

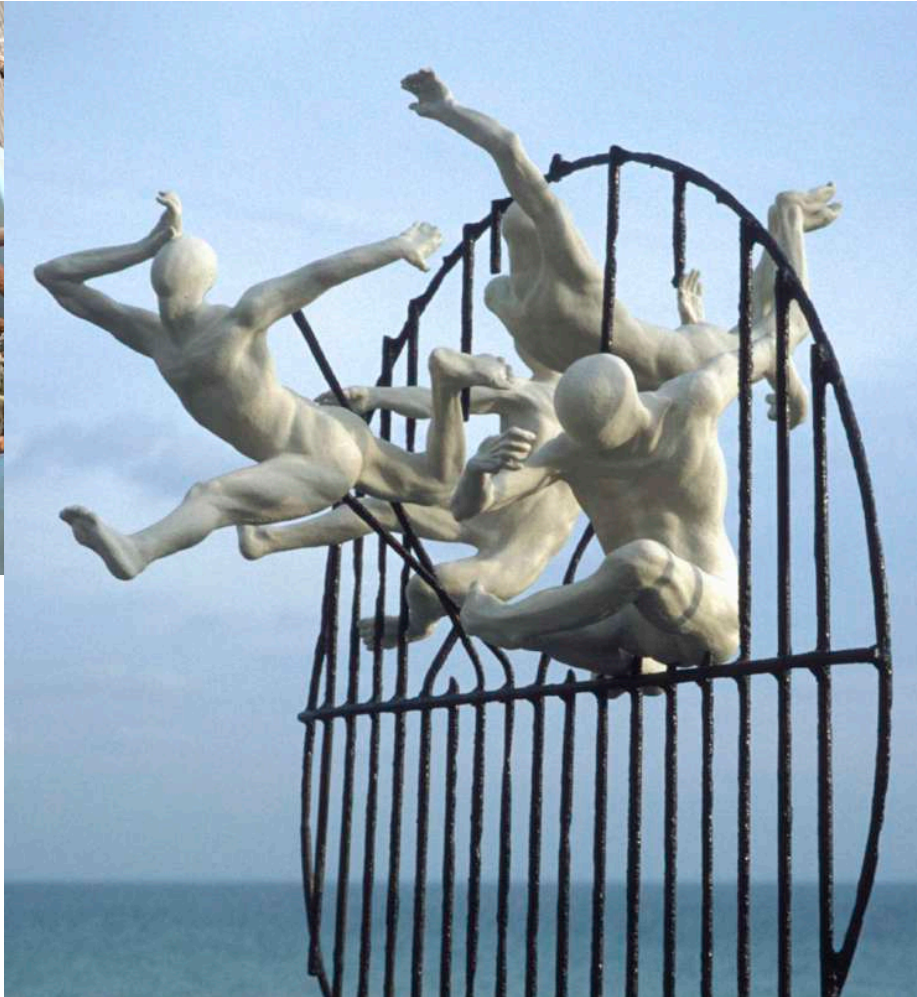
Making life-size figures
with the hand & simple hand tools

Flight of the Langoustine
by
Pierre Diamantopoulos ©

First, find the absurd idea



“ A storm had deposited a mangled lobster pot yards from my first studio under the arches on Brighton beach. To my absurd way of thinking, this washed-up object had been a means of escape for the lobsters and this immediately translated itself into a human story of exodus and release – a dash for freedom.”



- A washed-up Lobster Pot.
- Combining a human story of exodus...
- with absurd humour...
- ...ghosts of fleeing lobsters
- ...together with the joy of modern dance choreography
- ...and a profound sense of unease...
- and ambiguity.

Producing Flight of the Langoustine : 3 Disciplines



- Sculptor/
project
manager
- + Bronze
Foundry
- + Steel
Fabricator
&
Engineer

Why use the human hand to make art today?



- The value of sculpting by hand & simple tools :
- The result is uniquely human
- Expressive
- With a particular style
- & the personality of the artist



