

faerie portrait

By David E. Parvin, A.L.I.



When Messier Daguerre invented the first relatively practical photographic process in the mid eighteenth hundreds, many in the art world complained the it wasn't really art because the camera could only capture what was already there. In other words, there was nothing of the artist in the photograph. Though photography has long been recognized as art, the same criticism has been made of life casting. The very first article that I wrote for this magazine in April 2001 was titled "Life Casting, Fine Art or Cheating." (1) The work, "Caylie as a Faerie," is an example of how much of the artist really can come out in the art. The construction of this piece was described in an article of mine titled "Making a 3-D Faerie Portrait" that will appear in the spring issue of Faerie Magazine. If ten different artist had be told to cast Caylie and then turn her into a faerie, there would have been ten very different interpretations. Life casting is indeed alive and well as a method of individual artistic expression.

A detailed description of the construction of this piece will be in Faerie Magazine; but here is a brief summary. The original and unmodified life casting of human Caylie was made in plaster using FiberGel. Thirteen year old Caylie's natural faerie looks helped with the transformation. The steps were to open her eyes, point the ears, sculpt in the wings, and add leaves for a dress and a flowers for a head band. After making a silicone rubber mold, the final enhanced portrait was cast in Forton MG. The white flesh parts are FMG plus powdered limestone. The light blue area around and over her head is the same but with a little blue dye. The leaves, wings, hair, and molding at the top are FMG with copper powder. "Super Antique 40" was used to turn the hair black. A green patina solution of my own making, a solution ammonium chloride and cupric chloride, was used on the leaves and wings. The garland is a string of artificial flowers dipped into FMG mixed with brass powder. All parts except the garland were buffed with either a white or a brown buffing compound.

Faerie Magazine has a circulation of almost 30,000 which means that after the spring issue comes out, a whole bunch of people, mostly new, will have been exposed to life casting.

For an email of "Life Casting, Fine Art or Cheating?" contact me at parvinstudio@comcast.net.