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How to Make Your Warthogs Look Real

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So Often, I am asked about how I make my warthogs look so real. "How do you get the skin to look so soft and natural? How do you pull of original poses?" Well, I can only say three things —reference, reference, reference. You just cannot mount a realistic animal without knowing what it looks like. If you try, then it's just a guess.

In the photos (below), you will see three differently colored warthogs. The biggest problem I see with mounted warthogs is they are painted just one solid color—gray with very little or no paint cleaned off the hair. As you can see, warthogs are not one solid color, but lots of lighter and darker shades of the same color. This is partly due to the color of the dirt the hogs live in. If the dirt is red, the hog will have a tendency of being on the red side and the same with darker dirt or lighter, as you can see in these pictures. In our studio we always ask the hunter to take extra pictures of their trophies to leave with us while mounting. These pictures greatly aid us on colorations or any outstanding characteristics which may help when either mounting or finishing their mounts.



#1 Although a warthog may look ugly, its skin is soft and flexible. The direction the warts is a forward angle, not facing straight.



#2 The hair direction on the side of the jaw is nice, and neat with a slightly upward curl.



#3 The rolling body wrinkles are soft and thick. Under the neck is sagging skin, not wrinkles, but loose sagging skin. Take note of the two different amounts of wetness around the eyes.



#4 This photo shows more wetness and more around the actual eyes. Also note the downward angle of the eyelashes. They are not out straight as so often seen on mounted warthogs.

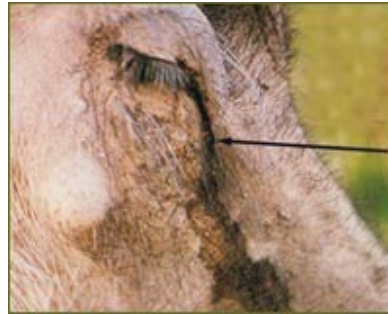


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#5 Again, the heavy wetness around and behind the eyes. Also not the deep wrinkles behind the eye. This is seen among the older, heavier hogs. The warts are angled forward.



#6 The arrow shows a fine line of drainage with a very dry looking skin around it. The coloration around the eye is not reddish dirt, but fleshy skin showing through. A warthog has sensitive skin, much like that of a hippo. Usually a warthog color is very fleshy, although often it not seen due to the mud and dirt baths they give themselves for protection from ticks, fleas, parasites, and the hot sun from burning. Again note the downward growing eyelashes.



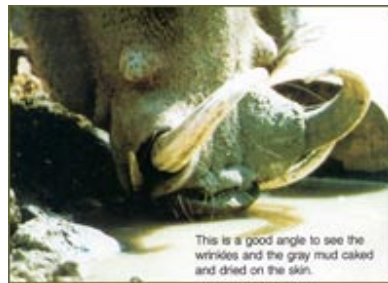
#7 Note the direction of the hair over the opening of the ear, which protects the ear canal from insects.



#8 The ear curls slightly back. This is a good picture to see the sagging skin under the neck. You can see one wrinkle with the head tilted down and the rest is loose sagging skin. So many times a warthog is mounted with a thick round neck, or a neck that looks like an accordion, both because the taxidermist did not know what to do with all the extra skin. Notice the many shades of colors on the hog, from dark to light.



#9 Nice, smooth, even wrinkles are seen on the side of the neck, but not underneath. This is a good example of the forward facing warts. See how close the nose is to the lip skin and how snug the lip skin is to the tusk. Distinctive wrinkles are seen on top of the nose.



#10 This is a good angle to see the wrinkles and the gray mud caked and dried on the skin.

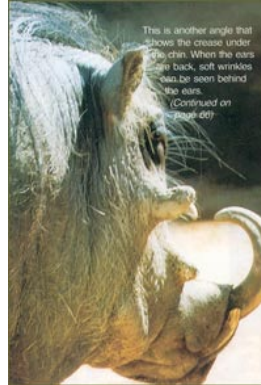


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#11 The front of the nose has a slight inward slope. There is a close fit of the nose to the lip, and a definite groove under the chin. Also not the dirt stuck on the skin.



#12 This is another angle that shows the crease under the chin. When the ears are back, soft wrinkles can be seen behind the ears.



#13 Note the wrinkles around the base of the tail and body junction. On a thinner hog, the roll of skin around the base of the tail is smaller compared to a heavier, larger hog. A skin roll can turn into several rolls.



#14 This is a darker colored hog with dried, caked-on mud all over its skin with some of the fleshy color showing through.



#15 This great reference shot shows the hair direction covering the ear canal opening, the soft, distinctive wrinkles of a heavier hog, the forward facing warts, the wetness around the eyes that drains down the face, and lots of fleshy colors around the eye and the corner of the eye.

About the Author

Ron Schaefer offers full spectrum [Taxidermy Services](#), [Bronze Sculptures](#) and [Wildlife Drawings](#). Ron Schaefer, a Texas taxidermist, founder and artisan for [Heads Above The Rest, Inc.®](#) and has been studying the fine art of moving and adjusting skin since 1975. He specializes mainly in life size African and Exotics with his passion being Cats.

Heads Above The Rest, Inc.® is not a large production firm. Ron Schaefer strives for low volume, accepting a limited number of clients each year, enabling him to maintain high quality craftsmanship and customer care. He leads the industry in higher standards and you will see a definite difference when working with Heads Above The Rest, Inc.®.

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