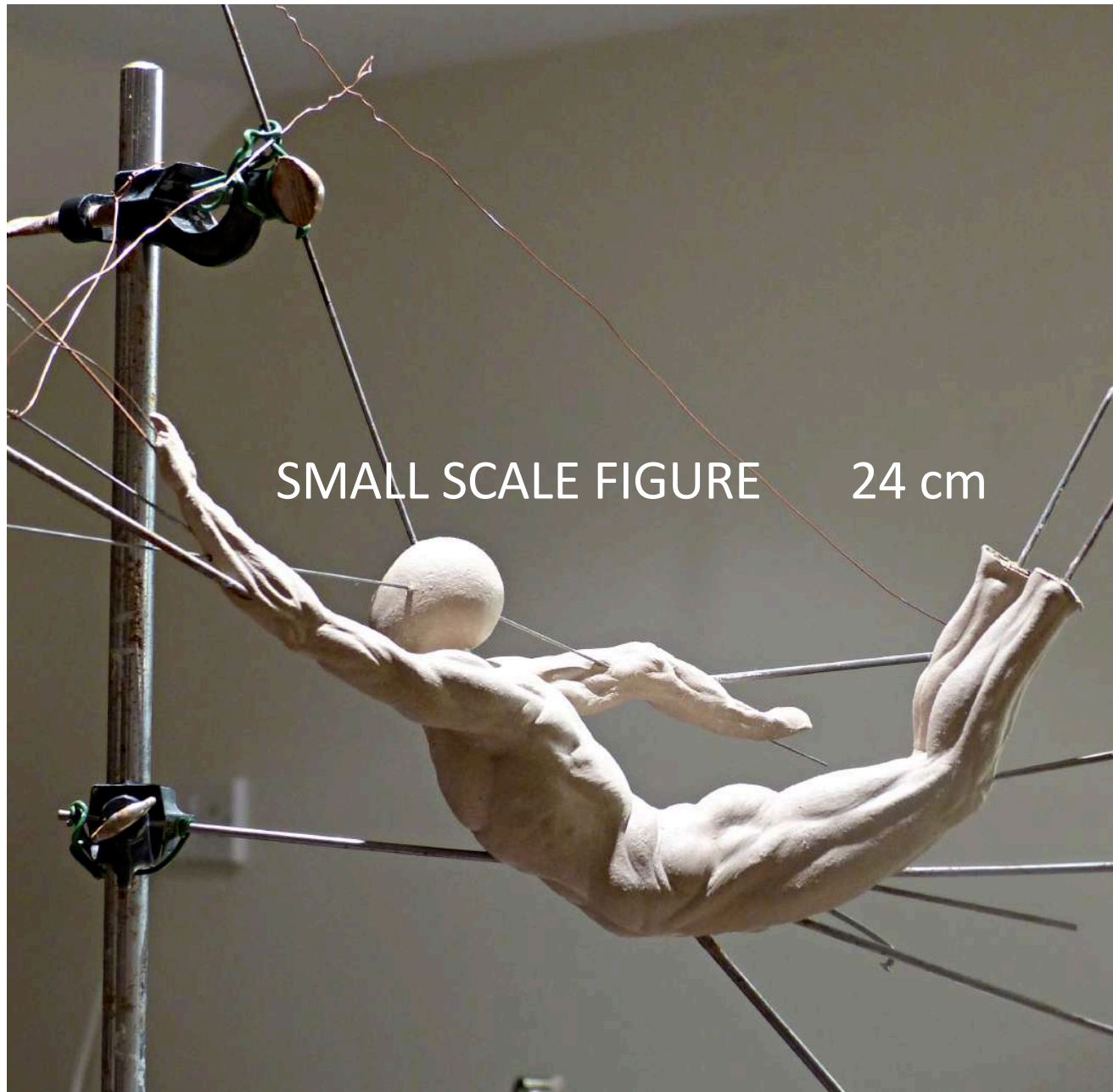
- One rough outline...
- ...then a long design & making process...
- Starting on a small scale...
- Then to life- size

Starting small ...The Maquette (scale model) 1 : 6.5 (22)



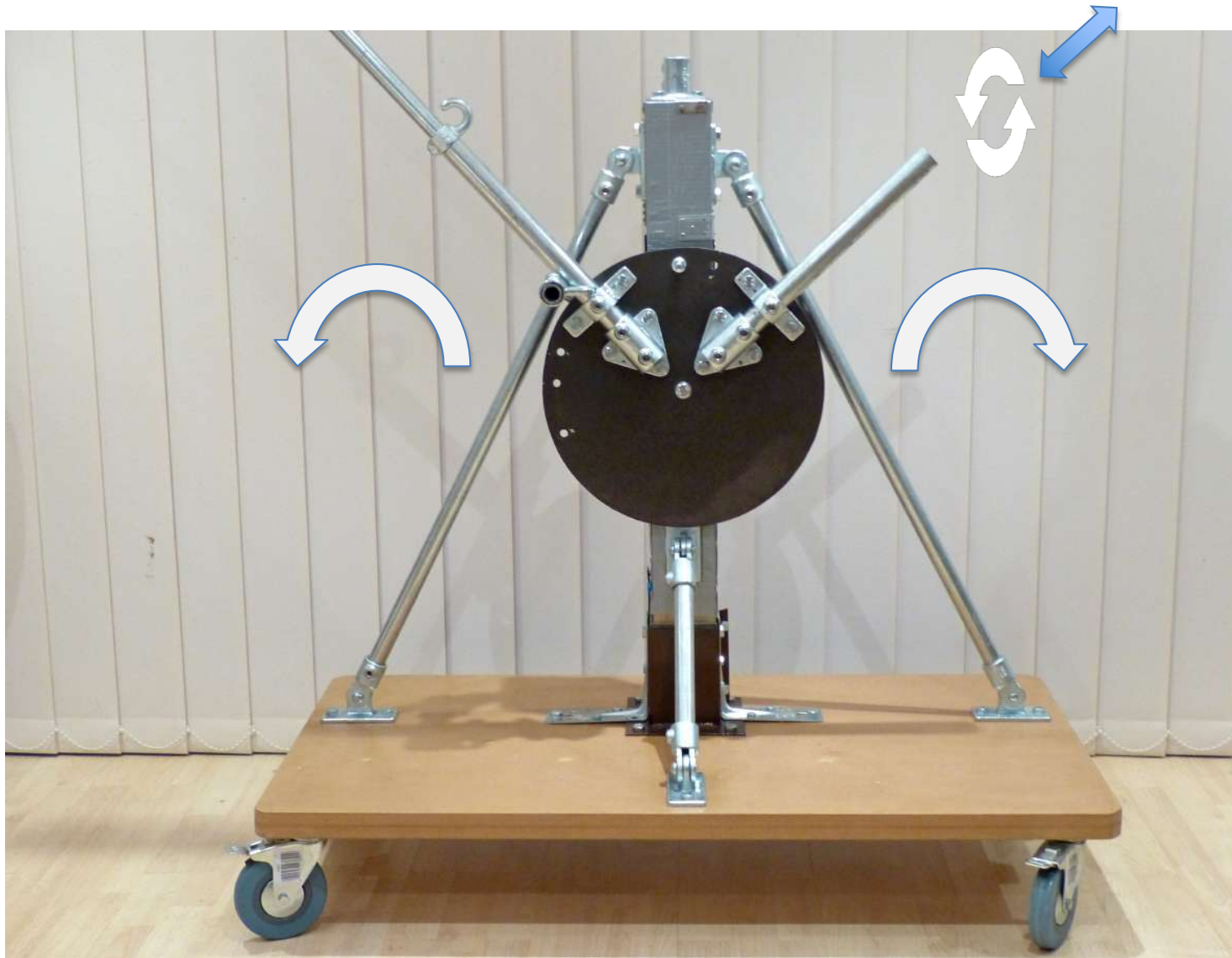
- Lobster Pot Grid.
- Pierre welds and re-makes the original lobster pot to scale
- 46 cm diameter = 3 metres

Small maquette figures are made to same scale in clay and fired



- This is a simple support for a tiny figure...
- To make this figure life-size...
- ...the external supports must now be engineered to be extremely robust to hold it up.
- And the life-size figure must have an *internal* armature (skeleton) to hold the weight.

