Demonware

The Gargoyles

I made these gargoyles as new toppers for my gates in an attempt to replace my skulls and my grossly undersized broken cemetery sign. I used techniques that I had learned while constructing my tombstones and horse. While they ended up taking longer than I had anticipated, I was able to gain more knowledge and skill in the 'art' of foam carving.

Materials & Tools

Required Materials

- (1) 2 ft x8 ft x 2 in piece of Foamboard per gargoyle
- 1 tube Liquid Nails Projects Foamboard glue
- Elmers wood putty
- Thick/cheap outdoor paint
- Acrylic Paints
- Sketch
- Scotch Tape

Tools

- Hands
- Dremel Tool
- Light Hand File
- Hacksaw
- Square
- Putty knife
- Sharp pointed object, such as a compass
- Sponge core sandpaper block from Scotch
- 1 mm Uni-Ball Gel Impact pen (good for drawing on foam)
- Latex Gloves
- Pencil (with broken end)

Step 1:

Create your design. This will probably be the most difficult for some. Simply get some graph paper and draw a very basic outline of what you want the different body parts to be.


Since the foam board is only 2 in thick it will take multiple layers to create the depth that you need. Here I have a photo of my sketches and tools. I had seven main body pieces consisting of his butt, body, back of head, face, and wings. The next picture should give an idea of how I started this project.

Step 2:
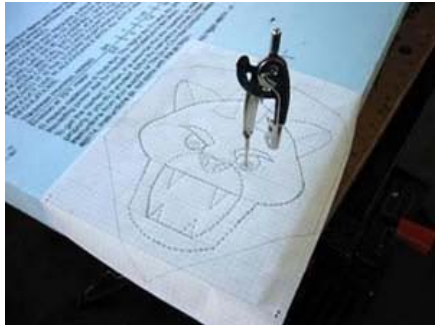
This step works just about like carving a pumpkin, you lay out your design, poke it out, and cut it. Its simple, but it will tire your hands.
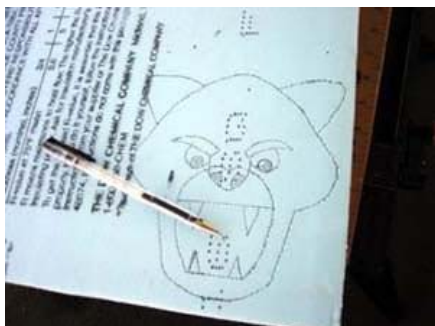
First tap your design to the Foamboard. Take your sharp poking tool and punch thousands of little dots around the design. I typically poke them all about 1/8 in apart to I get a nice smooth design, this can also help if you accidentally miss an area by helping you find it easier.
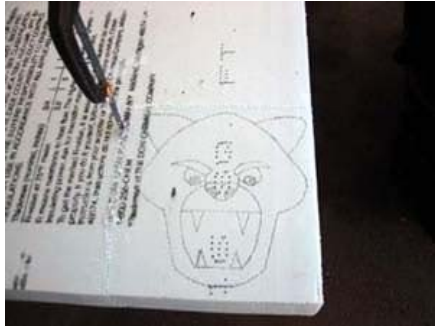
After that trace the design with the gel pen, this will help when you cut out the design.

After that take your square and draw a line around the design and cut the design away from the board. Now the obvious part, cut out the design.

Step 3:

While the head is still uncarved we need to glue it together with the back of the head.

Just like gluing together the horse and tombstones, take your file and 'rough up' the surfaces, spread some glue, bind them together, and let them sit overnight.

Step 4:

Now take your file and begin the long task of shaping your gargoyle.

The body can be done in this way, but I would advise using the dremel tool on the head. Work the face as you would a tombstone, cut out the deepest parts first and gradually work your way up.

Here are some more images of the 'rough' work.

Step 5:

Now that the head is assembled and has the basic features cut out, now do some shaping with the file to get a rounded head.

After that use the dremel tool again to add real details and shape the features the way that you see fit.

Along with this you can also make some horns, they are really easy. Cut out a rectangular piece of foam about 1 1/2 in long and cut it into a triangle shape using an imaginary midpoint at the top, and cut the other sides the same way to leave yourself with a basic pyramid shape.

Round it out with the file and smooth it out with the foamy sandpaper block. Make marks where you want to mount them to the head, file the head a bit and attach them with the glue. They will glue just fine without being weighted down.

Step 6:

Now basically do the same thing with the body that you did with the head.

Shape it with the file, glue the middle body to the butt, shape them with the dremel, and finish up with the sandpaper.

As you can see I also bent one of the arms, I did this by cutting an angle at 45° from the bottom of the bicep and spinning the lower arm around.

What I would recommend doing next is to actually shape the elbows, which I neglected to do. BTW, the cut on the chest of the bottom right pic is deliberate, if you were curious.

Step 7:

Now you need to build the base, attach the gargoyle to it, and make a few finishing pieces.

What you want for a base is up to you, mine was simply a 1x1 ft square that I cut the insides out of so that I could attach it to my pillars.

Then the next parts are just assembly, rough up the base where you want the body portion to go and glue it on.

After that has dried completely, attach the arms and chest.

At this point you will also want to make some hands or paws, again, it's up to you what you want.

After the chest and hands are glued and completely dried attach the head and make some legs.

The legs can be a nuisance to fit under the arms, so keep that in mind when you decide how you want to do them.

After that make a tail and/or a spine. Then finish it by going over the entire prop with very fine sandpaper for a smooth finish.

Step 8:

Now that all of the parts and pieces are attached this gargoyle is almost ready to go.

One of the things that I did to keep this project from looking like it was pieced together was to go over all of the seams with wood putty. Why wood putty? It works pretty well with the foam, its easy to work with, and dries hard. TIP: Wear latex gloves when working with the putty, it is difficult to get off your fingers.

Dish out a glob of putty, roll it into ball and smash it flat. This makes it much easier to tear off a piece the size you want. Now go around and pack it into the seam to make it appear as though the whole thing is a single piece. Use the pencil to pack the putty into spots unreachable by your fingers.

Step 9:

After that cover the entire prop with a thick coat of outdoor paint to give it a base coat. After that coating dries paint your gargoyles to your liking. Hooray! It is finally finished!

The Completed Gargoyle