



La Bruja

(The Witch)

By Alex Leipzing

I have been building all kinds of models from WWII era kits to science fiction, historical kits, dioramas, and figures. In the beginning I dedicated myself to assembling tanks, vehicles, planes, and mechanical things. Figures were something difficult and impossible for me and the total opposite to what I commonly built.

With the passage of time and discovering new concepts in which figures can enhance all kinds of models or dioramas I finally decided to put aside my fear, and delve into the field of figures, busts, and their derivatives. Believe me, I do not regret anything.

Entering the world of figures, defined a before and after in my modeling life. I had to re-learn new techniques, change and acquire new tools and paints dedicated to this magnificent genre. This investment of time, knowledge and resources has been very worthwhile. I love tanks and armored vehicles, and I love building sci-fi ships and mythical planes from World War history. But figures have me captivated and have made me get more involved in modeling. They have allowed me to capture a little of my personality and my essence in each new figure I paint.

Dia De Los Muertos (The Day of the Dead) is a very enthusiastically celebrated festivity in my home country of Mexico. An aspect of this enthusiasm are the countless popular songs that pay homage to this celebration. One of those songs is the Huapango Jarocho 'La Bruja' (The Witch) which tells the story and folklore of how we perceive these feminine entities. La Bruja are women of great beauty who deceive and seduce their victims, luring them with gifts or impossible promises only to later show their true nature. Having kidnaped the innocent,

they take them to the mountains and consume their essence or life force. Later the victims are turned into pumpkins or pots. At least that's what they say happens in Veracruz where this style of popular song originated. Based on this Huapango Jarocho song, I was inspired to make this composition based on a 1:10 scale bust from Karol Rudyk Art Miniatures.



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I wanted to give her a 'Day of the Dead' touch by painting her mask with lines of different colors, shapes and flowers resembling the makeup of our Catrinas or Sugar Skulls. This is an important aspect to the folklore of this tradition. Painting this detail took a lot of time due to the fact that I had to be very precise to prevent the lines and shapes from having to be corrected later or making them seem forced.



The figure has several accessories and jewels on it which provides the possibility of painting those items in different tones and finishes to simulate materials such as semi-precious and precious gems (coral, quartz, jade, etc.), and metals (gold, silver.)

The spoked wheel is an interesting element that has two very important accessories. One is the typical Brujeria (witchcraft/ voodoo doll) for hexes or bindings. The other, the famous chicken feet. Widely used in black witchcraft. Both elements are easy to paint but placing them was a bit laborious. The spikes and the dripping candle wax allow for the possibility of being painted with rust and weathered effects, adding a very rural feel.



The small chest that La Bruga is holding is painted in a more careful way, since it has several gems and elements that make it look very luxurious. The interior is full of ornaments, coins, and gold jewelry which were painted completely in silver. Later I put a clear, yellow color on those items to give them a very shiny, polished gold appearance.



I wanted each individual element to look striking, new and very valuable. In the end, this is the dazzling bait that traps many unsuspecting victims.



The cat is completely inspired by my cat, Lettuce. Putting a black cat in the scene seemed very trite to me and in Mexico it is said that witches adopt cats of any color. I chose to paint the cat as Lettuce and not just another dark cat. With this element finished, I took time painting the brown and white pattern of the fur line by line with a fine tipped brush. I also wanted the whiskers to look old and worn so I made them from the bristles of an old paint brush.



The painting of La Bruja's skin was done with an airbrush. I started from a totally black base which gave the figure a smooth, shiny finish. From there I airbrushed sensual, brown skin tones. Conversely, the rotting face was painted with a brush using grayish tones, with a cataract effect in the eyes and a bloody color on the gums and teeth.



The base is full of pumpkins of different sizes which I sculpted one by one. Several of the old pots and jars have the name of each victim (Adela, Pepa, Joba, Juan, etc.) engraved on them as mentioned in the song. These items, as well as all the terrain were sculpted from epoxy clay. The foliage, grass and branches were all fashioned from dehydrated plants and foliage and sealed using natural materials.





I hope you like this work. I tried to infuse the figure with the essence of my favorite holiday as well as incorporating aspects of the popular folklore of Mexican witches. And don't be afraid to come to Mexico, especially during the Dia De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead). I assure you that witches don't really like to come down from the mountains.

