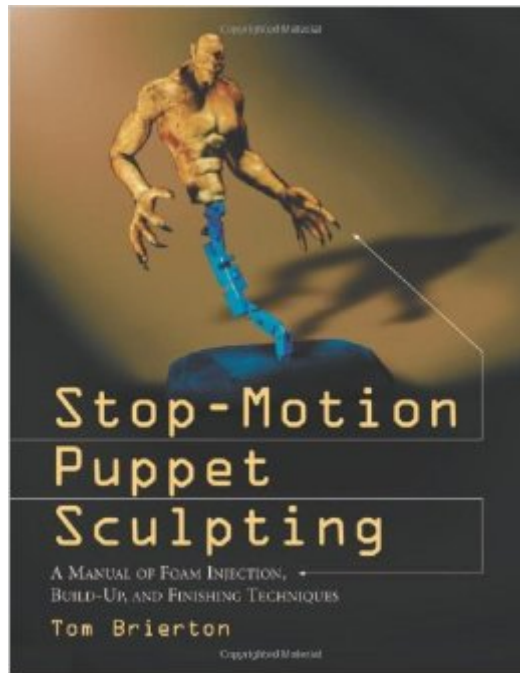


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# Stop-Motion Puppet Sculpting: A Manual Of Foam Injection, Build-Up, And Finishing Techniques



## Synopsis

Stop-motion puppet animation is one of the most unusual and demanding art forms in the world. It uses a variety of skills, including design, sculpting, metal work, mold making and casting, taxidermy, filmmaking, storytelling and acting, and can be seen in the simplest commercial spots on television to more complex animated shorts and science fiction and fantasy feature films. [Illegible] work explains research and design of puppets, and details the fabrication of stop-motion puppets around a metal armature skeleton using the build up and foam injection processes. scissors or other instrument into the shape desired and attaching them to the armature. In the latter technique, the character is sculpted in clay over the armature. This clay sculpture is then replaced with foam by using a plaster mold and injection gun techniques. Finishing techniques described include the making of hair, eyes, eyelids, teeth, horns, nails, and chitinous (insect-shell-like) surfaces.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I would probably be more forgiving if this book were less than half the price it is, but since this is nearly a \$50 investment I have slightly higher expectations. As an earlier reviewer noted, this book is 74 pages in length (including an index and glossary). If it weren't bound, this book could have been stapled together. I don't have a problem with a short book if it is packed with unique, focused insight into a topic, but unfortunately in my opinion this book only achieves this on a shallow level. This is a book focusing on a specialized technique by an industry professional. I would expect it to contain a wealth of insight reinforced by a number of examples outlining different levels of complexity and

various challenges facing foam puppet builders. Instead this book offers one simplistic example of sculpting a figure on a wire armature. It then takes the reader through a single example of the steps to create a foam injection puppet and an example of the foam build up technique. In about 25 pages the author covers sculpting, mold making, foam mixing, injecting, baking, removing the cast and painting. It feels more like an instruction pamphlet than a resource on the topic. I would have liked to see multiple examples illustrating varying levels of complexity. How would the author have dealt with a 4-legged puppet? After reading this book (in about an evening) I'm left with many basic questions, such as materials appropriate or to be avoided in armatures for foam injection, issues surrounding undercuts in puppet sculptures, poses puppet sculptures need to be in for an injection mold, and there's practically nothing on feet anchors, a topic I believe there must be enough information out there to fill a few pages.

As the title of the manual suggests, the book is a primer of learning the fundamentals of foam injection and build-up techniques, material which is (especially the unique process of build-up technique) difficult to find when wishing to create realistic Ray Harryhausen/Willis O'Brien-type animation puppets (as outlined in the build-up chapter of the manual). The book is called "A Manual of Foam Injection, Build-Up, and Finishing Techniques", not "The Manual...", and therefore one would assume before purchasing it that is yet another text on creating stop-motion puppets, and would be a viable addition to one's stop-motion library. The copy at the back the manual (as well as in web advertisements) indicates that this manual also covers the creation of replacement models for animation. This topic was discontinued by the author for a later manual that he is writing on stop-motion animation, lighting and cinematography. Prior to going to press, the author contacted the publisher to edit the replacement models topic out of the advertisements, but they did not do so. It would behoove web/book advertisers of this manual (or any book/manual) to include the page count of a given manuscript, so that consumers can know the size of the book in question. The cost of this manual is, in my opinion, overpriced, but the pricing was the decision of the publisher, not the author. The manual is also printed on substandard paper stock. Other stop-motion books currently on the market do not cover build-up technique as detailed as this manual, especially as it pertains to a machined armature. Virtually all stop-motion books on the market cover sculpted puppets using only wire armatures.

This book details the processes of foam injection and build-up technique for stop-motion animation; techniques that are very difficult to find in other publications. Because of the advanced technical

nature of the two processes, one should assume that puppets fabricated using these techniques are beyond the interest and scope of most children. More easy to understand publications for pre-teen children (as well as adults) on how to build more simple "cartoony" characters would be Craft Skills for Stop-Motion, by Susannah Shaw, and Creating 3D Animation, By Peter Lord. Both of these publications are outstanding sources of stop-motion material. A consumer might find some of the manual's material "inappropriate". Chapter 2 of Stop-Motion Puppet Fabrication is devoted to anatomical sculpting, which details the clay rendering of a female nude in a dance pose. I suggest that before anyone criticizes such art through prejudicial censorship, they should well note that such innocuous anatomical nude figure studies can be found in centuries-old masterpieces: (Michelangelo's David, and the genius of Auguste Rodin [Lovers, etc.]. The general public (including children) are exposed to such masterful works of art on a daily basis, either in books or at museums. I champion the ideal that the human form is a natural sculpture of beauty and should be regarded as such. The best source of studying human anatomy for the pursuit and study of fine art is to go to the source; the human form. There is nothing distasteful or inappropriate about it, unless it becomes [...], which I do not personally advocate in my own work. Chapter 5 outlines the rather difficult process of foam build-up.

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