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#### ADMINISTRATIVE

CREATING A TRUE

# Moving Tribute to the Late, Great PRINCE

BY ANTHONY DIPASQUALE

**W**hen Alan Pastrana, owner of PASTRANA UNLIMITED, meets with a client who has a true passion for a project, the first thing he has to do is sit down with the client and proceed with an interview process that consists of picking the customer's brain in an exchange of ideas. So when avid Prince fan, Roxane Winslow, approached him with a plan to commemorate her Suzuki Hayabusa motorcycle in honor the late singer's memory, Alan knew he had an exciting challenge.

"Everyone has a budget, whether big or small," explains Alan. "And during the interview process, it was immediately clear from the amount of reference materials Roxanne brought just how much this project meant to her. It was also evident this was going to be a large undertaking.

Roxane was very passionate about this endeavor, her enthusiasm was the perfect muse to help guide Pastrana. Alan began to sift through the many images and lyrics she had presented to see what would work best with the design of the motorcycle affectionately referred to by its owners as a 'Busa.'

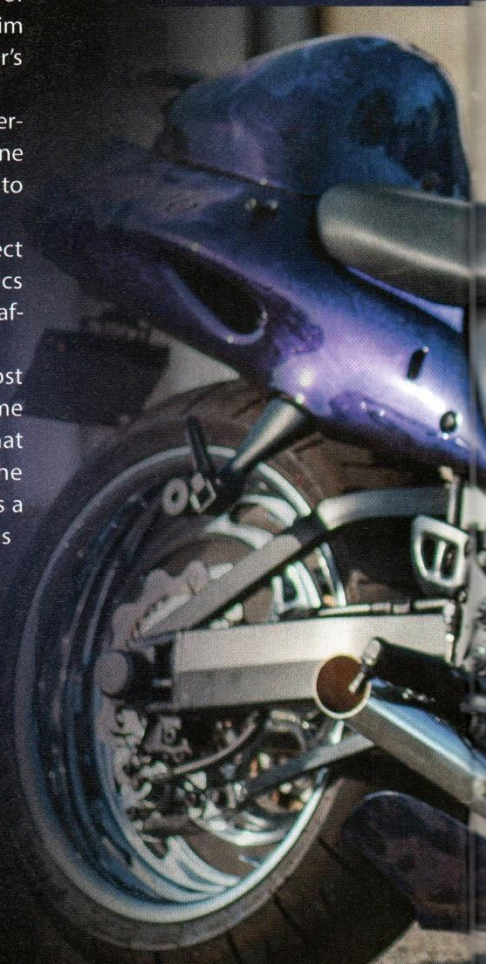
"I always hear out the customer first before I make my suggestions," he says. "Most of the time they know what they want, but sometimes they leave it up to me to come up with the content. Once I establish which images are going to be used and what fits the layout, the next elephant in the room to address, is the budget! Here's the part where we figure out if we're on budget or over budget. As usual sometimes a customer's excitement or enthusiasm might exceed their wallets appetite which is typical for most folks who don't understand about an artists' price structure and what goes into setting a price. Luckily for Alan, he has much experience in settling a customer's expectation, giving them the best bang for their buck while staying on budget and totally maximizing the contents of the project.

**A**fter contemplating the many pictures, they decided on the images that would not only work best, but would also capture the emotional effect Roxanne was looking for to pay homage to her musical hero.

To help stay on budget, Alan relied upon his years of experience and special techniques to maintain the power of the images they'd picked. One of the first money-saving ideas he pulled

from his bag of tricks was to maximize the portraits by enlarging, zooming in, cropping, and only paint one hand instead of two.

"It was a 'less is more' technique that eliminated secondary detail, but still kept it graphically powerful," he explains. "It brought out the composition very well to only show Prince from the waist up with one



hand and his face, big and bold, very powerful, yet simplistic.

Once the plethora of pictures was looked over, we narrowed them down to three main focal points on the bike and three main subjects, the rest would be filler. Yet there was still one major hurdle to overcome. Any proper tribute to the 'Purple One' would have to have a special base color to offset the images to be airbrushed on and Roxane had approached me with the color she wanted to use from a shade she had on just a postcard which simulated a tie dye effect.

"I had to figure out how to recreate this color and stay on budget," he explains. "I came up with a simple solution that would be only a couple of bucks more, yet effective enough that it would appease Roxane's choices, *and* not add an excessive amount of work for me, thus keeping cost at a reasonable level—a marbleizer effect," he says. "I went back to the Roxane telling her about the technique that I felt would be perfect to make the art pop and after I emailed her samples, she agreed right away." In the end, this would be the most crucial effect that would tie everything together and put the icing on the cake without breaking the bank and actually maximizing the entire scope of the job. It was true genius and it's what I get the most compliments on for being such an easy effect.

The "old-school" marble technique was very popular in the late 80's and early 90's and this was the appropriate technique to bring it back!

"The hardest part in creating this effect for the project is ensuring all the nine disassembling parts of the bike maintain color and texture consistency," he continues. "After parts are stripped and primed a black base coat is applied first. This is done so once the silver-to-white marbleizer is applied, there's enough contrast for the marble effect to take place."

