

Wax: Stop Motion's Little Known Material 5

Written by Marc Spess

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Recently while searching information about using modern waxes such as Azbro and Castilene I came across [Adam Beane's web site](#) .

Adam gave me a basic run down on how it all works, and so I asked for his permission to post parts of his e-mails for our site. Here is Adams process for working with Castilene:

"Castiline comes in two colors, and three grades each; soft, medium and hard. The soft can be worked more or less like oil clay, except solvents don't work so well on it (like rubbing alcohol works to smooth out oil-clay) The primary means of smoothing out Castiline is with heat.

Heat can be applied precisely with tools heated in an alcohol lamp (a jeweler's lamp) or with soldering iron-like "waxers". Waxers have interchangeable tips and temperatures can usually be precisely controlled. Also a kind of sanding sponge made by 3m can be heated in an alcohol flame and used to smooth out large sections of a sculpture just as a solvent-soaked rag would smooth out sections of an oil-clay based sculpture.

When I begin a sculpture, I melt down the hard pink "not the soft pink" Castiline in a croc pot. The pink is stickier and less brittle than the green. I then work the warm clay as though it were oil-clay, using the hot sanding sponge as I go, until it is necessary to switch to finer tools.

When I am satisfied with the rough sculpture, I make a silicone mold of it and pour melted hard Green Castiline into the mold. I continue to work the Castings until I achieve the level of detail you see on the pieces on my site.

Trying to work the green Castiline (especially the hard stuff) from scratch- good luck! It can be done, but you will probably be scratching your head asking why the hell does anyone like this stuff?"

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I then asked Adam what tools he liked to use most, and what basic tools are needed for beginners who venture into wax sculpting. Here was his reply:

"I will say that 99 percent of my rough is done with a medium sized knife tool and hot Sanding sponges. Then, for the cleanup and detail work, I do about 50 percent with a tiny flat spatula I made out of hardened steel and 40 percent with a tool on the waxer. The waxer is a dental waxer from Kerr. The remaining ten percent is one other handmade spatula/ pick tool- very small, for getting in between teeth and in corners of eyes. So, three tools- two spatulas and one knife. Plus a waxer and hot sanding sponges. Less than most people think. Many people think I must have a special tool for each part, like a tool for doing eyes and so on. Not so! The Kerr waxer is sort of the Cadillac of waxers. Way more than most people would need (or, at about \$460.00, way more than most people would want to spend)

A simple jewelry waxer (basically, a soldering iron on a rheostat) should suffice. The alcohol lamp is very important and at about 6 dollars, very affordable. If you buy one, also buy a small fire extinguisher and keep it near by. In my 3 1/2 years sculpting I've never had a fire, but basically, an alcohol lamp is a molotov cocktail waiting to go. Very dangerous!

So a beginning tool kit might be: one medium knife tool (from Compleat sculptor?), one small flat spatula (which I had to make) and one very small spatula/ dental pick. One alcohol lamp and some 3m fine grade softback sanding sponges, one fire extinguisher. One small croc pot (or coffee can on an electric burner)"

I highly suggest anyone interested in wax to visit Adams site. Pretty soon he tells me he will be posting a section on his site with more details about working in wax. You can find it [here](#) .

[Part 4](#)