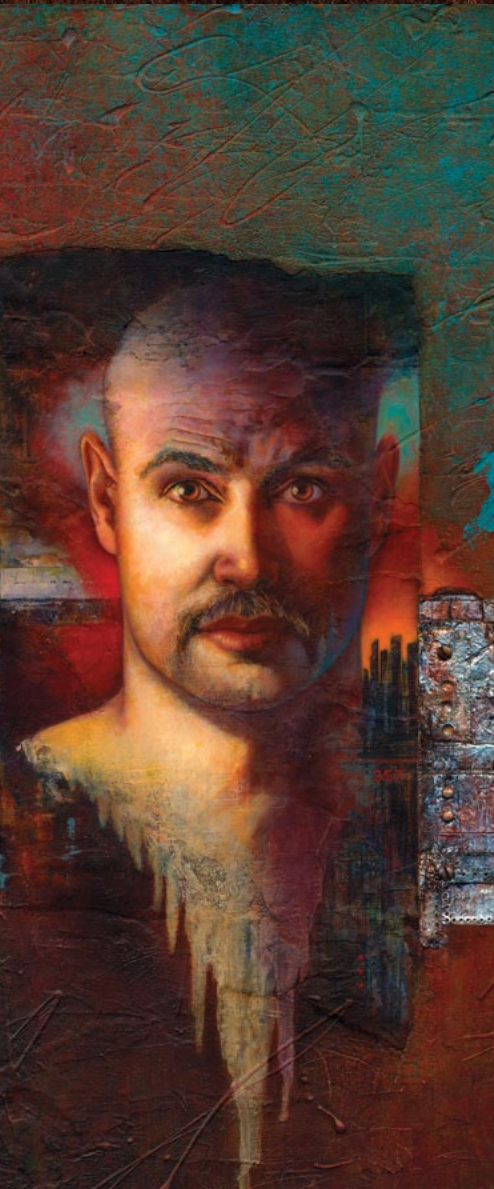




mixed media

3 Step-by-Step Lessons for
Experimental Painting
by Lisa Cyr



using xerography and laser printing

Aesthetic play with a copy machine and laser printer can yield intriguing results. Overlapping, creasing, crinkling, ripping, enlarging or reducing over several generations of copies can alter the original content in a dynamic way, creating a unique, more graphic composition.



1 Playing With Composition

Using a copy machine to enlarge and reduce, several prints are made of famous historical documents available in the public domain, such as the Bible and the Declaration of Independence. Each is ripped to create unique edges and the pieces are arranged to form several compositions. Additional decorative type is set on the computer and a laser print is made on clear transparency film. The transparency is moved around to determine placement for the final composition.



2 Establishing a Unique Border

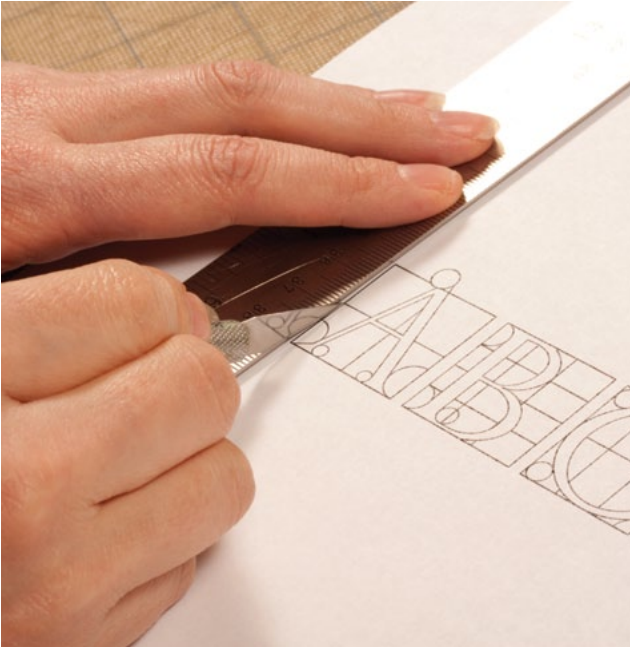
The various pieces of ripped paper and the clear transparency film are placed on a photocopy machine face down and a new copy is made. Using a craft knife, the composition is cut so that the outer edge of the piece resembles an old writing tablet.

