

cjwalas says **SO I think tonight should be a random collection of Q&As as we've got a couple of newish members.**

BnEgscaler says Homework posted before last week session knowing I would not make it - teaching fishing classes again.

jasher817 says *Yup i am still a freshman in this "school"*

Torby says **I got inspired yesterday, so I'll have something interesting next week** 😊

cjwalas says **What do you all find to be the hardest part of the process? I don't mean "head", "hands", or like that. What step is the most difficult?**

Rick Raively says **starting**

Rick Raively says **and then finishing**

Rick Raively says **and then the middle part**

cjwalas says **Thanks Rick. Your insight is always so...insightful.** 😊

bjcott says **I found getting the proportions correct a challenge**

jasher817 says *I have try a head yet*

BnEgscaler says I have mixed a bright green Premo with a bright green super flex and the resulting backed figure does not accept paint evenly. It seems rather waxy.

cjwalas says **I mean, is it the armature, the roughing in of the proportions, the fine detail, the brushing out, the painting, etc.?**

Rick Raively says **getting the head even on each side, ears eyes**

bjcott says **I found having a photograph in front of me very helpful**

cjwalas says **Interesting, Bob. I have run across that problem once or twice myself. Maybe try and add a tiny bit of regular Sculpey.**

jasher817 says *I found my self looking at my legs to see where to put the wrinkles in the clothes*

jasher817 says *And my arms and my nieces*

cjwalas says **As I've pointed out from the get go, basic proportions, hands, and head (face) are always the most difficult part.**

Torby says **Well, for Milo, I turned upside down in an old pair of torn overalls to see how they'd drape** 😊

jasher817 says *If I get it wrong it is a hobbit in middle earth*

cjwalas says **Using yourself as a model is invaluable. It's important to get a visual reference for anything you're not really sure about.**

jasher817 says *or an elf*

Torby says **Been having a little trouble with the arms being too short.**

cjwalas says **And That's a good way to look at making figures. If the figure doesn't turn out the way you want, it's not hard to make it into something else.**

Torby says **Well, Jash, about any figure would fit somewhere between a Hobbit and an Elf** 😊

jasher817 says *who would know there is a railroad in the land of middle earth* 😊😊😊

cjwalas says **I know I harp on this a lot, but checking and rechecking proportions every step of the way is the best way to learn them and make them second nature.**

jasher817 says *so I can go wrong now can I* 😊😊

Torby says **As I was doing the single bake figure, I had a plan and a backup plan for if that didn't turn out well. Instead, I altered the plan 'cause it turned out so nice.**

Torby says **There's a guy on MLS who did make a middle earth train.**

jasher817 says *He was cool*

cjwalas says **That's one of the difficult things to teach, but easy to learn, Tom. The process is infinitely adaptable to the whim of the moment.**

Torby says I've been wondering what a Narnian train would look like.

jasher817 says *man now I need some thing else to reference*

jasher817 says *A big lion*

jasher817 says *or some thing English*

cjwalas says **Tom, check out some of the Warhammer RPG designs for Narnian inspiration!**

Torby says I do a lot of google image searching for reference.

cjwalas says **There's some good "steam fantasy" ideas there.**

Torby says *hehe I was looking at the cover of "Voyage of the Dawn Treader," thinking they'd likely build a train in the same style.*

jasher817 says *off topic ...are we?*

jlcop says *That reminds me, I still haven't tried the paperclip caliber thing 😊*

jasher817 says *lots of wood*

jasher817 says *paperclip?*

cjwalas says **It's definitely worth doing if you're having proportional problems, JL.**

Torby says **"Off Topic" is my middle name!**

cjwalas says **Yes, unfold a paperclip and form it into a "U" shape. Bend it to the size of one arm (leg, etc.) and use it to measure the other arm.**

jasher817 says *Ohhh Cool*

cjwalas says **It's very important to check your proportions. Don't assume you know what a human being looks like just because you've seen them all your life.**

jasher817 says *I keep getting that look a meetings for that "off topic" thing 😊*

cjwalas says **We tend to digress on occasion here.** 😊 😊

jasher817 says *Humans what are HHHuuuummmaaannnsss*

jasher817 says *all I see is people (peeps)*

cjwalas says **When I ran my shop, I always knew a good sculptor from a mediocre one by their set of tools.**

