

July 2023 - SU

# *Taxidermy In Focus*

Quarterly Newsletter

*Ashley Rollins*



*Taxidermy Tech*

*Vocational Training and Mentorship*

# Taxidermy In Focus

There has been a lot going on here over the last three months....much more than I have room for here so I promise not to make this too long. I sometimes get a little long with these things and the bigger this newsletter gets the smaller my section is going to have to get!



Ken Darville

First I want to congratulate everyone who attended and competed at the conventions over the spring and early summer. Most of you will already know about Chloe Smiths fox and Ashley Rollins deer entries at the Alabama Taxidermists Convention. If not you can read about it in this newsletter. Chloe's story was also picked up by the Gulf Breeze News and if you want to read that article Ill link it here >>> [Nature Preserver – Gulf Breeze News](#)

Allison Doty went to the National Taxidermist Association Convention in Sioux Falls South Dakota and scored a high second place finish in the Professional Division in some of the most challenging reptile competition in the country. Very proud of her and all of our competitors. I would love to hear from anyone else who competed this year. It was a great season and we are looking forward to next year. And speaking of next year...

## Taxidermy In Focus

Our plan for next year in competition is a pretty aggressive one. Chloe has plans to create another small mammal mount and to try and secure her ascension to the Master Division for 2025. She and I have also committed to a Combined Artist entry for the World Taxidermy Championships next year. This will be my first time competing in over two decades. It is a huge project that will combine carving, sculpting, molding and



**Allison Doty – NTA Convention**

casting to create a Lifesize replica of a Mother and Calf Bottlenose Dolphin. The majority of the time invested in a project like this is research...probably 60% or more. Our first steps in this journey involved reaching out to some old friends at the Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge in Navarre. Retired Air Force Colonel Bill Anderson, a former Director at ECWR and a couple of folks from the ECWR team spent some time in the shop about 3 years ago for some classes to start developing an internal capability to support their education center. I knew that these folks would be extremely helpful to us in gathering as much information as possible on the anatomy and physiology of these animals, relative size data, specific measurements, textures, etc.

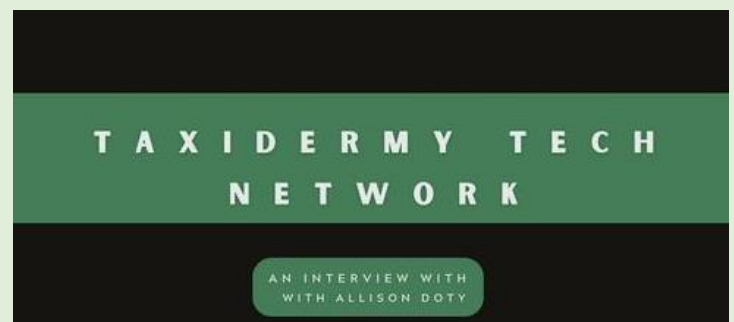
## Taxidermy In Focus

Much of what we would need to replicate the dolphins could potentially be available from a single source. I sent Bill a message and he put me in touch with the current director. Within a few days I got an email from Kennady Brinley and we scheduled a day for Chloe and I to go out and meet her to discuss the project. Kennady is wonderful and we could not do this without her. I will be documenting the entire process on the dolphins in our newsletter over the next year. Unless something has changed, last I heard from Kathy Blomquist was that it looked like the World Show will be in August next year instead of spring.

If you had not seen Sarah's interview with Allison on the Group Page you missed something wonderful. I had no idea and they did this on Fathers Day so it was very special to me. Even better news is that Sarah will continue interviewing our alumni to tell your stories and I am very excited about it! You can see that interview here >>> [Taxidermy Tech Network- An interview with Allison Doty](#)



**Chloe Smith with Kennady Brinley**



## Taxidermy In Focus

Last but not least, we have started an Internship Program. It is in the early stages but we have advertised it and we do have applicants already. I won't get too deep into it just yet as it is currently still evolving but we are looking forward to it. The intent is to primarily find and assess potential future members of our team here in Pensacola but also to give others an opportunity to get valuable experience to help them in their own careers.

That's it for now...Please enjoy the newsletter and if you have any contributions for future newsletters, please submit them to us! We would love to hear from you!



# Competition Techniques

***Grey Fox Part 2 of 3 By Chloe Smith***

*Grey Fox Competition Piece Part 2 – The second of a multi-part series with Chloe Smith documenting (in progress) the design and construction of her competition grey fox from carcass casting the body to molding and casting the mouth, nose and ear liners.*

Editors Note: Since the first part of this article back in April, Chloe completed her fox and attended the Alabama Taxidermists Associations Annual Convention and Competition. In the end she had over 220 hours invested with a little bit of blood, a whole lot of sweat and even a few tears. Everything was custom made with the exception of the eyes which would have also been custom made had there been just a little more time.

This was a new experience for her and the first time for me to witness an employee excelling on this level in over 20 years. Chloe's commercial skills have been rapidly improving over the last year and especially so since the beginning of 2023.



Her confidence has been off the charts and the level of maturity as a professional has been given me greater confidence to increase her levels of responsibilities within our business...which I know sometimes increases her stress level! But she has earned my trust and my respect and I know what she is capable of...which is much more than I ever was or ever will be. Watching her work both as a taxidermist and an instructor and having the opportunity to mentor her and see the growth right before my eyes is

amazing. And I have to admit that going to this convention was probably even more important for me than it was for her... and I know how important it was to her. It was the first time in 22 years attending one and the first time ever I had not competed. Oddly enough, going as a spectator to support Chloe and Ashley Rollins after all the hard work they did was infinitely more fulfilling for me than any show I attended in the past. Had they not done as well as we would have hoped I would have been just as proud because it's not about the destination at all...its all about the journey...and I know their journey has been one of tremendous growth and the confidence they have gained is priceless. But they both did amazing! You can read more about Ashley's Deer in her article in this newsletter. As for Chloe...she did something that just doesn't happen. In 35 years of taxidermy and many years of teaching and competing at the professional and masters division levels, I personally have only seen it happen one other time ...a best of category and a major memorial award in the first competition. I knew that young man as

well and to this day he is one of the most amazing career taxidermists I know...far better than I ever was and far better than I ever will be.



