



BY RICK LOVELL

PART II

FUR-OCIOUS



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We got well on our way in the previous issue (July-August '08), now it's time to complete the wolf!

26. Some deeper reds and browns are also airbrushed over the brushwork to enrich the colors and drop the value a bit more. The

very dark areas around the eye go on next.

27. Medium value grays and tans create the soft transitions in and around the ear. No masking here, just careful freehand spraying.

28. It's a good idea to stand up every few

minutes to look at your piece from a few feet away; it's difficult to judge value and color when your nose stays inches from the work. Viewing your work against the reference photos from several feet away allows for a fresh assessment of the way things are going. From here I see that my colors are okay, but my values are much too light. That's fine, it's easy to darken, but difficult to lighten airbrush paintings.

29. The "mask" of the wolf's face is

PROJECT MATERIALS



BOARD: For this piece I wanted to be able to work reductively, meaning removing pigment by scraping, erasing or sanding, so I needed a hard, smooth surface. I used Frisk CS-10 illustration board, which is no longer available (I bought several cases when I heard they were going to stop importing it). I could also have used gessoed Masonite, sanded smooth, or the commercial equivalent called Claybord, which is made by Ampersand and is available at most art supply stores.

AIRBRUSH: Olympos HP 100B and HP200B Micron

COMPRESSOR: Iwata Hammerhead

FRISKET: Vinyl Frisket: Frisk Matte Finish; Paper Frisket (for working wet with sponges and spattering): Canary tracing paper and rubber cement in a specific recipe I learned about at an Airbrush Getaway:

- 1 part Two-Coat Rubber Cement
- 2 parts One-Coat Rubber Cement
- 2 parts Bestine thinner

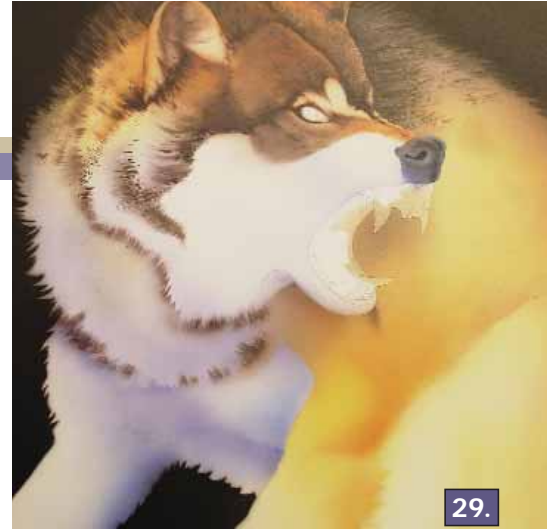
This mixture provides the perfect tack for frisket, and in combination with the Canary tracing paper, it's waterproof and will not allow wet media to seep under the cut areas.

PAINT: Medea ComArt Transparent Airbrush Pigments in Bright Red, Ochre, Ultramarine and Transparent Smoke; Holbein Black India Ink

MISCELLANEOUS: Enamel butcher tray, 2-ounce plastic portion cups with lids for mixing paint; X-Acto knife with #11

blades; .003-mil acetate for general masking; 2-inch blue painters tape to mask off the margins of the board

BRUSHES: Escoda 1212 Kolinski Sable #6 watercolor brush; Princeton fan brush; 2-inch "chip" brush from the home center (this is a very cheap disposable house painting brush that I use as a mask for creating fur textures with the airbrush... read on to find out how!)



darkened considerably with reddish browns and dark gray tones, and it's pretty close in value to the reference photo. Now I can judge how dark to go with the white cheek and neck areas, which I will visit later.

30. The fur on the wolf's back arcs up and toward his rear, and then it transitions down the flanks and cascades down in a spiral fashion toward his belly. It's an interesting but complicated area, and I'm paying close attention to the reference photos as well as my black and white study to make sure I get the flow right. I'm using the watercolor brush with the bristles spread out to lightly stroke in the sections of fur as they move down the body of the wolf.

31. I've cut an acetate mask in a curving, saw-tooth pattern to darken the areas between the areas of fur. It's important to think about the nature of fur; most of what is painted is the spaces BETWEEN the surface hairs. In other words, the visible hairs are light lines against a darker field, so most of my painting is establishing that darker field in preparation for painting or scratching out the lighter hairs that are on

the surface. The dark field isn't a solid, flat tone, but a system of shapes that establish the current or flow of the fur. And there is much variation in color and value, and variation in the sharpness or softness of edges as well; the key word is variation... the more the better!

32. The wolf is twisting around dramatically, and it's rear leg is overlapping his side and even his front leg. The knee area is light in color and it's also catching a raking light, making it almost glow against the darker tones of the animal's darker flanks. I saved the first acetate mask I cut for this piece in order to reuse the saw-tooth pattern in several different places; it comes in handy here to mask the leg as I darken the fur on the wolf's side as it goes into shadow between the front and rear legs. I'm starting with warm tones and gradually darkening them with Smoke and Ultramarine. I'm lifting the edge of the acetate to keep the tonal transitions nice and soft.