Then using an Iwata LPH-400 spray gun, the marlbeizer is applied and then very quickly before it dries, a piece of cellophane paper is laid over the wet marlbeizer and patted down. Once the cellophane is peeled off, it leaves behind a very cool textured marble-like effect.

After the marble effect is completed on all the parts, different shades of magenta, deep purple,

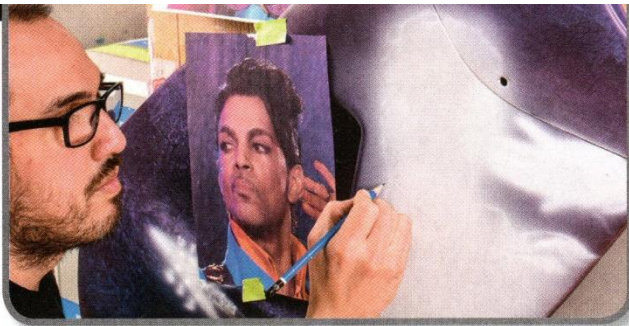
ultra violet, and midnight blue Candy 20 by Createx, are applied over the marble effect. This perfectly simulates the reference post card Roxane had wanted for a background color.

With the marble and different shades of candy completed, all the parts are clearcoated with PPG DC3000, 'locking' everything down under a layer of urethane clear, thus preventing any candy from bleeding through and also creating a perfect layer to airbrush the murals on once the cleared surface has been sanded and scuffed.

Alan was ready to airbrush. Working from both printed photos and cut out stencils, the project slowly began to take life. On the following pages, you will see a step-by-step description about how one of the main images was produced.

The end result was an impressive work of art that both the man who painted it—and the customer who rides it—can be proud.





### STEP 1

The image is projected for placement purposes and using Createx white, a white base is applied while the projection is displayed. This gives perfect placement, size, positioning, and proportions, however details and features still need to be worked out by drawing them in with a pencil. It's important to understand that because sometimes the projected photo is pixelated or of poor quality, you never get an exact transfer, therefore you must edit. I correct problems by redrawing them, making sure the lips look their best and the eyes are straight, etc.



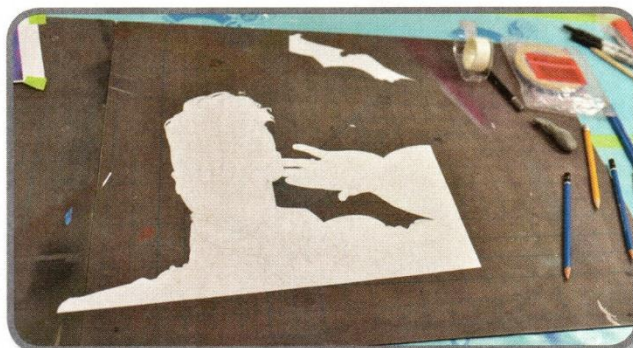
### STEP 2

The picture of the guitar strap had a symbol that had to be drawn in by hand and basically corrected from the original reference photo.



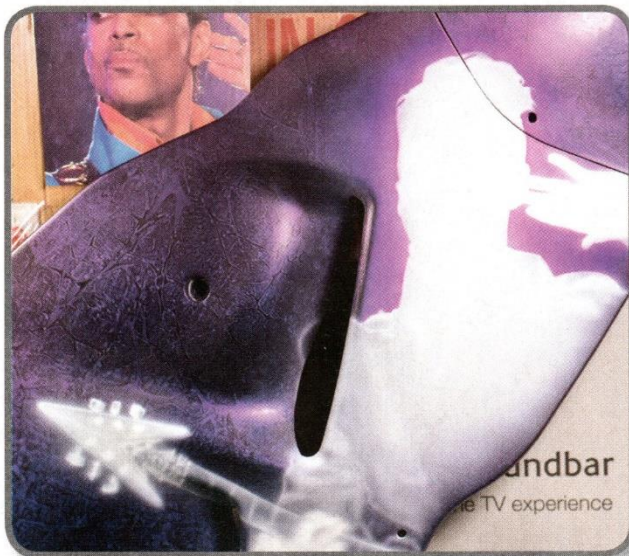
### STEP 3

Not all areas of the projected image fall into place, so certain portions, like the bottom of the guitar, need to be established and air-brushed with an opaque white.



