

Ghost of Halloween

<http://www.ghostsofhalloween.com/projects/tombstones/>

PROJECT in 2004:

Tombstones

In 2004 we decided it was time for some new tombstones. I showed my friend Terry, who happens to be an artist, the tombstones over at www.ourhaunt.com which I liked very much. Terry said he could help achieve that look.



Now, back in 1998 we made our first set of tombstones. As you can see it's just some carving and a base coat with some spray paint on it. Simple yet still decent looking. But, what I have now learned is, if you put in a little more time and use different layers/tones of paints you can create some outstanding results.

Below you'll find some images along with tips that I have learned which will make your tombstones very real looking. But first, I'll start with parts required. Of course, if you have any of these items, yay, a less expensive project.

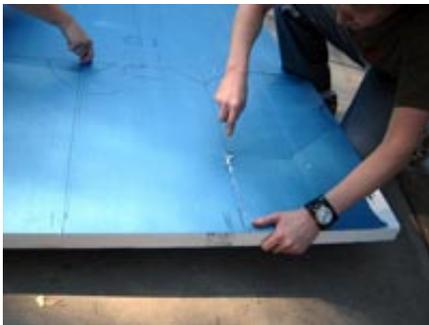
Styrofoam	I have been able to find, at Home Dept, a sheet that is 8ft x 4ft x2in.	\$14
Cutting Utencils:	We tried several different types of cutters. We found a serrated steak knife worked quite well	Free
Sand Paper:	Use a fine grit sand paper	\$3
Paint	Terry had a tinting paint, which I believe was just a black latex paint. So, we bought a gallon of white latex paint (latex is water based, which is what you need). It's amazing how little black paint you need to add to the white to make it a dark gray. My suggestion, get a gallon of cheap white outdoor paint and a small can of black paint. Don't forget to get mixing sticks. I would also spend 69 cents and get one of those plastic thingys that attaches to the paint can for pouring.	\$10-20
Rollers & Brushes:	Just buy the cheap stuff, you don't need anything fancy. We found a pack of 6 roller sleeves for 5 bucks. A handle should run you about \$3.	\$8
Roller Tray	Plastic tray liners are about 69 cents. They seem flimsy, but will hold the paint	\$3

& Buckets	just fine. If you aren't on a tight budget I'd get a tray. You'll also need mixing buckets, paper ones are sold at about 50 cents. Though, since latex is water based, you can use a bowl and just wash it out afterwards.	
Rags	Anything will do, old shirts, socks, your kid. This is what we use to wipe the paint off with.	Free
	Total:	\$44

If you don't have any of these materials \$44 might seem like a lot. Of course, this can be lowered if you have some of these items. But, in contrast, I've seen some pitiful looking tombstones sold at stores for about 15-25 dollars. This method will yeild 7-9 better quality tombstones for a little more than the price of a premade one. Let's move on...



Here you can see us measuring and drawing our designs with a grease pencil. We cut the foam into thirds length wise, then 2 of the 3rds into more thirds, and the last 3rd in half. This gives us 8 pieces. Actually, we cut one of the pieces a little taller with it's top being the sides of the pieces cut in half. The foam we got came with some platic coating which we peeled off. Sometimes it would come off nicely and other times it would be a pain.



Cutting with your average steak knife.



Don't cut angry.

Obtained from Omarshauntedtrail.com



Some shapes. After pulling to plastic off, lightly sand the sides to smooth it out. During this process also slightly round the edges. Not too much though, remember, tombstones are usually chisled.



As you can see here, much detail is added to the shape with the blue plastic over it from the above picture. Terry was chipping away for a good 30 minutes to make this effect, which later we didn't like and then sanded down.



This piece was the "taller" piece that was mentioned with the first picture. Take notice it's top angles are the same as from the blue piece two pictures above. Also, you'll notice this has cracks in it. The cracks are made by the sandpaper which is moved briskly across the foam to slightly *break* away the foam. Just be sure to make it look jagged, anything too angular will look man-made.



Some more shapes. The piece that is black has been spray painted. We wanted to try out a decayed look. Overall we did NOT like the effects spray paint had when used in this manner. It produced an undesired honeycomb effect. A few pictures down I'll show you a *good* way to use spray paint for a decayed look.



Another spray painted piece. This again illustrates a BAD use for spray paint. The spray paint only looks good to do a decayed/corroded look. It's not good for looking like pieces have broken off.



Okay, some paint now goes on! Super roller action!! Not much to it. This is our mid-tone color coat.



Here we are basically at the stage of where our 1998 tombstones were at. Now the fun begins.

Obtained from
OmarshaurMedtrail.com



If you were reading all the text, you will remember what I said using spray paint the *good* way. This is it. The look we have achieved is a very old, rotting, weathered, call it what you will, stone. Terry sprayed a good amount in the carved parts, the thinner in the spray paint ate away at the foam to the same extent that rain and time would have with stone. Later is a close up of the final, painted, product.

TIP:

I also want to mention some there here. If you notice the groove inset about an inch. These are the little details I overlooked whereas Terry knew to do. Stuff like this is very simple to add and it's amazing how much more it helps with the authenticity of carved stone.



Just more rolling and another heavily sprayed tombie!



Alright, this is where the magic starts to happen. Pulling from the base coat paint, we mix some more black in another bucket to make our dark tone color. It is also watered down. This is so the paint can be wiped off easily.

Technique:

Brush the paint into the cracks and lower spots and then gently wipe away with the rags. Also, splatter a little bit on and wipe that off as well. From here on in, we will continually wipe. Just like your mom taught you.



Some pictures of tombies with base coat and dark tones.



This is our old looking guy here. Notice the effect the spray paint had on the indentations on the cross.

Okay, so I didn't get pictures of us actually applying the highlight coats. Sorry! Of course, since this is my most descriptive topic project ever I'll describe the technique. First start out with a lighter tone of paint than your base (mid) coat of paint.

Drybrushing

This technique is where you use very little paint to create highlights on your piece of work. It's achieved by barely dipping your brush in the paint. And then, using a piece of scrap, brush of more excess paint. Then you lightly go over areas that need to stand out. This would be at cracks, corners, and edges. When you brush over the work more of the pressure, which is still very little, should be at the edges of things. It's kind of like your holding it at an angle, so the brush applies more to the edge when you press down. It takes a bit of trial and error. Once applied though, again, wipe with a rag. Preferably not the ones you used for the dark tones. Also, very lightly brush evenly in other spots that aren't at the corners and, again, wipe with rag.





We decided it might be cool to have a piece that just got worked by a mean kid or something and broken in half. At our haunt, we'll leave the broken piece on the ground.



Ahh, the lineup. This, is the final product. The photos don't give them justice. They were taken at dusk.



Here's a neat idea we came up with. A tombstone that some psycho killer or whatever your imagination brings you wrote on in blood.



Terry's going to build up on this one. Make the skull more 3-dimensional.



Finished products. If you look and the half one, you'll notice the light-tones at the cracks, and then some random highlights on the flat part of it.

Obtained from
Omar's Haunted Trail.com



The "Died" tombstone's dark-tones came out a little too dark, but hey, it'll be in the dark lit with malibu lights anyways.

That wraps up the new and improved tombstones.



Obtained from
Omarshaintedtrail.com