



by

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NOW AVAILABLE: [CD \(language english - text, illustrations, pictures and video\)](#)
[about my method of handsculpting directly into porcelain](#)

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This method of sculpting directly in porcelain has been developed by myself and described in my books (dutch and german) "Fantastische Sprookjespoppen - Fantastic Fairy Tale Dolls" and "Poppen en Beesten - Dolls and Animals". The illustrations are from the same books and made by myself. I have conducted several workshops on this subject at the Santa Fe Doll Art festivals (since 1995), the NIADA Conferences and special workshops all over Europe, the USA and Canada. It is possible to work with porcelain in my yearly [Doll Holiday and Workshop Week in Paris](#).

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More tips: [PDF - Dollmaking Tips and Techniques by Marlaine Verhelst](#)

Porcelain for handsculpting has been used for centuries by ceramists in sculpting their "objets d'arts". I have used the german brand "Hutschenreuter" (not available anymore) and the french brand "Limoges". I also use the brand "Artist # 100 Creation" from my supplier silex.nl. Porcelain from a local ceramist will do as well. I fire it only once on 1220 or 1240 degrees Celsius. The porcelain I paint with watercolour and I cover this with a varnish as a protection.

To start with the head I take a styrofoam egg and put a pin in the pointed side (so I can recognize it once it has been covered). I grease the egg with salad oil and cover it with two flat slices of porcelain (ill. 1).

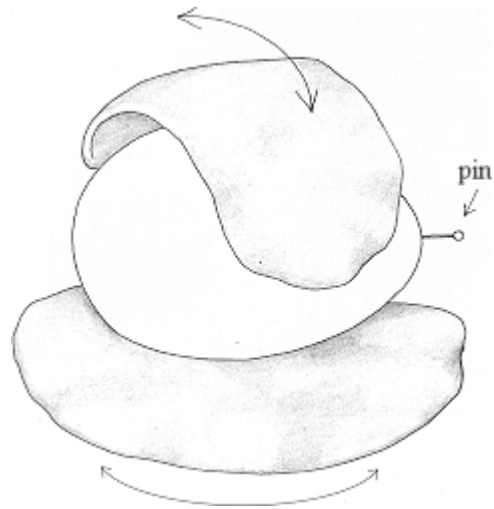


Illustration 1

Then I start modelling the chin - the side of the pin (that can be removed now). You can model the face including the ears as you are used to, keeping the head in your hands.

If you are working very slowly or if you do have dry and warm hands I would advice to put a piece of plastic foil (plastic wrap) between your hands and the head. If you don't, the back of the head will dry, shrink and crack. If you keep the head wet then you can work on it for about two weeks.

When you have finished the sculpting of the head you let it dry for one to three hours. It has to reach a certain stage between wet and dry. Then you will be able to open it to remove the egg. The egg cannot be left inside because the porcelain will shrink while drying (see below for further instructions).. To give the head a neck and shoulderplate I have developed a special stand(ill. 2). On top I can put plastic tubes of different lengths to fit in with the size of the head and the length of the neck(ill. 3). Cover the stand with plastic foil (plastic wrap) and prepare the shoulderplate (ill. 2).



Illustration 2

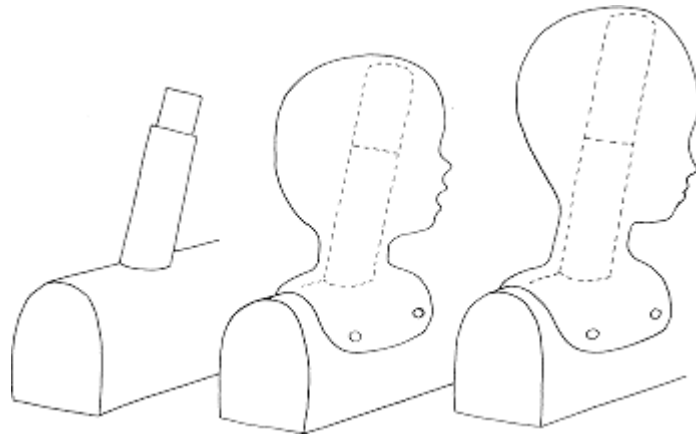


Illustration 3

Now we can operate the head. First we will make a hole for the neck by removing a round piece of material with a little knife. Then remove the top of the head - the brain pan- as you do with a boiled egg. Don't forget to place a mark so you will know how to put it back (ill. 4.)

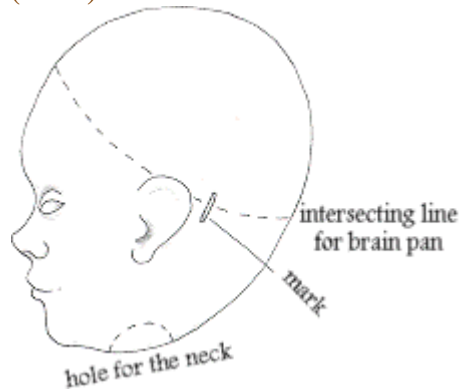


Illustration 4

You can push out the egg now with your thumb (ill. 5) and remove some of the material on the thickest parts of the head, for instance the forehead and the chin. You can use the tool showed on ill. 5.



Illustration 5

To replace to top of the head you have to make scratches -using a little knife- in the two parts that have to close. After scratching you will have to wet these parts with a

(wet) brush and without removing the scratches. Press the top of the head on the right place (where you have put the mark before) now. Smooth away the seam.

Put the head on the stand in the position that you prefer (ill. 2). Model the neck out of a slice of porcelain and smooth away the seams.

Cover the head now with plastic without closing it entirely. Leave it this way for a few hours so the moisture can spread even.

If the entire piece feels the same (as the head before operating) you can remove it from the stand and work on the inside of the head if necessary.

Let it dry slowly before firing.

Good luck!!

More information on my workshops in Europe and the USA and my doll holidays in Holland you will find at my Doll Art Site: <http://marlaineverhelst.com>

For my doll holiday and workshop week in Paris: [Paris workshop week](#)