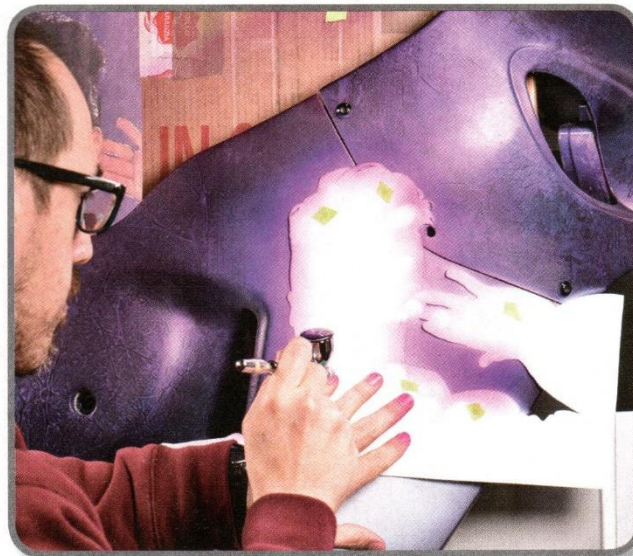
### STEP 4

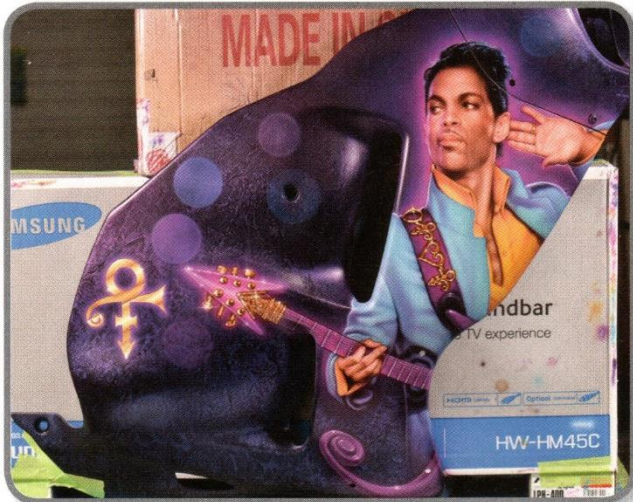
During the projection process, I also put copy paper over the projected image to create a free-hand mobile shield for Prince's head.



### STEPS 5 & 6

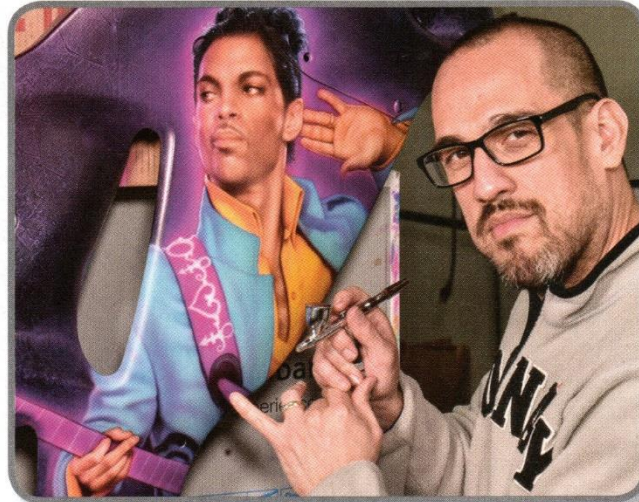
With the cut out as a shield, I'm able to protect the area of the portrait and background color without affecting the main subject of the photo. It also protects the image from any contamination, such as overspray.





### STEP 41

Almost finished. I decided to add circles to simulate a lens flare effect. This also helped me tie in the marbled background and the main subject. I had to figure out a way to bring the foreground into the background, and this is the glue that ties everything together in a subtle way.



### FINAL / STEP 42

The finished work of art and a moving tribute to the legend of Prince that's ready to ride! ■



**When Roxane Winslow** saw Alan Pastrana's work during the Progressive International Motorcycle Show at the Javits Center in New York City this past December, she knew he was the man to create her Prince tribute.

"Obviously I'm a diehard Prince fan," Roxane explains, "and I was just so blown away by the examples of his work he had on display. He did such an excellent job on the bike and when I'm out with my riding club, blasting Prince music, I couldn't be happier! I love it, everyone who sees it loves it!"



Alan Pastrana has been airbrushing for over twenty five years. He is the lead artist and owner of Pastrana Unlimited Airbrush Studios, LLC., of Plainville, Connecticut. Pastrana Unlimited specializes in automotive airbrushing and custom graphics, painting everything from custom choppers and hot rods, to canvas illustrations and even aircraft. Alan's artwork has been seen in many publications, including *Extreme Motorcycle Art*, *Easyriders* magazine (October 2007), *Custom Motorcuder* (January 2008), Cover of *Airbrush Step by Step* (April 2014), *V-Twin* magazine (October 2007), and has been on three covers of *Airbrush Action Magazine*. Alan has a highly successful instructional DVD, *Hip Hop Art with Alan Pastrana*, and, in 2018 he will be returning as a head instructor for the world-renowned Airbrush Getaway Workshop program.

Alan was born and raised in the New York City borough of Queens. Alan attended the Fashion Institute of Technology (F.I.T.) in Manhattan where he majored in Illustration. He's proficient with a variety of media, such as oils, watercolors, acrylics, pen-and-ink, Photoshop, Illustrator, and most of all, airbrushing. Alan has an extensive background in life drawing, painting, and portraiture work, and plies his skills to create outstanding artwork on automotive surfaces (motorcycles, cars, etc), as well as fine art commissions. His clients include Nike SB, Old Navy, Arts in Architecture, Jennifer Adams Interior Design Group, RP Miller Inc., N.Y. Mets major league baseball organization, Orange County Choppers, BBDO, Ovation guitars, Kanye West, Heron Preston, Rachel Platten, Peppermint Schnapps, and The Patrón Spirits Company.