To defy gravity, first the sculptor makes a support.



Pierre designed and made this turntable to allow a life-size figure weighing over 60 kg to be levered, turned and spun on its axis.

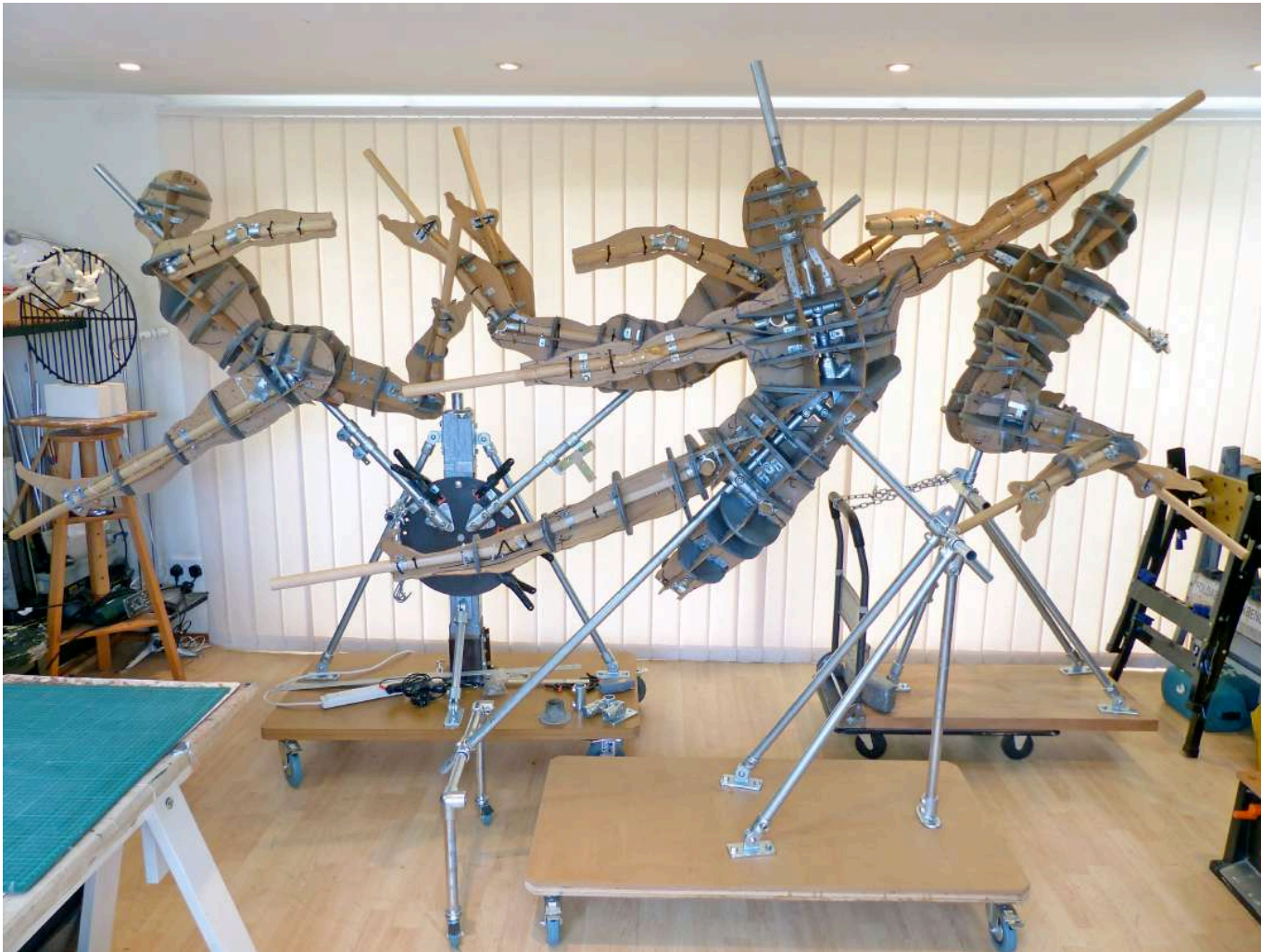
Four separate, bespoke turntables are made, one for each figure.

Then you need... 4 armatures (skeletons) for the figures

These armatures are designed and made by Pierre to be very strong and particularly light to support a non-drying sculpting material.

They are especially suitable for applying a much thinner layer of modelling material than conventional armatures and therefore can be more easily manoeuvrable.

Also, once finished the sculptures can keep in storage without drying out until ready to make moulds for casting into bronze.