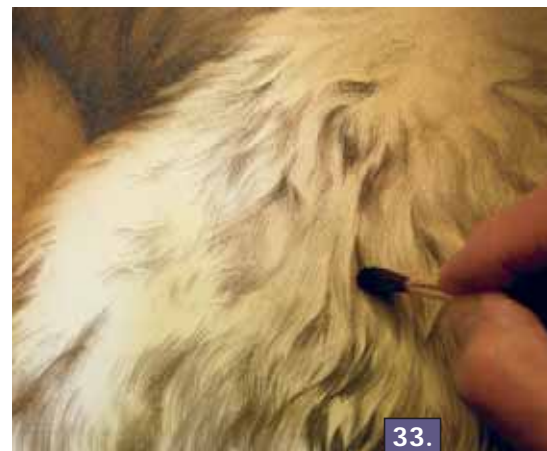
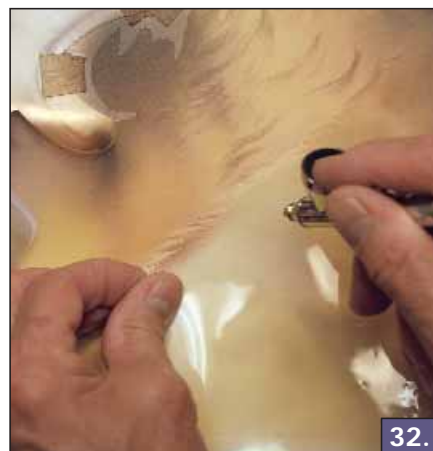
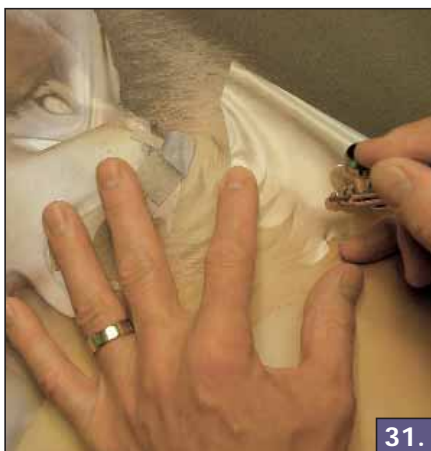
33. Back to the watercolor brush to fortify the darks of the fur with dark browns and grays. The flow of the fur is beginning to



work, and the twisting of the wolf's body is becoming increasingly apparent as I add more directional strokes.

34. More dark browns and grays to push down the values a bit more will help "pop" the lighter hairs that lie on top. Also, the head is casting a shadow that rakes across the body, so the whole area behind the mouth and head need to go much darker.

35. The base tones of the fur are almost done. The mouth and eyes are still covered





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with frisket, and it's time to break out the X-Acto knife and do some scratching. I'm leaving the frisket on the mouth and eye in case I need to adjust the colors or values with the airbrush as the scratching progresses. Please note that effective fur textures can be achieved solely with brushes and paint, but in this case I chose to use materials that would allow for a reductive, scratching technique for the finer, light fur.

36. Going under the knife. I'm scraping an X-Acto knife perpendicular to the sharpened

edge of the blade; I don't want to cut the paint, just lightly scrape it away.

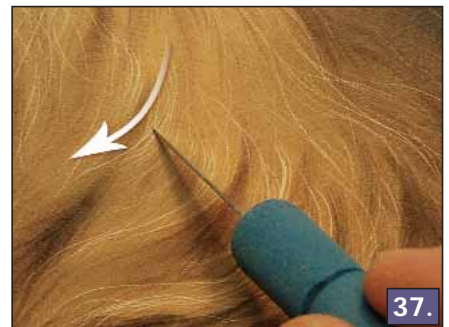
This technique creates very fine white lines over the darker under-painting. A layer of light fur is scratched in and then a light mist of golden airbrush color knocks it down a shade, and a new layer of lines is scratched in on top. This can be done as often as necessary to create many layers of overlapping hair giving a sense of depth and texture that is quite convincing.

37. This close-up shows several layers of scratching and glazing. You can see the effect of the saw-tooth frisket that was used to mask the knee area from the darker tones behind.

38. Now that the frisket is removed from the mouth and eyes you can see why it was important to paint the fur first; the unpainted areas seem outrageously bright against the dark fur, and it would have been easy to miscalculate the values needed in the

mouth and eye without the reference tone of the dark fur.

39. Now it's time to painting the mouth. The remainder of the frisket that I previously cut to protect the mouth and eye were carefully placed back on the artwork to protect the fur areas that have already been painted. The individual parts such as the teeth, tongue and gums were cut out separately and the frisket was removed and then replaced as each piece was completed. The same Transparent Smoke and Bright



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Red were used to create the fleshy pinks of the mouth and tongue.

40. A hand-held acetate mask is used to create the shading for the teeth. The teeth are painted with a combination of Ochre and Transparent Smoke, which creates a yellowish, warm gray. Once the teeth were painted, I carefully scraped away white highlights to give them a healthy, menacing sparkle.

41. The eye is next; the frisket for the entire eye is removed, and an acetate mask is cut for the iris shape, protecting the white of the eye. The iris has a soft edge, so an acetate mask works better than a hard-edged adhesive frisket would. A dark reddish brown of Transparent Smoke and Bright Red are sprayed to establish the darker tones of the iris, then pure Ochre to finish off the color. Black is carefully sprayed in freehand for the pupil.

42. The black whiskers are drawn in with a 00 Rapidograph pen and ink, using a French curve for a perfect arc. A little more scratching to add some additional light fur and highlights, and our gentle, happy little wolf is done.

Hope you got as much out of this as I enjoyed doing it. Feel free to comment via e-mail at rick@ricklovell.com. Cheers! ✖



RICK LOVELL, of Atlanta, Georgia, has been a premier commercial illustrator for more than 25 years, with a list of distinguished clients that include: Anheuser Busch, AT&T, Avon Books, Bantam Books, Business Week, CNN, Coors, Disney, Kellogg's, Macy's, Nestle Foods, Nike Design, Orkin, Pocket Books, Prentice Hall, Showtime, Simon & Schuster, and the United States Postal Service. For four years, Lovell served as the Illustration Chair in the Communication Design Department at the Atlanta College of Art, and in 2002 accepted a position on the full-time faculty. "I still enjoy doing freelance work when interesting jobs come my way, but what I now look forward to every morning is the challenge of bringing a love of art and illustration to my students."

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