***Chloe Smith***  
***Professional Division***  
***Lifesize Mammals***  
***1<sup>st</sup> Place***  
***Best of Category***  
***Brian Harness Memorial Award***  
***Alabama Taxidermists Association***  
***Annual Convention and Competition***  
***22-25 June 2023***  
***Sheffield Alabama***

There is an irony to this in the way that it played out and that is the fact that exactly 28 years prior at the Alabama Convention, I myself won my first Best of Category and the first Brian Gordon Memorial award with a Lifesize mammal...a swimming otter. The major difference between her entry and mine is that hers was much better AND it took me 3 competitions to achieve what took her 1. Many competitors compete for years trying to win a blue ribbon and even longer for a best of category so to do what Chloe did is truly extraordinary. She set the bar high for herself and now

she will have to maintain that standard of which I am confident she will. I am very excited about her future and I know that she will be one that everyone will be watching for in future competitions. As one long standing ATA member and highly experienced competitor put it to me...this young lady is a threat.



### **Chloe Smith**

*Professional Division - Lifesize Mammal  
1<sup>st</sup> Place  
Best of Category  
Brian Harness Memorial Award  
Alabama Taxidermist Association  
Convention and Competition  
22-25 June 2023  
Sheffield, Alabama*



In the last article we left off with the completion of the carcass molds. In this article we will continue the process through casting and assembling the body, mouth, nose and ear work and the mounting and finishing process.

**Taxidermy In Focus**

The fox specimen was in wonderful condition and was one of the largest grey foxes I have ever seen. I chose to skin it using the Ventrular Tubular technique which had the least amount of stitching and is the least noticeable. It was tanned using [Kryolan](#), a premium tanning solution and soaked for a few days stirring a couple of times a day.



The mold vessel was a [card board](#) tube hot glued and sealed to a board around the head which was screwed into the board from the back with a [two inch drywall screw](#).

The intent of casting the full head was to have a complete [jawset](#) and nose. Nose was in good condition but the lip line was a little dried out so I will have to use [Apple Sculpt](#) to fill it out.



For the form, I first set up the fox in a wood frame in the position I want him to be molded in. Wires are put into the back and then adjusted to where I wanted it to be. I then set the feet and drilled them into the wood. I froze it to keep it in the position that I created so that I could cut off the legs and make a mold from them and the torso in their position. Using this [method](#) you can create an animal form in any position you want.

**Taxidermy In Focus**



I used about 32 ounces of Smooth-On 14NIV silicone rubber with its catalyst mixed at 10% by weight to make the mold. I used a urethane casting resin ... A and B mixed two equal parts to pour the cast. This will be the head I will use for the form. Why did you make another [jawset](#) in this way? I wanted to get more intact teeth. What did you use to mold [it](#)? I used sand and the same rubber stuff.



**Taxidermy In Focus**



teeth and the [two part](#) casting resin for the [teeth](#) cast around the dental acrylic [jawset](#). I did [teeth](#) but it is primarily a backup.

I would recommend keeping it (pose) as natural to the species' actual movements as possible. Study your reference, know the species that you are working with and know their daily and natural movements and actions.



**Taxidermy In Focus**



inch away from each body part all the way around.

I mixed glaster into a soupy consistency and poured over each part. Once it set, I flipped each one over and put a release sealer over it all and then did the whole process over again.



So far I think I am moving in the right direction and is turning out nicely. I am learning a lot and very excited to see it coming together. I can't wait to see the finished product!

Next issue... Grey Fox Competition Piece Part 2 - The second of a multi-part series with Chloe Smith documenting the design and construction of her competition grey fox.



This is where the last article left off. The molds had been made of the body and all of the legs. At this point the plaster molds are allowed to dry. For casting they are coated inside with two coats of PVA alcohol which was painted in with a brush. Polyvinyl alcohol is a mold release that when dry forms a thin polyvinyl sheet that forms a barrier between the mold and the casting medium to keep it from sticking. Since the molds would be filled with foam for casting a secondary release layer of wax was applied and buffed out. The two sides of each mold were then taped together with electrical tape. A 1/2 inch hole was bored into each mold with a drill and fitted with a bolt as a plug. Two part 4-lb foam was mixed and poured into each mold and plugged.

At this juncture I am removing clamps that were holding the mold which I had filled with foam to create one of the foxes legs.

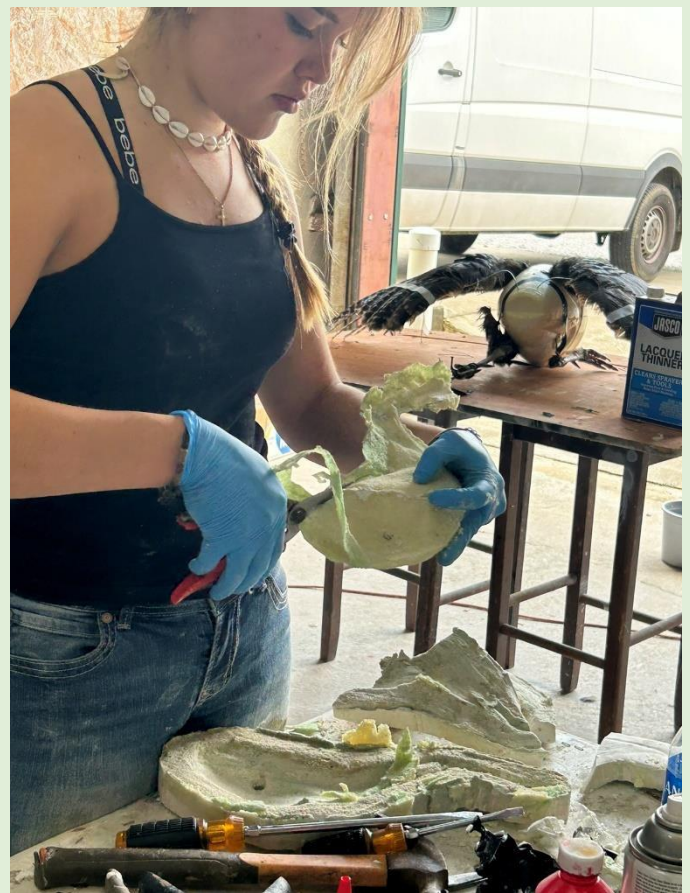
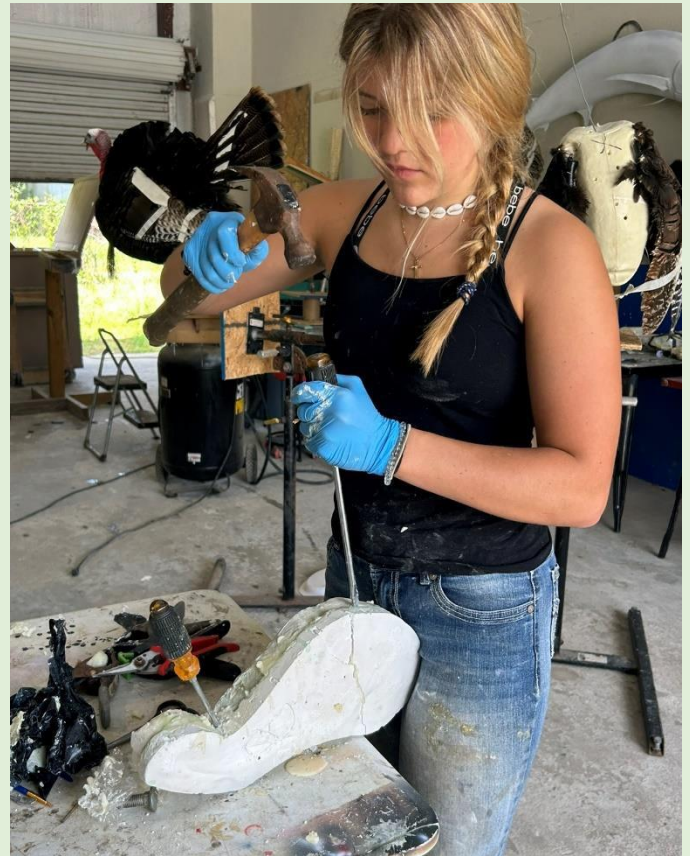


