

# The Making of “The Phantom”

An idea was born after seeing The Phantom of the Opera and its beautiful haunting music and story line. How to make a pair of dolls that would represent the Phantom and his lady!!

I started with deciding on just who would represent The Phantom. After looking at the gentleman dolls available, I chose Shaun. He was a good size and would go with the lady I was planning to make to go with him.

The next thought, of course, was HOW to put the mask in place without any straps showing. I first found a photo of the mask and after thinking about this for a day or two decided to pour a mask to fit Shaun’s face by pouring it from his mold!!

Work started by first pouring his s/p, arms and legs. That done, the head was poured in flesh porcelain. Once the head was released from the mold, I used only the face half of the mold to pour the mask. The pour gate on the face half was covered with tape and then filled with enough white porcelain to give plenty of extra so that the mask could be formed from the casting. Once the casting had set up the mold was dumped and when dry enough the tape was carefully removed from the pour gate and the casting left to firm up in the mold.

I then carefully cleaned the head and opened the eyes using the TIB’s method of cleaning on the leather hard ware and the head was carefully placed within a large plastic bag to keep it damp until the mask was prepared.

The “mask” was released from the mold, and using the photo a mask was carefully cut from the casting. The head was removed from the bag and the mask was carefully placed over the face and lightly pressed to the head casting to make sure it would assume the shape of the face and fit snugly.

What I hadn’t thought about was, the mask casting needed to be a little larger than the face in order to fit. Since both pieces came from the same mold they were basically the same size. After the head had dried just a little, it did begin to shrink a bit and the mask could be “molded” to fit closely to the face. At this point wet slip was carefully applied to the inside of the mask and the mask placed over the face. I mixed the wet slip with APT II so that it would be more likely to actually stay snugly against the face during the bisque firing and be firmly attached in the bisque stage.

A bit more cleaning and adjusting, I allowed the head to rest on the shelf until time to soft fire.

Here are photos of the mask and the head with the mask in place in raw bisque and after the bisque firing:



The mask



the mask in place on the head prior to bisque firing.

Finally the head with the mask after the bisque firing:



By painting the treated wet porcelain on the back of the mask before firing, the mask is now firmly attached to the face and there are no straps that will show on the finished doll.

The mask of course was the most fun to work out and once that was done, the painting could begin,.

The Phantom of The Opera was on his way to coming to life!!

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