

# ZENITH!

Valorie Spade ♠



# BJD MAKING !!

(Lower your standards for my project after seeing these pics because (spoiler alert) I didn't even finish :P)



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# RESEARCH

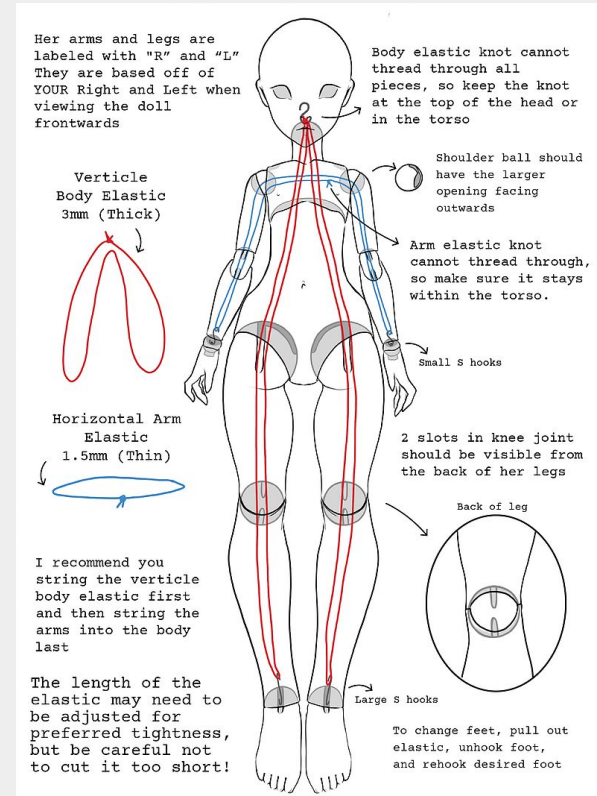
What is a BJD?

- ★ BJD stands for Ball Jointed Doll. These dolls have ball and socket joints that make them poseable, which is appealing to doll makers and collectors.
- ★ Making or buying wigs, clothing, and accessories is a big part of the BJD community.

# RESEARCH

How does a BJD work?

- ★ BJD joints are held together by an elastic band that runs through the hollow limbs. The band is held in place in the hands and feet.
- ★ Each of the joints on a BJD consists of a ball and a socket.
- ★ The ball allows for the limbs to move around in the socket, while the elastic ensures that the limbs stay attached.
- ★ The slits in the balls of the joints allow for mobility in a single direction (like how a real joint would only bend forwards/backwards, as opposed to 360°)



# RESEARCH

## Materials:

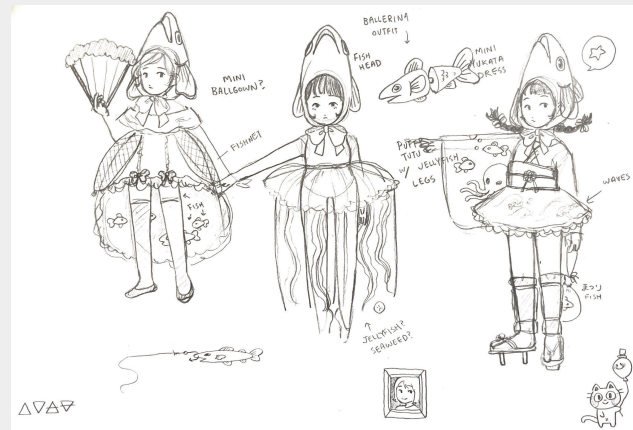
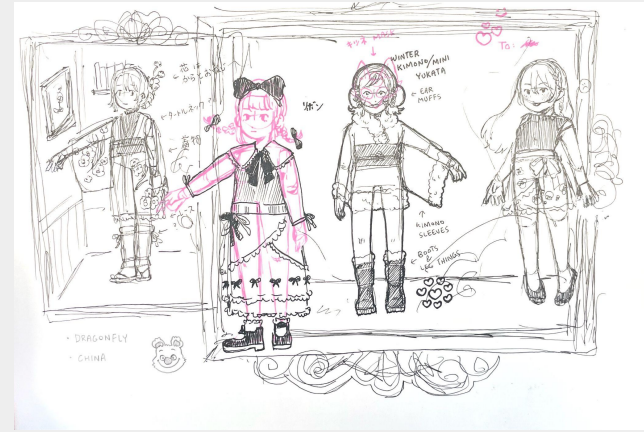
- ★ Air dry clay (doll clay!!)
- ★ Foil (or other material to make the insides hollow)
- ★ Sandpaper (and a mask so you don't breathe in clay dust. Trust me, it's not nice)
- ★ Carving tools
- ★ Measuring tools
- ★ Elastic/wire (for stringing the doll)



