

Making Marionette (Puppets) from Paper Pulp

By Karen Elzinga



Recommended for children Grade 6
and above if done as a class activity.

What Ingredients do I need?

- Recycled paper or copy paper
- Plastic drinking straws
- Strong string
- Sticks or as I have used old wooden vertical blinds cut down to size.
- Drill (Preferable but not a necessity)
- Plaster faces (you can just use the pulp but if you want more life like then these are great (They are available in the shop, [CLICK HERE](#) to view them. For larger quantities just email in for a quote.
- Paint and decorative items (fabric, hair, wool etc) tissue paper is a great item for dressing as is feathers.
- Large needle or skewer for threading body bits together through the straws
- Tub or blender
- No nails glue or craft glue
- Patience!!

TWO METHODS FOR PULPING PAPER



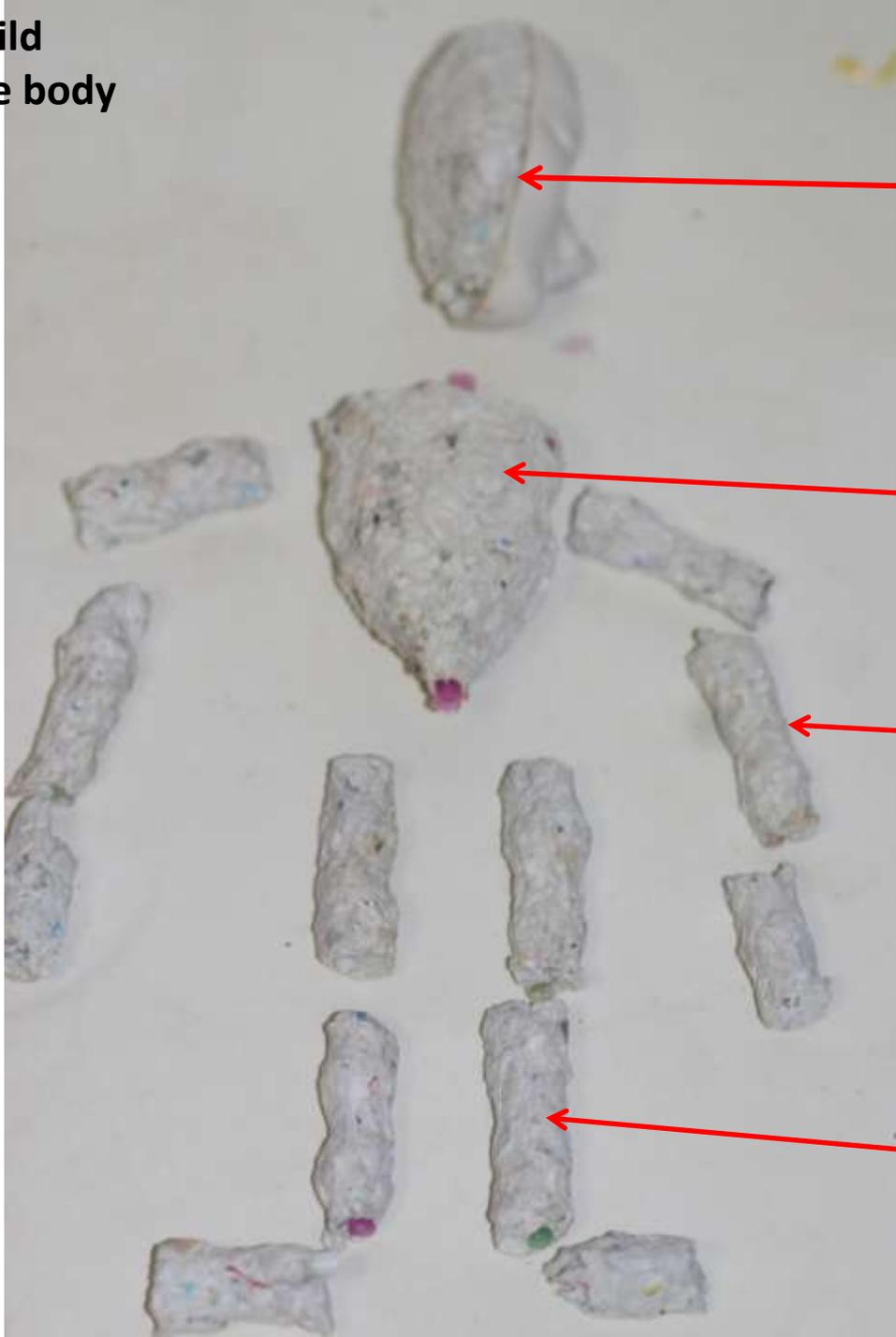
The first method for pulping paper is to use a food blender, adding a bit of paper in stages to a blender, this is a quick method and very effective for smaller quantities. You can use sort of recycled paper, but make sure to take out sticky tape or staples prior to pulping.

