

Plaster Bandage

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Plaster bandage is most useful for replicating fabric in scale and free form shapes.

You can buy plaster bandage at any craft store and it will cost somewhere around \$5 for a small package. Fabric does not like to drape in scale, so if you have, say, a bed and you want it to have a bedspread on it for your model, this is the stuff to use. In fact, you probably used some of this in grade school to make a mask or something, or you might have once actually had your broken arm set in this stuff. It works a lot like paper mache, but better. You cut off the amount you need, dip it in water, and place it where it wants to be draped, rough side up. You then massage the bumps, which is actually the plaster suspended on a gauzy kind of fabric, and smooth those bumps out as you shape it to what you want it to be. Then you let it dry. It does need a surface to support it when wet, because it gets soft and floppy, so it would be difficult to sculpt scenery out of it without a base, but that might be possible with patience and more time than I have. I've also used this to create tree trunks by sculpting around dowel, and for a number of other organic feeling scenic elements. If you form it onto a porous surface, like cardboard, while wet, it will stick pretty well when dry. If you form it onto a non-porous surface, like plastic, you should be able to peel it off when dry and use it as an independent piece.

The plaster is water soluble, so when painting it you may find that some of the white mixes into your paint and alters colors. If you put a coat of acrylic or gesso on it before painting, it will help seal the surface so this does not happen.