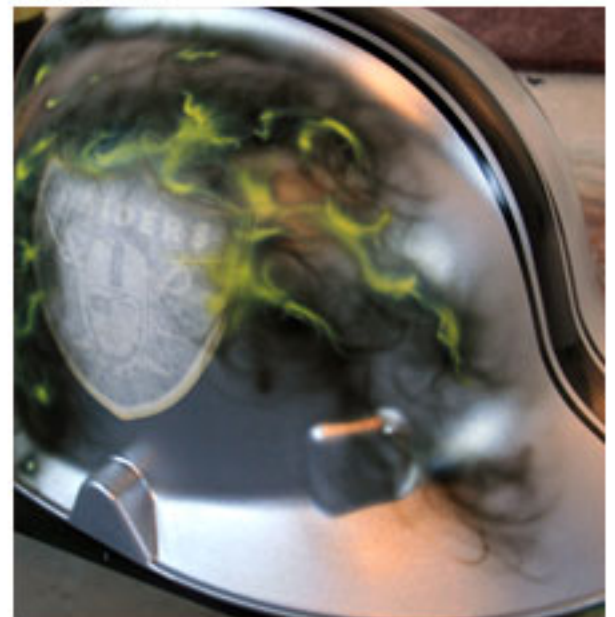
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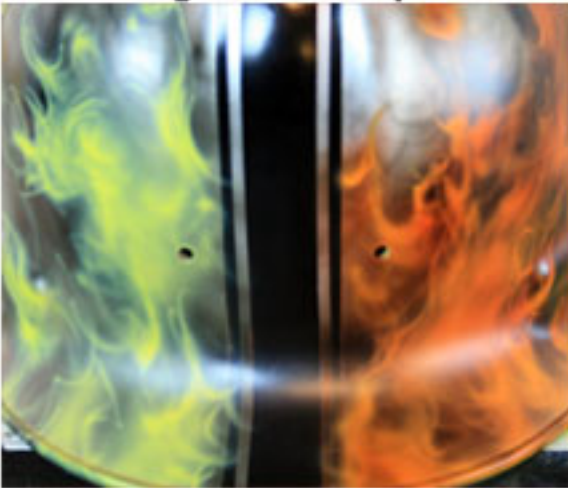
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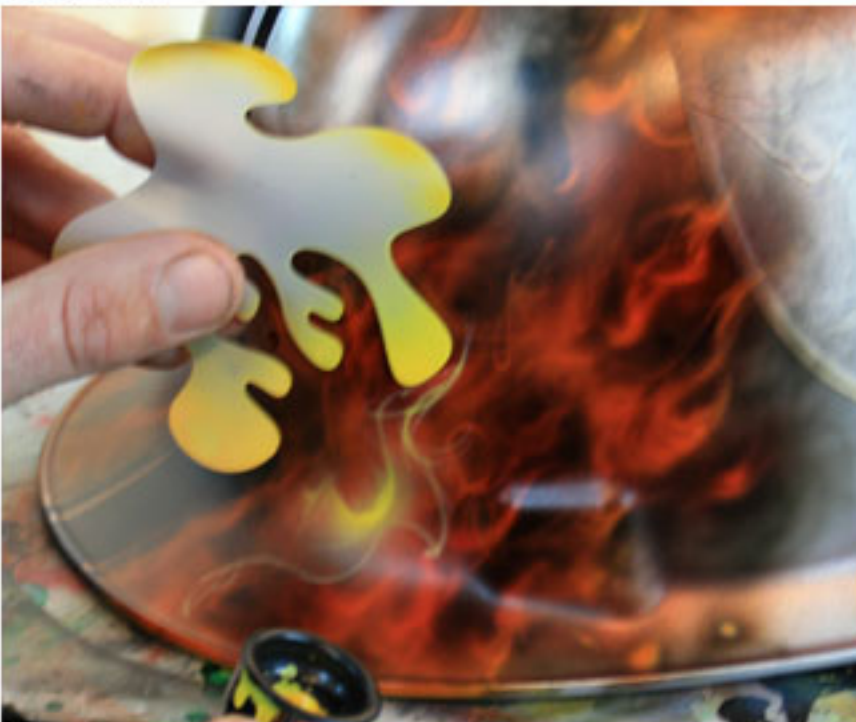