Making the figure's armature from profile drawings



Profiles (silhouettes) assembled using board, wood and steel tubes & clamps

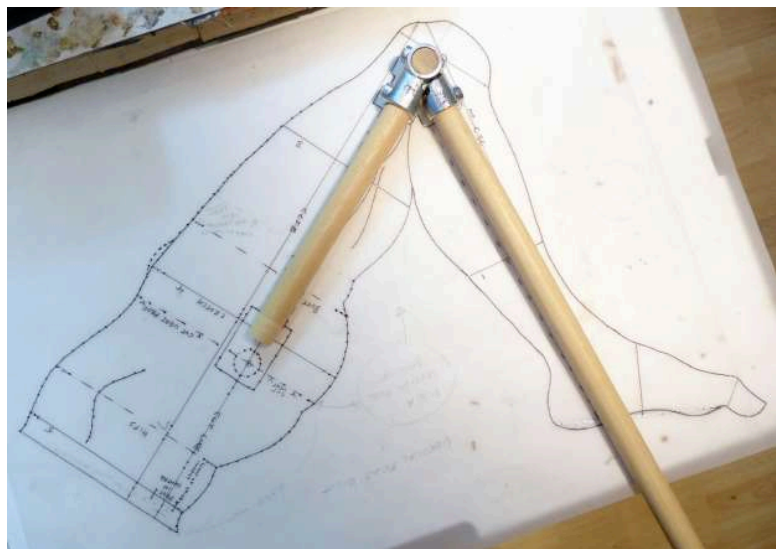
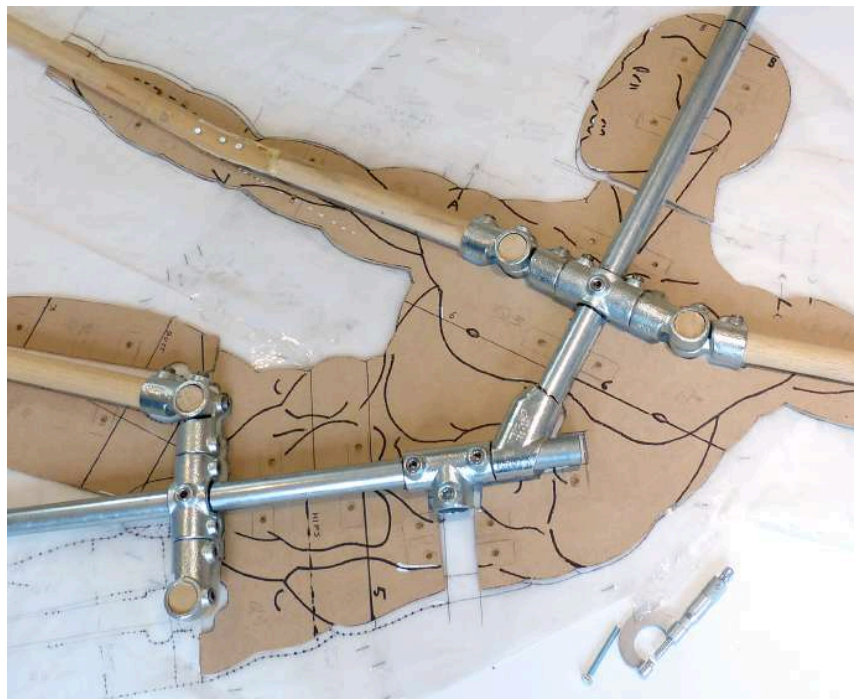
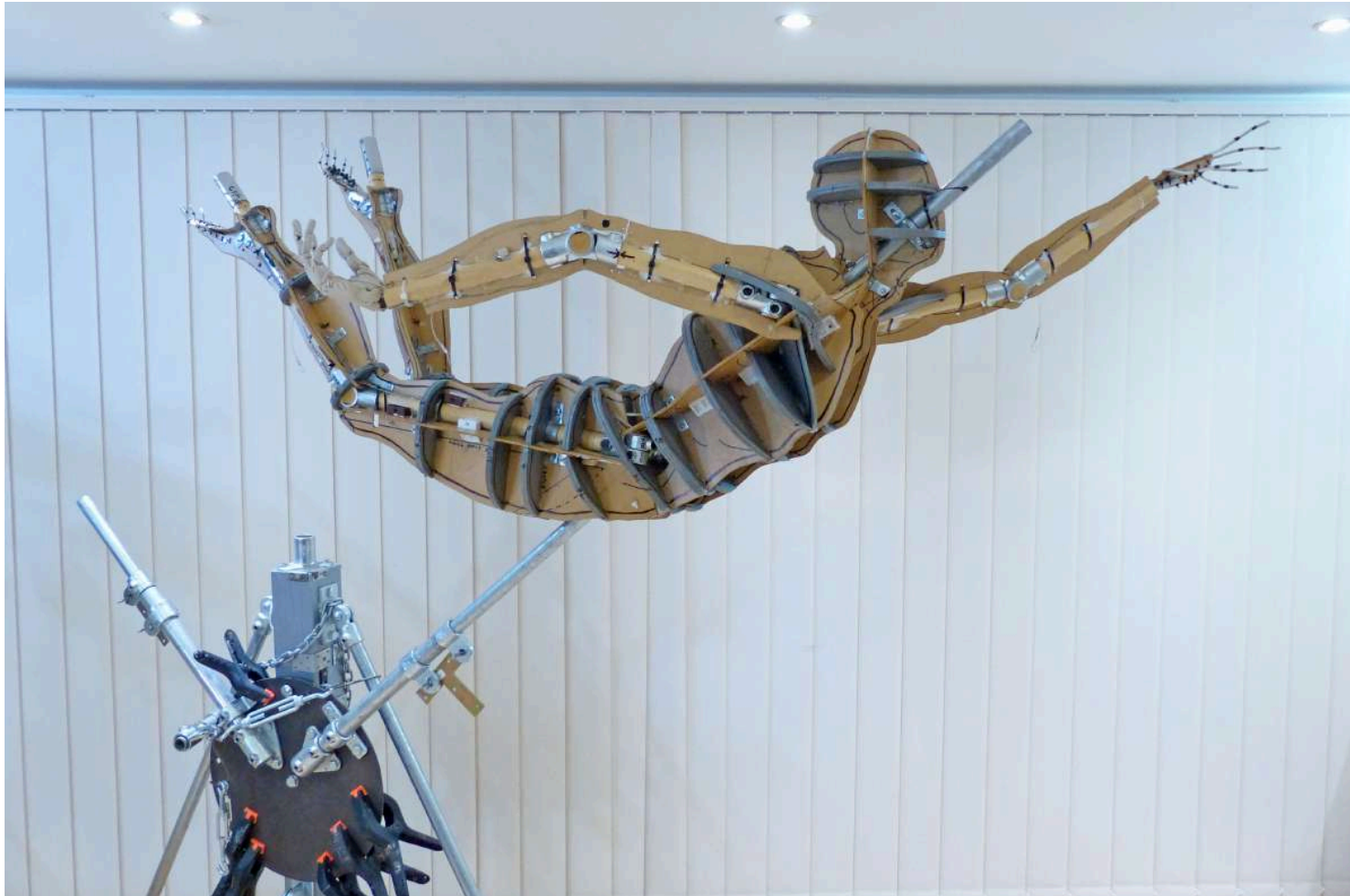
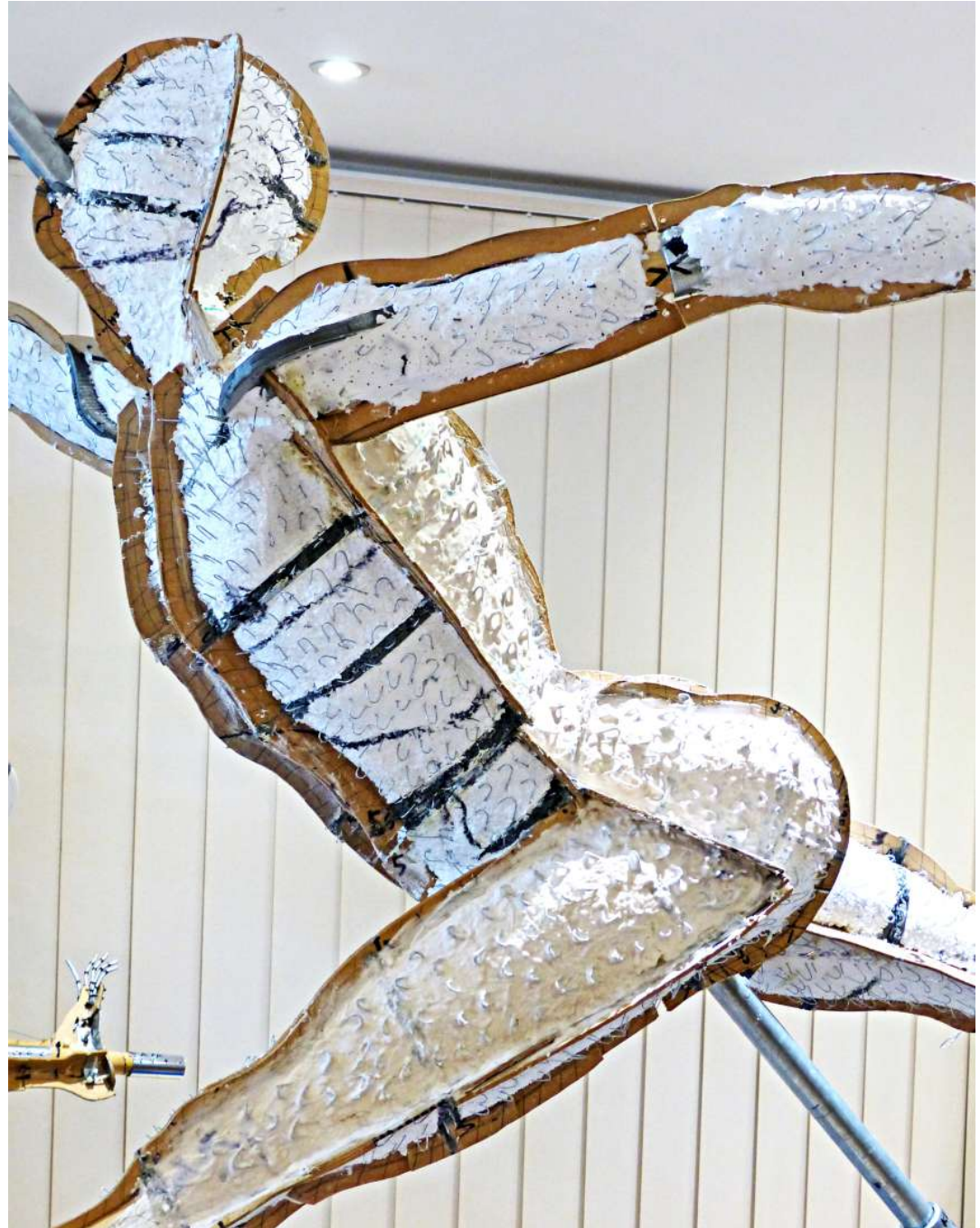