I then removed the electrical tape from the mold that was used to wrap it. The electrical tape ensures equal pressure around the plaster mold in order to keep the foam from leaking out.

I used a hammer and flat head to slowly pry the mold apart from all angles.

With the mold open I carved off the excess foam flashing around the seam and body

Below shows the demolded perfectly cast foam form with all of the details of the back left leg.





Wires are now inserted into the legs by drilling a line 1/2 inch deep down the middle and inserting a 14 gauge wire into the form. Using two part urethan casting resin I poured around the wire encasing it in the leg. This can be done before or after you mold it. You may want to use a heavier gage wire for the legs that will be supporting the body...12 or 10 gage would have been a better option.

The legs were positioned and attached with wire and screws. Once their placement/position was determined I drilled a long hole down the temporary base and inserted the leg wire.

When making the form it does not automatically create indentions for the leg joints to fit correctly. So in order to make it anatomically accurate I had to sculpt out the area so the "shoulders", "elbows" and thighs can naturally be contoured to the body. In the first picture on the next page, I had drawn out an outline and carved the sockets in the body to accept the legs correctly.





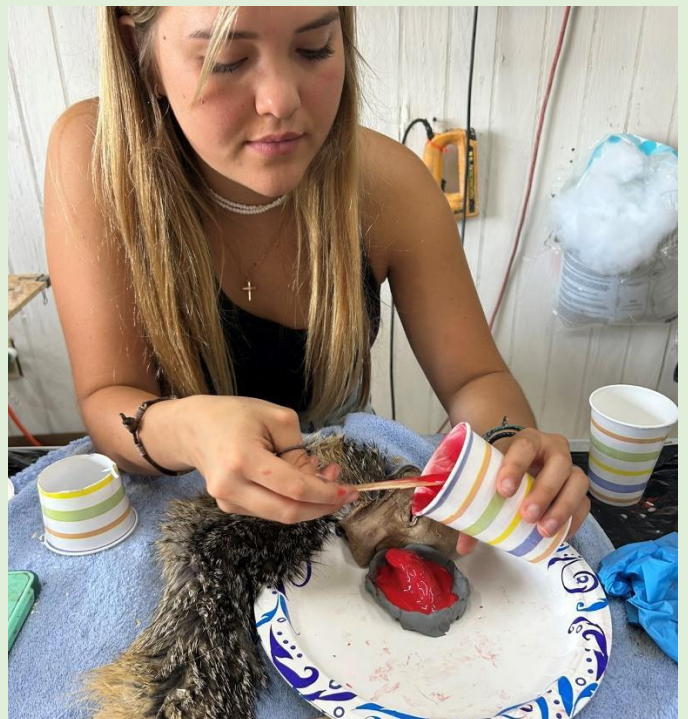
I then foamed in the legs and the body using two part urethane foam and began to carve and rasp out the rough shapes and smooth it out.

Lots of rasping and trimming in order to make the leg connections accurately correct. Here I have finished carving and sanding it and have added small important details like the rib cage.



Next was the molding process of all the facial and mouth pieces. I started first with the nose. I rehydrated and plumped the fox's nose up by injecting it with water. I then placed it into a cup and secured it with pins and poured the casting rubber over it.

I used a similar process with the ear. I inverted the ear and placed it on and around clay making a dam around with the clay and poured the casting rubber over it. This is a top view of the inverted ear before I poured the rubber on.





The picture in the above left is the dental acrylic mold of the top and bottom jaw taken from the fox. I cast over 20 jaw sets in order to finally get an exceptionally looking set. The molding part of taxidermy takes a lot of trial and error. I used two part dental acrylics with recolored polymers for tooth color and mouth tissues.

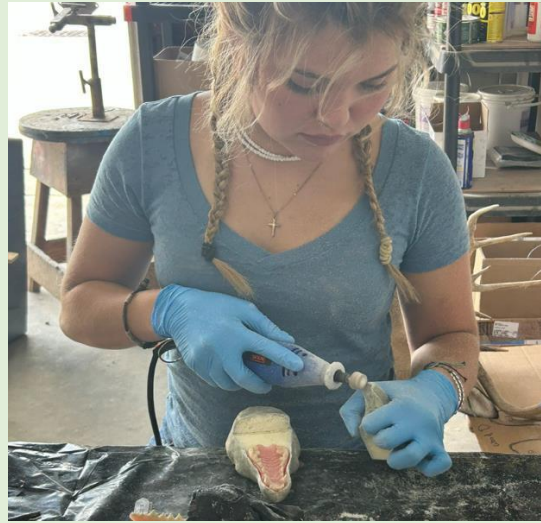
I placed the real tongue inside one of the bottom jaw sets in order to position it correctly. After that I poured casting rubber over it and then used the dental acrylics to create a tongue.

The final casting of the nose was done with urethane resin which detailed very well.

I sculpted out the head and carved it down to fit the jaw set properly. As you can see the jaw set has to fit in perfectly

Using water based paint to precolor the Apoxie sculpt, I sculpted the interior details of the mouth creating a perfect palate for the upper jaw set. I fit the upper jaw set in, building up the sides and the inside of the cheek so that when I fit the bottom jaw down there was no seam line on the interior of the mouth. Test fitting you can see that there is no seam line which makes the finishing work a lot neat.

