

Making a Brass Rubbing- without the Brass or the Rubbing.

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First What is a Actual Brass Effigy:

Monumental brasses were produced between 1000 – 1650 AD as a commemoration to the dead, or as a special church related event. Today, only approximately 8,000 monumental brasses are left. The reason for this is because the metal and enamel used to create these monuments were such precious commodities, many were destroyed and melted down to create armament. In addition, many of the brasses were destroyed during the various religious uprisings in Great Britain and the continent.

Brass rubbings normally are done by stretching a linen rag paper over the deeply etched monumental brass that is usually found at the gravesite. After securing the paper, heelball (a very hard wax) is rubbed vigorously over the paper surface to get an exact copy of the brass plate. A single rubbing can take from 2 hours to 2 days to complete depending in it's size, condition, and complexity.

My method:

It all started when I wanted to do a camp wall for the Knights of Saint Michael's SCA Household encampment for Estrella War 2016. I really wanted to do something I had never seen before, something different, and NOT just the typical Camp walls.I had an idea to create walls that looked like the brass rubbings I once saw at a friend's house.

So I started out by collecting pictures of United Kingdom Brass effigies that are public domain, and up size those to the size of an average camp wall which is 4ft high and 6 feet long, on average.

To make them I had to figure out how to create negative space. I could have painted the negative space white, but I did not want to add any more paint to the wall than I had to. So I decided that the best way was to put some kind of glue that would wash out, and I could paint over. I then started experimenting on small bits of cloth. I tried a few water soluble glues and ultimately chose Elmer's glue stick that goes on with a purple tint; to shoe where I had already put down glue.

Supplies:

1. A design of a Brass effigy or other design of your choosing
2. A lot of Elmer's glue Sticks (the ones that dry with a purple tint)
3. Drop Cloth-Medium to heavy weight
4. Large Paint Brush

5. Lots of Black Paint

6. Sharpie or Pen

- First trace on a light table, or opaque projector, your design on to Fabric.[I went the most economical route and bought drop cloths from a home store] I hung the fabric over my front door a foot or so above a standard doorway. I am attempting to make each Knight figure around six feet tall each.{Wall completed Dimensions: 7 feet by 3 feet} .
- Then using a Glue stick, put the glue on everything you DO NOT want to be painted black. Remember any area that you do not get the glue stick on will be painted.
- After the glue stick that you put down is thoroughly dry. I recommend letting it thoroughly dry for 24 hours.
- When you start the painting process keep in mind that the paint will start reconstituting the glue, especially if you paint an area too much.
- Once your entire piece is painted, again I recommend letting it dry thoroughly for 24 hours just to be sure all the paint has dried.
- After the paint is dry you can hand wash it in a big tub or just put it in the washing machine. DO NOT USE SOAP. After it is washed ON A GENTLE CYCLE and dried you should have your done piece.

Side note:

The biggest surprise to me was that unlike most camp walls, using this process you can see the design on both sides.