

Stucco / Plaster reliefs

What is Stucco? Basically it is a plaster that can be added to the outside or inside walls and structures to help hide the building materials below it. This gives the building a finished surface to paint or seal, and to cover less visually appealing construction materials, such as metal, concrete, cinder block, or clay brick and adobe. This process is used throughout the world and has been used throughout time. This instructional will hopefully help you recreate this look on your models with ease.



Materials: You will need some Joint Compound (also known as drywall compound or Mastic or “JC”). I have found a small palette knife is the best but, you can use a tongue depressor, butter knife, or cardboard cut into a knifelike shape (you may need to make a bunch of these as they get damp and lose their shape) to apply the JC onto the model. You will need some sandpaper (I love using the kind that is used in nail file kits as they are soft, cheap and easy to use. I find metal ones do not work as well, but can do the job in a pinch). The grit on the file should not be fine as it will clog the file quickly. You will need your kit as well. (In the photo I have glue pictured, as I need to assemble the kits first.) Make sure you have a workspace that can get messy. The plaster actually cleans up easily with a bit of water and a cloth, even when dry but, it’s best to have a spot that can get messy.



Build Your Model: When you build the model, only work on the main construction. This means just the main walls and no detail pieces, as that will make it harder (not impossible, just a lot harder) to put the JC on. We will add the rest of the details onto the model after we complete the work to the main construction.



Dry : Once the model is built and dry (and solid!) it’s time to add on the JC with our palette knife. I have used my fingers, a butter knife, tongue depressors...you name it, so long as you can get a flat finish on it, it will probably work. And have no fear, even if it’s not “flat” it will be sandpapered down at a later time to get it flattened.



Application: I have found that it's best to use small amounts, as it's easier to control. If you put too much on, just scrape it off and try again. This stuff can be easily cleaned with a damp towel, so messing up is easy to correct. Take your time. I can whip these out in minutes but, I have done it a lot. You will get better with each one you do.

To get the right look, I have found that applying the JC so that it's a bit uneven is ideal. I leave gaps as well (where I put none at all). In the painting stage, this gives it the effect of looking like the plaster is cracking, delaminating and falling off (as it often does over time). So making sure it's totally covered is not needed (unless you want it to look like new plaster on the model).



I do not making everything totally flat, as it's the bumps and imperfections that grab the most detail. Keep in mind, the smoother and flatter you make it, the more subtle the look will be.

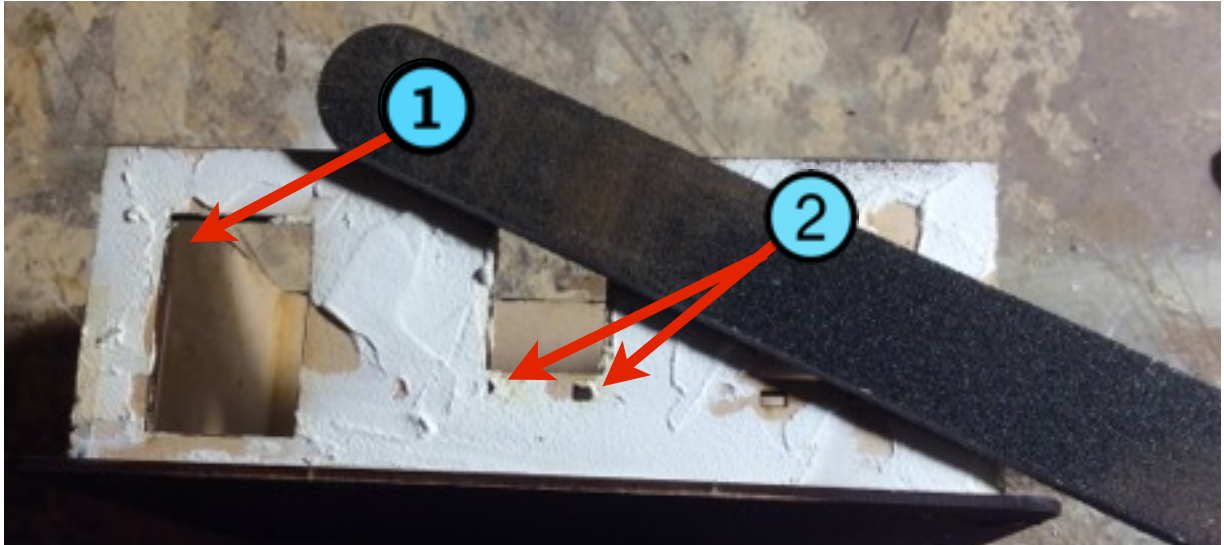
Use care around doors and window openings, simply because it will save time when you sand these spots later.



Plaster was used inside as well as outside the building. I decided to do the interior of the barn as well as the outside in the examples shown. This is because I wanted the interior to look like it was decaying as well as the outside. I left the house alone as I wanted it to look well kept, needing none of the JC on it.

Dry: *You must let the JC completely dry on the model.* I have found a hairdryer can help this process. You can see "wet spots" where the JC is darker than the whiter dryer spots.





Filing: When you file / sand down the surface, there are a few things to keep in mind. The first one is to do the large surfaces first. Go around the whole model and sand and do not worry about the windows and doors. The second is when sanding DO NOT just sand away to the surface. This will only remove all your work. The idea here is to leave some of the cracks and imperfections on the wall. This adds to the *real* or authentic look. That said, you need to sand down the taller, mountaintops and any fingerprints that were made while working on it. Just do this step slowly until you get the look you like, and then you will know how much you need to do. Just tap or gentle blow off to get the dust off or, use a dry soft brush. (Ed: *Best not to breath this stuff in too - I would suggest using a painter's mask that filters out dust particles.*)

- ① You want to file away any of the JC that's in the doorways and window areas. You will also want to file any JC off the top roof edges as well.
- ② You will need a small hobby knife, pen knife or tiny file to tap out any holes in the walls that are needed for construction. In the example used, this farm house has window sills that go in under the windows. These holes need to be tapped out so the part will fit in. If you cannot see them, just look on the other side of the model and look to find them.



Done! Ready for Paint!