HOW TO TURN PAPER INTO PULP



The second method is to use a tub, this is very effective if larger quantities are required. Add hot water to the tub and immerse paper, you can use cold water the process of paper breakdown just takes longer. Leave the tub and paper alone for at least 30 mins, an hour is preferable at minimum. If using as a school project and you wish students to be involved in the process you can decant paper and water into smaller tubs and have students work the paper into pulp. Simply get your hands dirty in the tubs, breaking up the paper as you go, you'll know when it's ready because it will feel like silk, soft and with no hard bits, generally this can be achieved in 10 minutes or less depending on quantity.

How to build marionette body



You must squash paper pulp to the paster head with a straw inside from the top of the head to where the neck should be

Squash paper pulp around a straw again going up and down ways with the straw

Squash paper pulp tightly around two longer straws for arms and a short one for a hand, repeat twice so two arms, hands are complete.

Repeat the same process as arms and hands.

Tips Page – Things to make sure of

NOTE – After your head has dried you will need to glue the back of the head to the plaster, as it will shrink off the plaster during drying, so pull it off and add some no nails glue or craft glue to secure it tightly.

Remember plaster heads are available in bulk in the shop, if you need larger or smaller quantities just email in with your numbers and we will quote you a price.

[Click here](#)



Place some pulp into the palm of your hand, add the straw on top, add some more pulp to the top over the straw and squeeze your hand shut, you want to get out as much water as you can, it helps with the drying time immensely.

Cut your straws to the size you want before adding pulp

*Push a skewer through your straws to make sure no pulp has blocked your holes before drying

Gerry Anderson is a famous puppeteer who has used a marionette puppet system called supermarionation. This system is most well known for many science fiction movies and television shows. Most recognized of which is probably the Thunderbirds.

Thunderbird puppet documentary (12 mins)
approx

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsfNRYbcld4>

Step 1.



Lay out
all your
pieces
like this

Step 2



Bend a piece of wire into a loop at the end and twist it, thread the rest of the wire through the hand and 1st arm and loop and twist the end, securing the hand and arm together on the wire. Repeat the process with feet and one leg. Do all arms and legs.

Step 3 – Body threading

Cut length of thread at least 6 times the length of the body then doubled it up and thread through the body starting with the head. Separate the strings when it gets to the legs and thread legs with one string each side.



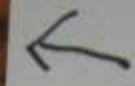
← start at head

← Thread string through to body

← Thread one string through each leg

← Thread string through foot and tie / secure to wire

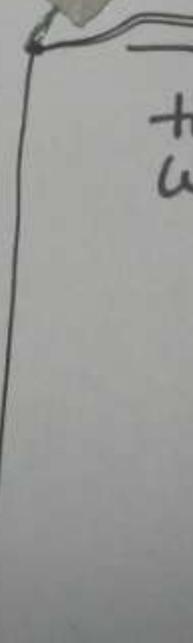
Step 4 – Arm threading



Thread string through arms and into the body and down the other arm.