[www.nymphaidolls.com](http://www.nymphaidolls.com)

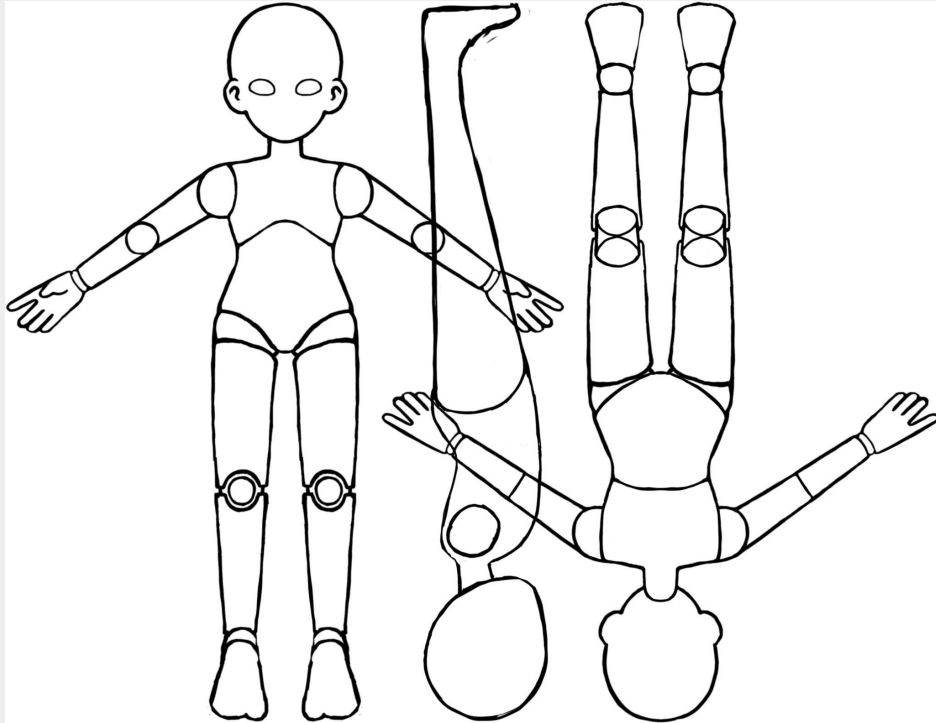
# PROCESS

- ★ Originally, my Zenith was going to be more fashion centered, with the doll being the base upon which I designed costumes/outfits on.
- ★ I discovered how much time and effort goes into making the actual doll, and had to postpone the actual clothing production part of the project (though I'll **definitely** be making clothes, wigs, accessories, etc for the doll when I finish)
- ★ I spent so much time during this project just designing outfits :')



(there was an awkward empty space here)





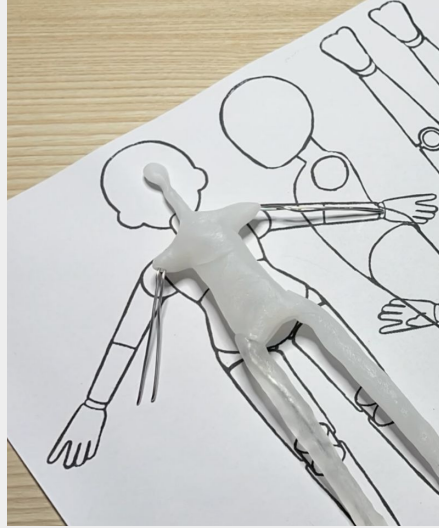
# PROCESS

- ★ Using what I learned from my research, I drew up a guide for the doll. (Front, side, and back views)
- ★ The most important part in making the guide was the proportions, as this is what I was going to use to make the physical parts, all of which have to fit together pretty well.
- ★ Once I was happy with the drawn guide, I printed it out. (The different views are overlapped so that they'd all fit on one paper)