Figure supported in position - as it will be on the sculpture



- Anatomical landmarks set
- Classical rules observed
- And rules about breaking rules...
- ...basic artistic decisions made
- ...like extending or exaggerating features stylistically.

3D armature takes shape... ...ready for the next stage



Figures are roughed-out in polystyrene & plaster to create a very light, basic shape – using a hand rasp



Studs for keying and anatomical markers are added to the polystyrene



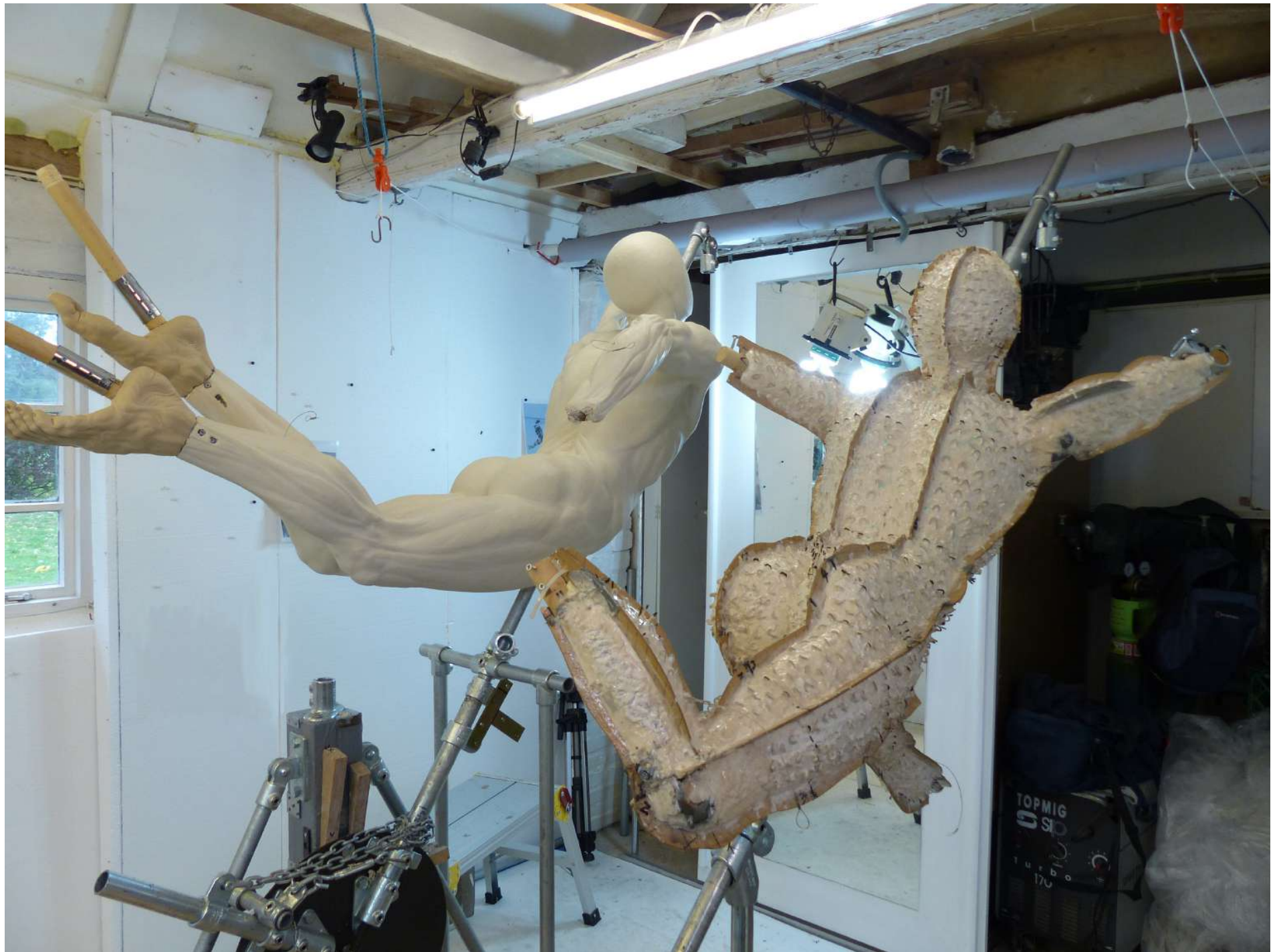
Polystyrene covered with layers of hard polymer plaster

