Jim Lawrence is one of the most accomplished, most experienced and most inventive artists in GK. He has been building and painting model kits for 35 years and is a frequent contributor to Amazing Figure Modeler magazine. He has painted and customized dozens of model kits, busts, masks and statues of all kinds for clients. His favorite subjects to paint are those inspired by the works and designs of Swedish artist H.R. Giger. Jim’s work on those subjects does justice to the Giger’s designs and to the work of the various artists who render Giger’s illustration work in 3-D. We also know Jim loves the designs executed by creature effects artist Stan Winston and his incredibly talented crew of artists who brought to life many of our favorite sci-fi/horror creatures. Among the most popular and memorable are the intelligent and technologically advanced aliens from the Predator films.

Black Heart was aware of Jim’s affinity for Predators and we tasked him with putting a quality finish on our 1:1 scale Predator Wall-hanger, one of the most challenging characters to finish because of the different features, textures and materials that were used to create the Predators (dreads, quills, bony protrusions along the brow, jewelry, skin, eyes, wrinkles, patterned spotting, teeth, mandibles, open mouth and all of that on just the head!). As usual, Jim gave us a finish that would make any “trophy” collector proud. Thanks, Jim, for making Black Heart look so good.
After H.R Giger’s Alien, Predator is one of my favorite movie creatures. I loved the original design of the Predator in the first film and I thought the changes by Stan Winston and his crew in Predator 2 were very well done. The Elder Predator in particular, as seen at the end of the film, had an air of dignity and wisdom but was also one of the most beautifully created Predators there has been. Joe Simon’s 1:1 scale sculpture for Black Heart Models truly captured the essence of the Elder Predator. Black Heart’s George Stephenson asked me to paint their Elder Predator and gave me the latitude to do it anyway I wanted. I have always thought embryonic colors were very distinctive. So, I decided to go in that direction.

To get things started on the painting side, I began by washing all of the pieces with warm soapy water because it is important to have a clean, release free surface for painting. Once dry, I brushed a coat of 91% alcohol over the pieces as, for me, this gives the resin a tooth to hold the base coat better. I next sprayed a base coat of White Rust-Oleum Automobile Primer over all the pieces (Photo 1).

Next, I applied a wash of Plaid/Apple Barrel #20433 Royal Violet over the fleshy part of the head to pick up all the detail. (Photo 2)

I next airbrushed FW #127 Indigo accentuating all the detail and (Photo 3) FW Red was applied over the Indigo with particular attention paid to the outer areas where the dreads attach.
I used red as it helps to enrich and to deepen the indigo (Photo 4). I next deepened the center groove with a bit more Indigo, (Photo 5) and then a little more red to give it soft or deepened look. (Photo 6) I mixed a light pink acrylic and airbrushed the inside of the mouth (Photo 7).

I painted the neck bands Apple Barrel/Plaid 20404 flat black. I airbrushed the detailing on the inside of the mouth with FW Sepia 251 and used the same to dot and deepen the detailing all over the head. (Photos 8A -8D) I painted Red & Blue veining inside the mouth and airbrushed a red wash over the entire mouth. (Photo 9)
Because of the way Joe Simon sculpted the mouth, the teeth and the bottom jaw pieces looked as though they are protruding out of a membrane sheath and could be glued in place with no puttying. I used the same paint technique on the fleshy, bottom jaw pieces that I used on the mouth as I wanted it to appear as though the musculature of the mouth extended out to these pieces as well. I then painted all of the teeth and horns on the side of the head with Plaid/Apple Barrel #20405 Antique White, detailed with FW Sepia 251 and over sprayed the teeth with Higgins Yellow #4025 and painted eyes with Plaid/Apple Barrel #20403 White.

I mixed reddish brown wash and painted a vein pattern throughout the eye, leading to a solid pattern around a black pupil. I airbrushed FW Black lightly around edge of the eye. To give him an amphibian look, I encircled all brown dots with white. (Photos 10A-10C)
The dreadlocks have already been base coated with white primer as I mentioned earlier. I next applied a wash of Plaid/Apple Barrel #20433 Royal Violet and, once dry, I airbrushed FW Purple Lake to accentuate detailing. (Photo 11)

I airbrushed Apple Barrel White #20403 lightly over all the dreadlocks and Painted FW #127 Indigo in a webbing pattern and outlined these in white and painted the dread rings flat black. (Photo 12)
I dry-brushed Createx Pearl Satin Gold over dread rings, neck band beads and dulled with Sepia and detailed with DecoArt Patina Teal Green. I painted Burnt Umber on the strings holding the beads and I dry brushed off white over the string to bring out the detail.

The colors I used to paint the beads on the dreadlocks were hand-painted random colors that I thought would look good. I airbrushed a black wash in-between the dreads and where they attach to the head to show more of a 3-D look and then I attached the dreads to the head with superglue.

I over-sprayed the entire piece with Future Premium Floor Finish, lighter over the head and heavier around the mouth to give it more of a glossy, salivary-sort of look. I then fabricated a bead with a ring and attached it through the tooth sticking through the lower jaw.

I washed and base-coated the nameplate in white primer. I airbrushed Liquitex Florescent Yellow on bottom half of the nameplate and did the same with Createx Florescent green on the upper half; I faded it into the Yellow. I painted the upper part of the letters with Spectra Tex #55-118Brillant Blue and faded into Apple Barrel #20401 Bright Red and used this same Red to outline the plate. I finished the piece by over-spraying the name plate with Future Floor Finish and then I glued the nameplate to a piece of dowel rod and attached it to the base with a dry wall screw.
There you have it! One impressive trophy ready to be mounted on your wall. My thanks to Ken Schlotfeldt at Badger Air-brush Company for the excellent airbrush I used to paint this piece. A big thank you to Joe Simon for a fantastic sculpture of the Elder Predator. And, thanks George Stephenson and Black Heart Enterprises for getting me this kit and giving me the opportunity to write this article for their website.