cjwalas says **The lesser sculptors always showed up with the most and fanciest tools, while the best showed up with what looked like a pile of garbage.**

bjcott says *right up there with the toothpick...*

Rick Raively says **Never, well NOT me** 😊

Torby says *You'd shake your head sadly at mine* 😊

cjwalas says **The toothpick is hard to beat as an all around tool.**

Torby says *Hmm.. I have a toothpick, an xacto type handle with a round poker, and a darning needle.*

jasher817 says *tools all I got is what came with the Premo pack and some piano wire in a Premo handle*

cjwalas says **I strongly suggest you make a "metal toothpick" tool as I show in... what chapter was it?**

bjcott says *ah, building a new society with a paperclip in one hand and a toothpick in the other* 😊

jasher817 says *that wire keep getting lost and so I bent one end and put some clay on the end an baked*

Torby says *I think that was in chapter 1.*

cjwalas says **The tools in the Premo pack are mostly useless for this scale.**

jasher817 says *yup*

jasher817 says *cool color thow*

cjwalas says **Teeth are acceptable. ANYTHING is acceptable IF it enables you to get the effect you want.**

Torby says *I wanted to make scales yesterday. The back end of my poker looked about the right size.*

cjwalas says **Does everyone have a needle tool?**

jasher817 says *nothing comes out the way I wont them* 😞

Torby says *I have one less than I did the other day. Dropped one.*

bjcott says *I rounded the end of a wooden one and that's all I used for my engineer figure.*

jasher817 says *make a handle out of clay*

jlcop says *arggh, I hate it when it does that while I am trying to type a entry* 😡

cjwalas says **It's very difficult to get the figure you REALLT want. We're working near the limit of what Polyclay can deliver in terms of detail.**

BnEgyscale says *I've tried all sorts of things but the toothpick and the #0 darning needle are the most often used. I have a few needles and a dental pick with a very fine point that I sometime use for fine details and separating fingers from the mitt style hand.*

jasher817 says *that guy was slick*

cjwalas says **It's a wonderful material, very versatile, very forgiving, repairable, paintable...**

jlcop says *I have a needle tool but it is too long and I haven't gotten around to making a better one yet*

cjwalas says **BUT! The puttylike quality makes fine detail more challenging. This is the main reason it works well to do the figures in many bakes.**

bjcott says *Chris, the eyes on my first figure were kind of like this:* 😡

cjwalas says **Homework for this week!!! MAKE A NEEDLE TOOL! You need to learn to work with a very fine, sharp tip.**

bjcott says *Any suggestions on eyes?*

jasher817 says *I also used the back end of some drill bits*

cjwalas says **Eyes are very delicate and fine to get right. All the more reason to have a tool that can make it happen.**

Torby says *I do LOTS of bakes. Every time I get a detail like I want.*

jasher817 says *smaller X X*

cjwalas says **How did you do the eyes?**

bjcott says *I thought you might say that* 😊

Torby says *Finer and sharper than my darning needle. And maybe longer for easy to handle. I think I'd like it bent too.*

bjcott says *Looking at them now, I think I left the sockets too deep*

Rick Raively says **what do you suggest to start off with to make a needle tool?**

jasher817 says *now that is homework I can do* 😊😊

cjwalas says **Be careful on the bend, Tom. My experience is that the tool works best when long enough to be held in between the thumb and forefinger with the other end resting in the joint between them (i.e. the base of the hand).**

cjwalas says **If you look at CH.1 (I think) there should be instructions for making a needle tool with a pin (or needle) and brass stock.**

Torby says **hmmm. Just a smaller point then...**

bjcott says **Chris talks about needle tools here:**

<http://www.mylargescale.com/articles/articles/figureclass/ch2/figures-02.asp>

cjwalas says **WB, John! Hope you can stay with us. I know it's a problem with your computer.**

jlcop says *I don't remember which chapter but it's in there somewhere* 😊

bjcott says **and here:**

<http://www.mylargescale.com/articles/articles/figureclass/ch2/figures-03.asp>

jasher817 says *ahhh Flash back to a dentist chair*

cjwalas says **The needle tool will take you to another level of detail if you let it. And some very fine detail in specific areas will make your figure look ten times better.**

jasher817 says *All those dentist tools*

Rick Raively says **just 10?** 😊

cjwalas says **Eyes are a focal point on your figures, just as they are on any person.**

