

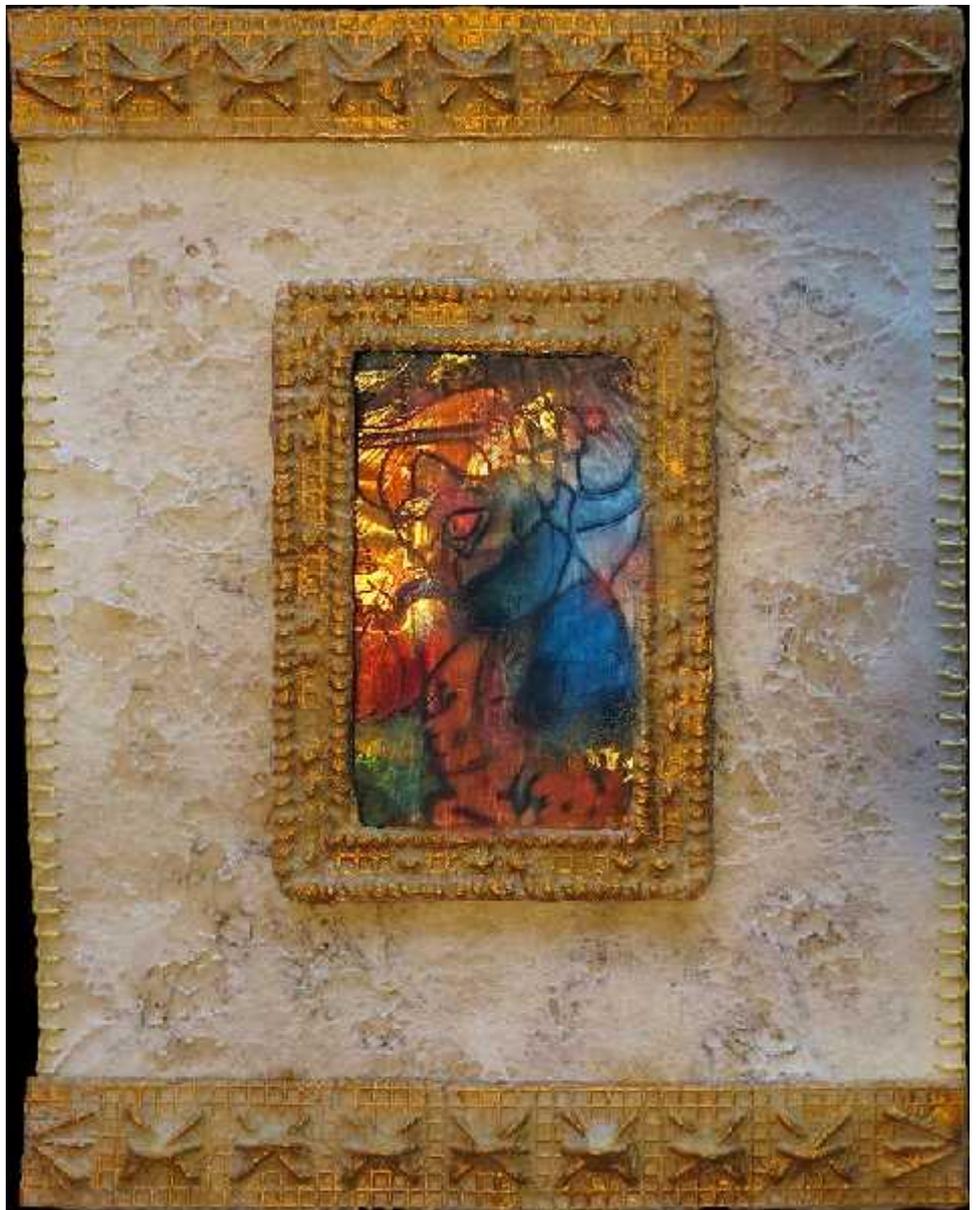
# You killed a what? A Sainthly Inspiration Maggie Grey

My last book, *Long Diaries and Tall Tales*, filled me with an enthusiasm for story-telling. This, coupled with a love of illuminated manuscripts, inspired a series of altered books containing a well-known story or fable. With a stitched design on the cover page and frontispiece, further pages contain illustrations and text about the story. This article details the making of the cover for an exploration of the stories about Saint George and the dragon but it would be suitable for framing or mounting as a stand-alone piece of work. I love the fact that there are so many weird dragons in the illustrated manuscripts, ranging from small lizards to the Loch Ness Monster.

We will be looking at several ways of making a glitzy distressed background with bonded layers of Lutradur. Border techniques and a printed depiction of the main character complete the cover. I am most excited by the technique I have discovered for the central image – an ink-jet image on printable projector film, mounted over metal shim.

