

CHRONOPIA

WAR IN THE ETERNAL REALM



We get a lot of questions at the studio from visitors about how our models are made. It's a common question and one everyone who visits seems to want to see. Of course, looking at Thom's sculpting desk will irrevocably scar most curious onlookers so we generally prefer to simply tell them without the shocking visuals.

Thankfully, Thom documents all aspects of a miniatures progress (except his own) and we can now show someone who asks exactly how this is done. This may be one of those times a certain someone's anal retentiveness may actually pay off (he doesn't read this e-zine does he Mark?).

Rather than focus on an older model, we thought it would be fun to look at one of the "just released" models from the Chronopia line. This bad boy from the Devout army was wonderfully whipped up by our own sculptor/ teacher Matt Beauchamp. That's him at the left (the lower image).

So, without further adieu, let's look at the evolution of an evil model....

Getting Started:

The first thing you'll want to do is gather up your sculpting tools. There are many types of instruments that you will need, dental tools being the most prevalent. In addition to these you will need the items on the list to the left. The important thing to remember is that you will be taking small steps as your model evolves. That said, you will want to take it slow and use small amounts of the mixed putty.

Once you have gathered your tools you will need to examine your reference art. This is very important! The piece you end up with should be as close to the reference art as possible. For the Shadow Stalker, we have this wonderful work by Adrian Smith to work from. While the art is top notch, it could translate better into 3D with some adjustments in its pose. This is done at the armature phase.

ARMATURE PHASE

Twist the wire into a "stick man" and make sure that the feet end in straight points which you will embed in the cork. This cork will enable you to handle and position your piece as it develops without touching the model itself. As putty will retain finger prints, this is important. You do not need to add the arms at this point.

At this point, you should have some fun deciding how the pose will end up. Position the wire until you find that dynamic position you want.



What You Need to Get Started!

- 1) Copper or steel wire
- 2) Pliers and metal snips
- 3) Corks
- 4) Green Epoxy Putty (Kneadatite)
- 5) Brown Epoxy Putty (Titanium Kneadatite)
- 6) Various sculpting tools
- 7) Low temperature oven (desk lamp)
- 8) Reference Art
- 9) PATIENCE!!!!

At this point make sure you have extra length on your arms, you'll see why shortly, and also make sure you have added in the extra joints a Shadow Stalker has in the legs.

Once you have the wire in the position you want, you will start adding putty to the wire frame. This is the only time when you can work with larger amounts of putty as the details are saved for later. You will want to block out the basic form of the model, adding in the basic musculature. (see picture 1-A)

While you are blocking out the body, you should also start on the sword. Taking a straight wire and bulking it up with Titanium Kneadatite, you will be able to get a jump start on the sword as well. Why a different kneadatite? Basically, the Titanium sets stronger and more rigidly and when filed (to create edges), it retains the shaping and holds the edge better than the green. (see picture 1-B)

LET THE BUILDING COMMENCE

Now its time to slow down with the amount of putty you are using. You'll want to add small amounts onto the bulked out model you have forming, small amounts that will set up the muscles and define your model. As you add putty and shape it into position, you will use some water to keep your tools wet and prevent them from pulling on your model (the putty does tend to get tacky).

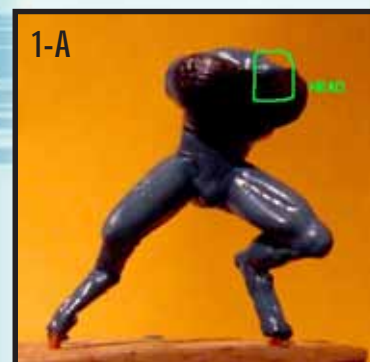
Some modelers use saliva at this point (ugh!) to keep their tools from dragging on the putty. Thom prefers Vaseline. Whatever you find most convenient, make sure it handy.

In between applications of putty, place your model under your heat lamp. This allows the putty you worked with to set. Kneadatite sets when exposed to heat so you should always store it in a cool, dry place when you are not working on it. As most people never finish a model in one sitting, you will no doubt need to store your putty (at least for a short while).