materials

Illustration board: 4-ply
Clear transparency film
White bond paper
Tracing paper

Powdered graphite
Graphite pencils
Graphite transfer sheet
Fine ballpoint pen
Technical pen with black ink
Colored pencils: warm and cool gray
Payne's Gray oil paint
Mineral spirits
Acrylic matte medium
Bookbinder's glue: pH neutral PVA
Vellum spray fixative

Craft knife
Large bristle brush
Flat nylon brush
Brayer
Blending stumps
Kneaded eraser
Adjustable eraser
Cotton swabs
Metal straightedge ruler
Copy machine
Laser printer
Wax paper
Cotton cloth



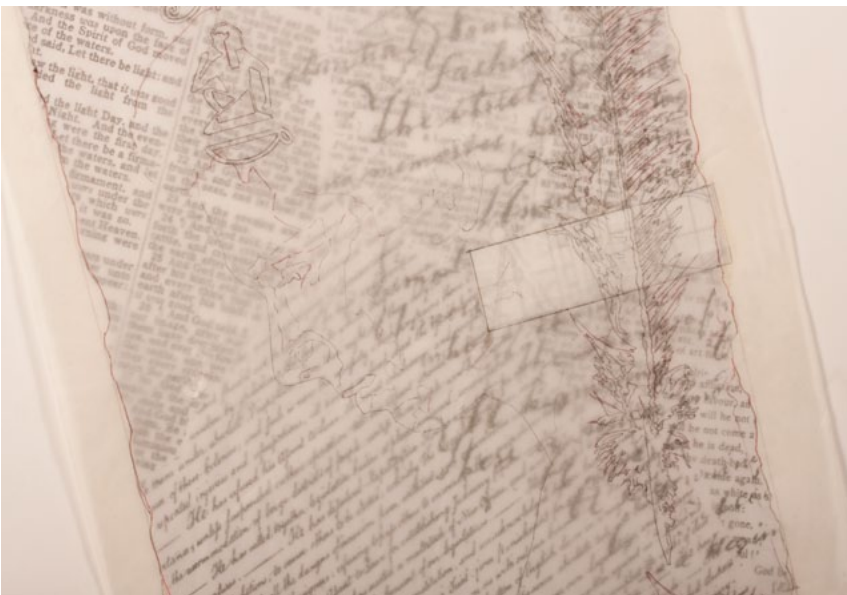
3 Creating an Accent

A typographic accent is created and printed out using a black-and-white laser printer. The edges are trimmed using a craft knife and a metal straightedge.



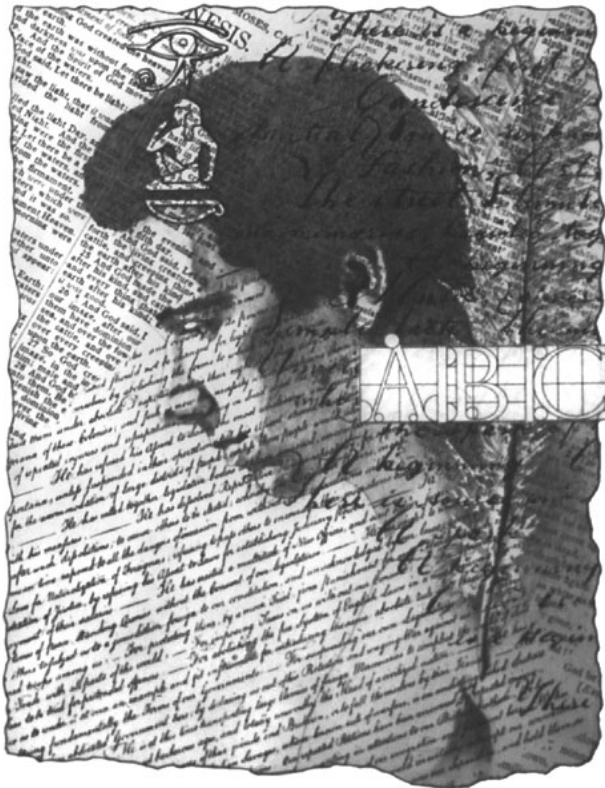
4 Mounting to Board

Using PVA glue and a flat nylon brush, the base art and typographic accent are adhered to illustration board. Wax paper is placed on top and a brayer is used to eliminate any air bubbles. Once dry, several coats of acrylic matte medium are brushed on top to seal the surface.