Thread string through hand

Start at hand tie on string to the wire

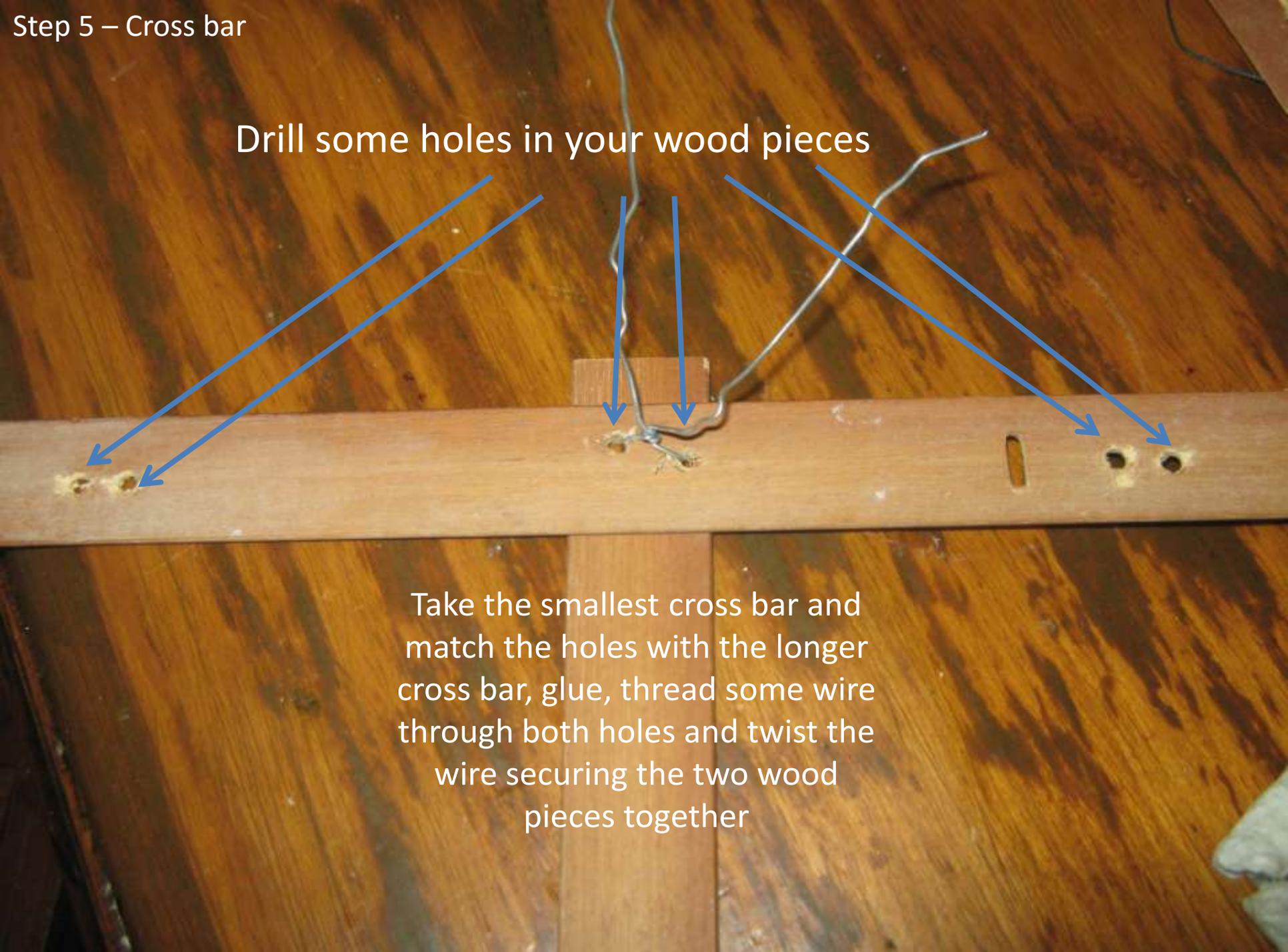


Your body should now look like this, all threaded together!



