

SEIRA-
MASUO'S

Whimsical Gunpla Production Notes

Author/SEIRA-MASUO

topics

- ① Enhancing detail using the mold colors
- ② Brush painting using acrylics
- ③ Proportion mods keeping mold colors
- ④ Review of techniques covered
- ⑤ Customization using other kit parts
- ⑥ Kit-bashing using two kits

and
more!

HOBBY
JAPAN MOOK

Explore his free-style Gunpla building
determined only by an initial theme

Grasp the principles
behind his mysterious
"Masuo Theories!"



Whimsical Gunpla Production Notes

This book is not a guide to building perfect Gunpla

There are countless ways to make cool Gunpla, and recently it has become easier to research these techniques in detail. But just because you understand the methods does not mean you can fully put them into practice. Skill level, time available, access to tools – these and other factors determine what is possible. The key to modeling is developing a personalized approach that fits your needs.

What I describe here are my particular methods, adapted over 10+ years of building. I draw on techniques from expert modelers and streamline the steps based on my tools and skills. My goal is not to present the ideal method, but rather to illustrate that corners can be cut and you can still have fun. If this gives you ideas for finding your own optimal balance between meticulousness and pragmatism, suited to your environment and temperament, then I consider it worthwhile.

While my style aims for minimal stress and consistent fulfillment, it is quite distinctive. It may be reassuring to know that you can sacrifice thoroughness without completely compromising quality. The key is tailoring the approach to your individual limitations and needs.

SEIRA-MASUO

First things
first...

contents

3	Contents
4	Introducing the production setup, including the tools and materials for whimsical construction methods
8	Let's start with an introduction to the fundamentals of "Masuo Detailing"
14	SEIRA-MASUO's Whimsical Gunpla Production Notes
16	Enhancing detail using the kit's mold colors
26	Brush painting with water-based acrylic paint
36	Changing proportions while keeping the kit's mold color
46	Review of techniques covered so far
58	Customization using parts from other kits
70	Kit-bashing using two kits
82	Finish it the way you like it!
94	SEIRA-MASUO's Whimsical Gunpla Production Notes Gallery of finished works
96	MS-14JG Shin Matsunaga's Gelgoog J (HJ Original Ver.)
99	AGX-04 Gerbera Tetra (HJ Original Ver.)
102	GNX-803T Jinx IV (mass-produced unit) (HJ Original Ver.)
105	XXX-01W Wing Gundam (HJ Original Ver.)
108	OZ-06MS Leo (Full Weapon Set) & OZ-06MS Leo (Space Specification) (HJ Original Vers.)
112	TEXT
114	Publication Info

* This book is a compilation of serialized articles from *Monthly Hobby Japan*, starting from the August 2021 issue to the August 2022 issue, with the addition of new content.

* In the examples presented in this book, those labeled "HJ Original Ver." are original models and may differ from the official Sunrise settings.

* All prices in this book include taxes.

* "Plamodel" is a registered trademark of the Japan Plamodel Industry Cooperative Association.

* The information in this book is accurate as of July 14, 2022.

Introducing my production setup, including the tools and materials for whimsical construction methods

Many may be curious about how SEIRA-MASUO achieves the unique finishes on his Gunpla – wondering about his production setup and the range of tools and materials that make it possible. This page will reveal his equipment and the “whimsical” process behind his creations.

First, my production setup

“Take shortcuts if you can” is my cheerful motto. As such, my modeling station is rather makeshift and rough around the edges. For those accustomed to finely tuned workbenches, my build habitat may seem unbelievable. Yet many acclaimed builds have emerged from this casual setting.



▲ My workspace consists only of a kotatsu table and a floor chair in the living room – a rather spartan setup. I have no dedicated modeling station or separate workshop, just this solitary piece of multipurpose furniture. In fact, the same table where I build my Gunpla also serves as a dining area for meals.



▲ An old monthly wall calendar serves as the cutting mat, replaced page by page when it gets worn out, making it eco-friendly.

Tools and materials

Cutters



▲ I use my cutters for a variety of purposes – from separating parts to removing nub marks to lining panels. I prepare several of them for rough cutting, detailed areas, and with blades at different sharp angles. By the way, while the cutter handles themselves are dollar store purchases, when it comes to the blades, I use high-quality Olfa replacement blades for optimal sharpness.

Design knife



▲ After I decided to make my debut as a professional modeler, I purchased a design knife to assemble my tools but the blade was too sharp for me to use properly. Today, I've found a new use for it as a scraper – though different from its original purpose, it serves me well in this role.