5 Adding the Subject

A line drawing is created on tracing paper, which allows the graphic background to show through. The subject is positioned so the subject and the background work in harmony. The line drawing is transferred to the working surface using a graphite transfer sheet and a ballpoint pen. Note: A graphite transfer sheet can be created by rubbing graphite onto layout paper, using mineral spirits on a cotton cloth to spread the medium.



6 Establishing the Values

The main subject is established in powdered graphite, pencils and blending stumps. Ink and a technical pen are used to add the hieroglyphics. When the drawing is complete, vellum spray fixative is applied to seal the surface. Always use protective gear and spray in a well-ventilated area.



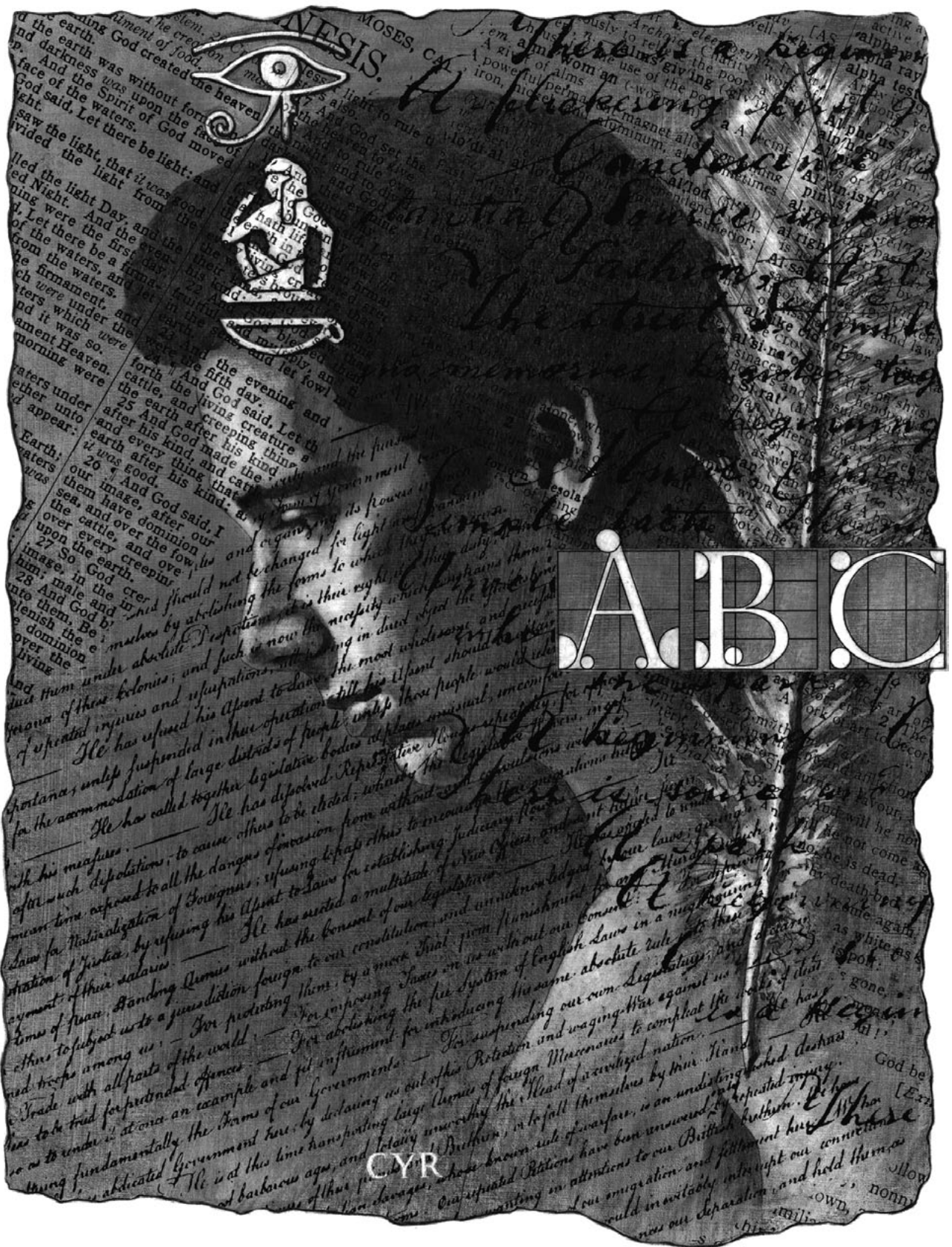
7 Creating the Mood

Using mineral spirits in a well ventilated area, Payne's Gray oil paint and a large bristle brush, a wash is applied to the entire surface. Once dry, light areas are lifted using cotton swabs, a kneaded eraser and a sharpened adjustable eraser. When the lift-out is completed, vellum spray fixative is employed to seal the surface.



8 Employing Warm and Cool Tones

Various warm and cool gray colored pencils are used throughout to enhance the transitions as well as add visual interest through temperature changes.



Title: The Journalist
Size: 11" x 8½" (28cm x 22cm)
Mediums: mixed media
Surface: illustration board
Collection: Museum of American Illustration, NYC

employing additive and subtractive processes

By infusing the working surface with additive processes such as textural painting and collage, and subtractive process like scratching, sanding and peeling back the layers, a visually compelling image that ignites both the mind and the senses begins to unfold.



1 Applying a Collage