jlcop says *are good for dentists* 😊

jasher817 says *one to many* 😊

cjwalas says **In your case, Rick, maybe 2 times better.** 😊

bjcott says **Chris, it's chapter 2 page 2-3**

bjcott says **Low slung hats cover a multitude of sins and imperfections** 😊

Rick Raively says **because I am already so good? right??**

cjwalas says **The eyes and the mouth are the most important features on a face. Nose and ears define proportion and can be used for character, but the eyes and mouth MUST be in proportion.**

jasher817 says *not cross eyed* 😊

jasher817 says *in and out Burge... Figure class*

Rick Raively says **AH Chapter 2 page 9**

cjwalas says **Think of the popular UFO aliens these days. The face is based solely on the relationship of the eyes and mouth. Ears and nose are usually absent or minimal, yet they are immediately relatable.**

jasher817 says *I need to make some of them* 😊

cjwalas says **While I want you all to learn to do fine detail, basic proportions are much more important.**

jasher817 says *I could have a crashed UFO and some "take me to your leader" aliens*

Torby says **That applies to Muppets too** 😊

cjwalas says **A figure can be lacking detail, but still be convincing if the proportions are good...**

cjwalas says **But a very detailed figure with bad proportions will always look "wrong" somehow.**

Torby says **I getting sleepy.**

cjwalas says **So let's all try and make the needle tool this week so that we can move into the details of the head and face next week.**

jasher817 says *Muppets yes* 😊😊

Rick Raively says **Needle tool - Chapter 2 page 9**

cjwalas says **Hey, IF you can get the proportions right for a Muppet, you can do a person just as easily and as well. It's a matter of proportion and balance.**

jasher817 says *Needle tool = Details .. Got it*

Torby says **Needles!**

bjcott says **definitely early in chapter 2**

cjwalas says **I trust you to find the info!** 😊😊😊😊😊😊

jasher817 says any thimbles

cjwalas says **The other thing I want to revisit is brushing out with alcohol.**

jasher817 says not rum

cjwalas says **Alcohol is great for softening the outer surfaces of most (not the waxy clays as much) polyclays.**

Torby says **I bought a stiffer brush for that, but still not doing well with that. I rely on my metal tool to smooth surfaces.**

cjwalas says **But what it does as well is act as a lubricant to allow us to use a brush to smooth and push the clay around in a way that we can't do with other techniques.**

cjwalas says **It's very important to learn how to use the brush and alcohol. It can really enhance the finish of any figure.**

BnEgscale says What are the characteristics of a good needle tool?

jasher817 says It has a point

Torby says **Rick just applies the alcohol to the observers** 😊

cjwalas says **A good needle tool "feels" right when you hold it, the same as any other sculpting tool. The point should be gradual and rounded, not angular like a pencil point.**

cjwalas says **Make sure it's long enough. A short needle is pointless (pardon the pun!).**

jlcop says *the one I bought is 6 3/4" long which I find too long* 😊

cjwalas says **This is a tool you will need to do pinpoint spots as well as be able to draw it across a surface, so be sure there are no burrs.**

BnEgscale says I have a sail needle that works good for me. It has a long tapered point - total length is about 6 - 8 inches.

jlcop says *but it also has a knurled textured part which I'm not sure if I like or not*

cjwalas says **I think I know the one, JL, and I agree that it's too long. I'd say 4-6" is the range we want. And THIN.**

jlcop says *How do you like the sail needle, I have one around somewhere and was thinking of trying it*

cjwalas says **Sail needles can be a bit thick, Bob. We're talking a very fine point.**

cjwalas says **Is it a round one or triangular, Bob?**

jlcop says *Don't get even, get ahead!!* 😊

bjcott says **thanks Chris, evening folks, tools at 9:00 pm next week....**

BnEgscale says It is round. I have a number of needles. The really thin ones are hard to handle. I like the longer ones with a long tapered point that allow me to handle by the thicker stock end.

Torby says **I think that's why Chris adds a brass handle.**

BnEgscale says Another good session Chris. Thanks!!!

jlcop says *OK, needle tool homework, Good Night and thanks again!* 😊

cjwalas says **See you next week with needles in hand!**

❖ cjwalas decided to leave us at Mon Mar 20 21:02:29 MST 2006