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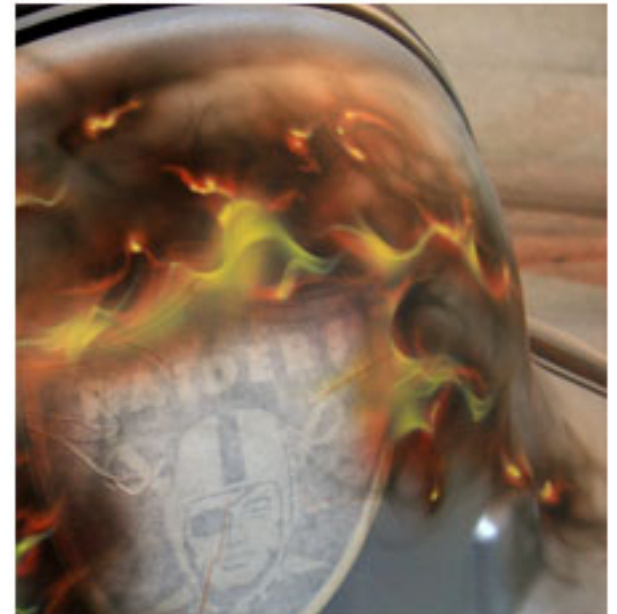
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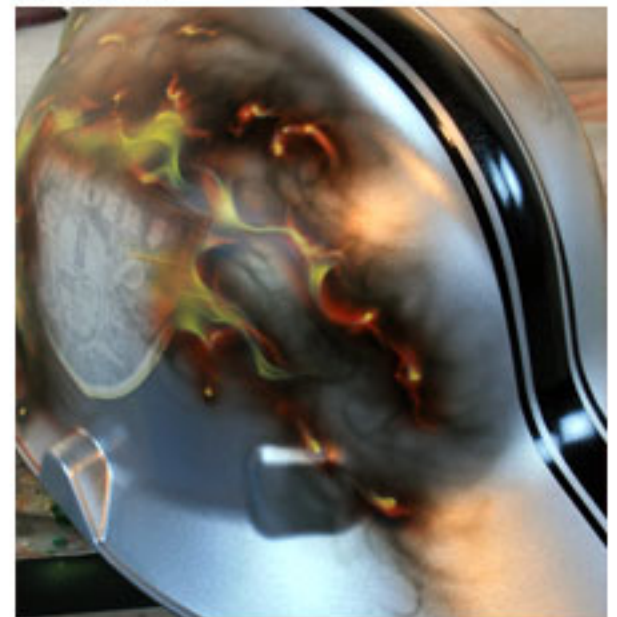
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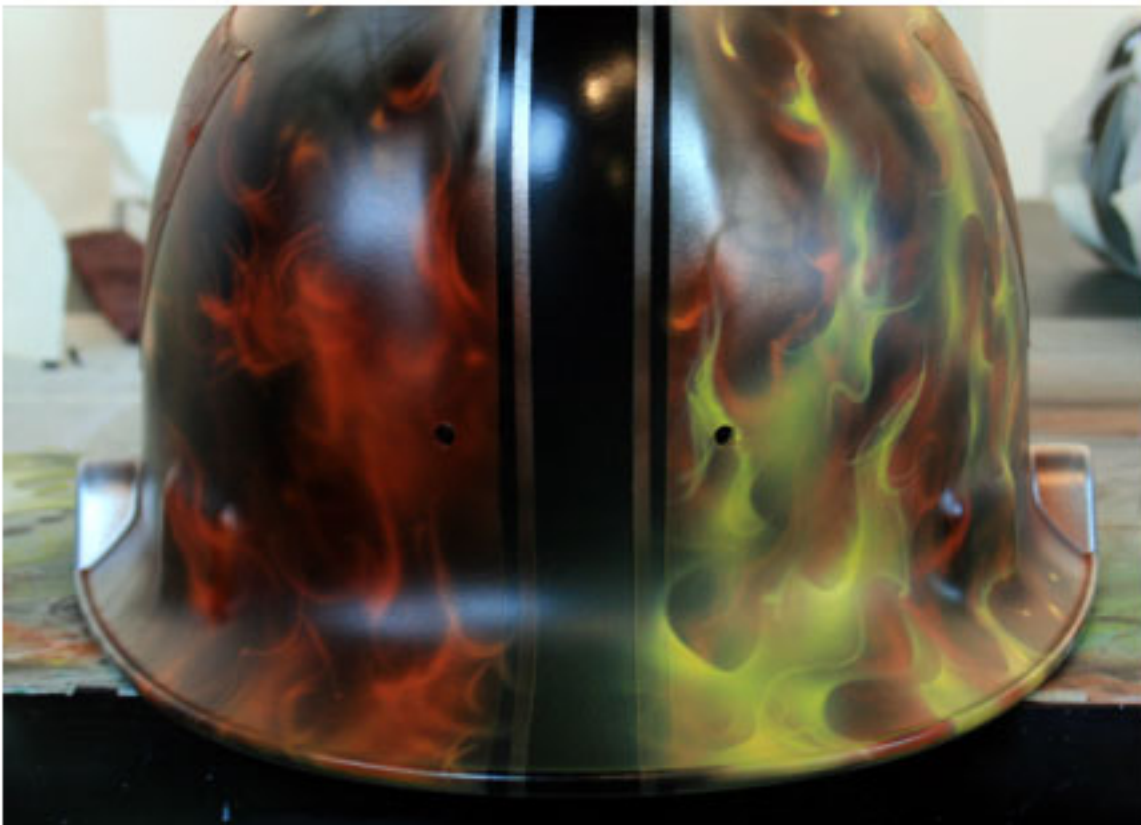


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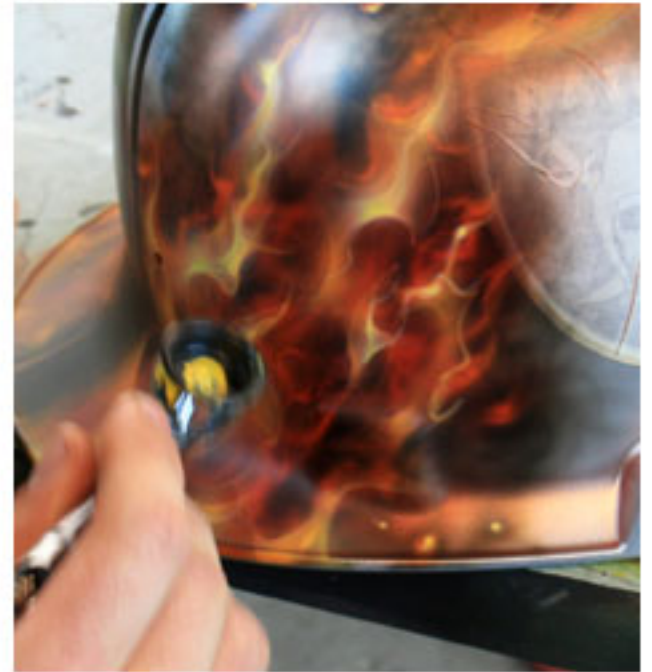


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