A dimensional ground, built from Masonite and poplar wood strips, is layered with various ephemera and papers that have been printed, punched, cut and ripped. PVA glue is used to adhere the papers to the working surface. Wax paper is placed on top and a brayer is used to eliminate any air bubbles. Rub-on letters and numerals in various sizes and colors are applied to the surface with an embossing stylus. The collage layer symbolizes the chaotic onslaught of messages experienced by mankind.



2 Employing a Resist

Gesso is applied to the working surface using a painting knife, almost completely covering the text of the collage layer below. Painter's tape is then employed as a resist. It is placed in the upper-left corner in a crosslike design. Another layer of gesso is applied over the tape and to all other surface areas except the interior box, which will house the figurative subject. Once dry, the tape is removed to reveal an inlaid design.

materials

Masonite ¼-inch (6mm) thick
Poplar wood strips ¾" × 1½" (19mm × 38mm)
Papers: various
Ephemera
Silver tape: water-resistant
Rub-on lettering

Bookbinder's glue: pH neutral PVA
White gesso
Acrylic matte gel medium
Acrylic matte medium
Resin sand texture gel
Acrylic paint
Oil paint
Liquin
Black ink pad
Graphite powder, technical pencils and leads
Vellum fixative

Blending stumps
Painting knife
Painter's tape
Paint roller
Sponges: organic and synthetic
Wooden stick: sharp at tip
Round, flat and bright brushes
Straight-edge knife
Craft knife
Brayer
Embossing stylus
Rubber stamp
Sandpaper and sanding block
Hole punchers: large and small
Wax paper
Screws
Drill



3 Scratching In

Before the second coat of gesso is dry, a sharpened wooden stick is used to scratch into the wet surface. This will give the painted ground yet another debossed effect.



4 Dripping

Gesso is applied to the surface by dripping it from the end of a painting knife. The piece is left to dry overnight until it is fully cured. Speeding the drying process with a hairdryer may cause cracking, as the gesso's surface will dry faster than the interior.



5 Applying a Warm Undertone

Burnt Sienna acrylic paint, thinned with water, is applied with a brush and allowed to drip down the composition. Several coats are applied.