Etching saw



▲ When I made my professional modeling debut, I purchased three key tools, including the aforementioned design knife. The second was the Hasegawa etching saw, which has proven to be extremely useful. In fact, I don't think I could do without it at this point. I found this saw in the model section of a large electronics store.

Metal files ①



▲ The third tool I bought was a set of Tamiya metal files. Although I spent more on it than I should have, I've hardly used it since. I dug it out today just to feature it here, but upon inspection, it seems to have some rust (tears). It seems a shame not to make more use of such tools after purchasing them.

Calipers



▲ These calipers are made of metal. I sharpened the tips with a grinder to make scraping and shaving details easier.

Needle nose screwdriver



▲ Needle-nose screwdrivers are a common item in driver sets. I make good use of them for tasks such as re-carving panel lines and dotting circular detail points. I sharpened the tip to a fine point with a metal file.

Metal files ②



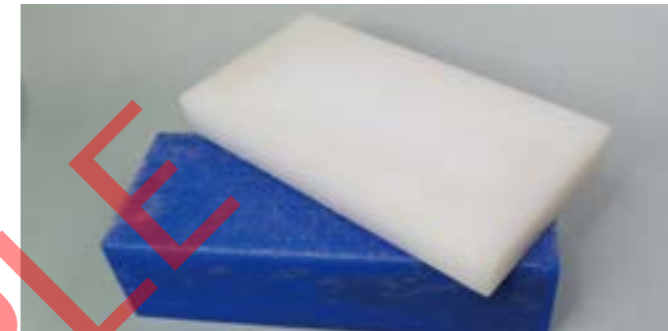
▲ While I've been hesitant to overuse my higher-end metal files, the ones I've had the most success with are, surprisingly, from a dollar store. They've proven invaluable for flattening the runners. In fact, aside from recently replacing the second orange one, I've been using the same files continuously since my debut. Their longevity is impressive, to say the least. The blue patterned file has a semi-rounded shape.

Metal files ③



▲ In addition to the metal files from the dollar store, I also have these from Hasegawa. I found them both in the model section of a big box electronics store.

Cutting board



▲ A raised platform used when cutting with a cutter knife. It can also be used as a work surface in place of a cutting mat.

Nippers



▲ I had been using cheap nippers from the dollar store (with light blue and blue designs) for a while, until I first met Max Watanabe-sensei (!) at the All Japan Ora-Zaku Championship judging. He must have heard rumors and felt sorry for me, because he gave me these commemorative nippers! I still use them with gratitude!

Precision driver set



▲ This is also an indispensable tool for model making. Homemade engraving blades made by sharpening the tip of fine dollar-store screwdrivers with a whetstone! I find them invaluable for tasks such as carving recesses, scraping lines, polishing with the edge, and more. The extremely thin one is a special item made by further modifying one with a grinder!



Paint dish



▲ I have loved and used dollar store Japanese Salt Plum Plates since I started. The smaller dish is from my childhood home and I use it to hold paint.

Brush set ①



▲ I stock up whenever I come across nice brush sets at a dollar store. Since they don't always have these items in stock, I buy a bunch whenever I see them so that it lasts for a while.

Brush set ②



▲ These small brushes are also from a dollar store meant for nail art. A set of 5 for a very low price!

Pin vises



▲ I also purchased a set of pin vises from the dollar store. While I have interchangeable tip types as well, the solid body dollar store version is what I typically have on hand and use most days.

Instant glue



▲ I bought both standard and gel instant glue at the dollar store. I keep a supply on hand just in case my supply of glue dries and hardens.

Tweezers



▲ I bought a nicer pair of tweezers (above), but the ones I use every day are from the dollar store (below) (laughs).

Brush set ③



▲ Brushes are a consumable item, so even though I have some from places other than the dollar store, I haven't used them much lately. Brushes are delicate, so depending on their compatibility with the task and my own preferences/trends at the time, I use different ones as needed.

Paints



▲ The paints I use for coloring. They are pretty much leftovers from the poster paints I used in college and paint from the dollar store. This much will probably last me the rest of my life! Lol.

Top coat



◀ Matte finish spray used at the end. I have both a premium top coat that gives an exceptional finish, and cheaper hardware store acrylic matte lacquer, which gives an average finish but is affordable and gives you a lot. Of course I don't use them together! (I use one or the other depending on the item).