Before permanently connecting the bottom jaw I pre-sculpt the top and bottom lip line. I have also created a line indentation around the bottom of the lip line for gluing the skin .







To the left is the finished mold of the back of the ear. I filled them with urethane casting resin, slowly rotating it around to create an even hard layer.



The picture to the right is the final product of the ear liners complete with hand painted veining. I hand sculpted the edges of the ear liners with epoxy sculpt to make them thinner and more sharp



I test fitted the skin to the form and began sewing up my ventral incision. The fox showed signs of hair loss at this point and it was necessary to commit right after test fitting. This was 3 PM and it was after midnight before mounting was complete. It was an exhausting night!

More sewing!



The tail was placed and sewing was complete.

I gave it a quick blow dry and did a cleanup of the incision line to get rid of any extra high paste.

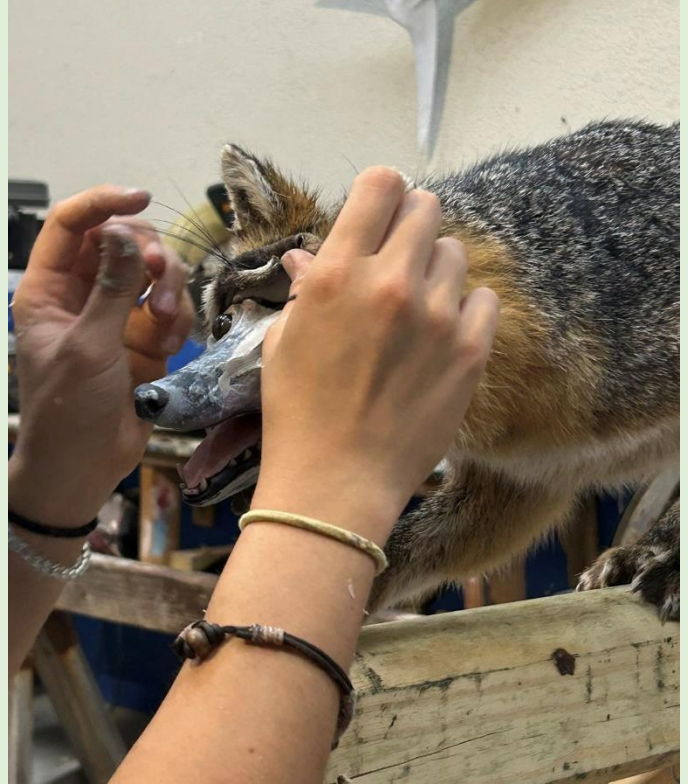


At this point I am putting in the tail. I took a wire wrapped in paper towels and string to make it identically proportionate to its tail.



I placed two 12 gauge wires into the back of the head by drilling holes and filling them with hot glue and then insert the skull through the mouth of the skin. I put clay around the head and the neck to form a smooth transition

I then pulled the skin over the head and adjusted.



I made apoxie sculpt inserts in order to attach the ears easily .The liners had been positioned on the head prior to mounting and earbutts presculpted with apoxie sculpt, then cut out to create a pre-set. The ears were then inserted and glued with Pro-1 during mounting so at this stage they plugged right in.

High paste is being put around the head and the mouth and the ear but slots in order to keep it securely attached to the once it dries.





.The thin hide around the mouth is being  
into the groove that I had created around  
the lip line.

Next I position and align the hair  
patterns.



An important step is proper grooming  
and this includes cleaning and blow  
drying the hair in order to get it to lay  
correctly. This has to be done a couple  
times a day until fully dried. This step is  
crucial to keep the fur standing up, fluffy  
and looking natural





I placed stiff carding on the ears to keep the ear edges from curling and to help prevent drumming while drying.

In the October newsletter I will cover finishing work and the process used for making the tree section that the fox was walking on as well as the poor grasshopper that was almost didn't make it!

Here are a couple of shots of me scrambling to do last minute touchups in the hotel room the night before the convention began. It was a late night!



I have the best parents in the whole world. They have supported me and helped me so much!



A lot has changed in the taxidermy industry since my first catalog came in the mail back in 1988. Over the years I learned out of necessity to use Walmart, Home Depot and Hobby Lobby a bit more in an effort to become less dependent on the supply industry for consumable supplies. Fast forward to today and what I see among the taxidermy community is a higher level of dependence than ever before and so my intent in our training and training support efforts has always included help our students learn how to find the materials they need locally and how to produce their own as much as possible, but in an efficient way.

In our waterfowl course the student learns how to make their form in either carving or wrapping...they learn to mold and cast their own heads and bills and now how to make their own eyes. All of this can be done with efficiently with materials that you can purchase locally or through Amazon.

We obviously produce some of these items for sale to our Taxidermy Tech Network exclusively at discounted prices and that's ok if that's what you want. But you should have a choice and in order to have a choice you need to know how to make that choice a viable one.

So that's what we are doing in this article...bird eyes. We continue to experiment heavily with new ideas on how to make our work more efficient and less dependent. We have some new ideas we are working using clear urethanes with our focus on mammal eyes and we will keep you updated on our progress as these projects progress.

## Making your own Acrylic Bird Eyes

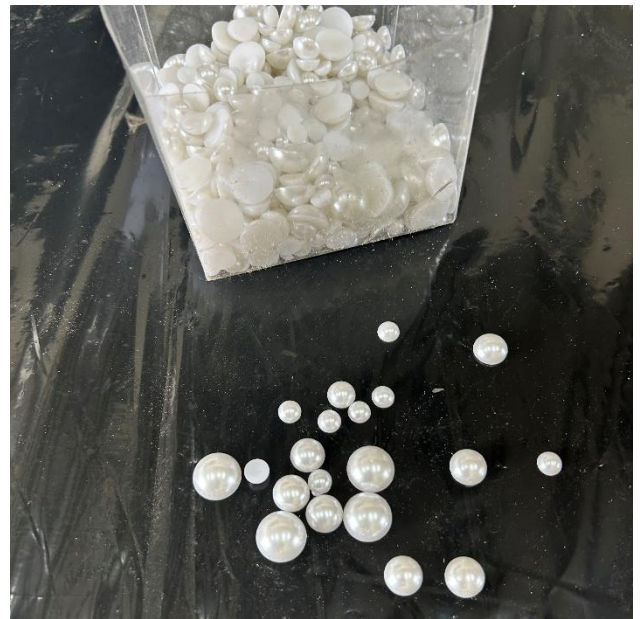
*By Ken Darville*



For these eyes you will need flat back plastic beads or pearls that are used for making costume jewelry. You can buy singles sizes or an assortment and in large quantities very cheap. The sizes can range 2mm on up and in a range of common waterfowl sizes...8mm, 9mm, 10mm and 12 mm. I get the pearl or base white but you can also find pre colored. I prefer to paint my own for birds but the recolored black ones are great anywhere that you would use a hollow bubble eye...squirrels, otters, etc.



