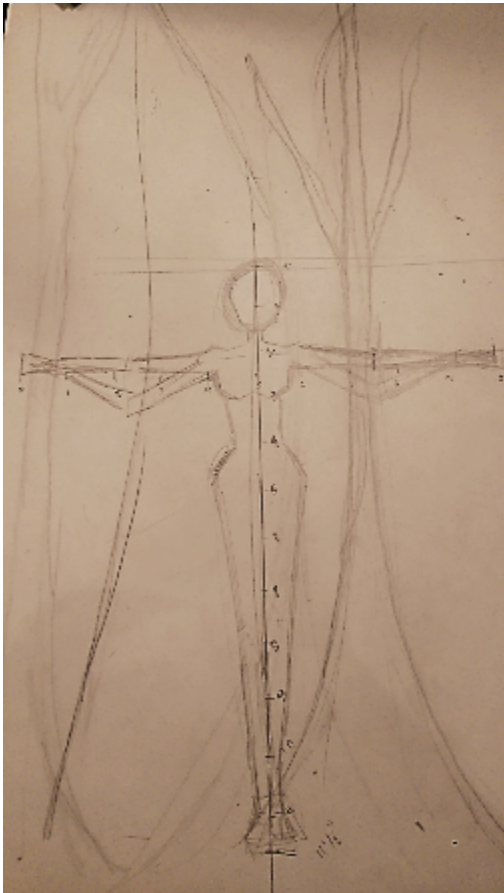
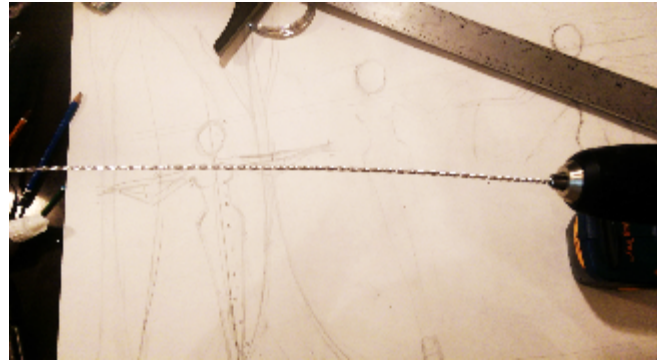


Armature



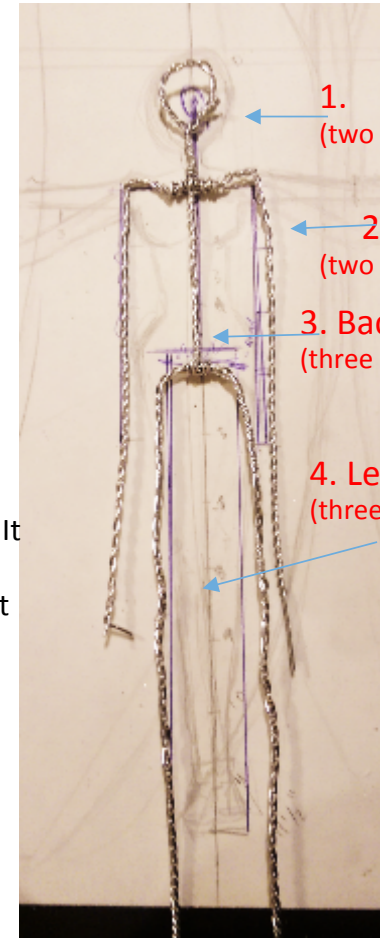
I started with a technical drawing of how I wanted the puppet to look. My puppet was 11 ½" tall and 10 ½" from hand to hand. I also make a drawing of the sides that I wanted the threes to be, so I could check the proportion of the threes against the puppet sides



To make the armature I twisted aluminum wire #1. It should have been armature aluminum wire (that several tutorials recommended). However, it wasn't possible to find it easily. My wire turned out to be fine, however armature wire may be a bit harder which may be better to hold the weight of the puppet's extremities .