Let's start with an introduction to the fundamentals of "Masuo Detailing"

Broadly speaking, it consists of a combination of three types of detail: "convex," "concave," and "line engraving." These are added by two types of crafting – "carving" and "gluing." The key lies in balancing and arranging them appropriately.

BANDAI SPIRITS 1/144 scale plastic model kit
"High Grade Cosmic Era"

GAT-X105+AQM/E-X01 Aile Strike Gundam

Composition and commentary by SEIRA-MASUO



HGCE Aile Strike Gundam
● Manufacturer: BANDAI SPIRITS
Hobby Division Creation Department
● 1430 yen, released in Feb. 2014
● 1/144, approx. 13 cm ● Plastic kit

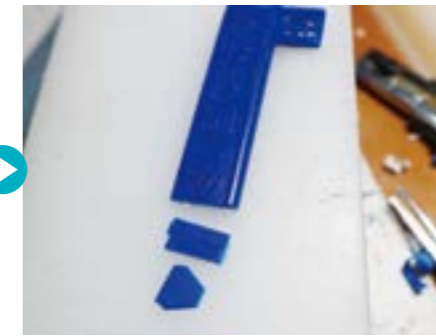
GAT-X105+AQM/E-X01 AILE STRIKE GUNDAM

1 Cut out the runners

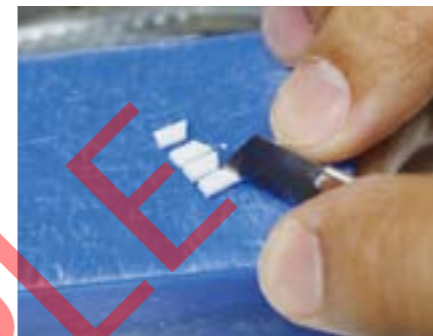
If you are using a production method that makes the most of the mold color, you can use the runners from the kit as detail-up parts without adjusting their color.



▲ I will start detailing. I will be using runners as plastic plates that will be attached as details, so I will start by making the runners into plates.



▲ The tag parts of the runners are also a valuable material. We will use the tag parts for things that go beyond the width of the runner. This time, we will cut it into a hexagon and attach it to the center of the top of the chest as a detail.



▲ Plastic runner plates (my term) are convenient for cutting identical shapes and widths. Make the cuts at an oblique angle.



▲ The cutouts are attached to the side of the ankle plate.



◀ This way, we decide on the density and repeat pattern of the details after we have applied the plastic pieces to the entire surface.

2 Linking details

Glued protruding details are unified as a single detail by connecting them with grooved or recessed details.



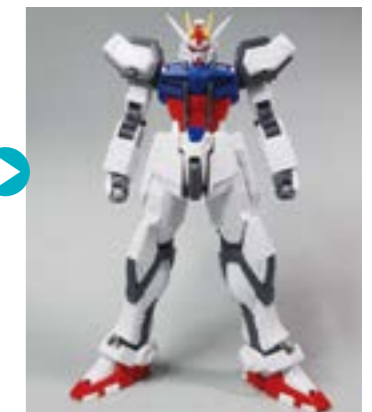
▲ Starting with the glued plastic plates, we will now add grooves or carvings (recessed details). First, we will make a rough sketch with a pencil.



▲ We will use a hobby knife or chisel to add grooves and recessed details along the rough sketch.



▲ Repeat this process on the chest, waist, legs, and throughout the body.



◀ The whole body is detailed. Notice how the protruding details that were added first are more prominent?



▲ I'm also adding details to the Aile Striker, paying attention to the protruding and recessed parts, but instead of carving grooves, I'm using the method of applying very thinly cut plastic sheets. It is easier than creating a clean, straight line with engraving.



▲ We will also add details to the beam rifle and shield in the same way.

Completed! HGCE Aile Strike Gundam!

The HGCE Aile Strike Gundam has been completed with basic "Masuo Detailing." While it may appear to be a complicated job, the process is surprisingly simple. The basic formula for all my work is creating basic details and meticulously reproducing them throughout the body.



► Details have been improved and surfaces look more 3D by adding details as panel lines. This gives a sort of gradient effect to some armor sections.

Work completed!



▲ Detail-up work completed. Despite having many steps, the process is straightforward and requires no special skills. This is the basic approach of "Masuo Detailing."



▲ To adjust the proportions, I shortened the neck joint. To lower the poly cap mount on the neck, I cut out a piece.



