Simple Puppet 1: Wire Armature

This is a method for those without power tools like drill presses, bandsaws or belt sanders. It uses aluminum armature wire and simple nuts in the feet for tiedowns, held together with epoxy putty. This is a small puppet, 130mm (5 ") tall.

Materials Used:

1.5mm (1/16") armature wire, about 1.2 metre (4 ft) long

0.9mm armature wire (special order) about 3 metres (10 ft) long

5 minute epoxy glue

Epoxy putty

2 x 3/16" half nuts or square nuts for feet

2 x 3/16" machine screws, 2" long, for tiedowns

2x 3/16" wing nuts, for tightening tiedowns

2 white plastic beads for eyes (these are 7.5mm)

Tools Used:

Small pliers for cutting wire

Small modelling tool, stick, or toothpick for mixing epoxy glue

Snap-off blade knife for slicing epoxy putty

If all goes well, the finished puppet will look something like this.

More information and links at:
www.stopmoshorts.com>tutorials (especially Mike Brent's tutorials)
www.stopmotionanimation.com (stop motion help and discussion)
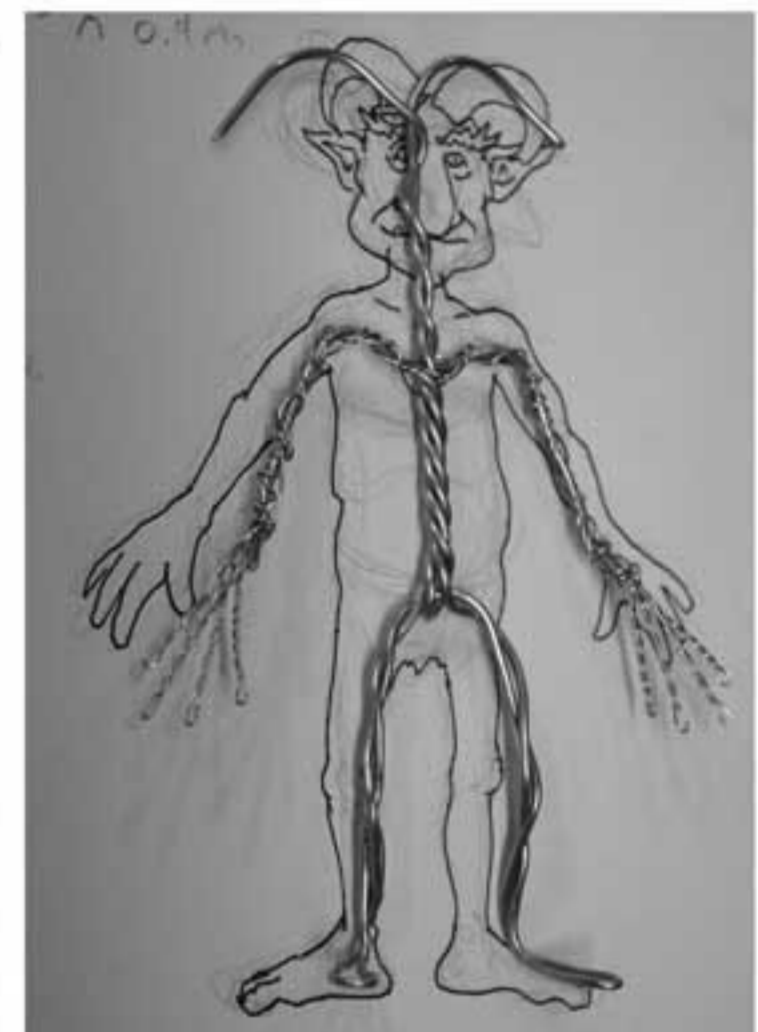www.picturetrail.com/hilligossnic

1. bend a piece of 1.5mm (1/16") wire to form arms, legs, and spine.

2. Twist legs, and get another piece ready to add to the spine.

3. Twist 4 wires together for spine, with 2 for arms and two for head.

4. Thin 0.9mm wire has been used for the hands and wrists, and wrapped around the arm wires.

5. Knead together small amounts of epoxy putty at a time to cover the parts where the bones would be. Leave a big enough gap at the joints so the wire isn't forced to bend in one tiny spot. Build up the head with some wire.

6. Press blank eye beads into the putty while it is soft to make shallow sockets. Add wire loops for eyebrows, ears, and lips. Here, the upper lip has a single loop, the lower lip has 3 loops for better mouth shaping. Choose one method for both lips.

7. With 5 minute epoxy, glue a 3/16" half nut or square nut onto the top of each foot loop. This is for the tiedown which will support the puppet during animation.

8. Cover the nut and the wire with epoxy putty to hold it in place.

Now you have an armature. Time to move on to the next step.