Our cast duck heads are preset for eyes and in this article we are doing eyes for one of our base shovelor heads and for one of our color cast canvasbacks. The shovelor eye will be yellow and the canvasback will be red.



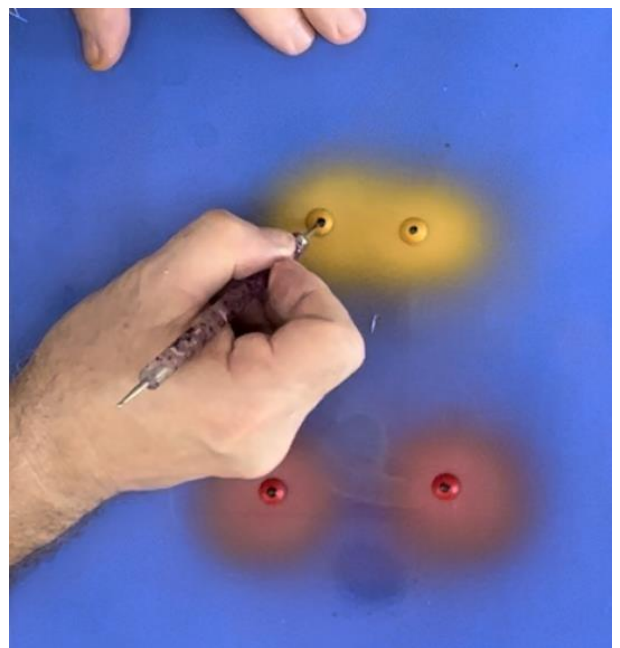
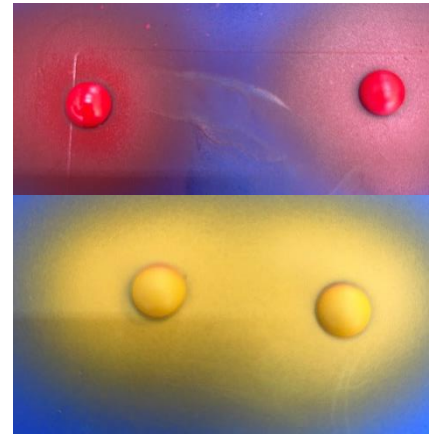
Select the correct eye size and using 2 sided take or a little spray adhesive secure the flat back bead to a piece of cardboard or some surface you can paint on. Spay a light coat of matte sealer over the beads to prepare the surface for paint. We prefer to



use Rustoleum 2X Matte Sealer that you can purchase in Walmart and Home Depot.

Next... paint the eyes the desired color using lacquer or water based paint and your airbrush. You could hand paint them with acrylics but it is possible you might have brush strokes. I used lacquer paints with gill red and yellow ochre.

After a few minutes to ensure your paint is dry you will need to apply the pupil. You can use a small artists brush or even an airbrush but it is difficult to get a near perfectly round pupil free hand with a brush and the airbrush will likely leave a pupil that is a bit too soft on the edges. We have been using dotting tools used in nail art to apply the pupil by hand using black acrylic paint. Works great! Practice on a couple of blank unpainted beads. Load the round tip by dipping in the acrylic paint and touch to the center of the bead. If you want the pupil larger just carefully move the tip in a slow circular pattern. The round tip really helps to keep the shape consistently round.





You will have to allow the acrylic pupil to dry which could take a few minutes. The acrylic paint is thicker and will need to dry all the way through to keep from smearing.

Now you are ready for the UV acrylic resin coating. We have been using the Hildie & Jo resin from Joann's but any UV resin is fine. This clear coating is thick and cured only through UV light. The fastest and the best way is 5-10 minutes in direct sunlight but you can also use a UV light bulb (available through Amazon, Lowe's, Home Depot) or any UV light source.

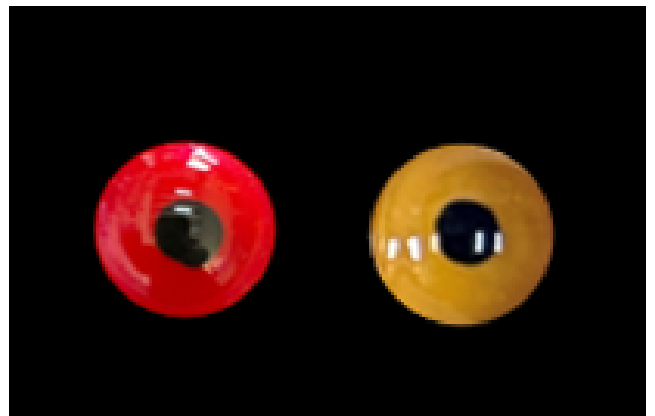
The UV resin will come in a non-see through container. Pour a small amount into a dry water bottle cap...this stuff will coagulate fairly quickly in ambient light and quickly cure in direct UV light contact. Take a small brush and coat the eye completely. We set our eye with a small amount of super glue before coating. If you are making a lot of eyes at one time you will need to lay them out on wax paper to be able to peel them off easily so we find it better to coat after installed.



Place under the UV light source or in direct sunlight and in about 10 minutes the resin will cure. For more depth and a deeper corneal lens you can apply another coat of resin and cure.

We have been experimenting for a long time for a good solution for an economical commercial bird eye with depth and clarity...and one that we will never run out of. We had historically used the aspheric flint eyes and then later used the European acrylic eyes. Flex eyes have no depth and the sizes are not correct as they are sized only to fit an eye ring that is part of their system. Most birds wont have the wood duck sized eye rings so that particular system doesn't work for us. The wired economy eyes that most of the suppliers carry have a little too much of the coke-bottle lens look and I have never like that at all.

The eyes that we are producing here for our commercial birds allows us to size properly, customize the color and lens and is a good equal alternative to the European acrylics.



## Competition Whitetail Journey

I took basic whitetail class with Ken back in 2021 and this year I decided to enter my first competition. I really enjoyed pouring my heart out into this, it was a lot of fun to be put to the test and there were times that I got frustrated and had to walk away from it because something would mess up or my hands were not doing what my mind could see. I knew I was going in there with flaws but those flaws were my lessons.