The materials list for this article is shown on the final page of part two, where you will find details of a Workshop on the Web kit.

I shall try three possible methods for the background, each combining different weights of Lutradur bonded to Craft Vilene. I'm using Fusefx for the bonding as it is a lighter, lacy product but Bondaweb will work just as well. They all give slightly different effects so will prove useful for other projects.



## Backgrounds method 1

Cut two weights of Lutradur, one of Craft Vilene and two of Fusefx to the size needed – just a little smaller than the inner pages of your books – see middle pic below.

Spray one piece of the Fusefx or Bondaweb with dark paint or ink and allow to dry – see below left.

Use **uncoloured** Fusefx to bond the heavier Lutradur onto Craft Vilene. Iron well, especially the edges. Place torn pieces of the coloured Fusefx on top and place the light Lutradur on top of that – below right.



Iron it all together, using baking paper under the iron.

Dab with a little cold tea – not milky! I use a tea-bag for dabbing. The ink from the painted Fusefx will run into this giving an interesting effect.

Then zap with a heat gun.



You will probably have to give it another dab with the tea bag afterwards, as some extra white surfaces will be revealed, see right.

The glitz effect will be added later – see page 5.



## Backgrounds method 2

Use uncoloured Fusefx to bond together a light and a heavy Lutradur, cut to book size, as before. Don't have the iron too hot and use baking paper under the iron.

Then use a heat tool carefully over the surface, below right, and very gently allow the surface to disintegrate. Note, as you work, that the lighter top surface disappears quite quickly. Try to preserve some of it.



I hope that you can see from the photo, right, how the surface is a mix of strands from the top piece and lacy effects from the bottom one.

Out with the tea bag again for a light wash of colour.

We will be working on this piece on page 5 – when gilding methods are discussed.



### Backgrounds method 3

This is the final experiment for backgrounds for the frontispiece and, after due consideration, it was the one I liked best for this purpose as it had a delicate touch that didn't distract too much from the focal point.

Cut a piece of Vilene and one piece each of the light and heavy Lutradur to the size of your page. Bond the heavyweight one to the Craft Vilene. Making sure that it is well stuck down.



Now find two stamps or small blocks, lettering works well as one of them. Randomly stamp over the surface, preferably using a non-run ink pad such as StazOn – see above left.

When dry place the lightweight Lutradur on top, using Baking Paper and iron, placing baking paper between the iron and the surface – see above right.

Dab very lightly with tea and allow it to dry.

Use the heat tool with a very light touch, so that you expose some of the lettering underneath. Depending on the effect you want, more heat can be applied in a few places to burn through to the Vilene.

Now we have three samples, it is time to look at gilding methods.



## Gilding

Here are three options for gilding.

**Treasure Gold** (or similar metallic waxes are always effective). This is a deep bronzy gold which looks good, especially around the motifs. The trick is to put on layers, very lightly – imagine that the surface is very hot. I often let it dry for a day or two and then go back and add another very thin coat – see pic right.

**Interference colours.** These work best on dark colours and they look good on the sample where we used the dark painted Fusefx. I like the Golden Oxide Greens as they don't overpower with glitziness – see pics below.



**Pearlex Powders** – or any make of lustre powder. There is probably enough stickiness in the Fusefx to ensure that these coat without more adhesive but they give good glitz when used with the metallic waxes. This pinky-gold looks a little different from different angles and has quite a subtle gleam. Apply sparingly with a dry brush or a small amount on your finger.



## Focal point

The focal point for the story of Saint George comes from a sketchbook that I'm compiling, see below, based on the wide variety of slain dragons depicted in the many manuscript illuminations of the fight. They range from huge and feisty to rather pathetic – like the one shown here, who looks more like a patient showing his tongue to the doctor than a fiery mythical beast.

I draw and paint them rather than using scans from Google or books as I am wary of copyright infringement. Many Google images are copyright free but do be aware of the need to check, especially if you sell your work.



The chosen image will be printed twice on ink-jet ready, overhead projector film, see above right, which will produce a translucent image ready for the next stage.

I always put together a whole page of images for use in later work. My image program, Paint Shop Pro, has a useful Print Layout option – see right.

Make sure that you follow the instructions on the Transparency pack. The side that you print on is usually slightly tacky.

These images can be placed over foiled fabric, painted kitchen foil, sweetie papers or metal shim to produce a metallic effect. I was particularly excited by the effect on shim as the image seemed to float above it, giving great depth. Using two film prints of the same subject deepens the colour.



In part two of the article, we will put the piece together. Read on.