The first figure is ready for applying the heavier sculpting material



Rotating the figure on its own axis in the studio,
ready for sculpting







Sculpting & modelling the figures with hands and simple tools



Marking out muscles & building up the layers



Identifying muscle groups & bony structures



Adding more layers & carving back... by modelling *and* sculpting



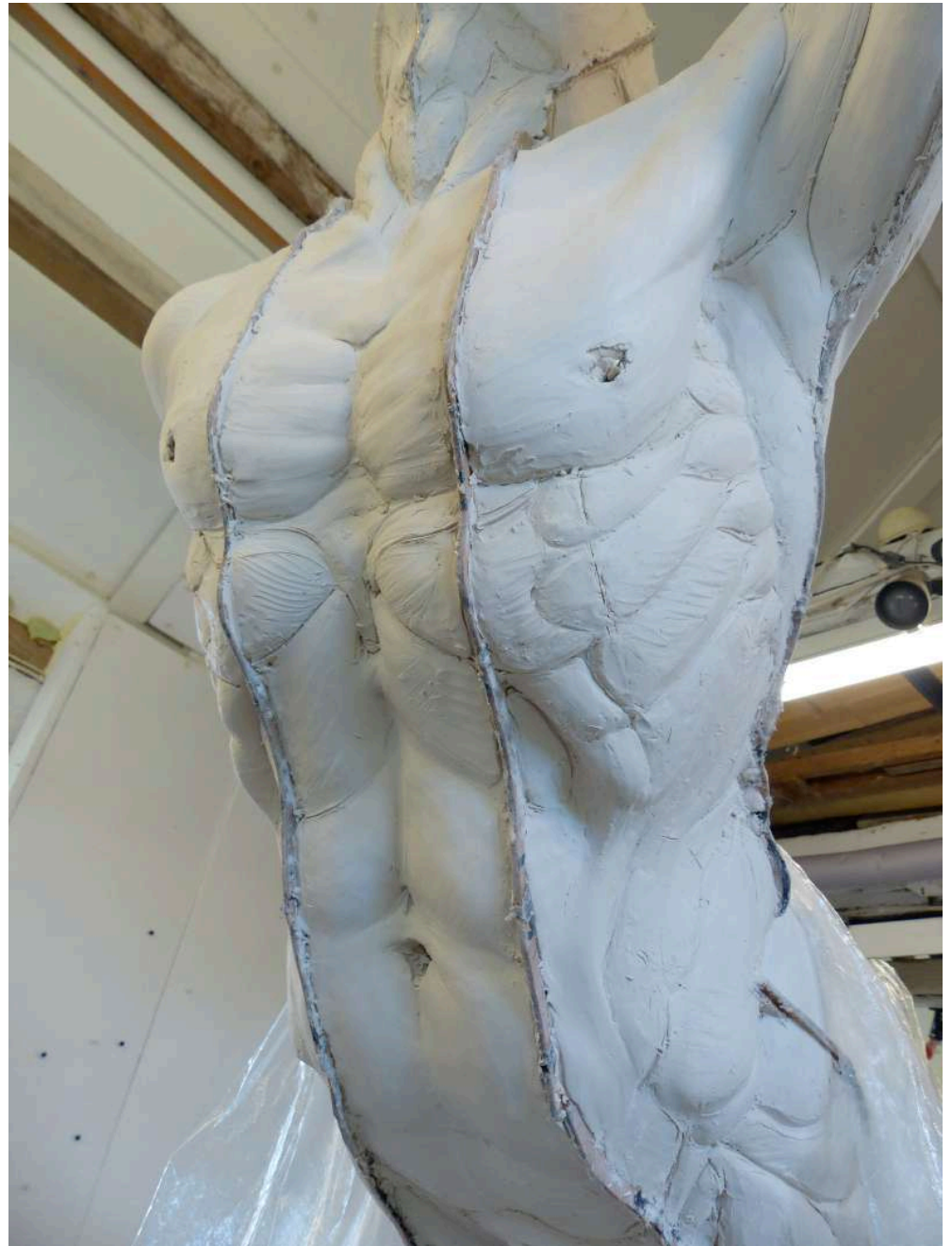


Then refining & blending the contours





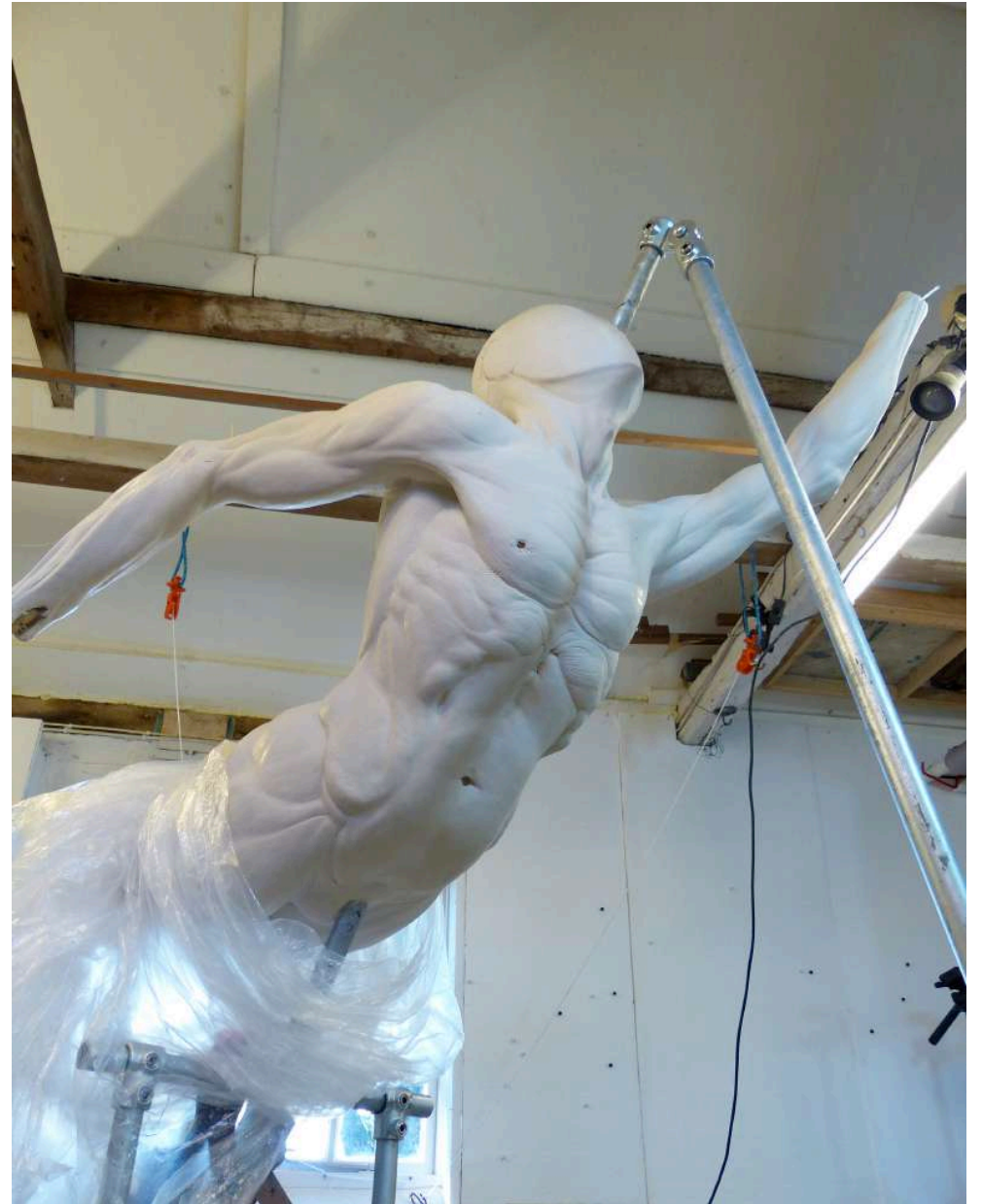
Working up to the profiles



Cutting out the profiles & re-shaping



All profiles removed

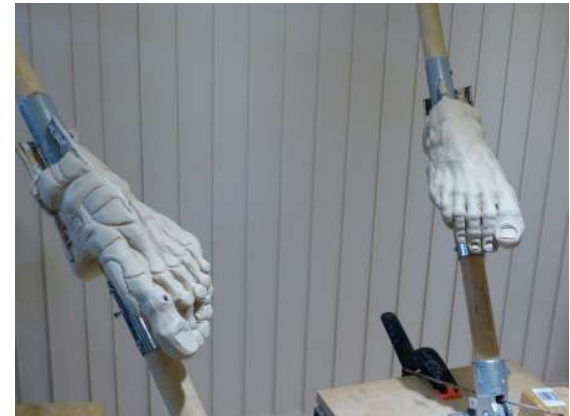
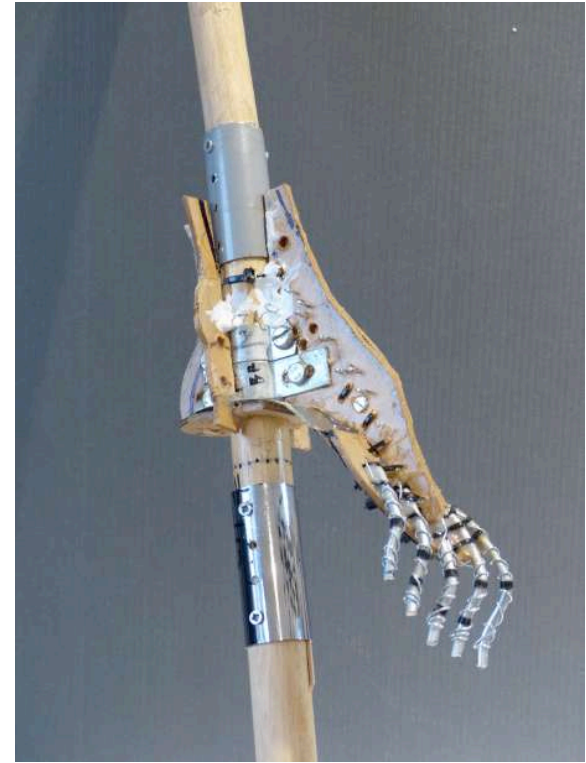
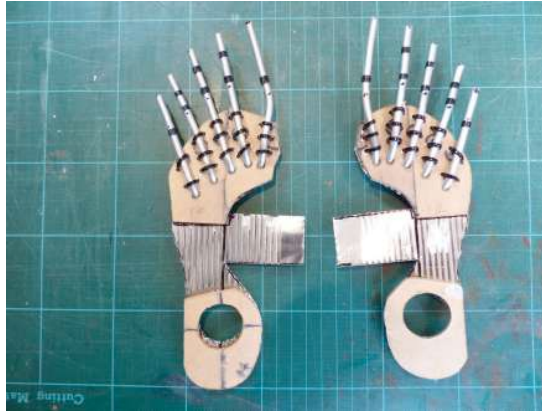


The feet and hands are removable for ease of working in a softer medium



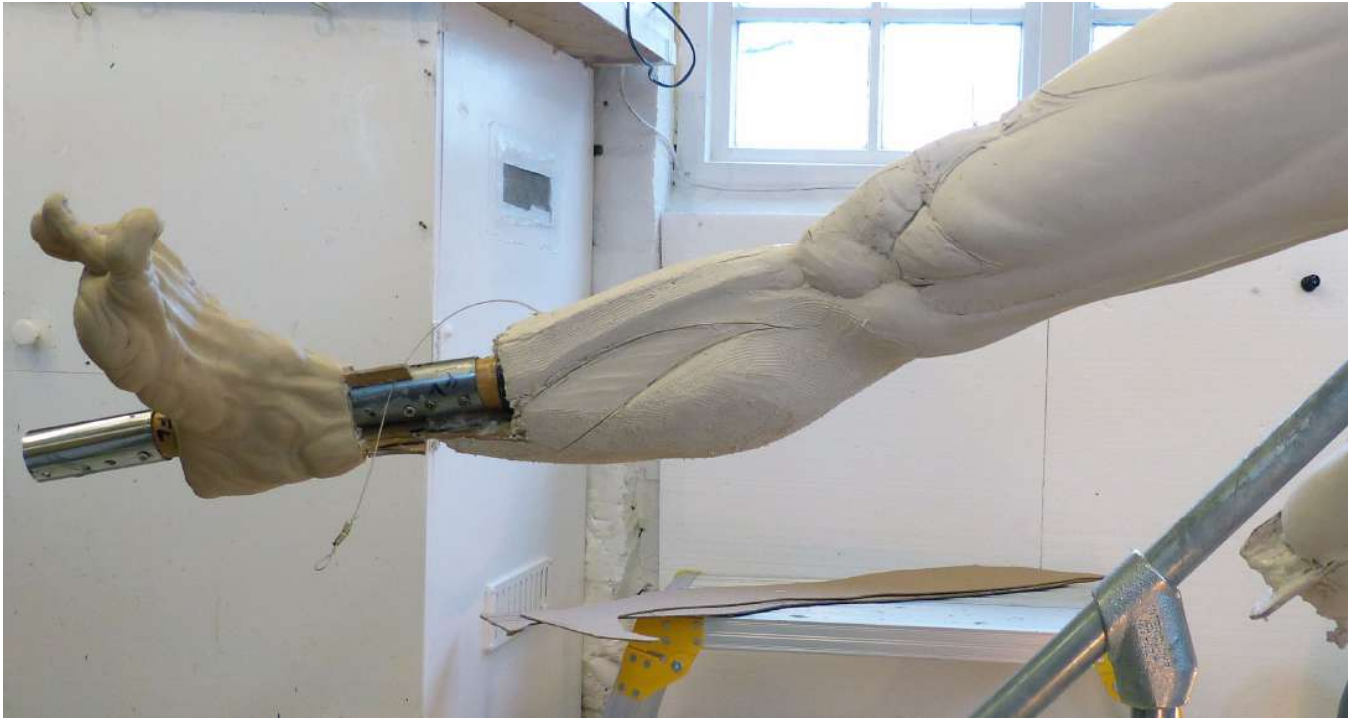
Stages in making a foot

The feet are removable so they don't get in the way or damaged when making the torso. Pierre uses two different, compatible materials for the feet (note their colour). For the final stage a much softer, waxier professional sculpting medium is used. This is very much like clay and very good for delicate, detailed work and it, too, doesn't dry out.



Feet are joined to the legs in the final stages





Stages in making a hand

The hands are also removable so they don't get in the way or damaged when making the torso. The hands are made entirely from a much softer, waxier professional sculpting medium which is different in colour, very much like clay and very good for delicate, detailed work and it, too, doesn't dry out.



And hands are finally joined to the arms





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