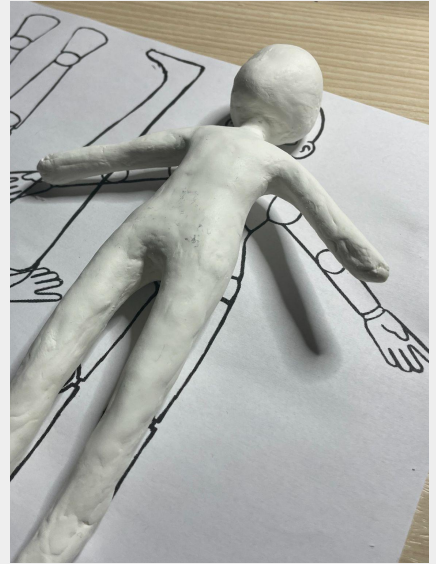
# PROCESS

## Attempt #1

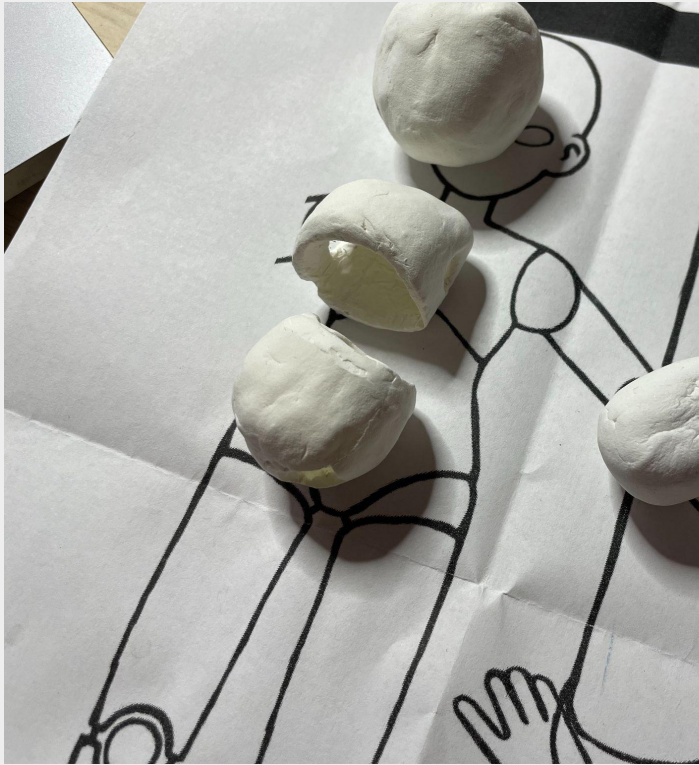
- ★ I started making this doll the same way I made my stop motion doll.
- ★ I used a wire armature covered in moldable plastic, and covered that in a layer of air dry clay, hoping to cut that off of the mold when it was dry and cut off each part that I needed to work on
- ★ (Not so) surprisingly, that didn't work. The clay I used was standard air dry clay, which wasn't the right consistency for me to carve/cut it like I needed to. Having the whole body in one piece was also a **huge** pain to deal with.



(This was the method wikihow suggested. Now I know: don't trust wikihow for niche/complicated crafts like this without doing more research first)







# PROCESS

## Attempt #2

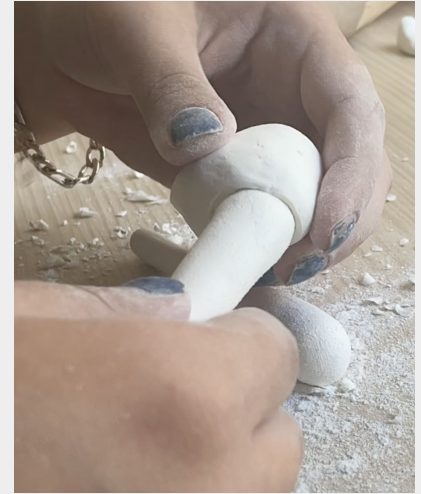
- ★ Learning from my mistakes, I tried again with new, higher quality clay. I used crumpled aluminum foil inside instead of the molding plastic, and I separated the model into the head, arms, legs, and torso.
- ★ All of those adjustments worked great, but I now had a new problem: the doll was too small to work with. The small bits were too difficult to manipulate, and the limbs were too fragile, especially since I barely knew how to get the limb mechanism working.
- ★ I gave up on this version as well, and printed out the doll guide in a larger size to try again

