

I have always had a fascination with ephemera – vintage items made from paper, and especially those pop-up cards from the Victorian era. I kept working on designs in that vein for this project but the card wanted to be a 50's outer space scene, so I finally gave in and made it that way.

This scene is made from pastillage and gum paste. I used premade gum paste from Chocopan and I made some simple pastillage. Be sure you are ready to work with the pastillage before you make it. You will want to work quickly as it dries out very fast. Be sure to have sufficient space for all your pieces as you will want to roll out the pastillage, cut your pieces and collect the extra bits from around your pieces, leaving them in place until they dry.



Tools Needed:

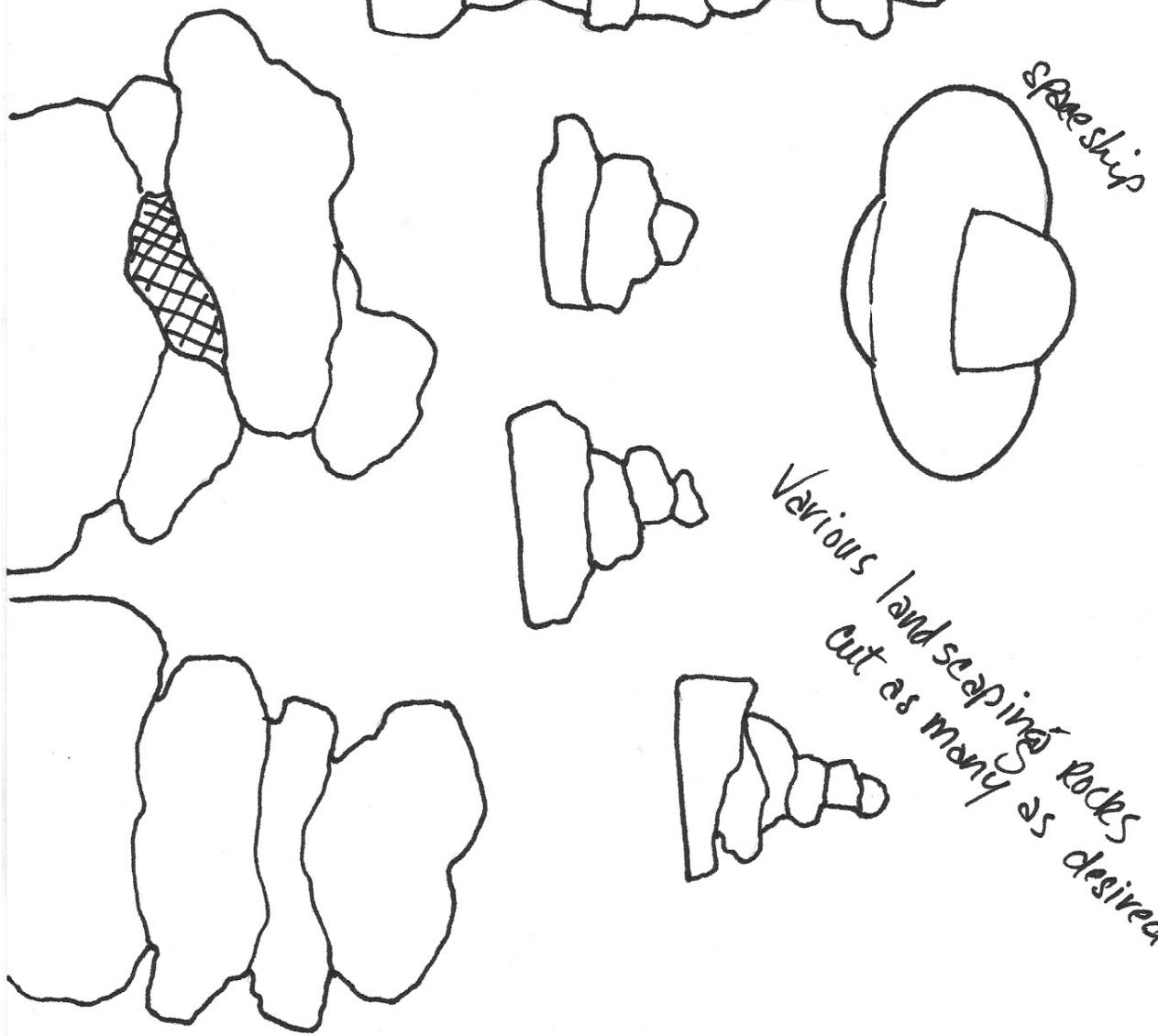
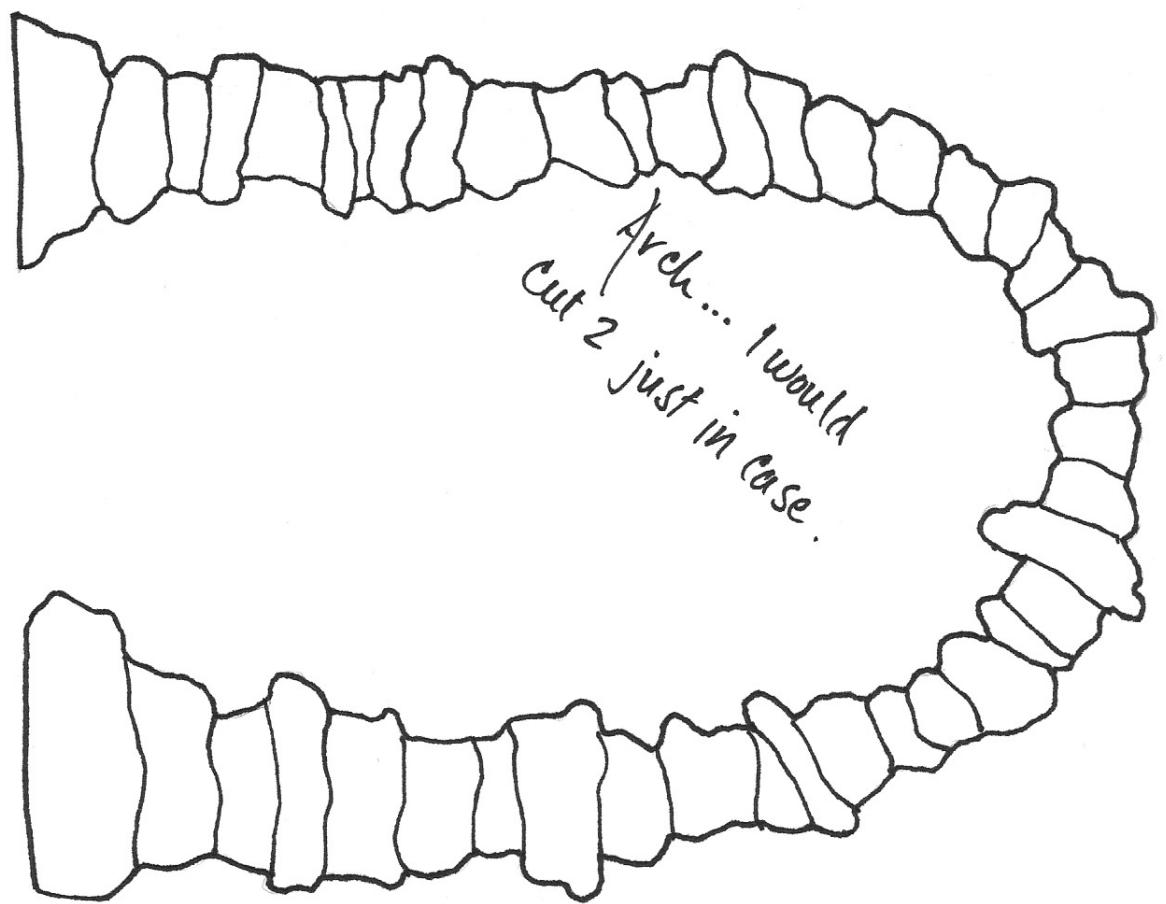
- Rolling surface and pin
- Cutting wheel
- X-acto knife
- Ball tool
- Stylus
- Needle nosed pliers
- Needle nosed tweezers
- Wire cutters
- Large table space where pastillage can dry undisturbed
- Powdered sugar in a puff for working with pastillage
- Cornstarch in a puff for working with gum paste
- Small amount of shortening
- Emory board
- Sand paper 80 grit & 100 grit
- Dremel tool
(if you happen to have one)
- Vodka
- Royal Blue gel color
- Royal Purple gel color
- Sky Blue Gel color
- Super black gel color
- Bright white
- Paint pallet
- Paint brushes
- Two glasses of water

