

The “Palace Guard” by Alan Ball

The idea for this figure came from Karsten Abel, who suggested to Marion that it might be a good piece for me to make.

Looking at the copy of the painting he sent, I liked the relaxed yet self-assured pose and decided that I would like to do it.

I don't know much about the picture but decided that the figure was a pretty good representation of the romantic style of eastern warrior and decided that I would go with that (I don't see anything wrong in having a little fun now and again - anyway, I don't see much that is totally outrageous in the picture).

I decided to do the piece in 75mm this is one of my favourite sizes for figures, you can get the detail you want and it doesn't take up much more space than a 54mm.



Start:

To start I made the head in my usual way, by shaping a lump of Magicsculpt to the basic form of a head (with a long "Tail" which eventually becomes the neck). Once this is hardened I carve out the head (minus ears and hair).

With the head now roughed out, I add another lump of Magicsculpt for the body, in this case I also added enough for the right leg so I could make sure the body and head were at the correct angle. I also added some Magicsculpt to the head, which I would make into the helmet. This was all set aside propped in the correct position to set hard.

Once this had set I started to carve out the form of the body and leg, I made sure to finish the boot on this leg as it was important to have the second leg lying on this correctly if there was a gap left the whole effect would be spoiled. This was all checked for the correct position and angle against the wall I had made to act as the base.



Once I was happy that the figure was proportioned correctly I put some Vaseline on the lower torso and over the first leg another sausage of Magic sculpt was then pushed onto this for the second leg.



Once this second "leg" had set I prised it off the figure (the reason for the Vaseline).

Now I could carve the second leg and boot and know that it would sit back on the torso and first leg at the correct angle and position.

Dressing the figure:

I decided to “dress” this figure instead of carving the clothes on, as I wanted pretty dramatic folds in the shirt and jacket, which would be impossible to carve. Once I have the head pretty well done I like to work on a figure from the feet upwards, as most clothes overlap the ones below I find it easier to work that way. The second leg was glued into position with the boots sitting nicely on top of each other. I then added Magicsculpt for the trousers and pushed it into position with a wet brush (brushing with the direction of the folds ...I didn't worry about the top section as once the trousers were finished I would be adding a large sash. I sat the now trousered figure against the wall again to check it still looked okay and let everything harden.

I now mixed some Magicsculpt and let it lose a little of its tackiness (until you can pick it up and it doesn't stick to your fingers), this was rolled flat and one edge cut straight.

Using the straight edge of the Magicsculpt as the opening in the shirt I added it to the figure and formed the folds in the shirt I wanted with a cocktail stick and a wet brush.

I made sure to push the shirt flat where a strap for the small shield would cross the body

This process was done again for the jacket.

Before this set I also added the main part of the sash. I wanted to do this at this point so I could have the jacket overlapping part of the sash.





Arms:

Now I started on the arms adding a sausage of Magicsculpt for the right arm (again using Vaseline to ensure I could remove the sausage once set), which would be holding a spear.

When ready the arm was carved out of the sausage and the hand drilled to hold the spear which I had made while waiting for the Magicsculpt to harden, this was all set aside for the moment. The process was repeated for the left arm making sure that the hand would rest properly on the wall.



Helmet:

The helmet now needed a bit of work, as it was still just a basic "Blob".

I carved and sanded this down to the shape I wanted and added the turban using Duro around the bottom edge.

I also added the belt for the small shield, as I needed to have the ventail fall over this.

I also cut a groove into the front of the sash at an angle to take a pistol and word that I had made.



Details:

Everything was starting to come together now and it was time to start adding the details to the figure.

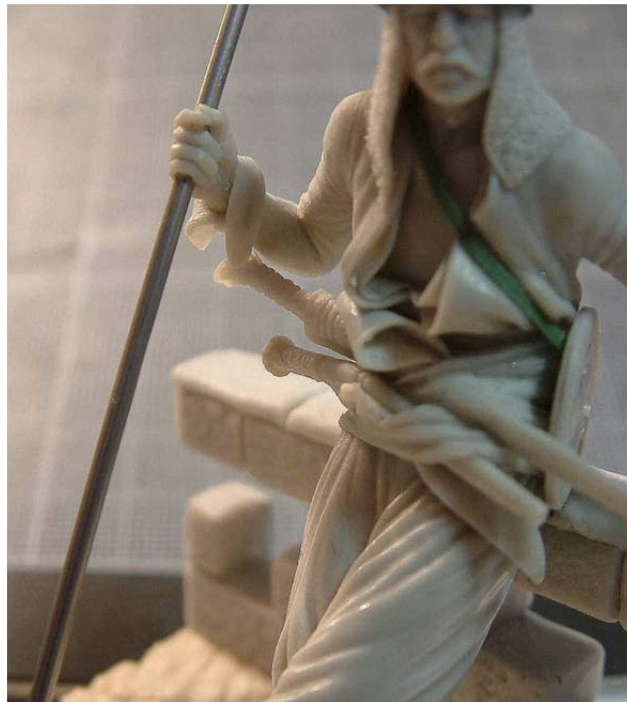
I glued the sword and pistol to the front of the sash and with some more rolled out Magicsculpt added the folds of the sash over these.

The ventail was added from more of the rolled out Magicsculpt detailed with a toothpick (I replaced the first shield strap with one from Duro as the Magicsculpt one kept breaking).

The small shield and arms were glued into position and everything checked to make sure it looked correct.



When I was happy with everything I sat the figure on the base and made sure that he sat in the desired position without any gaps showing under his feet or left hand.



Finish:

At this point the figure was finished, it only needed a gentle rub down with wire wool to get rid of the main knife marks and a final polish with toothpaste to get rid of dust and minor marks and it was ready to paint.

Thankfully my wife Marion painted the figure as she is a much better painter than I am.

Thanks once again to Karsten Abel for the suggestion and picture on which this figure was based.