▲ I shaved the bottom of the cut part and lowered it by one step to reattach it.



▲ The custom kit has increased detail density due to the shortened neck joint and additional details compared to the straight build (left).



▼ With additional protruding details on the wing parts, I changed the shape of the Aile Striker's wings.



FRONT



SIDE



REAR

Key points of "Masuo Detailing"

The three main types of details I use are "protrusions," "indentations," and "grooves." Instead of placing them separately, I view them as a single detail and add protrusions and indentations to grooves to create variation. In other words, the idea is to place a single detail in a way that does not become boring. I don't do this out of necessity, but I group them together in an appropriate place while considering balance so that even the same method does not appear monotonous.

before
↓
after



▲ The custom kit looks vastly different from the straight build (left), primarily due to the extensive detailing applied to its numerous parts. But my method was so simple – I just added the same pattern of protruding, recessed, and engraved details over and over again.

■ I've done a lot of MGs, RGs, and even other Strike-based models

I've been lucky enough to have a connection with the Strike series. Including the new and old MGs, RGs, Strike Noir, and Build Strike, I've done quite a few builds (laughs). Personally, I've always been very particular about one thing: not using the same details. Of course, the finished product will always look the same (not just for the Strike), but I try not to have the same fine details, like the lines of the panel lines. So this time I'd like to approach the Strike Gundam with a new feeling.

■ Aiming for a different approach...

I've never built an HGCE kit before, but the quality is amazing, it's perfect! I shortened the neck for personal preference (not really necessary), but otherwise I didn't alter it at all. The additional details are done to bring out the mold colors, as usual, using runner tags and runners. The body white and frame gray are left as mold color, the other parts are painted with water based acrylic colors.

■ I ended up with the usual finish (sigh)

The proportions are almost the same as on the kit, and the painting is finished with partial paint, leaving a lot of mold color. Does that look like a lot of work? (laughs). I hope this kind of carefree modeling will be helpful in your future modeling endeavors.

SEIRA-MASUO's
**Whimsical
Gunpla
Production
Notes**



④ Summary of previous sections

⑥ Kit-bashing two kits into one

⑦ Complete in a style you like

③ Change proportions to get the most out of the mold color

① Detailing that makes the most of the mold color

⑤ Make customizations by using parts from other kits

② Brush paint using acrylic water-based paints

SEIRA-MASUO stands out among the HJ magazine modelers with his distinctive techniques. Aren't you curious about how his signature "Masuo Detailing," original arrangements, and subtle painting techniques are created? The ideas and secrets behind them are explained in this book. In this book, we simply decided on the subject in the first part of each section, and then let him freely create the models as usual. Simply observing this process will provide intuitive insight into the unknown "Masuo Theory."

theme:

Enhancing detail using the kit's mold colors

kit used:

HGCE Freedom Gundam

The first topic is enhancing details using mold colors. Most people may associate customizing with a full paint job, but I will explain building methods that do not require that. Of course, it's not completely bare – shading, painting to change colors or highlight details, and clear coats to unify textures are all required. But just leaving the white plastic, which makes up most of the surfaces, exposed without using a primer will make it feel like less of a hurdle.

HGCE Freedom Gundam
 ● Manufacturer: BANDAI SPIRITS
 Hobby Division Creation Department
 ● 1980 yen, released in August 2015
 ● 1/144, approx. 12.5 cm ● Plastic kit

Alter the impression simply by adding extra details



▲ The Freedom Gundam, reborn in 2015 as part of the High Grade Cosmic Era (HGCE) series. With its stylish silhouette and extensive articulation, it can strike dynamic poses.

1 First, check the overall proportions



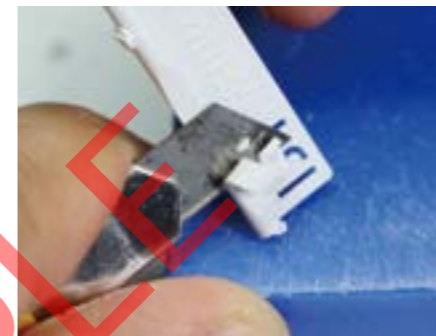
◀ This is the HGCE Freedom Gundam. It's a great kit that looks cool without doing anything, so no modifications are needed (laughs)!



▲ After the temporary assembly, start cutting the runner frame right away. These will be used as plastic plates for extra details.



