



Website: <http://www.HeadsAboveTheRest.com>

Email: [headsabovetherest@peoplepc.com](mailto:headsabovetherest@peoplepc.com)

## Finishing a Warthog

Written and Photographed by Ron Schaefer

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The warthog is a very common animal to harvest in Africa. Although this may be an easy animal to obtain, it can be rather difficult to finish and make look realistic. I will be using Hydro-Mist paints for finishing this warthog.

First the eyes are coated with eye protectant and allowed to dry. Then start with #102 Natural Flesh. Using it as a base coat, lightly spray the entire hog, not a heavy coat. Also paint inside the nostrils. Now is a good time to check for pinholes. The first coat of paint helps the pinholes to stand out. If you find any imperfections, now is a good time to repair them. You can use Epoxy Clay, or Sulp-All to repair them.



**#1** Mist over the flesh with Buckskin Tan. This is more or less to tone down the flesh color. Spray the belly with a heavier coat.



**#2** Use #303 Neutral Gray with a fast mist to highlight certain areas. Next use #201 Rich Brown. This is another rather fast mist. Be careful — when heavily mixed with flesh color it comes out as orange. Use this color also as highlight #1. Let paint dry.

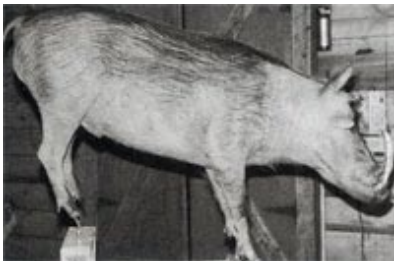


**#3** If the paint is still wet you can use a hair dryer to speed up drying. Use a damp, warm rag and clean the paint from the warthog hair, gently rolling the hair back and forth you can clean the paint off rather easily. Don't press too hard or else you can rub off the paint on the epidermis. The cleaning is needed or you will lose perspective on the depth of the paint. The first coating you applied was Natural Flesh. A warthog epidermis has a lot of fleshy color showing through. The sun tans the hide as well as dried on mud or a dirt dusting as they roll for protection from the intense heat and bugs. But you still have the natural color showing through and this is what you are trying to re-create. So don't over-spray the mount. Be sure to use your reference pictures. Each warthog does vary slightly as well as the color of dirt or mud they roll around in.



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**#4** After the mount is clean you can continue. You should be pretty close to the color you want on the majority of your piece.



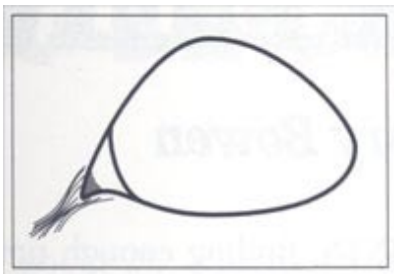
**#5** #203 Dark Brown is used to fine down to your desired reference photo. Apply this also around the eyes and tear ducts, using a fairly heavy coat on tear ducts. Inside the ears and around the feet and hooves. A warthog's eye glands do secrete some oils, but the majority of the wet look is the fluid from the corners of the eyes. #601 Jet Black is used to mist over the eye glands and the upper half of body only. Apply under the jaw and around the head. A little on the belly is also needed.



**#6** You need to clean the mount again with the same method as before. After your mount is clean you can clean the eyes. With the liquid eye protectant painted on, when dried it is easily removed with a toothpick and peeled off. This saves a lot of cleaning time and also the possibility in scratching eyes.

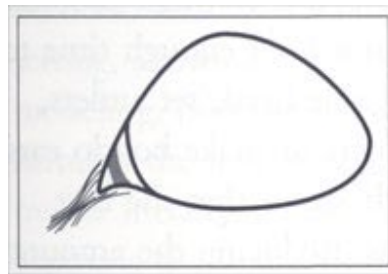


**#7** After eyes are cleaned the left eye nictitating membrane is painted. In this particular mount I rolled the eyes left. This is painted by hand using acrylic paints, starting from the corner and working out to the edge. Using unbleached titanium for a base coat, painting about three-fourths of the way out.



**#7a** Apply red iron oxide in the very deep corner, blending into the unbleached titanium.

**#7b** Use burnt umber two-thirds of the way out to the edge. Each color blends into the next (photo 8 below).



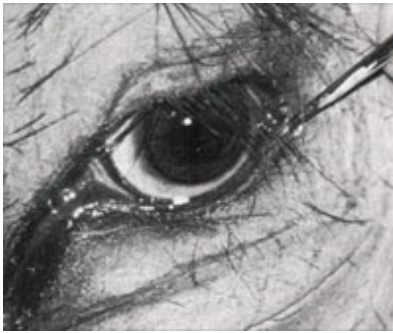
**#7c** Ivory black is used on outer edge, blending into burnt umber.





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**#8** Liquid Crystal is used on the bottom edge of eyelid. I apply three coats of Liquid Crystal.

### **Note from Ron Schaefer**

"When I moved to the Dallas area I found there were many wild game parks to study wildlife. Gathering an extensive library of African and exotic references helps a lot if you specialize in African taxidermy as I do. Teaching African and exotic taxidermy classes, reference gathering, judging competitions and trying to keep up with the taxidermy backlog with Heads Above The Rest, keeps my schedule full. My best advice is to try to keep performing quality work and to love what you do."

### **About the Author**

Ron Schaefer offers full spectrum [Taxidermy Services](#), [Bronze Sculptures](#) and [Wildlife Drawings](#). Ron Schaefer, a Texas taxidermist, founder and artisan for [Heads Above The Rest](#), Inc.® and has been studying the fine art of moving and adjusting skin since 1975. He specializes mainly in life size African and Exotics with his passion being Cats.

Heads Above The Rest, Inc.® is not a large production firm. Ron Schaefer strives for low volume, accepting a limited number of clients each year, enabling him to maintain high quality craftsmanship and customer care. He leads the industry in higher standards and you will see a definite difference when working with Heads Above The Rest, Inc.®.

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