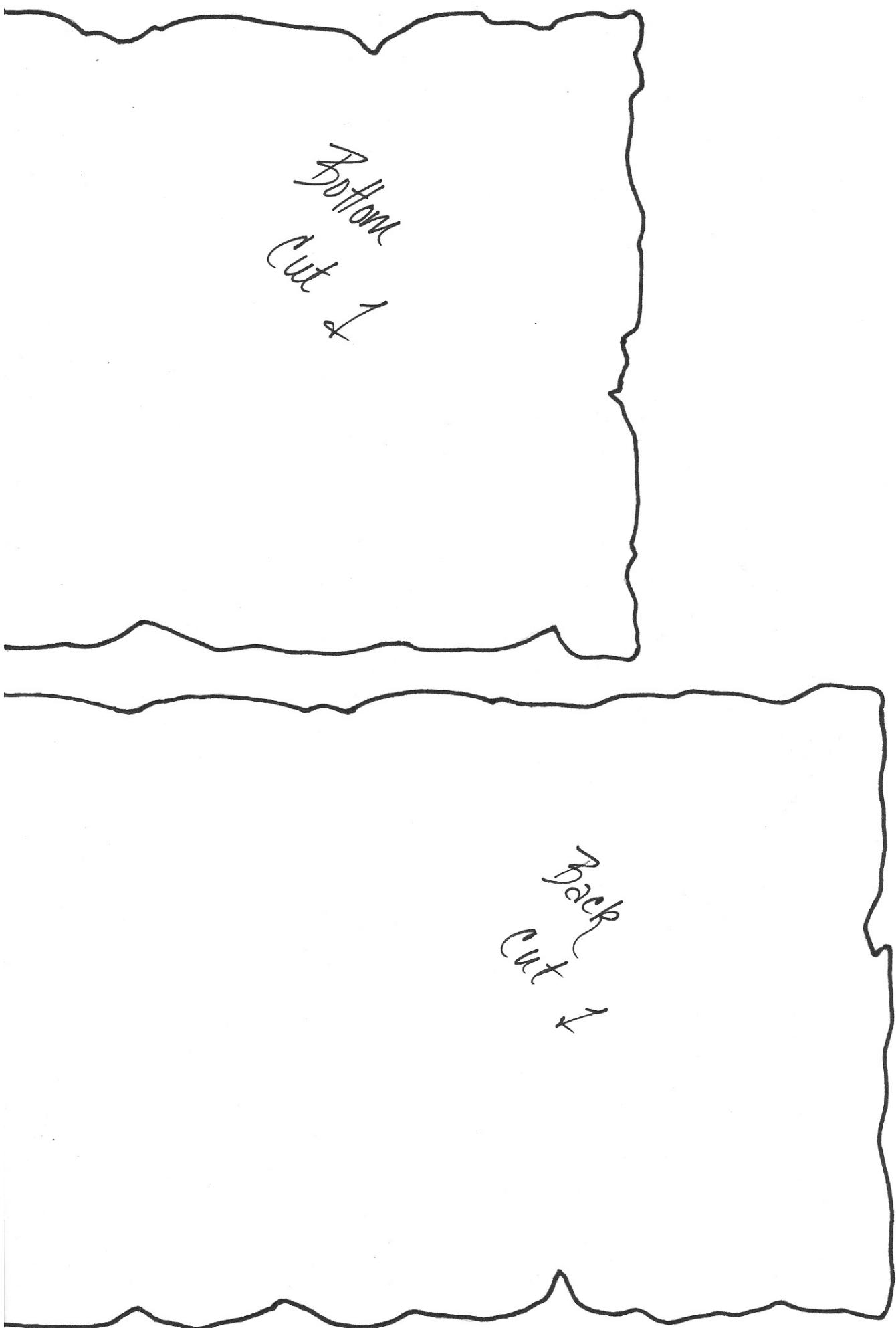
Making Pastillage:

Start with 1 pound powdered sugar. Put all but a handful into a lightly greased mixing bowl and add 1 Tablespoon Gum Tragicanth along with 1/4 cup (more or less) water.

Mix until it all forms one big clump. The mixture should still be slightly sticky. Turn out onto your work surface and knead in the rest of your powdered sugar.

The mixture will have a brown tint but will dry white.





Step 1: Cut out all the pieces for the scene. You will likely have some roughness on the edges of the rock pieces due to all the little cuts and contours. Smooth them out as best you can, using your fingers and the small end of your ball tool. One of the lovely things about pastillage is that it can be sanded once it is completely dry provided you are careful, so just get it as smooth as you can. For the background pieces, the edges should come out a little less ragged because the cuts are longer.

It never hurts to cut out a second arch piece in case the first one fares poorly in the sanding stages. The recipe provided makes more than enough for some extra pieces.

You have some options for sanding – for some of the tighter spots I used an emery board, for other places I used a small piece of sandpaper, and for other areas I used a Dremel. The main thing to keep in mind is that you do not want to put pressure from the front or the back – that can snap the piece. You want pressure from the side directly against the edge, working on small, well supported sections, one at a time. Patience is a virtue at this stage, so take your time and handle your pieces gently.



While your paint is drying you can work on the figures. The robots are made from gum paste and will require some drying time as well. There is no reason that they cannot be made from modeling chocolate, if you need to move more quickly than the gum paste will allow.

Step 2: When you have all your pieces sanded, it is time to paint. The large background piece will be painted to look like outer space. I started out with some royal purple, royal blue and sky blue on my pallet. For painting, I like Americolor gel colors. I added some vodka to my sky blue and washed the entire background piece with this. Working quickly while it was still wet, I added some royal blue everywhere except the center. Again, while the paint is still wet, I floated some royal purple just around the edges. This gives a bit of a gradient effect and creates some depth. To add some texture, I dipped a toothbrush (purchased new for food use purposes) into the vodka, shook off the excess and then held it close to the surface while I ran my finger over the bristles spraying the vodka onto the painted surface. Finally, I sprinkled some very coarse sea salt over the surface and left it in place until the paint had dried completely. Adding the dry salt to the wet paint will have the salt soaking up some of the liquid color and leaving lighter spots. When painting, I keep two glasses of water on hand to rinse my brush. The first glass is where I get the paint off my brush. The second glass is where I make sure it is clean. This cuts down on paper towels and ensures that you will keep the color in the water and not risk putting your elbow on it and getting it everywhere before you realize you've done it.

The rocks and the planet's surface are painted with a tiny bit of super black mixed with some bright white and shaded with that same gray mixed with a small amount of royal blue. You can experiment with the colors until you get what you want. Keep in mind that you can always come back with some petal dusts after the paint has dried completely. I used blue and silver disco dusts attached with some corn syrup to add highlights. I do not use disco dust on anything that will be put on a cake or other item that will be eaten – if you are putting this on a cake, I would suggest sanding sugar instead of disco dust.

