

# Caracolilla

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Welcome GK junkies to another issue of *AFM* devoted to original design model kit mania. In this episode I'm going to try to bypass the usual monster-horror-chiller theatre avenue and instead take a bit softer turn toward sci-fi and fantasy with Blackheart Enterprises' Caracolilla. This 1/2 scale bust, beautifully sculpted by Abner Marin, is itself a departure from Blackheart's list of usual suspects (famous classic and modern horror characters), so it's only fitting to try a slightly different approach painting her, or at least it makes sense to me. Anyway, she has a very interesting swirling seashell-like structure on either side of her head and I thought it might be fun to portray her as kind of the pearl of the sea; a princess of some ocean depth society unknown to the landlubbers above. In addition, I'll also be trying out some of Badger Airbrush's newer line of paints, the Minitaire series, Casey Love's airbrush colors and the pearl set.

Picture number one shows the bust primed and in a very, very light gray by mixing the included Stynylrez gray and white primer together. Casey Love brand Cracked Soil, a yellow white shade, is applied to add some depth into the base color. I then used the Minitaire version of Cracked Soil which is the same tone only warmer having a slight brown tint mixed in to map in where the redder tones will be (Pic. 2). Next, I used Skull White to highlight the edges of the shell swirl and her forehead, nose, cheekbones and chin (Pic. 3). These steps are real subtle I know, but it helps me see how things will work out without going for broke and having to repaint if I don't like it. Beginning with the darker, warm shade, I decided to push the red brown a bit more towards purple and push the color heavier by mainly adding reddish purple, still keeping it semi-transparent by mixing the color with a transparent base medium. I like to use Comart because it dries with more of a matte finish but something like Tamiya clear would work

as well. Next, I add a yellow brown tone called Mummy and spray the outer ridge of the spiral and circle in parallel to the red purple. Finally, turquoise is lightly sprayed along the white edging (Pic. 4).

The top of her head and the shell spirals definitely have a more monstrous look compared to the organic beauty of the sides and face because of the horns and harder edged bony growth concentrated up there. I mix a transparent gray green and mottle the area backing off as I get close to the yellow brown color, then with black umber, concentrate around the base of the horns and punch up the shadowed areas (Pic. 5). I really had to pay attention to this step because it would be real easy to push her toward a darker realm; the amazing detail itself lends well and easily pulls you in that direction especially with cool black umber loaded in the airbrush. I searched my feelings, fought the urge and instead changed to an extra transparent Aqua and applied very, very soft shadows around her face, lips, and just tinted the recessed areas in general along the entire piece. I then added a little more aqua color to the transparent mix and tightly mottled here and there around the shell (Pic. 6).

Moving down to the neck/base section of the bust, I use the same shades as in the shell and as before, lightly map out where I'd like the colors to be (Pic. 7). Once I'm satisfied and I get a good feeling about the entire piece, it's time to start again from the beginning and bump up all the colors in the same order as before. The only change to the paint recipe is a little less transparent medium in the mix creating in the end, deeper, richer colors, still fading and blending into each other, but a stronger, more vibrant contrast between the hard growth







of the shell and the soft beauty of her face (Pic. 8). This wraps up the paint job as far as basic color is concerned. Next, we move on to adding pearl effects.

I also received Badger's pearl paint set consisting of eight colors: red, blue, green, yellow, white, silver, bronze and gold. I begin with the obvious: I really want her face to be the pearl in the shell so I pour some white into the airbrush (with a tiny bit of water to help with the flow. All the paints used need just a couple of drops of water or retarder to assure a smooth flow through the airbrush) and softly spray the color on the face, nice and easy because I want to build up the pearl effect so it doesn't look like she's wearing a mask. I do the same thing with two more colors--gold, which I carefully mottle around where the shell starts growing to her head and Aqua, by mixing blue, green and white together with an even tighter mottling on the same area. This gives a very nice seashell effect that I continue on to the base as well. Red pearl is sprayed on the

rosy parts where there may be more blood flow, like a fish's gills. Just remember to keep it subtle; pearls can take over a paint job real fast so it's always better to take your time and build up slowly. Pictures 9 and 10 show the first and second passes with the paint and how the effect is built up to create the finished paint job of Caracolilla, the Pearl of the Sea.

I hope the article was interesting, I know we didn't get horrific at all with this piece and that's no knock as I've seen some real nice creepy versions of the bust. I just wanted to get pretty for a change and I think it worked well with the subject. That's the cool thing with original design garage kits; there's no hang up where you can go with these sculptures as the sky's the limit. Thanks to George at Blackheart Enterprises for the bust and Ken at Badger Airbrush for the fine line of airbrush paints, the Minitaire, Casey Love, and Pearl series. There's a ton of fantastic colors to work with that fit the bill for any project you can imagine. Thanks and see you next time.