6 Peeling Back

Areas of the collage are cut into and torn off with a straight-edged knife. To further distress the surface, sandpaper and a sanding block are used throughout the composition. Acrylic matte medium is applied to seal the surface. Exposing the under layers represents leaving one's earthly existence behind.



7 Drawing the Subject

The main subject is added to the composition using powdered graphite, technical pencils with various graphite leads, brushes and blending stumps. Although a photo reference is employed, the features are altered to convey the desired character. Vellum spray fixative is used to seal the surface. Always use protective gear and spray in a well ventilated area.



8 Creating Faux Metal

Water-resistant silver tape is embossed, cut, punched and layered onto the working surface to suggest a corroded metal shield. A sharpened wooden stick is used to deboss the tape with circular and linear marks. Several hole punchers are also employed to deboss and punch into the surface. In key areas, gesso is built up in layers and painted in acrylic to resemble small bolts. Screws that have been abraded with sandpaper and then painted with acrylic paint are inserted into holes that have been drilled into the surface of the panel. Acrylic gel medium and resin sand texture gel are applied to the metallic surface with a painting knife, using a higher concentration in the corner areas to create the look of erosion. Payne's Gray and Burnt Sienna acrylic paint are applied on top and then wiped away with a rag to accentuate the crevices and holes. Type is introduced using a rubber stamp and black ink.



9 Establishing the Mood

Both the subject and the industrial environment in the background are blocked in using acrylics, a paint roller, brushes, sponges and a painting knife. The sides of the piece are also painted. Acrylic matte medium is used to seal the entire surface. Finishing touches are executed in oil using Liquin as the medium. The finished painting deals with man's journey from this life to the next.



Title: The Final Hour
Size: 24" x 18" (61cm x 46cm)
Mediums: mixed media
Surfaces: Masonite with wooden framework

symbolism, metaphor and allegory

"As the sun sets over the horizon, the battle between good and evil commences to engage forces. Through the entangled fight, the restless warrior becomes fearful and anxious of the unknown. In the mirage, the heart grows weary, the breath becomes shallow and all seems bleak. With nothing of this earth to rely on, the soul looks inward in search of higher ground. The merciful Creator speaks and a glimmer of hope shines like the dawn of a new day. Full of hope and opportunity to begin anew, the faithful warrior presses on, and a newfound sense of strength ensues."

Much of my work has a spiritual, mythological or psychological relevance where metaphors, symbolism

and allegory are used to stimulate curiosity, provoke thought and encourage further inspection. Throughout my pictorial idiom, I employ a concept-based, message-driven approach, evoking the imagination and the senses. I want the onlooker to be intellectually engaged with an instinctual desire to look deeper into the work to discover hidden messages within the layers of symbolic meaning.

The mixed-media painting entitled *Masquerade of Wits* is a conceptual portrait about the inner struggle to find clarity in a world full of uncertainty, distractions and temptation. In the piece, a contemplative female figure is presented as a symbolic warrior who metaphorically fights against the forces that create despair, anxiety and fear in her life. The meditative subject looks inward through a symbolic mask. A physical manifestation of her internal psyche, the mask dissolves into the flesh to become one with the myriad levels of consciousness present in the mind's eye. Like a protective shield, the apparitional, mask-like form displays imagery from ancient armor and military attire, reminiscent of a time when the righteous always triumphed over the malevolent forces of evil. Olive branches, historically emblematic of peace, are introduced in the brass assemblage accent as



Title: Masquerade of Wits
Size: 23" x 26¾" x 1½" (58cm x 68cm x 4cm)
Medium: mixed media
Surface: Masonite with wooden framework

well as intertwined throughout the war-inspired iconography to create an interesting dichotomy.