You Will Need:

- 1/8 cup gray gum paste
- 1/8 cup of black gum paste
- 1/8 cup of white gum paste
- Small amount of light blue gum paste
- Small amount of dark blue gum paste
- 6 pointed tooth picks
- 4 Dragees
- 1 package white cloth covered
- 22 gauge wire
- 4 – 4" pieces of 20 gauge wire
- Styrofoam to hold your figures while you work on them

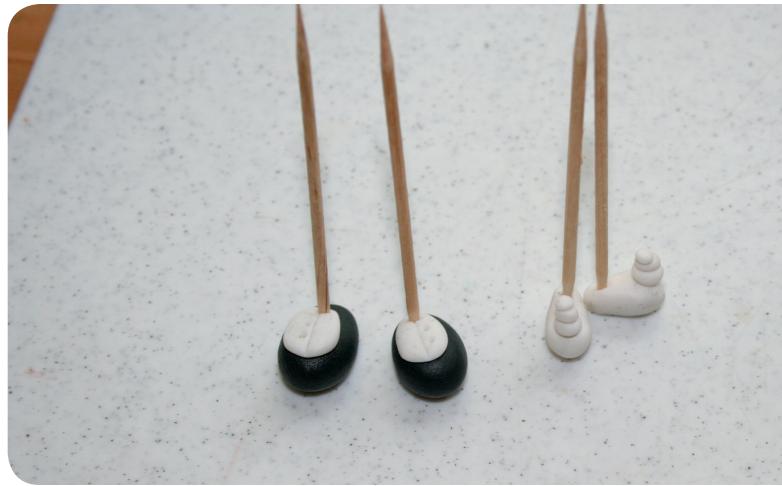
Step 3: These figures begin with the shoes. For the groom, select a piece of black gum paste about the size of a small grape, roll it into a ball and cut it in half. Roll both pieces into balls, give them a gently rounded teardrop shape and flatten them slightly. Use your finger to press down and force more paste into the front of the shoe so it is thicker there than at the heel. Roll two very small pieces of white paste into balls, glue them in place with a small amount of water and press them down to make "spats". Use your cutting wheel and stylus to make the detail marks. Set them on the Styrofoam next to one another.

For the bride, select a piece of white paste the size of a small grape, cut it in half and roll both pieces into balls just like you did for the groom. Shape them and put them in place on the Styrofoam. Roll 3 very small balls of white paste, decreasing in size for each shoe and glue in place at the toe.

Step 4: The legs are made on the toothpicks and wrapped with the white cloth covered wire. For the groom, begin wrapping the wire at the bottom of the toothpick. Make 11 wraps and cut the wire with wire cutters. Roll a small ball of gray paste and thread it down on the toothpick for the knee joint. Begin wrapping with the wire again right on top of the knee joint. Make another 11 wraps and cut the wire. Poke one leg into each black and white shoe, running the toothpick all the way through the shoe and into the Styrofoam. Do the same thing for the bride, but only make 9 wraps each time. Poke her legs down into the white shoes, running the toothpicks all the way through into the Styrofoam.



When the mushroom stems are fully dry, work with the light and dark blue pastes. Select pieces the size of a small pea. Roll them into balls and then into elongated teardrops. Use your stylus to make a hollow in the larger end of the teardrop into which you can glue the stem. Use your finger tips to gently roll the elongated points down so your mushroom caps have a curled point on top. Use a pair of needle nosed pliers to grip the stem of the mushroom and poke it into the Styrofoam while the caps dry. Make them in various sizes so you will have a selection from which to choose when decorating your scene.



