

Creating a Full Body Lifecasting

Using plaster bandages, a little alginate and a cooperative model.

A message from Ed McCormick, Managing Director of ALI

A

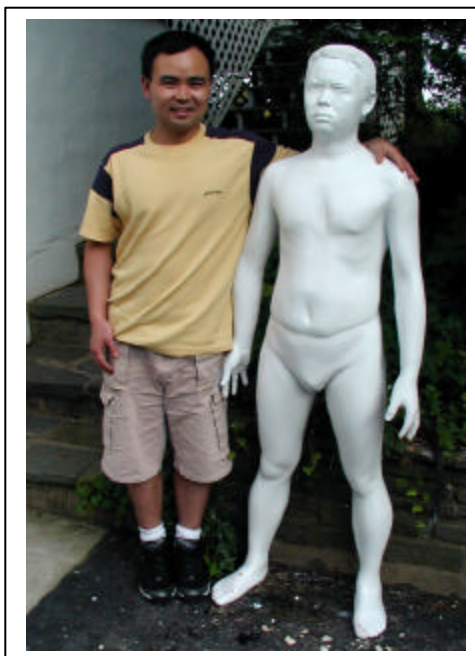
few months ago I received a call from a client who had a special lifecasting requirement. Actually, he was also a special client. For the past three years he lived in Japan where he rose to become a TV star as one of the very few Americans

acting in Japanese soap operas. He had always been interested in super heroes such as Batman and Superman and had begun a collection of movie memorabilia including a number of superhero costumes. It was in Japan that he became intrigued with Japanese super heroes.

My commission was to provide four lifecastings approximately 5 foot 4 to 6-inches, with a young physique for his new Japanese collection. After posting my model requirement on local college bulletin boards I soon found that there were no models in that height range. The ones I did find were victims of fast food and that is overtaking us all. By luck I finally located a Chinese scientist who was on a sabbatical from a California university working on his PhD. He told me that he was co developing the first organic-based transistor that would revolutionize the field. The results of his work and that of his associates will be published in the next issue of Nature magazine.

The figure had to stand with legs apart and hands at the side but arms slightly away from the body (like someone drawing six guns in the old West). Certainly this wasn't a very artistic pose, and knowing that most of my work would be covered in elaborate costumes it wasn't an assignment that was very artistically challenging either. Let's face it I was making a super mannequin.

But I went about it with enthusiasm nonetheless. The body mold was made in two pieces less head and hands using plaster bandages. I molded the hands in alginate to preserve the detail and finally I created a two piece full



Hong Meng standing next to his lifecasting likeness.

head mold using alginate for the face, neck and ears and plaster bandages for the back of the head. All of the pieces were cast in Forton MG after which they were assembled and the seams filled. For the final touches I sculpted open the eyes and added hair by taking Forton MG with an accelerator and applying the thickened Forton to the head to shape the hair. I used a very thin comb while the Forton was still damp to provide realistic hair detail. You can see the results with our model, scientist and inventor, Hong Meng standing next to his likeness.

When the modeling session was done Hong Meng refused payment. He said that he enjoyed the experience too much to accept payment and wanted instead to be paid in friendship. So what turned out to be a humdrum assignment ended meeting an extraordinary man.

The client has since requested seven low cost copies. So now I plan to make a silicone and fiberglass mold and cast the copies using rigid foam.

Ed McCormick,
For ALI Members



Join the Association of Lifecasters International visit:
www.lifecasting.org