

"The Cat and the Canary"

James Nichols is an accomplished figure kit painter from Valley Springs, California. Knowing that James is the type of modeler who "thinks outside the box" and "engages his creativity", we asked James if he was willing to share the techniques he utilized on "The Cat". James, being a true Scottish gentleman, kindly and readily agreed. Thanks James for showing what can happen when a Crimson Pool kit, "thinking outside the box" and "engaging one's creativity" come together on the workbench!



Greetings! Crimson Pool Productions' founder Joshua Swift was kind enough to ask me to write this article on my painting of The Cat, from the silent screen classic "THE CAT AND THE CANARY". Magnificently sculpted by Ray Santoleri, this bust is cast in five parts (bust, hat, snaggy teeth and base) and best of all requires no seam work...just wash, prime, and paint! With that said, shall we get to the fun?

"Eye See You....."

After a nice bath in warm, soapy water, the Cat and his hat (hmmm...Ted Geisel, anyone?) were set aside to dry. Once dry, I used my primer of choice, Rustoleum gray Automobile Primer...it's a light gray primer I use for most of my builds. After it dried, I took a very sharp pencil and marked in where I wanted the Cat's irises positioned. I then lined the inside of the eyelids with a pinkish flesh/burgundy mix. I should mention that a lot of my colors are custom mixes I've had for years and I can't quite remember what colors I used to make them. From there, the eyeballs were painted with Ceramcoat Oyster White, leaving the irises untouched. The irises were based with Apple Barrel English Ivy Green, then a smaller circle of Kelly green was added. To give him a more unusual look, I added streaks of crystal green and metallic peridot.

"The Skins Game"

Cat's skin color was based out with Ceramcoat Medium Flesh, then drybrushed with Ceramcoat Fleshtone. I did a wash of dark burnt umber inside his mouth then detailed each tooth with light ivory. Lips were detailed with a mix of medium flesh and slightly thinned dusty mauve. I tend to paint the upper lip just a touch darker than the lower lip, which seems to look more natural to me.

Before shading the flesh, , I took a detail brush and ran some thinned Freak Flex Hammer Horror Red Wet around his left eye for a more gruesome touch.

These days I like to use chalk pastels for shading, so I got my set of pastels out my fine and superfine microbrushes and began to shade.

I stroke the microbrush directly on medium brown pastel and apply it to ear crevices, hollow temples and cheeks, the philtrum area, under the jaw....



basically anywhere the drybrushing misses but not so heavy it obscures the base color. I then took a dark burnt umber wash to detail Cat's nostrils... black makes nostrils look like caverns IMHO. Once dry, 3 very light mist coats of Testor's Model Master Lusterless lacquer spray to seal the pastels then 3 more coats to seal the deal.



"Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow"

Cat's eyebrows were painted in using burnt umber and a detail brush. Then individual hairs were painted in with territorial beige, followed by individual hairs of country gray.

Cat's hair was basecoated with burnt umber, followed by drybrushing with burnt sienna then chestnut brown. Once dry, his temples were drybrushed with perter gray followed by country gray.

"Sartorial Splendor"

Very straightforward on the clothing...ivory shirt, tompte red tie with crimson drybrushing. The jacket was painted a gray-green, then a black green wash applied followed by drybrushing with the base color. Buttons are a green-gray which will also be used on the hat, then a very light black pastel shading on the jacket. Cat's topcoat was basecoated with Folkart Charcoal, then the high areas were lightly drybrushed with pewter gray. Black pastels to deepen the folds, lacquer sealer, and he has a suit to be proud of...in the words of George Zimmer, "I guarantee it"!

The hat was basecoated pewter gray then very gently drybrushed with country gray. The hatband was basecoated the same green-gray as the buttons, then a black green wash followed by drybrushing with the green-gray with a couple drops of light ivory. Black pastels to shade the hat, then lacquer spray to seal the deal.

"Heavens To Murgatroyd"

Cat's snaggle teeth were basecoated with Krylon Satin Ivory. Once dry, I used a Dremel fine sanding barrel to gently remove the pour spout. Once that was done, I superglued the teeth in place (PLEASE do yourself a favor and do his teeth one at a time so you glue the right tooth in the right place!) and carefully touched them up with ivory acrylic. I then took a superfine microbrush and brown pastel and shaded gently around the base of each tooth. With all the painting done, all that was left to do was to seal everything once or twice more with lacquer spray, then gloss his eyes with Future floor polish (I left his teeth dull and lusterless...I think it looks better on this fellow), and glued his hat on. There is the matter of the custom base I made for him...but that, I think, is a story for another time...