Step 5 – Cross bar

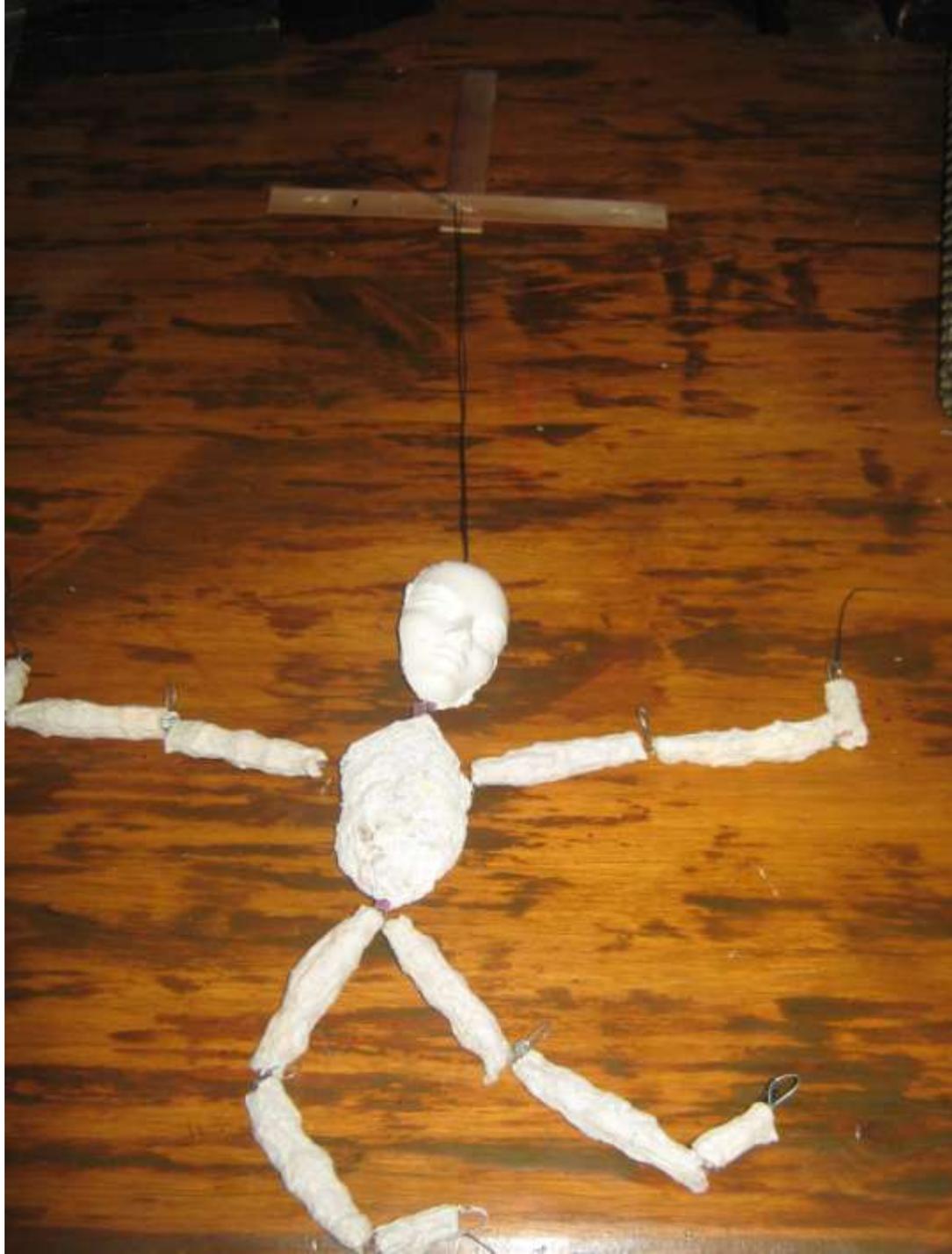
Drill some holes in your wood pieces



Take the smallest cross bar and match the holes with the longer cross bar, glue, thread some wire through both holes and twist the wire securing the two wood pieces together