Step 5: The arms are made on wire. You will need to trim the bride's arms a bit as they are shorter than the groom's. For the groom's arms, make 9 wraps at one end of the wire, leaving a small length bare for the hand. Bend the wire to a 90 degree angle for the elbow, roll a very small piece of gray paste for the elbow joint, thread it onto the wire and glue in place with water. Right above the elbow joint, begin making another 9 wraps, cut the white wire and then bend the 20 gauge wire at the shoulder where it will go into the body. Do the same thing for the bride's arms, making only 7 wraps each time. Roll very small balls of gray paste for all four hands and glue in place at the ends of the arms.

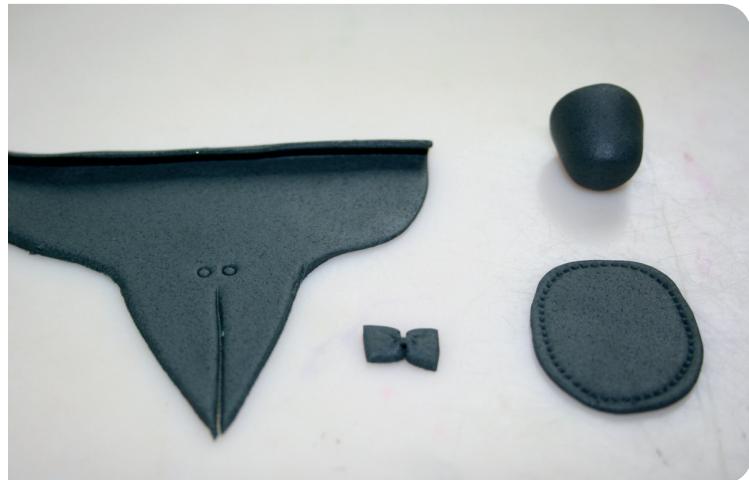
Step 6: You can make the stems for the mushrooms now, too. They are much easier to handle when they are dry. Pinch off tiny pieces of white paste, roll them into balls and then into itty bitty logs which are pointed on the top. Lay them aside to dry.

Select pieces the size of a small pea. Roll them into balls and then into elongated teardrops. Use your stylus to make a hollow in the larger end of the teardrop into which you can glue the stem. Use your finger tips to gently roll the elongated points down so your mushroom caps have a curled point on top. Use a pair of needle nosed pliers to grip the stem of the mushroom and poke it into the Styrofoam while the caps dry. Make them in various sizes so you will have a selection from which to choose when decorating your scene.

Step 7: You can also make the white wire curls while you wait for things to dry. I used the white cloth covered 22 gauge wire for this. When I need lots of these, I hold 5 or 6 pieces at a time and cut all of them at once into 4, 5 or 6 pieces depending on how large I want the largest curls to be. I use needle nosed pliers and curl 5 or 6 pieces each time. It goes quicker that way. Make the curls in various sizes according to your taste and the needs of your scene.



Step 9: At this point you will want to begin attaching the arch and rocks to the planet's surface. Decide where you want each piece to go and then glue them down with royal icing. Begin at the front of the surface (the part closest to the viewer). You will need to prop the pieces in place. Stop when you get the arch glued in place. You will want to complete the figures before you go any further so you can be sure to accommodate the bride's train and still place the figures side by side.



Step 8: Make the bodies for your figures. For the groom, you will want a piece of gray paste about the size of a walnut. Roll it into a ball and then into a cylinder. Make sure your legs and feet are set the way you want them to be and press the body down onto them until the body meets the wire wrapping. The figure should stay upright with the toothpicks sticking into the Styrofoam. For the bride's body, you will want about 3/4 as much gray paste as you used for the groom. Roll it into a ball and then into a cylinder. Roll it between your index fingers to give her a waist and a bust. Press her body down onto her legs until it meets the wire wrapping.

Step 10: Now it is time for the clothing and the head for the groom. You will need a piece of white paste about the size of a grape. Roll it fairly thinly with your pin and cut an oval that will fit the front of the body to make the shirt front. Trim one end of the oval off so that you have a blunt end and rounded end. Glue it to the front of the body and use your cutting wheel and stylus to make the detail markings.