*I learned SO MUCH going through this journey and there's still so much to learn and I want to learn.*

It puts you in a whole new mindset because you are challenging yourself to give all you got in all of your being to recreate this creature. You are going all the way to the little, tiny, fine detail of every inch of this animal. If it were not for those mistakes I made I could not have improved. I wanted critiques for things I was not seeing and try to learn how to correct what I knew I was walking in with.



I wanted to be critiqued to mold me into a better taxidermist. And after that show and talking with judge about my deer my mind has been in overdrive thinking of ways I can improve my skills and techniques. My eyes were opened to the little things that would have made a world of difference. I did this to meet other taxidermist and learn and share ideas, and it's mind blowing seeing all the God given talent in the competition room. So many beautiful mounts and hard work. My favorite seminar of all was by Rick Krane and he did not mount or paint a thing, he just spoke. I just listened to all

his wisdom he had to share. That man is so full of knowledge that he blew my mind! I wish I could remember his quote word for word, but its along the lines of enjoying failure. If you don't have failure how will you get better? Use your failure to light a fire in you to do better and not let it discourage you. He don't know it, and don't even known me but I needed to hear that. I love a good challenge and love to test myself, I've always been a competitive person. Ever since the convention, I have been thinking and taking notes of how to go above and beyond the average and how to really bring my deer to a different level. Things hitting me now that I didn't see or think of prior this experience, and most if it being little fine detail that I didn't even think about until after the fact. Being my first time I didn't know what to expect at all.

I redid my personal deer that I shot back in 2012, so I really wanted a pose I loved and of course being me that's not an original form I could just find anywhere so I made it happen.. I love to try and be different and unique. I really wanted to create the vision I had planned in mind.

I used a Joe Coombs pedestal semi sneak, with a Ben Mear's change out head.



I altered it with more of chin up look like he's kind of winding the air, checking his surroundings. I foamed the Mear's head to the Coomb's form, then had to resculpt the neck muscles accordingly to his new head position with apoxi sculpt.

***Your are going all the way to the little, tiny, fine details of every inch of this animal.***



I used a cast nose and ear liners. I built my ear butts with apoxie sculpt. I under



built those muscles because I was worried I was going to make them too big and that caused a ding on my score sheet, LESSON LEARNED.

Finish work painting... I used some lacquer based airbrush paints and pan pastels. The judge told me this is my weakness, so I've really got to get on the ball with blending my colors better. Other than memories made and learning, the best thing I walked out of that place with is my score sheet, Now to try to apply it and improve.



For the habitat I had an original plan of building a tree and blending it into the backing of the deer. I had that pedestal started and a 4x4 on it ready to make my tree, I already did foam and glued my dirt layer down. It wasn't going like I wanted.



One night it was a slap in the face with a sudden change of plans with what I wanted to do. A Bible verse came to mind and it all flowed together and I thanked God right then and there. I started with a whole new pedestal and I got a rustic piece of barn wood with Bible verse engraved in it. I carved out the back of the form to fit the wood in and used free form habitat black to create my tree bark. I used a silicone tree bark mold to press into the free form to create the backing around the wood (if you ever use this, 90% alcohol is a good release agent so it don't stick to your mold) After dried I painted with a grey base color acrylic then

when dried I finished the rest with pan pastels.

I took many trips through the woods looking for mosses and observing oak trees to try to recreate that look. Then I ran across mushrooms that I loved.



So I learned you can use all purpose silicone caulk with a drop of acrylic paint to "kick it in a heat" to make a mold. After it was dry I cut mushroom out and poured in amazing casting resin to create mushrooms, painted with pan pastels.

*I love a good challenge and love to test myself, I've always been a competitive person.*

I also did a small water scene with amazing casting resin, I added some fish and little rocks from a creek in it before adding the resin.



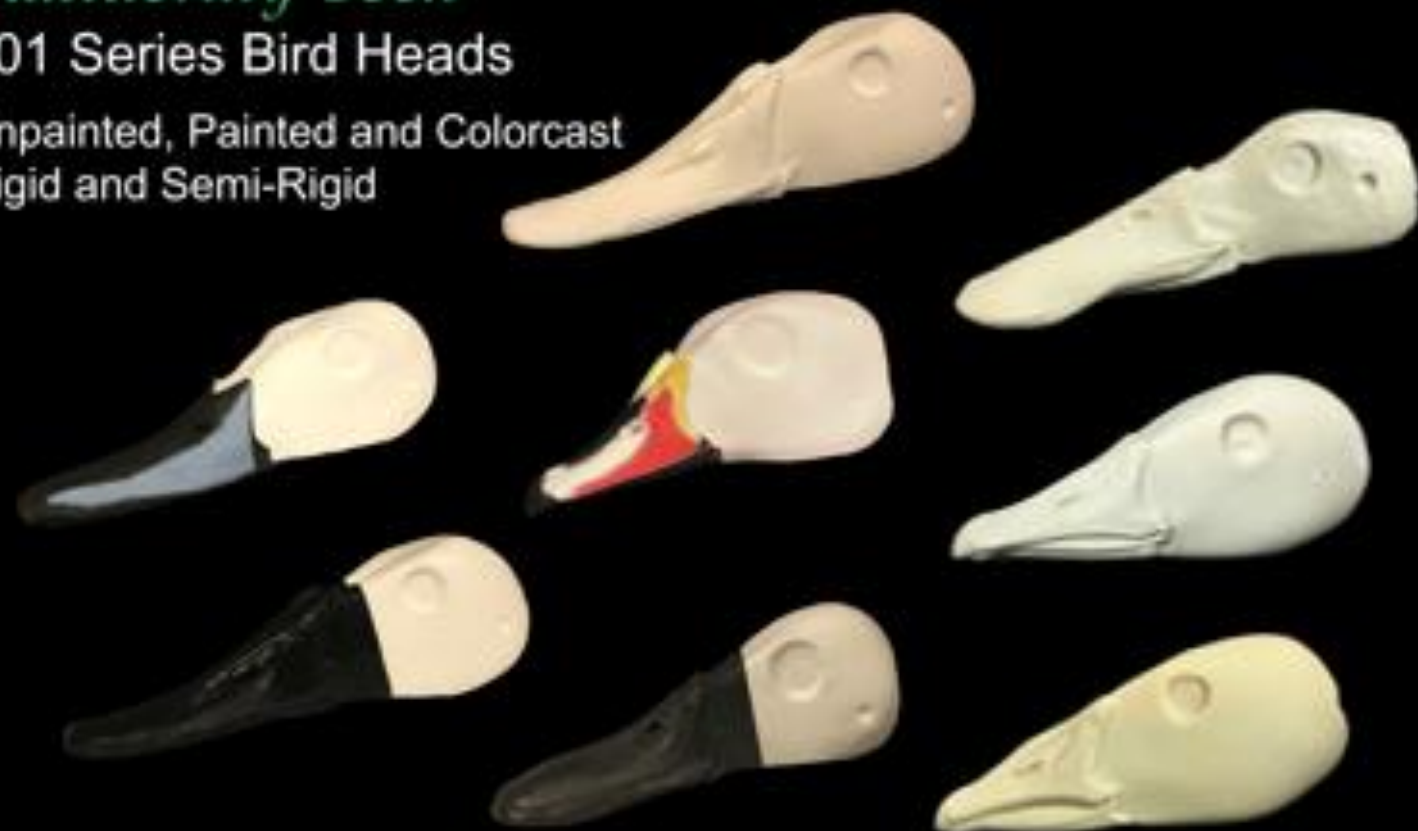
An advertisement for Taxidermy Tech Vocational Training Programs. The top section features the company name in a stylized font, followed by "Vocational Training Programs" and contact information: "CALL TODAY - TOLL FREE (844) 945-3278", "Pensacola, Florida", and "www.taxidermytech.com". There are small images of a deer head and a taxidermy process. Below this, a woman named Ashley Rollins from Woodland, Alabama, is shown smiling and holding two taxidermy mounts of deer heads. She is wearing a white t-shirt that says "Taxidermy Tech - ALUMNI". The website "www.taxidermytech.com" is printed at the bottom of the advertisement.