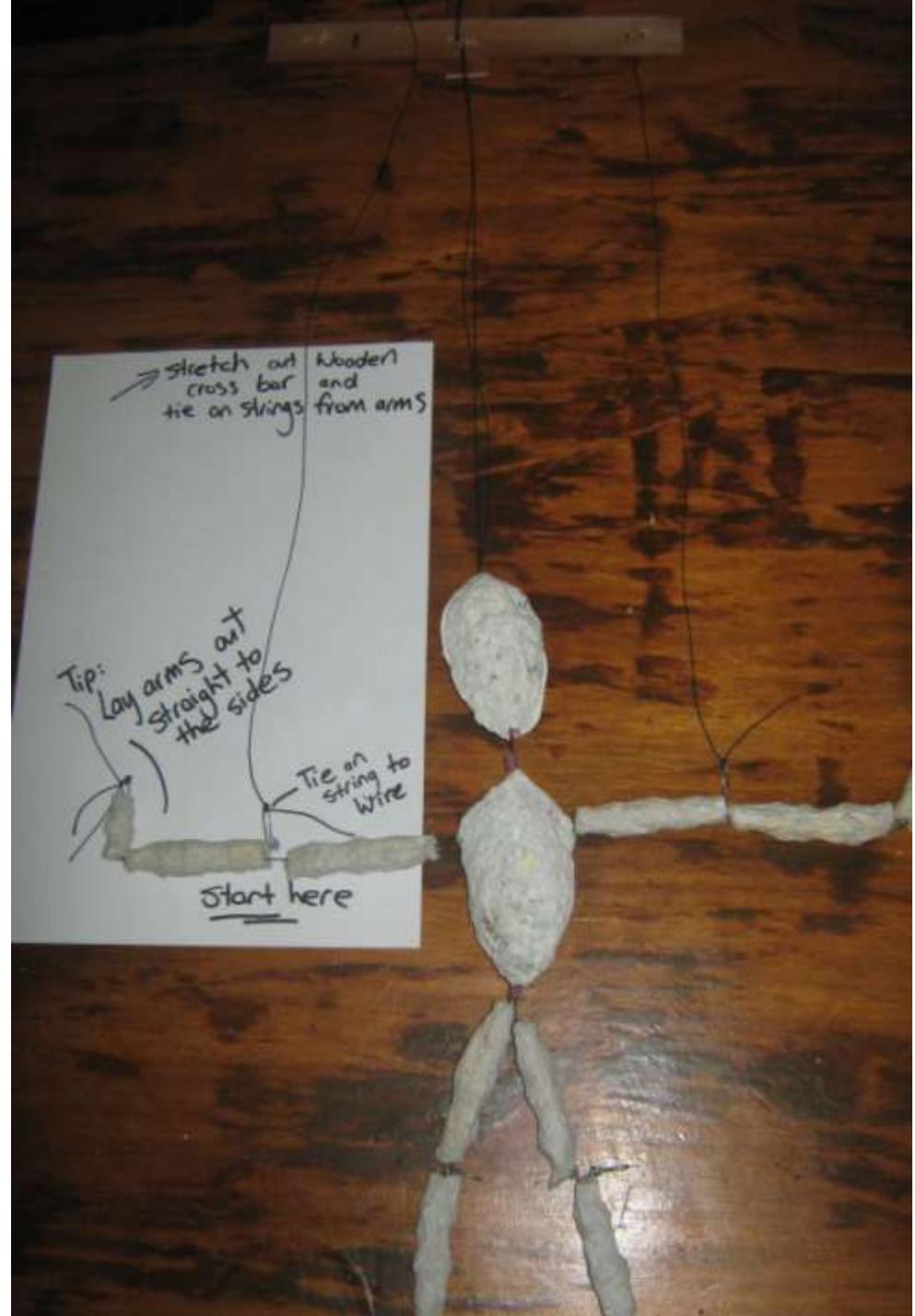
Step 6- Tie head onto
cross bar

Thread the string
coming out of the
head through the
wire on your
cross bar and tie
a knot. **Make sure
you leave a good
distance of string
between the
head and the
cross bar.**



