



<http://www.mantoothmanor.com/LEDtombstone.html>

LED Portrait Tombstone

I have been a fan of Eddie Allen and his changing portraits from [Hauntedmemories](#) for some time now. I have made back lit portraits before using his art but never in this type of application.



Using one of his small 5x7 portraits, I was able to recreate a back lit version in a tombstone.

I'll skip the basics, such as the design and lettering as there are plenty of info on the web. What I will say is that I started with the same 2" thick foam insulation I used in the pillar construction since I had plenty left over. Feel free to contact me if you want more info.



Moving forward slightly, the photos show the basic design in place. The lettering has been cut, and my base has its hidden mounting brackets in place.



Also the pocket for the LED was created where the picture will eventually sit. The frame was given to me by a family friend and I'm lucky to have a pair. It fit the 5x7 portrait perfectly. I knew that to be back lit, I needed a light source. A standard bulb might get too hot so I knew I wanted to go with an LED. The LED Shown came from and was just what I was looking for.

Not shown here in any photos is how the tunnel was created for the wire of the LED. Using a small rod heated at the tip, we melted a path for the wire to travel. Starting on the bottom side of the tombstone and working our way up to the bottom of the pocket, trying to be carefull not to poke the hot wire through the face or back. I wasn't carefull enough but nothing a bit of liquid nails couldn't fix.



Some details were later added with a wood burning kit. I like to use a wood burning kit instead of a soldering iron because it comes with shaped tips.



Once the detail work was finished it was time to add the first coat of paint.



I try to use Latex house paint in various colors that I find in the "oops" bin at my local hardware stores. Not only are they cheap but the worse the color is sometimes is the best. First I started with a dark olive greenish brown base and apply a lighter gray/tan on top with a sea sponge.





Here is the frame and portrait together. The frame has a glass face to it. I've applied silicone all over to prevent moisture or rain damaging the portrait. Silicone as well as hot glue was used to hold the picture frame in place. The LED cluster is also held in place with hot glue.



Once the base paints are applied, it's time to weather the tombstone.



I decided to use the quick and dirty method of aging the tombstone. It involves a garden hose, and your weathering colors of choice. I never have the same colors twice but I seem to gravitate towards blacks, browns, Raw Umber, and a yellow in varying amounts.

First wet the tombstone with a garden hose with a nozzle that will have a fine mist at low pressure. Once its wet all over, I quickly sprayed my weathering mixture with a spray bottle on the back side until the colors started to run down. Once I was happy with not only the color (I could adjust the color at this point if needed) but the texture as well I would then do the face.



This technique will quickly age your tombstone. The hardest part is letting it dry.



After the tombstone had dried it was time to check out how well the LEDs lit the portrait.



Now that this is finished, it will make its first appearance Halloween 2008

Obtained from
Omarshauntedtrail.com