The wire should be twisted 3 to 4 loops per inch



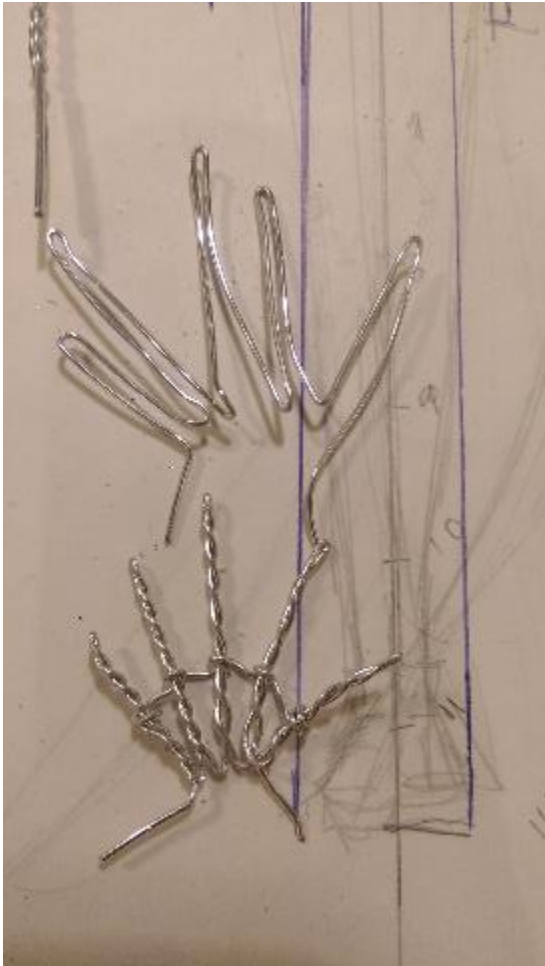
1. Head
(two wires twisted)

2. Arms
(two wires twisted)

3. Backbone
(three wires twisted)

4. Legs
(three wires twisted)

The body is made out of 4 different parts of twisted wire. The arms and legs are longer than the technical drawing specifications, so the hands can be attached , and the legs can be bent to form the feet and to add the nut for mounting.



The hands are made with aluminum wire #20. First the shape is made and then the wire is twisted.

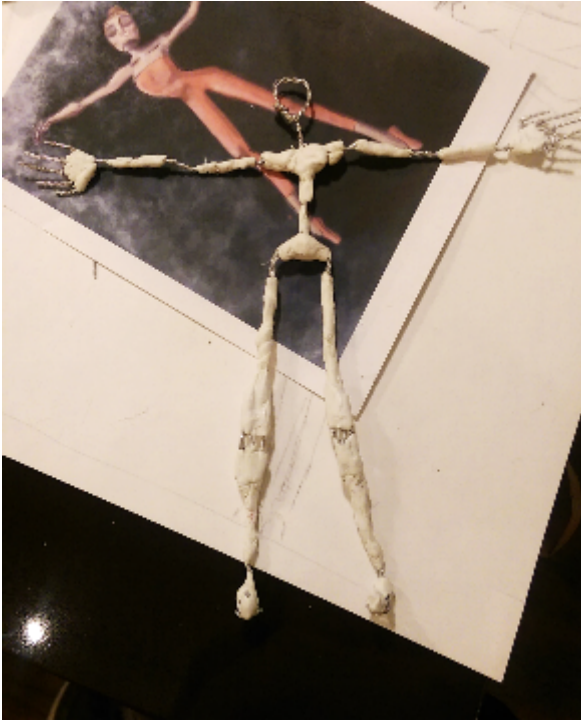


For the feet the legs are bent 90 degrees to the front and a nut is attached to them, so the puppet can be bolted to a surface to make a walking or dancing effect. In this case I attached t-nuts for the flying woman and a normal nut for the dancer (because she needed to appear to be on point).



Once everything is attached the puppet armature looks like this!