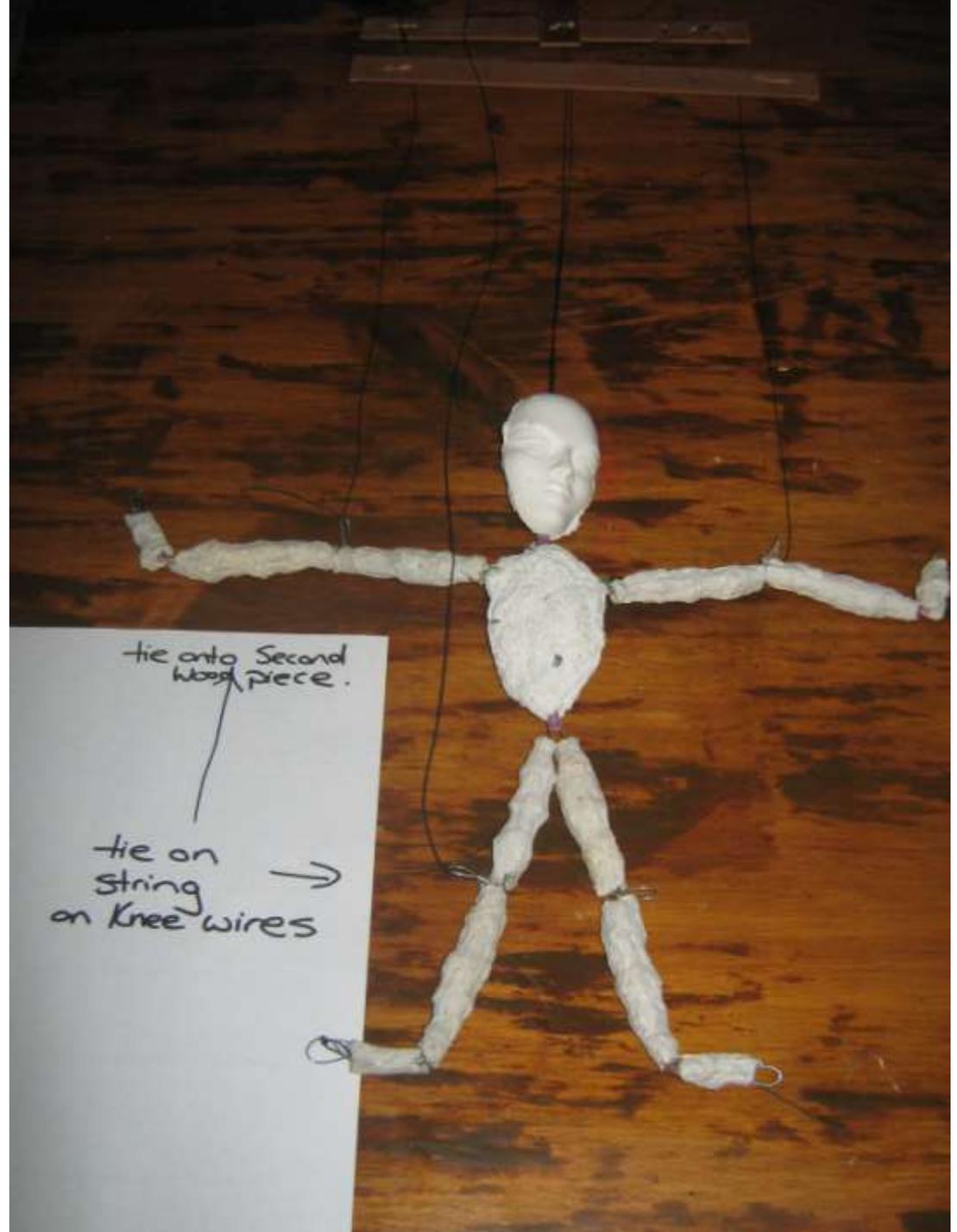
Step 7- Threading strings to cross bar

1. Stretch your arms straight out to the sides of your body.
2. Stretch the cross bar out from the head until your string is fully stretched.
3. Measure your string from the arm to the cross bar allowing enough to tie and cut.
4. Tie string onto your elbow wire
5. Tie the other end of string through the two holes on the outside edges of the cross bar so that both arm strings are the same length.