Step 11: Cut out the paper template or cut a jacket piece by eye and dry fit it to the body. Make any adjustments necessary on the paper. You will need some black paste rolled out fairly thinly so it covers a 6" circle. Cut the tuxedo jacket using the template you have altered to fit. Use your tracing wheel to make stitching lines, if desired. The piece is designed to be glued to the back with some water; the "wings" wrap around the sides and the neckline rolls down to form the collar and the lapels. Use your needle tool to poke pilot holes into the shoulders where you want the wires for the arms to attach.

Step 12: Use two pieces of gray paste which are each about the size of a pea, roll them into balls and flatten them slightly. Moisten the end of the arm wire and push the pancake onto the wire until it meets the wire wrapping. Insert the end of the arm wire into the body where you drilled the pilot hole. Prop the arm in place until it dries. Repeat for the other arm. Use your needle tool to drill a pilot hole where the neck will be inserted into the body.

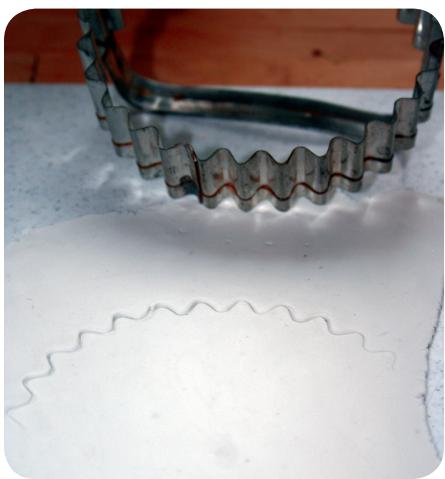
Step 13: Make the head using a ball of gray gum paste about the size of a grape. Break a tooth pick in half and make 4 wraps with the white cloth covered wire around the toothpick. Insert the broken end of the toothpick into the ball until it meets the wire wrapping. Poke the pointed end of the toothpick into the Styrofoam. Use your cutting wheel or the backside of an X-Acto blade to make the marks for the mouth. Roll a tiny ball of gray paste for the nose and glue in place with some water. Poke two dragees into place for eyes. You can poke the head/neck into the body at this time if you wish. Let the head dry and then make the hat. Roll some black paste fairly thinly and cut an oval shape for the brim. Dry fit it to the head to be sure it is the right size. Select a piece of black paste the size of about half a grape, roll it into a ball and then into a cylinder. Use your fingers to make it into a blunt cone. When you are happy with the way it looks, glue it in place with some water. Make the hat band from some thinly rolled light blue paste. Cut the strip with your cutting wheel, wrap it around the base of the hat cone and glue in place. Make a bow tie from a tiny piece of black paste. Roll it into a ball, then a cylinder and flatten it with your fingers. Use some needle nosed tweezers to make a pinch in the center and glue it in place.

Step 14: When the groom has dried enough that you can handle it safely, trim the toothpicks that are sticking out of his feet, put him in place and attach with royal icing. You can attach the rocks that go behind the groom and prop them up until they dry. It will help him stay upright.



Step 15: The bride will get dressed in place. Trim off her toothpicks, put her next to the groom with their arms intertwined and glue her down with royal icing. The dress comes first. It is more of a train, really, but I liked the look of it. Roll out some white gum paste very thinly in the shape of an oval. Using your cutting wheel or X-acto knife make a blunt cut on one end. This will be where you gather the fabric and attach it to the bride's back at her waist. I rifled through my drawer marked "miscellaneous tiny cutters" and pulled out some things that I thought looked like lace. I used these to make a design along the rounded end of the train. Gather the

blunt cut end and attach it to her. I folded the sides of the train up at 90 degree angles – it helped save space and it also helped to stabilize her while her glue dried. Make the bow and attach it to cover up the gathered fabric.