Body

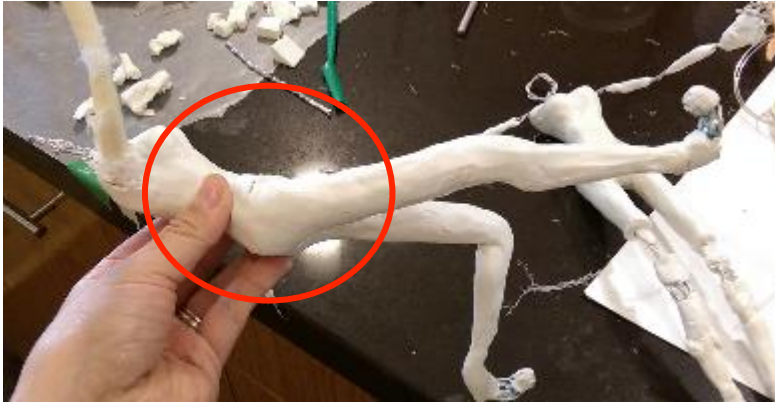


Applied Epoxy Putty (I used the brand in the photo below) to cover the wire that don't need to move leaving the "joint" parts uncovered. My layer of epoxy putty broke because it was too thin, and my wire wasn't resistant enough. I had to reinforce the knees with extra wire and putty.



I tried two different ways to make the body of the puppet. The first one was with filling and then covered with tape. I was hoping that this would make my puppet lighter. Then covering it with doll's clothing, but the shape of the body was too different from my original puppet's design.

Luz Gaitan



Then I tried to cover the tape with clay in order to give it the shape that I wanted it to have. However, it didn't work because the clay kept separating when the joints were bent. This could have caused a big problem during shooting.

Then I tried covering the armature with only clay. This obviously gave it a shape closer to my puppet designs. However, this made the puppet much heavier and caused problems, breaking the legs, knees and ankles.



Here is the difference between a puppet made with filling and tape (left), and clay (right).

Tip: I found that there is a way to smoothly shape clay by covering with plastic wrap.



Luz Gaitan

Head



Once that the body was done I shaped the basic form of the head (teardrop). Then I cut it in half and glued in place.

I found a doll stand at the thrift shop which was very helpful during this process. I covered with sponge so I didn't damage the puppet and to keep it stable while working.



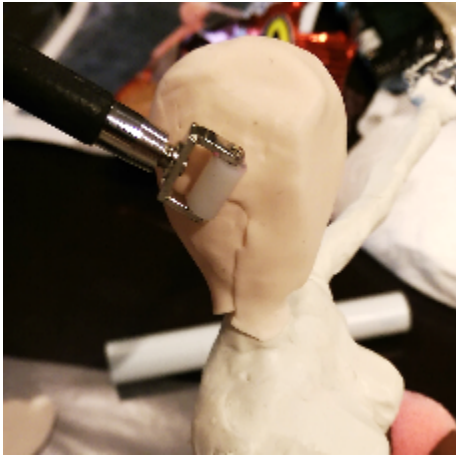
To cover the head I made a thin, even layer of skin colored clay. To make sure it was even I put an even number of cards on each side and then used an even shape roller over baking paper.



Stop-Motion Puppet Making

Then I covered the Styrofoam with a thin layer of clay, making some cuts so I finished with an even layer all over the head like is seen in the photos.





I evened the clay with a rolling tool and made a vertical incision in the half of the face and then three horizontal ones (the top is for the center of the eyes and the top of the nose, the middle one is the bottom of the nose, and the lower one is for the center of the lips). This helps to make sure that the face is well-proportioned.



First thing I did was to press into the clay to form the sockets for the eyes. Then, taking extra clay, I shaped it in a triangular form. After I attached it to the face I gave it a more detailed shape, then added extra clay on top of the eye sockets, the cheeks and the chin. Also I added white clay on the eye sockets, making sure not to cover it entirely.

Lips



The lips are very tricky; I tried several ways and at the end the one that worked is this one: I made a roll of clay and then cut a small part of it with a clay knife. This will give us the lower lip (the flat part that the knife created will be the part that is against the “skin” of the face).



Using the same steps, we can create the top lip, but after we cut we are going to go make a small incision on the center of the lips and then we are going to slice it in half one more time.

Ballerina's hair



Afterward, I added very thin rolls on the top and bottom of the eyes (to have a more defined eye shape) and the eyebrows.