Considered windows to the soul, the eyes project a serene and crystal-clear blue expanding from a flaming orange center. The complementary color scheme alludes to the setting of the sun, when the light fades and darkness takes reign, creating a dynamic interplay between life's often paradoxical forces. Although the eyes are astute sensory filters, they are not perfect interpreters of reality, as perception can often be misleading. In times of doubt and fear, the malicious Tempter intervenes, presenting a false reality that uses trickery to set one off balance. A masquerade of wits ensues as virtue and truth battle deception and deceit. The overall design and custom accents are based upon the sixth chakra. Known spiritually as the third eye, the Anja chakra represents a mystical gateway to the inner realms of higher consciousness. For insight and enlightenment from the heavens above, the figure is presented as gazing, looking inward to evoke the third eye. Through meditation and prayer, teleportation from the limitations and boundaries of the external, earth-bound existence to the all-seeing world of nirvana that exists within is possible. In times of distress, the divine spirit that is forever omnipresent

helps guide the troubled soul on a path of hope and lucidity of mind and purpose. The indigo color, deep violet blue to a dark grayish blue, that is known in the all-seeing sixth chakra symbol is ever-present throughout the perimeters of the mixed-media piece. The perfectly symmetrical balance of the facial features and mask juxtaposed against the more cacophonous environment is highly significant, as it conveys the importance of maintaining one's balance amidst the chaos of life.

Throughout the highly conceptual piece, the use of subtle allegory is present. Hidden messages encourage balance and discourage the manifestations of fear and doubt that hold one back from the fullness of what life has to offer. Being human, no one is perfect but instead intrinsically flawed and prone to fall, especially in times of despair and internal turmoil. But with guidance from above, one is able to regain the strength needed to continue to move forward from a place of stability. Hope and abounding possibilities present themselves with the break of every new day. Life is an amazing journey of triumphs and tribulations, a continuous battle of wits. "Fight the good fight of faith" (Paul to Timothy I, 6:12), finding a way out of the dark and into the light. Godspeed.

materials

Masonite: ¼-inch (6mm) thick
Poplar wood strips: ¾" x 1½" (9mm x 38mm)
Bristol board
Printmaking paper
Bond paper: 11" x 17" (28cm x 43cm)
Synthetic mesh
Cheesecloth
Colored tissue paper
Sketchbook
Facial tissue
Transparent plastic sheets
Frisket
Ephemera: various paper weights and textures

Acrylic paint
Acrylic matte medium
Acrylic matte gel medium

Molding paste
White gesso
Oil paint
Liquin
Pigment inks
Powdered graphite and pencils
Ebony pencil
Colored pencils
Bookbinder's glue: pH neutral PVA
Vellum fixative

Round, flat, bright, fan and sponge brushes
Painting knife
Sponge
Sponge roller
Cotton cloth
Cotton swabs

Kneaded eraser
Blending stumps
Sandpaper
Brayer
Painter's tape
Glass
Decorative fabric lace
Floral stencil
Plastic grocery bags
Wax paper
Ink-jet printer
Hole and bindery punchers
Desktop custom die-cutter
Decorative hardware: metal
Screws, washers and bolts
Computer and scanner
Drill



1 Priming the Surface

A dimensional panel made of Masonite and poplar wood strips is primed with several coats of acrylic gesso using a sponge brush. For an even surface, the panel is sanded smooth between each coat. For instructions on building a dimensional substrate, see the step-by-step instructions in chapter 3.



2 Establishing the Values

The main subject is drawn on a primed Masonite surface using graphite pencils. To block in the large areas of tone, powdered graphite and brushes are employed. Blending stumps are used to soften the areas of transition and a kneaded eraser aids in lifting tone when necessary. The area is sprayed with vellum fixative. Always use protective gear and spray in a well-ventilated area.



3 Creating the Collage

Printmaking paper, bristol board and various paper ephemera are cut, punched and ripped forward to reveal a layered edge, and backward to show a more deckled edge. The collage pieces are adhered to the surface using PVA glue and a brush. Wax paper

is placed on top and a brayer is used to remove any air bubbles. Using a painting knife, acrylic gesso is applied to the lower sides of the mixed-media piece, adding depth and dimension. Frisket is applied to mask off the facial areas.



4 Adding Dimensional Stenciling

The mask design is blocked in using brushes and acrylic paint. A floral stencil is taped into position with painter's tape. A raised surface is created using molding paste and a painting knife. Once the embossed design is fully cured, acrylic paint is applied to harmonize the floral areas with the rest of the composition.