ABOUT YOUR KNEADATITE: *There are numerous types of Kneadatite on the market and sculpting is only one of the applications these two-part epoxies are used for. When sculpting models, we always recommend you use the **GREEN** epoxy for nearly all your work. Alternately, when you are working with weapons, vehicles and such, you will want the added rigidity of the **TITANIUM**. We never recommend you use the **BLUE** Kneadatite for modeling as it never really gets rigid and hence will not support paint all that well.*

When you get to the ankles you should start creating the feet. It will spread out over the cork as if this was the ground beneath its feet. Another thing to remember is that the back of the model will be wearing a great cape. Because of this you need not spend a lot of time sculpting the details on the back, you will only be covering them up later. (see pictures 2-A,B & C)

Once you have this level of work completed you may start adding on the arms. Again, you will want to not worry about their length at this



point. With some protruding wire, insert this end into the shoulder and build up the arm from the shoulder down to the wrist. You should also begin blocking in the head of the Stalker at this point too. (see pictures 3-A & B)

At this stage of the game it would be wise for you to check on the progress of your model. By this we mean making sure your model is in relative scale to other models of his same size. In the instance of the Shadow Stalker, Thom's directions were that he should be slightly larger than a human (Firstborn model) and smaller than a Dark Eyes Warrior (a Devout model). You can see how the scale check came out in picture 4-A.



Once you have verified the scale, you should double check the sword you started earlier. Is it big enough? Too small? Does it fit correctly? Temporarily affix it to the model to see as in picture 5-A. Often this is an overlooked step but scale is very important. Keeping it unified is one of the chief goals of any sculptor.

THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS!

Up until now, the Shadow Stalker project has been in the formative stages, with only rudimentary details. Now, having blocked in all the basics, it is time to focus on the details. The armor is added (note the use of the Titanium Kneadatite) and smoothed into position. By referencing the art constantly, it becomes obvious where the plates will need to go, where the protrusions must be, etc.

Once the armor is in position, you can go back with your green and add in some overlaid details. It is important at this point to keep the armor smooth and even. While the armor sections cure under the lamp, we turn our attention to the other hand, the one with the wicked weapons coming off the wrist, a Devout version of the X-Man Wolverine in my opinion.

Using a straight wire armature, the Titanium is added over the wires to make the blades. The green putty is used to block out a fist once this has set. In between the fist and the armor we go back and add more details to the putty. (see pictures 6-A, B & C) You'll note how closely Matt stayed to the drawing!

THE DEVIL YOU SAY!

Now that the details have been started, now comes the fun part, the part where the model starts to come to life. In Picture 7-A thru F, we see how these details evolve. Spikes are added to the armor, leg grieves molded into place, the loin cloth added into place, and the details to the face added.

This is a fun period, and as I am told, some of the most rewarding in the sculpting process. While the new details cure, our attention turns back to



the sword and wrist blades, adding more details to those.

Now is a good time to add in the cape, since it covers so much of the back side of the model the cape will determine what details are really needed in the wrist and arms. The cape is also an important piece as the fluidity transmitted in the cape is important to reinforcing the dynamic position of the model (or at least that's the sculptor-babble Thom tells us).

This process continues back and forth until all the details have been applied. The end results are shown below. We hope you have enjoyed the process..now go paint up one! ~MC



FINAL PRODUCT

(Note left hnd is attached for the photo only)



Here are some tips Matt suggested while doing this piece.

- 1) Use small amounts of putty (pea-sized)
- 2) Mix putty and then let set for 5 minutes before applying to miniature.
- 3) Work from the inside out (muscles, skin, clothes, armor, then final details)
- 4) Use heat lamp to cure putty.
- 5) Multi-task whenever possible.
- 6) Create definition with differences in raised detail.
- 7) Strive for variation of textures (smooth, fur, scales, etc)
- 8) Remember to be patient!