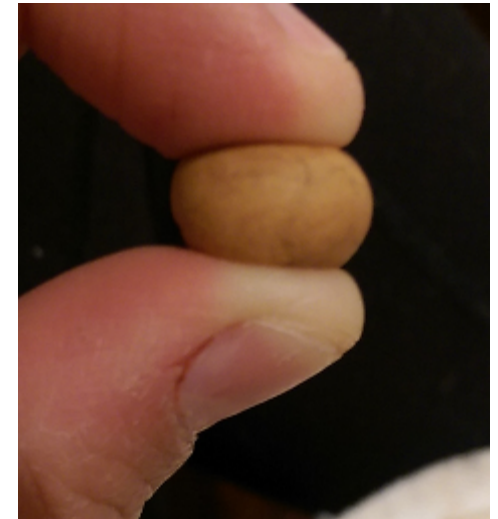


For the ballerina's hair, I mixed light and dark brown clays. I didn't mix them perfectly, so it helped to give a texture to the hair. Then I cut two shapes like in the top left photo and two rectangular ones for the middle top and bottom of the hair. I smoothed everything and any excess of clay I pushed to the top center where the "bun" is supposed to be.



With this tool I textured the hair in different directions.

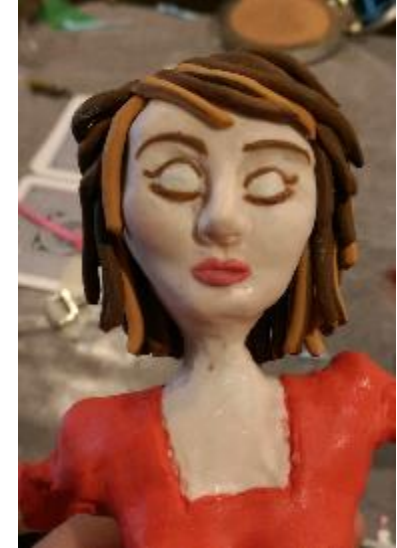
Then I formed the bun and also textured it before adding to the head.



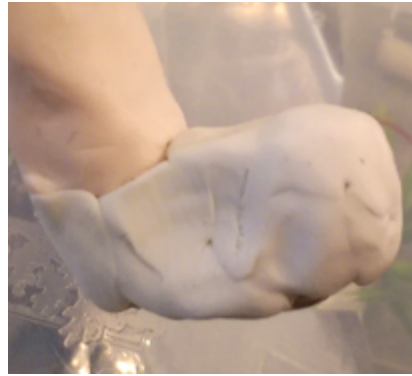
Flying woman's hair



For the flying woman, I added two different colors of clay to a clay spaghetti tool. Then I covered the "spaghetti" with harina (flour), so they didn't stick to each other. I applied the first layer of hair and then cut it, so I knew where to add the other one. I repeated the process, mixing the colors of hair until the head was completely covered.



Shoes



For the shoes, first I covered the "feet" with an even layer of white clay.



Then, using blue clay I made a semi-circle shape for the front and the back of the shoe. I also added a white roll of clay to form the back edge of the shoe.



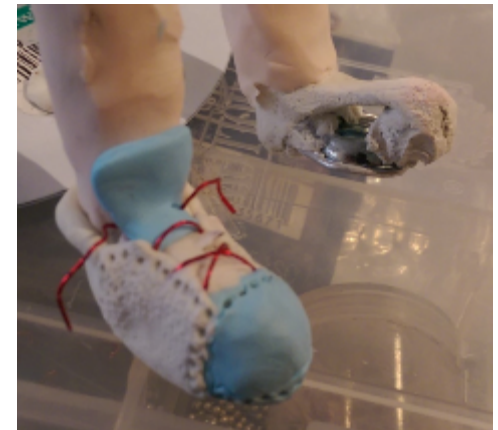
I made the clothing and the skin covering the puppet with thin layers of clay, and then smoothed it.



I added two semi-rectangular shapes, one on each side of the shoe, as shown in the photo.



I textured the shoe to give it more dimension, and added the shoe laces (made out of thin red wire). I added the a blue rectangular shape to create the shoe tongue. All of this was made with clay, but I think that next time it may be better to make it with epoxy putty, because all the grass of the set ended up sticking in the shoes.



Wings



The wings were very easy to make. I cut a piece of thin transparent stiff fabric in a wing shape. Then I glued (with fabric glue) the feathers one by one on the top and the back sides of the fabric. I made sure that at the top of the wings there was a part without feathers that could cover the arms of the puppet.



Once the wings were dried, I pressed the fabric on the clay that was covering the arms and then I added more clay to cover the fabric.