5 Sponging

The mask area is further developed using acrylic paints. A sponge is used to add texture and visual interest.



6 Drawing the Details

Using colored pencils, an ebony pencil and acrylic paint, details of the mask and surrounding areas are further developed. The area is sprayed with vellum fixative. Always use protective gear and spray in a well-ventilated area.



7 Adding Tissue Collage

Acrylic matte medium is applied to the working surface and one-ply facial tissue is adhered. Once dry, several coats of matte medium are applied on top as a sealant. When completely cured, the textured area above the eyes is sanded slightly to prepare for the addition of the military iconography that is drawn on top in graphite.



8 Creating Custom-Printed Paper

Line drawings of ancient military attire from the sketchbook are scanned into the computer, altered and composed into an abstract arrangement. Colored tissue paper is taped on a sheet of 11" x 17" (28cm x 43cm) bond paper using painter's tape. The sheet is run through the flat paper path of an ink-jet printer, and the line art composition is imprinted onto the surface using pigment inks. Once dry, the sheet is sprayed vellum fixative. Acrylic matte medium and a brush are used to adhere the tissue paper to the working surface in a folded fashion. Matte medium is also applied to further seal the surface.



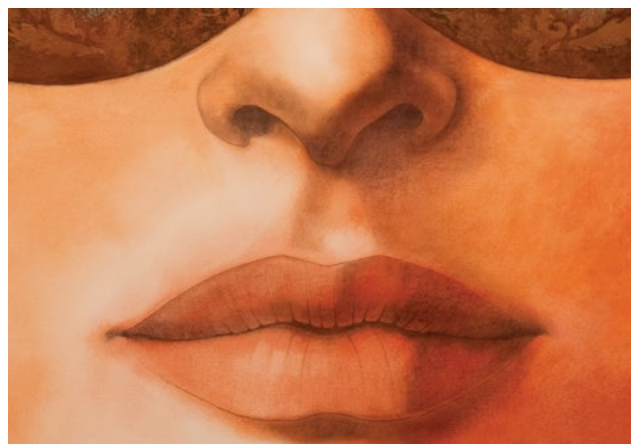
9 Blotting

Acrylic is applied throughout the piece with a brush, painting knife and sponge. To create interesting transitions, crinkled plastic grocery bags are used to blot the wet surface, infusing it with an organic pattern.



10 Incorporating Cloth and Synthetic Mesh

Synthetic mesh and cheesecloth are painted with acrylic on glass and left to dry. They are later ripped into pieces and applied to the perimeters of the composition using acrylic gel medium.



11 Blocking in the Tones

The facial features are blocked in with acrylic washes. Light areas are wiped out using a cotton cloth and cotton swabs to establish a chiaroscuro effect.



12 Employing a Patina

Acrylic matte gel medium is applied with a sponge roller to the mask area and decorative fabric lace is debossed into the surface in an overlapping fashion, creating a distressed texture. Once this is fully cured, gold and copper acrylic paint are drybrushed on top with a fan brush. To highlight the military iconography underneath, pewter and gold acrylic are painted in the areas of light while bronze and antique copper are used for the darks.



13 Creating Multilayered Accents

Decorative accents are designed on paper, scanned into the computer and die cut into layers on plastic sheets using a miniature die-cutting machine that can accommodate custom designs. Employing a painting knife and molding paste, each stencil layer requires three to four applications to build the surface. Ample time for drying and sanding is allowed between each layer. Matte medium is used to seal the surface before a decorative patina is sponged on with acrylic paint.



14 **Painting the Details**
 Oil paint is used to render the finer details on the subject. Liquin is employed as the oil painting medium.



15 **Customizing Assemblage Accents**
 Rounded screws are sanded at the top, filled with molding paste, treated with layers of gesso and painted with acrylic paint. The upper central assemblage accent is sponged with gold, cop-




per and bronze acrylic. Holes are drilled through the substrate and the decorative accents are attached to the composition with the custom screws, which are held in place with washers and nuts in the back.

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