When Gary from Animation Armatures said he would send us a kit for review, we couldn't say no. Armatures are the foundation for puppets, and without them they couldn't be animated.

So after a couple of weeks it arrived in the mail, packaged in a small cardboard box and bent up nice and small.

Now before I get into the nitty gritty of how good or bad this kit is, it is important to keep in mind it is sold for around 80 US dollars. It is a value kit for beginners and not designed for feature films, but more for practice. As the saying goes, you get what you pay for.

This kit is definitely perfect for the beginner who wants something they can experiment with, learn from and modify to their personal liking. Many times people buy more expensive kits and don't want to alter them because they have so much money tied up in them.

So what about the design? The kit is in a rough approximation of what a human proportioned puppet would look like. Our kit stood at just over 10 inches tall and 3 1/2 inches wide at the shoulders. No tie downs were included but the toes do have some threaded nuts that can rotate. The forearms have some smooth rods inserted into the elbow ball joint and a round piece of brass tubing slid over it. This is where you can insert wire for the wrist and epoxy it into place.

The good news is that the kit is made up of parts that are all strong on their own. The main fault is that it would be more solid if the parts were soldered together properly. All the parts are crazy

glued (or possibly epoxied) together. The threaded rods go into balls with smoothly drilled holes and twist out with little effort. There is a tip sheet that comes with it that explains what to do if this happens. Crazy glue and/or metal adhesive glues.

If you want to save some money and solder the parts together yourself this is definitely what we recommend. Other aspects of the kit were what you could expect in this price range. The screws and bolts in certain areas are as tight as they can be made and squeeze the brass sections in-between the sandwiches. You can't tighten these down if the ball or sandwich plates wear down. Drilling a couple of holes above those and the balls and adding a second bolt to tighten would solve this problem. Again, all easy to do yourself.

There are some other small issues with this kit, but over-all it is a good starter kit for beginners or for the animator who wants to save a little and do things themselves. The parts are easy enough to modify and worth the cost alone.

You can visit the main armature site where these are sold here .