



Kraftmark Company
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ProCreate™ Terrain Putty Tutorial

or

“The Making of Skull Island!” by Don Goddard

Introduction: I recently began playing a 28mm Pirate Skirmish game and needed to expand my terrain options for my game table. Most of my terrain consisted of basic foam board hills and small clumps of plastic cake decoration trees so I thought I'd try to create something simple but impressive using Kraftmark Company's new ProCreate Terrain Putty. I decided to make a skull shaped cave and entrance without scale trees (so it could be used for various games and scales) that could serve as a centerpiece and an objective for jungle battles. My 28mm Pirates could fight Island Natives on one day and my 15mm Undead could defend it the next!



Mixing Terrain Putty and starting the Skull Cave: Since the skull would be the exterior of a cave entrance I decided to conserve putty by making the piece as hollow as possible. I covered a large Styrofoam ball with a plastic bag from the grocery store. I mixed the putty with my hands using latex gloves. There was no strong odor from the mixed putty. The latex gloves helped with smoothing the mixed putty on the foam board.

Sculpting Terrain Putty to create the Skull Face: Here is the putty spread on the bag covered foam ball. I covered less than half the ball in case the cured putty was difficult to remove from the plastic bag. The rock texture was created with what would become my primary sculpting tool on this project, the handle from a broken plastic spoon (seen resting on the plate). The putty stuck to the bag easily and was firm enough to hold its shape even hanging vertically. I was concerned with how light the mixed putty was at this point, but my fears were unfounded.



Carving and Filing Cured Putty: When cured, the skull was very durable and pried easily off of the plastic bag. I was surprised at how strong the thin sections towards the edges were. I needed to remove excess putty from the nasal opening and one eye socket, both of which required carving and filing to remove. This stuff sets up like concrete but is still light and can be worked with simple tools without crumbling or cracking.



Here is the skull being checked for placement on the foam board hill that was glued and pinned together and left to dry for several hours. I also carved out a little path leading into the depth of the hill for the cave entrance. A 28mm Pirate (Eureka Miniatures) is shown for scale.



Apply Terrain Putty to Foam Board to create a Path: The rock face removed and putty was worked into the cave entrance and shaped with the broken spoon handle. The putty stuck to the foam board easily. I used a little water to lubricate the latex gloves to keep the putty from sticking.



Glue Skull to Base; Build up Island: I glued the Skull Face to the foam board with Terrain Putty. I added Putty to the piece by rolling thick ropes of the mixed putty and pushing it into place with the slightly moistened rubber gloves. The putty absorbed water while it was being mixed but it didn't seem to adversely affect it. I had given up being frugal with the putty at this point, as the jars seemed to hold a lot more than I had originally thought.



Using water to smooth: I added even more water to my gloved hand and experimented with making smooth surfaces. The putty has a working time of hours and I found that being able to "play around" with it helpful as I only had a rough idea of how the piece would end up looking.



Bulking up the Skull: After looking at the piece I decided that the skull was not "skully" enough so I added another layer of Terrain Putty. The putty was applied in the same manner as before in rolled sausage shapes. The fresh putty stuck to the cured putty very well.



Keeping Tool Wet to Shape Putty; Experiment with more water: Here is the water slicked putty after being shaped with my spoon handle. I found that I needed to keep the plastic handle wet to prevent a slightly grainy appearance to what was supposed to be weathered stone.

I added more and more water to see if the putty would develop issues while curing. The additional water only made the putty easier to manipulate and sculpt. Any added drying time was not noticed (I was actually doing this project over a series of evenings after working on other projects). The putty dried just as durable as before.



Removing Skull for Better Positioning: I noticed that the skull was staring straight up after adding more putty. Removing the skull for repositioning was difficult to say the least. I cut through the cured Terrain Putty with a hobby knife and while prying the skull off pulled several pieces of firmly attached foam off with it. When the cockroaches outlive mankind, several of them will live in this terrain piece!



Reattach Skull with Terrain Putty: Due to the putty's durability and tenacious adhesion I decided that instead of adding foam and gluing it with wood glue, I would use the putty to glue the foam into the structure as I built it back up. The putty worked wonderfully for this and I was able to shape and then finish sculpting the back of the piece with a lot less waiting.



Removing Excess Cured Putty: I needed to remove some of the cured putty on the back of the rock formation to make it more of a head shape. I used a hobby saw and it worked wonderfully.



Thinning Putty with more and more water: Since I used expanded bead foam board I needed to coat and fill in the larger flat surfaces that would not be covered with flock. I mixed some Terrain Putty and kept adding water to see how it would blend in. No matter how much water I added I was able to get it to mix to a consistent thickness throughout without clumping, lumping, or breakdown!



Applying Thinned Putty to Foam Board: Here is a heavily thinned down layer of putty being spread onto the piece. It was easy to get fantastic texture using this technique. I plan on experimenting further using it on some boggy marsh and water tiles.



Conclusion: I was very pleased at how easy it was to work with this ProCreate Terrain Putty and its ability to make fantastic terrain no matter how I attempted to mess it up. Every time I would try something new it would have surprisingly effective results and inspires me to make more terrain pieces to see what I could accomplish. This is a fun product to play with and it is capable of some amazing results while being easy to work with.

Here is photo of the finished piece after flock and coarse tree foam has been glued on:



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Please contact Kraftmark Company at 610.717.1785 or info@kraftmark.biz for more information.

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