HAUNTED PORTRAIT

This is a composite of three seperate shots to try and give you an understanding of how this effect works. Notice how the eyes seem to follow you across the room. The secret to making tis a successful prop is to ensure that the viewer isn't allowed to get any closer than five feet to the portrait. If the viewer gets too close to the prop, it becomes apparent that the eyes aren't real.

Making the Prop:

Step 1:

The first step in making this extremely disconcerting prop is to obtain a suitable image. Originally I wanted a mean, scary looking man like the portrait of the crazed millionaire in the movie "The Haunting." Unfortuanately, I couldn't find anything to fit that billing, so I relied on an internet search for "Creepy old man" or something like that. Anyway, I ended up with this somber old codger.

Go ahead and print out the portrait to match the desired frame size. Make sure that the head of the painting is life sized though. Nobody will believe they are being watched by someone with 1/4" eyes, y'know. So make sure it is life sized.

If I remember right, my eye measured approximately 1 1/2" from end to end.

Step 2:

Yep. Step 2 and still no picture. C'mon though, its been easy so far right? Okay, once you have your sized portrait printed out, lay it down and glue it to a posterboard backing for support. After the glue dries, lay the printout on a clean, flat area and cut out the eyes with an X-acto knife. Now drink a beer (if you are of age) and celebrate the fact that you didn't lop off a finger. (note: if you DID lop off a finger, put down the beer and go to the hospital immediately)

Step 3:

Slap that puppy into the frame.

The areas within the white strip were filled in to match the spacing of the painting's eyes.

Step 4:

Take a picture of your eyes with a digital camera. Make sure that they are "angry" eyes. Take several shots to give you a variety to choose from and don't worry about getting it perfect. You don't even have to use eyes from the same shot. My example above uses eyes from two different photos pieced together in Photoshop.

If you don't have a digital camera, borrow one. I suppose you could always smash your face down on a scanner but chances are that you would go blind and never even get to see the end result of this awesome project. So keep your eyes outta' the scanners kids!

Print the eyes out and move them into position for the cutout eyes of the portrait. I had to adjust the positioning of my eyes in order to fit with the portrait. The image above show how much "extra space" I had to add betwwen my eyes to make them fit correctly.

Step 5:

Cut out the photo of your eyes and glue it to a piece of foamcore. Make sure that the foamcore is larger than the photo. Try to give a 1" border of foamcore completely around the photo. In otherwords, measure your photo and cut the foamcore two inches larger in both hieght and width, the center the photo.

Step 6:

Cut a second piece of foamcore the exact same size as the previous piece. Now cut a hole in the second piece that is the same size as the photo of your eyeballs. What you are essentially doing with this second piece is building a frame to glue overtop of the original piece. This second piece of foamcore give you a quarter inch of depth for the photo of your eyes,


Step 7:

Once the two pices are dried, glue them directly behind the portrait. Tis back view sows the positioning of the foamcore. Since no one will see this side, I decided to make the portrait out of scraps that were laying around the studi

Step 8:

In order to get the painting to set flush against the wall, I inserted some brass thumbtacks into the back of the frame. This allows it to rest flat against the wall once it is hung up.

This shot shows the back of the painting in a three-quarter view. From this angle you can see that the eyes are inset the depth of two pices of foamcore. (approximately 1/2")
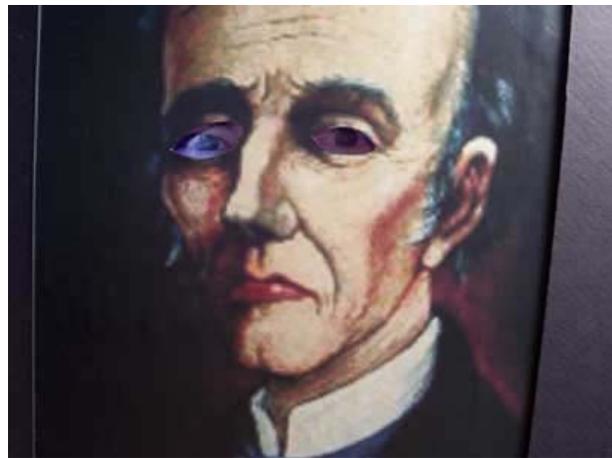
The portrait is finished and ready for hanging. Remember that this prop is more effective at distances ranging from 6-12 feet. This shot shows a dead on view.
Is someone watching you???
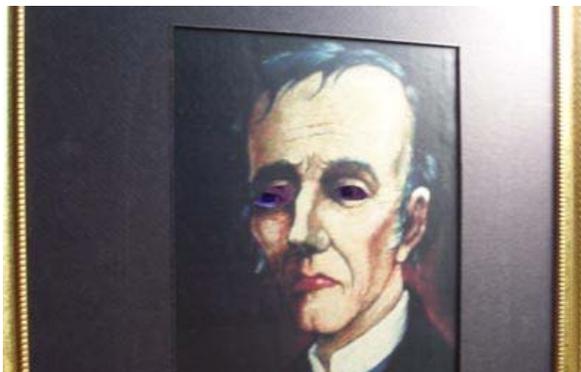
Here is a view from the left.
Oooooooh spooky!!!!!!!

And another creepy view , this time from the right. Can you say: creepy old peeping Tom?