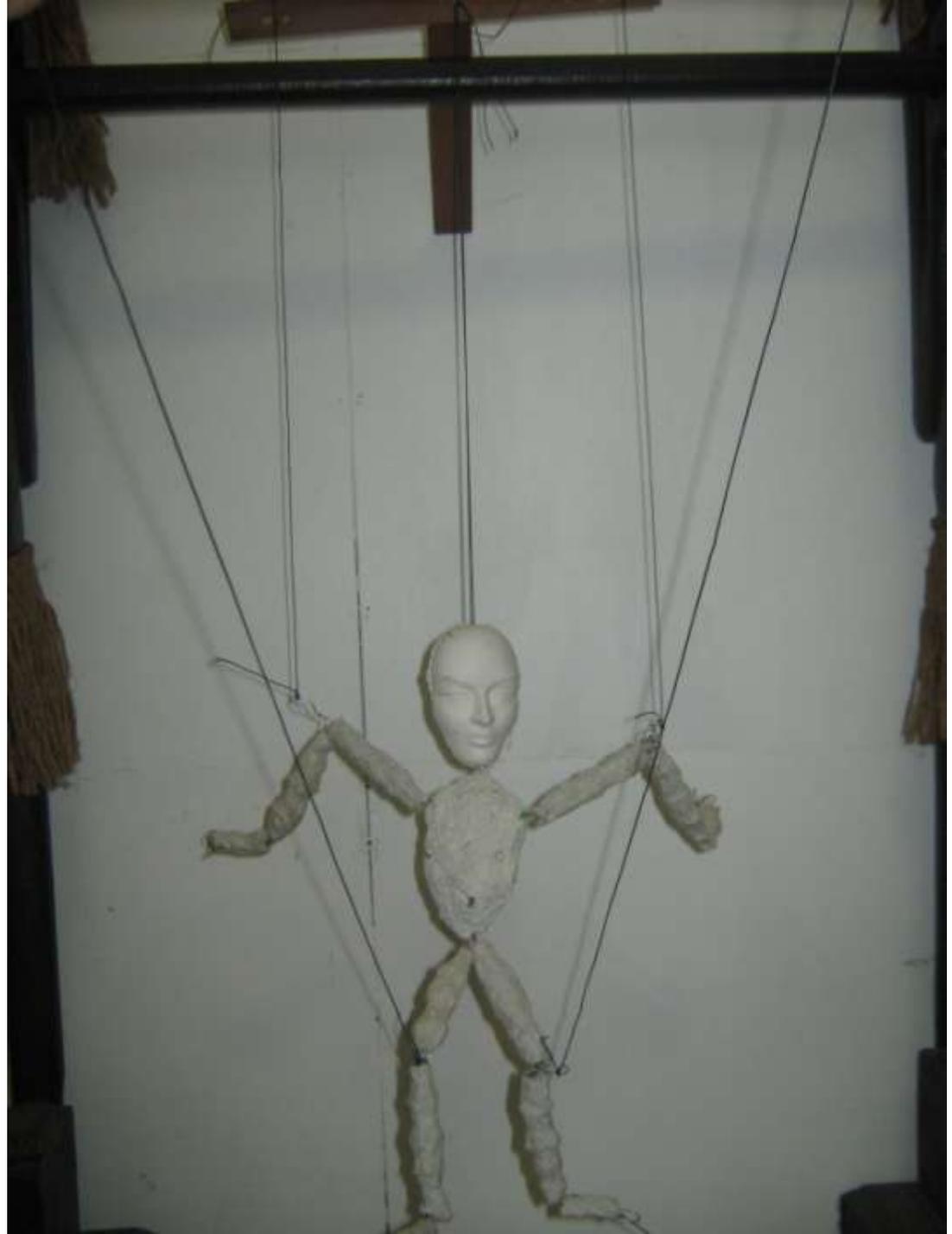
Step 8 – legs and 2nd piece of wood.

1. Lay your second piece of wood just below your cross bar, again straighten out your arms and this time your legs.
2. Measure your string from the knee wire of your legs to the second piece of wood allowing extra for knotting also and cut.
3. Tie string to the knee wire of the legs and tie the other end to the second wood piece threading the string through both holes and tie.



Test out your marionette by moving the wooden cross bar and second wood piece. Get ready for decorating.

It is up to you if you wish to decorate before or after you tie your puppet to the wood.



Finished Products by Grade 6 Students Peregrin Springs State School 2013





The students loved doing these puppets, many came in at lunch times to work further on them, they were all very proud of what they had achieved.

The students got very creative and not one looked like another they were all incredibly different and individual.



About 45 students did this project, not one failed to produce great results.



Thank you for viewing how to make Marionettes, I hope you can now go out and create your own puppets. Send us in your pics, we would love to put them on display in our gallery.

This has been another Karen Elzinga Fine Art Lesson



elzinga  *collective*

** Eccentric Fashion & Accessories * Original Art * Eclectic Oddities **



Karen Elzinga (Bachelor degree –Double major – Fine Art and Visual Culture)