Step 16: Make her neck just like you did for the groom and have it ready for the head.

Step 17: To make her head, use a piece of gray paste a bit smaller than the one you used for the groom. Roll it into a ball and put it on the neck. Use your cutting wheel or the back of your X-acto knife to make the facial lines. Glue two dragees in place with a small amount of water. Her hair is made from many coils of white cloth covered 22 gauge wire. To make the coils, cut various lengths of wire and wrap them around your needle tool, a toothpick or something similar. Leave a little bit at one end that can be poked into the head. Glue them in place with some water. Use a small 5-petaled cutter and some white paste to make a collar. Glue it to the body and insert the neck through the center of the collar until the wire wraps meet the collar. To make the veil, do the same thing you did for the train, just on a much smaller scale. I made a half circle shape, cut my pattern to match the train, gathered the fabric and glued it to her head. Make a bow to cover up the gathers and glue it in place.

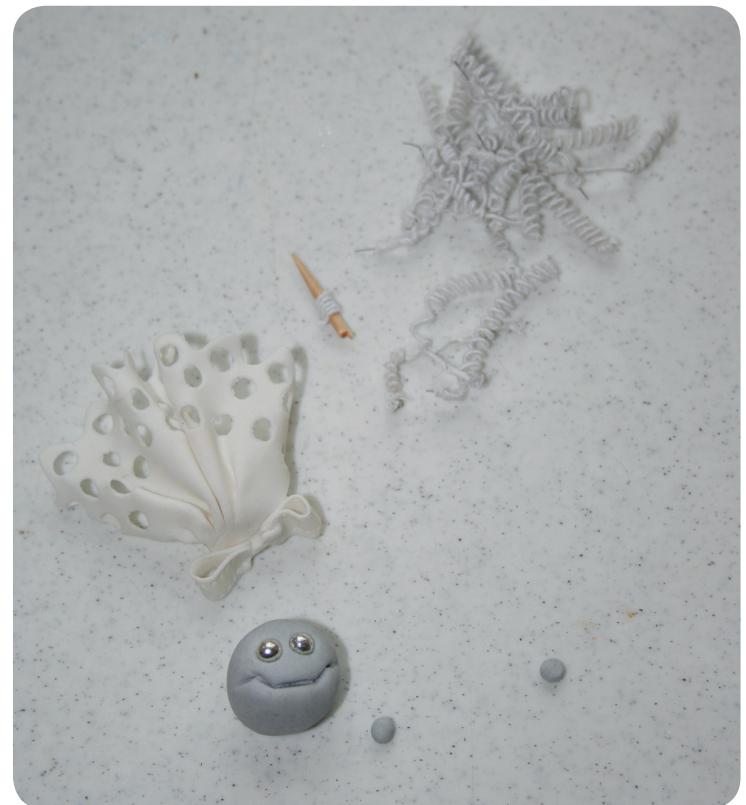


A word about wire: when you are making something that has parts which will be eaten or a scene that will be placed on a cake, you may want to avoid the use of wires all together. If this is the case, for the legs, arms and neck, you can pipe some thick royal icing supports, cover them with white paste and use your needle tool to make spiral markings. Pipe the wire curly Q's with royal icing. You can make the bride's hair from spaghetti which has been softened in water and wrapped around a toothpick.



I am always happy to see pictures of your work and answer any questions you may have. I can be reached at frotusbush@gmail.com

Kelly has been decorating and teaching for 20+ years and has developed a fondness for sculpture and writing. Her new book Woodland Picnic is now available on Amazon's Kindle Store.



Step 18: Now you can glue the rest of the rocks in place and add the wire curls and the mushrooms. When you have everything the way you want it, attach the background with some royal icing, propping it with something heavy until the joint dries. Because the scene wasn't sparkly enough, I sprinkled it with some pixie dust as a finishing touch.