# PROCESS

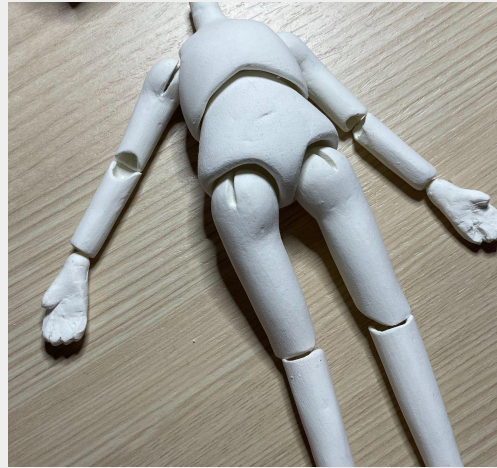
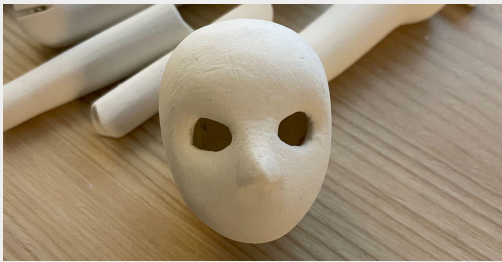
- ★ Finally, I had a method and size that I was satisfied with.
- ★ I made balls of foil a size smaller than the head and the torso, and covered that in a layer of clay. For the arms and legs, I covered straws in even layers of clay, and left everything to dry.
- ★ After adding clay to the dried bases and sanding/carving the limbs and torso to shape, I was able to cut the torso in half (to make the waist, which can twist and slightly bend) and cut the legs and arms (to make knees and elbows).
- ★ By adding more clay to one side of the joint, I made the “ball”, and by carving the other side of the joint I made the “socket”.
- ★ The “sockets” for certain joints like the leg/torso attachment required clay to be added in order to make them big enough to fit the ball joints.



Most of the work I did on the doll was just sanding, adding more clay, sanding again... until it was the right size and shape (which was a LOT of sanding and adding clay)



I took a timelapse and this was the only frame where you could see what I was doing :')



## “FINAL” PRODUCT

Currently, I have the limbs and torso mostly finished. The joints connecting the arms to the torso and the joints connecting the leg to the torso are working, though they still need a bit of work before they can move super smoothly. The basic shape of the face has been built, and the eye sockets have been carved out.

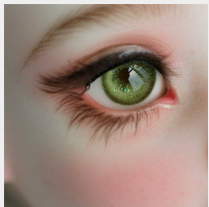
The joints for the knees, elbows, wrists, and ankles are still unfinished. Once those have been molded and correctly fitted, the doll is ready to be strung. Then, all final adjustments can be made.

# WHAT COMES NEXT?



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- ★ After the main doll is finished, it has to be sealed to protect the air dry clay. Then, the base can be painted. (skin color, blush, makeup, etc.)



jiaoba98.com

- ★ The face has open eye sockets so that eyes can be placed inside them and swapped out at any time. Making eyes involves a whole new process, which I'm super excited to try.



- ★ To make the hair, a similar process to what I did for the stop motion animation doll that I made last year would work. (with wefts made from acrylic yarn)



@fiorewardrobe

- ★ With measurements taken from the final doll, I can design and make clothing to be modeled by the doll. This was the part I was looking forward to most when I first started this project, but honestly I've enjoyed myself throughout every single step.



# CONCLUSION

Although I wasn't able to finish everything that I had planned, I'm so glad that I took this risk. Learning a new craft always involves a lot of research, experimentation, and failure, all of which I've used to grow as an artist over the course of this project. I've found a new passion, and I know how I can keep going so that I can continue to develop and grow even after this project is over.

Thanks for listening to me ramble like the crazy doll lady I now am :)