



[My Ghoul Friday](http://www.ghoulfriday.com)

<http://www.ghoulfriday.com/bubblehead>

Bubblehead



Step 1: Making a Basic Shape



Another paper Mache creation, this project shows how to make "Bubblehead" and the crate he comes in.

For this prop, I took a plain, styrofoam wig head and taped it to a small cardboard box that would act as the torso. I folded the corners of the box and taped them down, creating a rounded shape. I then used modeling clay to start sculpting the contours of his face (e.g. protruding high cheekbones; narrowing chin; brow bones; nose outline like a skull with nothing in the middle).

Step 2: Add "Bubbles"



Detailing isn't too important at this stage, but basic shapes are. I built up the bubbles (bubbles sounds nicer than cysts or pustules) on the scalp, and made the cheek bones more defined/pronounced. I made sockets for the eyes deeper because I knew that it would get filled in somewhat when I put the paper Mache overtop. Same went for the nose.

Step 3: Cover With Tinfoil



I covered the entire face and most of the skull with tinfoil. Be sure to press the tinfoil into each crevice or else you will lose all the detailing you've created.

If I hadn't wanted my modeling clay back, I would have covered the entire head with tinfoil and paper Mache. Good modeling clay isn't cheap, and being thrifty, I couldn't let all of that get trapped. 3/4 of the head gets covered with paper Mache and is left to harden. This needs to be followed by 2 or 3 more layers of paper Mache. You want to make sure the structure of the face will hold once it's been removed from the wig head.

Step 4: Remove Mask & Build Up Shape

Making some slits on the top and side of the face (and having used a butter knife to try and ease the mask away from the clay), I was able to remove the paper Mache mask and retrieve my modeling clay. I then filled the cavities inside the mask with balled up tinfoil before sliding it back onto the wig head and taping it in place.

I used toilet paper rolls and plastic bags to "flesh out the body" (neck/collar bones, chest, shoulders). Simply tape them to your form, even one on top of the other.



If you don't have a good idea of what this should look like, search online for an anatomy website - something that shows the human form and our bones/muscles. Look for protruding shapes (don't be sassy now) like muscles and tendons in the neck. You can even look in the mirror at yourself. Note the divots in your collarbone, the width and shape of your shoulders. Imitate and exaggerate these shapes with your creature.

Step 5: Cover Body With Tinfoil



Covered it all with tinfoil again to give the mache something smooth to stick to. I also find the tinfoil allows me to see the shape more clearly (I am not distracted by all the different colours and mediums I've used).

Step 6: To Add Arms or Not Add Arms



Now you must understand, at this point I hadn't fully decided what I wanted to do with this creature. Would he be covered in clothes? Will he break out of the ground? Will he eventually have a full body? I didn't know. These are all important details because it dictates if I need to make arms, hands, and detail his chest.

To be on the safe side, I decided to give him some basic arm structure that I could build on. All I used was cardboard rolled up and taped closed to create a rounder shape. I then covered them with plastic bags, taped them to the body, and covered them with tinfoil before starting the paper mache process.

Step 7: Creating Detailed Fleshy Bits



Once he was dry, I decided to give him more detail and texture using toilet paper. For the flat surface, I separated the paper so it was only one ply, and smoothed it onto his forehead and around the nose, crisscrossing it in some sections. Sometimes I used a brush to gently pat down the edges (you have to be careful because it can tear it or clump it very easily).

For the mouth and eyes, I simply rolled torn pieces of paper towel and dipped them in the glue before pressing them in place. I did the same technique around the raised "bubbles" on top of his head, creating little circles around the base of them.

Step 8a: Paper Towel Results



The paper towel makes such a difference when it comes time to paint it. It adds a depth of realism, gives more shape and texture to your creature. It's well worth it.

Step 8b: Paper Towel Results



You can see the difference the paper towel/toilet paper makes. It does most of the texture work for you. All you have to do now is use darker colors on the crevices and lighter colors on the ridges.

Step 9: Layering of Paint Colours



The key to making anything look more interesting or even more realistic is layering of colours. I put my darkest shades on first, following the underside of any contours I've created. Then when that has dried, I use a dry brush technique (tiniest bit of paint on my brush) of a lighter shade, lightly dragging my brush along the shapes. Finally, I use an even lighter shade (almost off white) to highlight the most protruding shapes on his head.

Step 10: Scavenge for Parts



After much pondering, and looking around the house to see what I have available, I decided my Bubblehead would be struggling inside a box/cage. I had a computer box kicking around, so I plopped a smaller box inside, cut the styrofoam that was used to protect the computer, and placed my guy on top.

Step 11: Secure the Frame



I used duct tape to secure the styrofoam in place, then put a bit of paper mache along the edges to cover the gaps where the box was stapled together.

Step 12: Blacken the Base



I had some black craft/floral spray paint kicking around. The bonus of using this is that it won't melt the styrofoam (normal spray paint will). I had to go back and cover the bright bits of detail still showing through the layer of paint.

You could easily use black latex paint or black paper instead.

Step 13: White Grain



Using white paint mixed with a bit of water and a large paint brush, I was able to create "graining". You have to wipe some the paint off the brush before you apply it in smooth, long strokes (try to continue each paint stroke in one consistent movement from top to bottom).

Leave a bit of black showing between boards to create an outline for the boards.

Don't worry about making straight lines. Old pieces of lumber have curvy edges. I left spots unpainted (so the black was untouched) for holes in the wood and made twisted spirals with my brush to make knotholes that I will later touch up with darker paints.

Step 14: Brown, Black, White Highlights



To give it a richer texture, I added some brown paint, highlighted the edges with some white, and then added a dry-brushed coat of black paint to sections.

Step 15: Closer Look at Holes



Here's a closer shot of one of the holes. If you're really keen, do a search online for theatre scene painting or wood faux finishes to get some tips on how to make an object appear to be made of wood.

Step 16: Create Boards



I painted 3 strips of styrofoam using the same techniques. I used glue and nails to attach them. The cans are to press the surfaces together while they dry.

Step 17: Arrange Boards



Again, don't worry about the edges being straight. These are weathered pieces of wood, so I want the ends to be jagged.

Step 18: Final Paint Touches



I gave Bubblehead some more white highlights including little pupils.

Step 19: Add Stuffing and Chains



I stuffed the top of the box with moss you can get at the craft store, and used an old chain from...well, to be honest, I don't remember what the chain used to belong to. If I had to guess, it was a lamp.

And here he is. Bubblehead in his full glory. The good thing about this prop is that Bubblehead isn't attached to the box. I can slip him out and reuse the box in future parties a different way, or I can build Ol' Bubbles a body and reuse him as well.

Final Close Up