Thankful to be a part of Taxidermy Tech alumni and to be able to share my experience with you..

## *Taxidermy Tech*

### 101 Series Bird Heads

Unpainted, Painted and Colorcast  
Rigid and Semi-Rigid



**Bufflehead**  
**Green Wing Teal**  
**Blue Wing Teal**  
**Cinnamon Teal**  
**Black Belly Whistling Duck**  
**Widgeon**  
**Goldeneye**  
**Ringneck**  
**Northern Shoveler**  
**Wood Duck Drake**  
**Wood Duck Drake Open Mouth**  
**Wood Duck Hen**

**Mallard**  
**Hooded Merganser**  
**Hooded Merganser Open Mouth**  
**Pintail**  
**Redhead**  
**Canvasback**  
**Common Eider**  
**Snow Goose Medium**  
**Snow Goose Large**  
**Speckled Belly Medium**  
**Speckled Belly Large**  
**Ross's Goose**

Unpainted heads are \$9.50 . All painted heads are \$14.50.

Colorcast heads are \$10.50 and are currently only available in  
BW Teal, Hooded Merganser and Canvasback.

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# Habitat Design and Construction

## Constructing a Splash

### Part 2 of 3

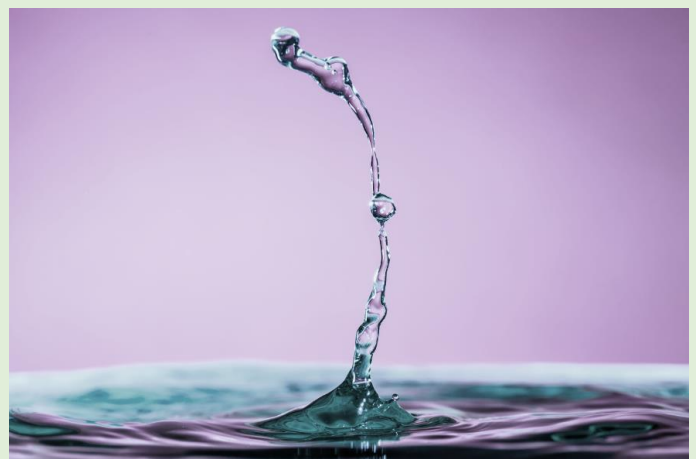
In the last newsletter I covered the elements of a splash so that we could deconstruct it and piece it back together. I made a few primary and secondary pieces using clear monofilament and polyester resin. In this second part of the series I will cover the construction of a small drop splash using one of the pieces I previously created. In part 3 I will continue to build on this simple drop splash and create a more complex composition. Below is a general reference picture for the composition.



## Habitat- Constructing a Splash

For this demo I started with an 8 x 12 x 1/16<sup>th</sup> clear acrylic sheet that I purchased from Lowes. If this were actually a water scene for a mount the size and thickness would be an important consideration in the overall composition size and weight that it would need to support if any.

I used one of the primary sections with a couple of small secondaries that I made in the last newsletter demo. I wanted this splash to be a simple drop splash...as if a pebble was dropped in the water creating a long steady vertical primary with a couple of small secondaries coming off as in the reference. There would also need to be a few ripples and some central turbulence,

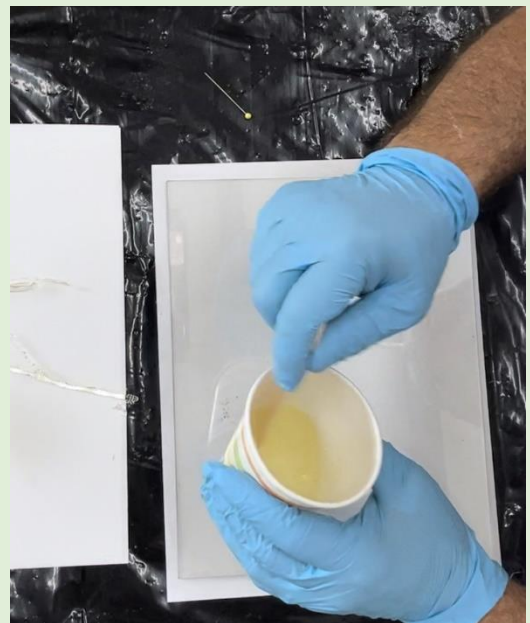
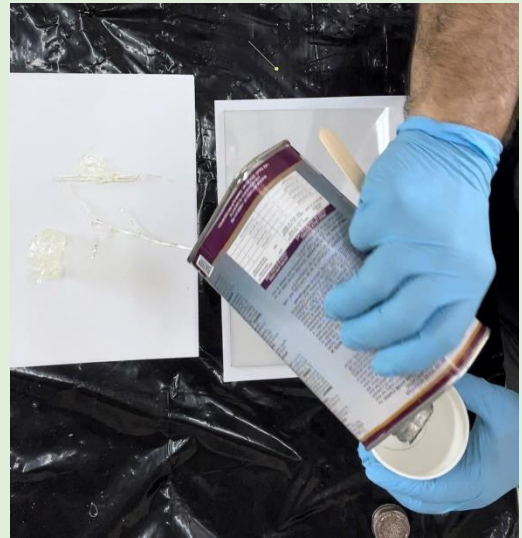


## Habitat- Constructing a Splash

I did use clear polyester resin in this demonstration however, we will be using clear urethane in the future on everything we use clear polyester resin and acrylic resin. The polyester resins can yellow over time. We have used these polyester resins because they go through a gel state fairly quickly that can be manipulated to create shapes and effects. The urethane is a far superior product for water, ice and snow scenes and it does not yellow. It is very expensive though...a gallon will run about \$300.

