



made from SCRATCH

By David Danz

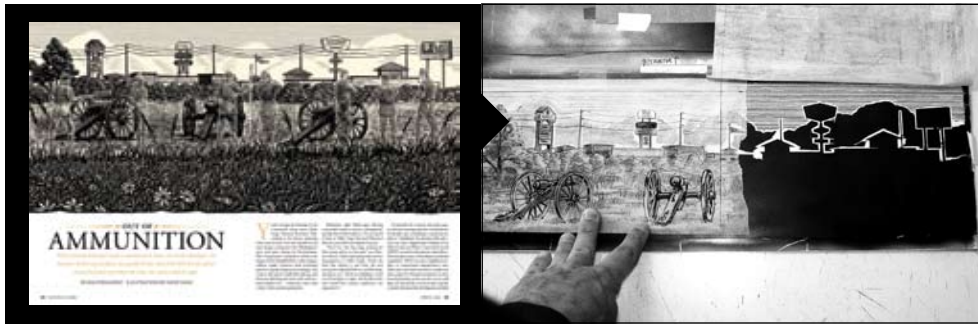
Scratchboard Illustrations: One Pro's Show and Tell

David Danz has 25 years of illustrating experience, so it was no surprise when one of our longtime clients, *National Parks* magazine, teamed up with Danz on a feature for their Spring 2008 issue. Danz was brought on to create a historic feel for an article about the present day effects of land development on specific Civil War battlefields. Below he shares his approach to the project and how he used a unique art form known as 'scratchboard' to convey the contrast of past and present.

I came to be an illustrator working in scratchboard after studying printmaking in college and developing a love for the relief print. Scratchboard and clayboard are both clay-coated boards with similar surfaces, about 1/8th of an inch thick, on

which ink or paint is applied as a drawing, or as a solid mass. Once applied, it can be manipulated by scraping, scratching, or additional drawing, resulting in a woodcut or wood-engraved looking piece of artwork.

Scratchboard was the most appropriate choice for a series of illustrations I created for *National Parks* magazine in January 2008. The article I illustrated had to do with a few specific Civil War Battlefields, and the permanent effect that modern development could impose on them. The illustrations needed to communicate a touch of sadness, representing the jarring force of new and



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old. Because I had never been to the Civil War Battlefields, my first step was to do some research on various web sites and books to gain a clear understanding of the landscape and history of the battlefields. Using scratchboard, I was able to convey a historical look for the illustrations while addressing a current issue.

Prior to working on this project, I had seen watercolor paintings of a Milwaukee-based artist named Charles Peterson, who is known for



“ghosted images” of people within his paintings. I decided to use this idea for incorporating historical figures in my illustrations. This actually meant more work for me, as the final art would require creating additional layers of these figures in order to achieve this effect.

After reading the article and coming up with mental images, I began the process of generating conceptual sketches and sharing them with BCG. Once the sketches were reviewed and refined on tracing paper, I began the next step of transferring the sketches to black scratchboard.

Transferring the sketch to black scratchboard was done by covering the back of the sketch with white chalk, taping the sketch to the scratchboard, and tracing over the sketch. This process created a white line drawing on the black scratchboard that

I used as a guideline in the scratching and scraping process of bringing the illustration to life.

I usually do not transfer an entire sketch at once, but rather only a portion of the sketch at a time, as I work from black to white. I work from upper left corner to lower right corner, continually tracing, and lifting up the tracing paper as I scrape and scratch away the black ink, until the entire illustration is rendered. After the entire illustration has been completed, highlights are refined with blank ink. I use a flat edge razor blade to remove the larger areas of black ink remaining on the sides of the unscratched board. If final art is going to be sent electronically, as it was for this project, I use Adobe Photoshop to digitally clean up my illustrations.

I also used Photoshop to reduce the opacity and overlay the separate layers of Civil War figures on top of the final base illustrations. My black and white art was enhanced with an additional tint of color used in the final printing of this job.

I was very pleased with how the illustrations turned out and the great job BCG did of incorporating my illustrations into the overall design. **BCG**



David Danz works out of his home studio, located outside of the historic gold mining town of Placerville in the foothills of Northern California. Unlike most of his contemporaries, David began creating authentic woodcuts, linocuts and wood engravings prior to scratchboard. This foundational skill set has greatly helped David during his 25-year tenure as an illustrator. To contact David, see more of his illustration work, or ask questions about working in scratchboard, you may contact him through his Web site: www.daviddanz.com.



An Interview with **Katie Lesser**

Describe your role at BCG.

I was hired almost a year ago after graduating from Susquehanna University with a B.A. in graphic design. During my first months at BCG I learned a lot about the industry and the studio environment. I also developed a personal work style that melds with the company and best serves our clients.

After the initial adjustment period, I began taking on more ambitious projects, which sharpened my creative thinking skills and pushed me to new levels. Recently, I've been working on several magazine re-designs and pursuing some projects geared toward event marketing.

What led you to become a graphic designer?

I've always been interested in the visual arts, especially photography. At the end of my first year of college, I took a blind leap and tried graphic design, which sparked an instant connection.

What inspires your design?

Every day I: check out the work of a new design firm, page through a design book or annual, or pick something I see on the street and analyze the design. I think it's important to be constantly stimulated by innovative and smart design. I also find inspiration in things I've never seen before, like a new place or person with a unique outlook. After you've seen something for the first time, that experience is lost. I try to capture that experience and transform the familiar into something new, through design.

What do you do in your spare time?

I enjoy spending time outdoors camping, hiking, and traveling. I'm currently pursuing horseback riding.