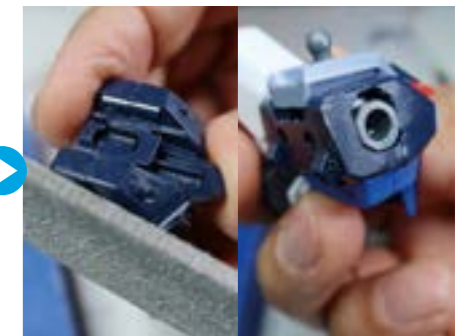
▲ Making a runner into a flat shape. I shave it to flatten one side with a cutter, then shave the opposite side using the first side as a reference and turn it into a flat shape.



▲ The tag has a section that looks like a runner. I shaved it off to use most of the surface.



◀ I checked the proportions. The body and arms were a bit too far apart and ankles were too thin.



▲ I'll shave the part of the shoulder armor interfering with the body to bring the arms closer to the body. I'll use a metal file and start shaving without much deliberation, as this section will be hidden once the kit is complete.



▲ I'll also shave and adjust some of the shoulder armor. It's a minor modification, but it fits better now.



▲ Enlarging the shoe section by widening it is difficult, so I'm going to create the illusion of a larger size by adding detail. First, I'll cut the runner into smaller pieces.



▲ By adding thicker cut plastic plates, I will make the ankles appear larger overall. But it's just an illusion.

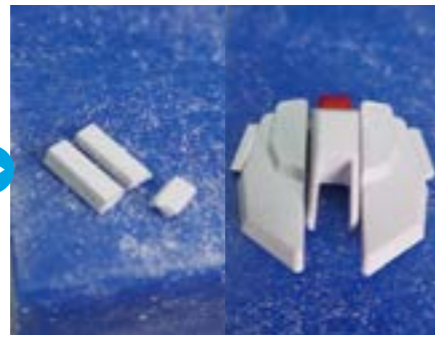


▲ I will also be enlarging the ankle guard. First, I will cover the hollows in the foot frame with tag plastic plates.



▲ I will fill in the gaps in the ankle armor created by increasing the width of the frame. This will increase the size of the ankle and ankle armor, visually reducing the slimness of the leg without making it thicker.

2 Start adding details



▲ To give the front hip armor the same volume, I will also attach thicker runner plates to adjust it. I chamfered them first before attaching them.



▲ From here, I will explain the process of adding shoulder armor detail step-by-step.



▲ The work on the part with the marks is done, but it would be nice to add a little more detail.



▲ I am going to add more details, starting from the current detail.



▲ Finally, the shoulder armor is completed, with grooves added around the connecting axis to the body.



▲ First, I will attach tag plastic plates to change the outline.



▲ I'll draw a rough image of the detail I want to add using a pencil.



▲ I attach a plastic plate to the part I want to make into a convex detail.



▲ The arm section is also finished by making a recess in the same way and then gluing a plastic plate to it. This way, details are not predetermined, but added by trial and error until they look good every time (with no plan...).



3 Don't neglect the face!



▲ Modify the head as you like. I'm going to paint the twin eye white so I can check the expression during the modification.



▲ Next, I will engrave the lines of the part to be made into a recess. For short sections, I will use a chisel to create a V-shaped groove.



▲ For lines that are longer than the length of the chisel, I'm going to use a cutter to make them V-shaped.



▲ The engraving of the lines for the recess is finished. I will make a recess on the inside.



▲ To reduce the red area around the eyes, I will extend the mask section upward.



▲ I will also add plastic plates to the gray parts.



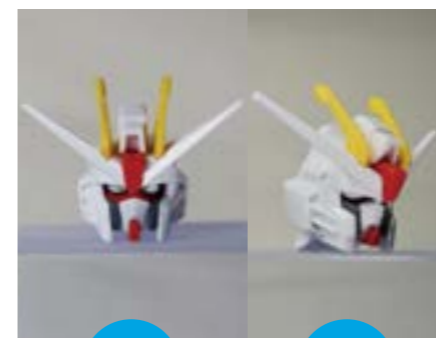
▲ The helmet has a wedge shape added at the seam. This will make the mask section look recessed.



▲ I am going to use the grooves I added as a guide to engrave the inside of the surface with a chisel one step lower.



▲ I will do the same with the other grooves, engraving along the pencil marks.



before



after

▲ I'm going to try extending the cheek pads up to see if that makes a difference.

4 Additional adjustments



▲ To slim down the waist, I will sand the sides of the torso with a metal file.