I catalyzed a small amount of resin and stirred until it started to thicken a bit and right before it gelled.

I poured the resin on the acrylic sheet and began to swirl it with the stir stick to make ripples.



## Habitat- Constructing a Splash

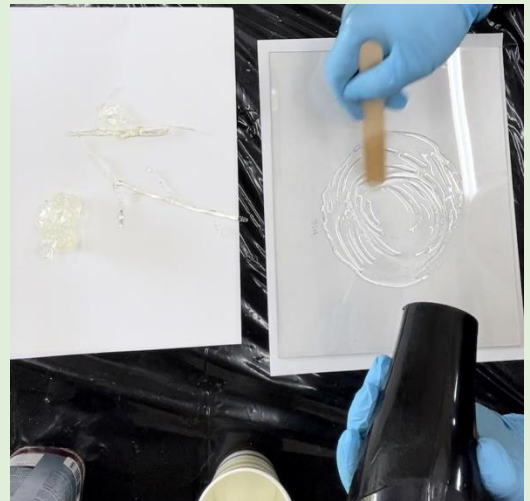
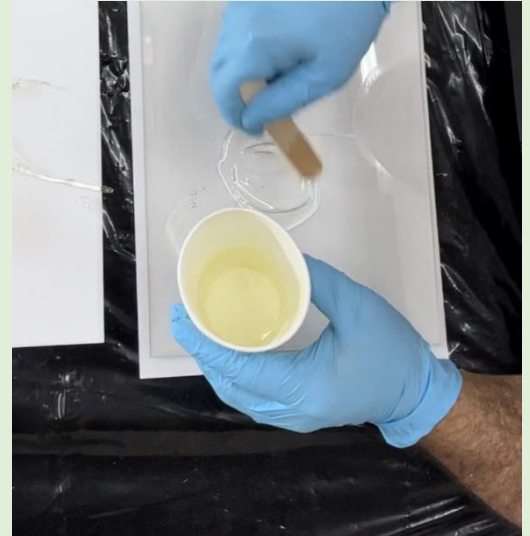
As the resin first started to gell I used the hair dryer on high heat to further roll the ripples.

Once the resin set I mixed another batch and repeated the process on the inside of the first ripple rings.

The hairdryer is a great way to create waves and ripples in polyester resin. It also helps to set the resin fast by speeding up the heat.

You can put as much effort as you want into creating rows of ripples. I kept this one simple.

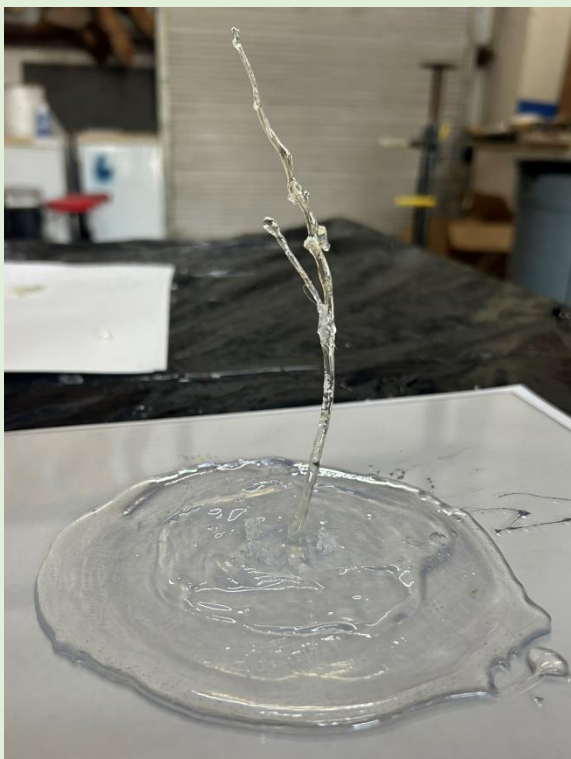
I left an open reservoir in the center of the ripples where the primary splash would be.



## Habitat- Constructing a Splash

The primary splash was then hot glued with clear glue to the acrylic sheet and held in place until it set. I then mixed another smaller batch of resin and filled the reservoir by dripping the resin down the splash to weld it to the acrylic and the ripple section.

And there you have it! In the next newsletter we will build on this splash and put together some more complex pieces.



# NEW!!! Taxidermy Tech Forum!

<https://www.taxidermytech.com/forum>

Created for those who are not on social media and the group page... but It is for all of us! Just another resource from Taxidermy Tech.

The screenshot shows the Taxidermy Tech Forum interface. At the top is a green header with the forum name. Below it are navigation links for 'All Posts', 'Categories', and 'My Posts', along with a search bar and a settings icon. The main content area features a 'Sort by: Recent Activity' dropdown, a 'More Actions' dropdown, and a 'Create New Post' button. The forum posts are listed in a table with columns for the post title, author, replies, likes, views, and time. The posts are sorted by recent activity.

				Recent Activity	
Savannah Will Current Week Day 5	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	1	2h
On Taxidermy Competition	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	4	2d
Expressions of Wildlife	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	5	2d
Find out what our Alumni know about our program!	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	2	2d
Wood Duck Eye Rings	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	2	2d
Recent Alumni	Ken <small>uw</small> · Alumni	0	0	3	2d
Waterfowl Heads Available	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	2	2d
Current Week - Savannah Will Day 3	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	3	2d
April Newsletter	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	2	3d
Current Week - Savannah Will	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	6	3d
Another sneak peek at progress on Chloe's competition piece.	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	5	3d
Welcome to the Taxidermy Tech Forum	Ken <small>uw</small> · General Discussion	0	0	1	3d

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