CREATING SURFACES WITH KAPA-LINE FOAMBOARD

- **Written by David Neat authorof'Model-Making: Material and Methods'**
  KAPA line available:
- **White 3, 5 & 10mm available**
- **Black 5 x 700 x 1000mm**
- **Model-Making: Material and Methods**

There are various different types of 'Kapa' brand foamboard. Most of them differ from regular foamboard in that the paper covering can be carefully peeled off to use the soft foam layer beneath.

This foam layer can be easily inscribed, carved, sanded, embossed or generally 'broken down'. The product named 'Kapa-line' (with an ivory/beige foam inside) is the best to use for this purpose, available either 3, 5 or 10mm thick.

Below, the paper layer needs to be carefully peeled off in strips to avoid damaging the foam surface too much.

The foam is polyurethane (different from the polystyrene in standard foamboard) and is stronger, much denser though still soft.
It can also be glued well with solvent glues, including superglue, without dissolving. It accepts all paints very well, even thin watercolour, and I've used either DecoArt or Rosco acrylic for these examples.

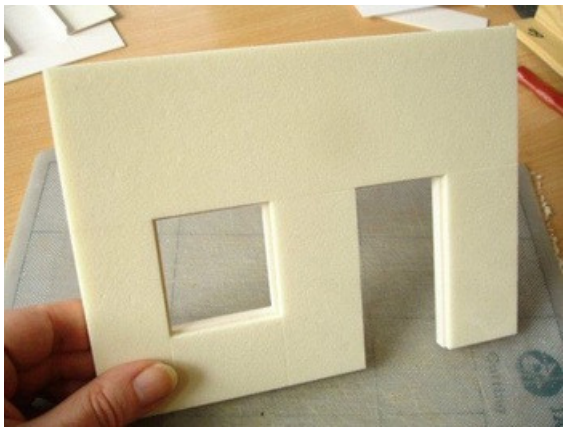
Once the paper has been stripped (on one side or both as one prefers) it is usually not robust enough on its own for larger constructions such as walls.

It should be glued to a stronger (card or plastic) backing form. This should be cut out first, including any door and window openings .

For a simple rectangular wall the foam can be stripped on one side and glued to the backing form paper side down. Its easier to cut the piece a little bigger and trim it once on the backing.

Either permanent spraymount, UHU (applied on both sides as a 'contact' adhesive) or a good double-sided tape can be used.

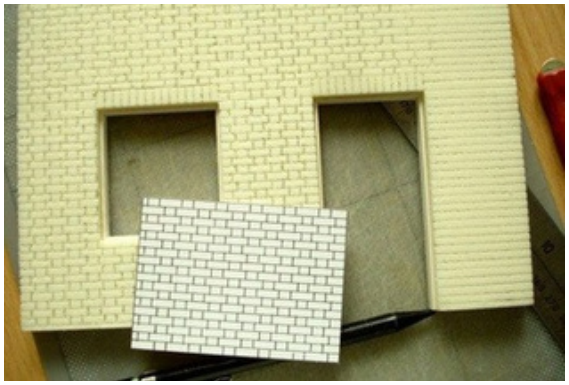
If the template backing form is complicated (with doorways and windows) I recommend removing all paper from the foam sheet, gluing as above, trimming close but not quite on the outline and sanding down - 'squaring off' the edges using a right-angled sanding block as shown below.



In fact this particular example was clad piecing together separate strips of foam to achieve square edges around the window and doorway without having to sand afterwards.

All that then needed sanding were the outside edges.

Different kinds of brickwork are simple to achieve in the foam.



The main tool needed is just a 'push lead' pencil (0.5mm best for 1:25 scale work). Brick divisions or 'mortar lines' can be inscribed in the foam (horizontal lines first) guided by a ruler and not pushing too firmly with the pencil.

It's best to start with a gentle stroke but this can be followed by a deeper incision if a more pronounced effect is wanted or if one purposely wants to fracture the line a little.

I recommend taking the trouble to draw up a small sample of scale brickwork which can then be used to mark spacings.

The brickwork template shown represents the 'Flemish bond' arrangement of bricks common for most structural walls especially in older buildings.

Make sure if you can that the brick arrangement fits in 'comfortably' around openings. Vertical spaces between bricks are easiest achieved by pushing with a small screwdriver or a piece of wood you've shaved down to a similar shape.

Here I've started to make the brickwork look more ruined by 'scratching' away with the point of a scalpel.

Alternatively a small piece of wood can be used to push single bricks or whole sections in.

Once pushed they will stay and will not expand back even with painting.

I have crumbled the surface even more by beating it with a small wire brush.

I always paint a thorough basecoat on surfaces first, often a 'mid' or average colour, and then achieve most of the final affect through dry brushing on top.

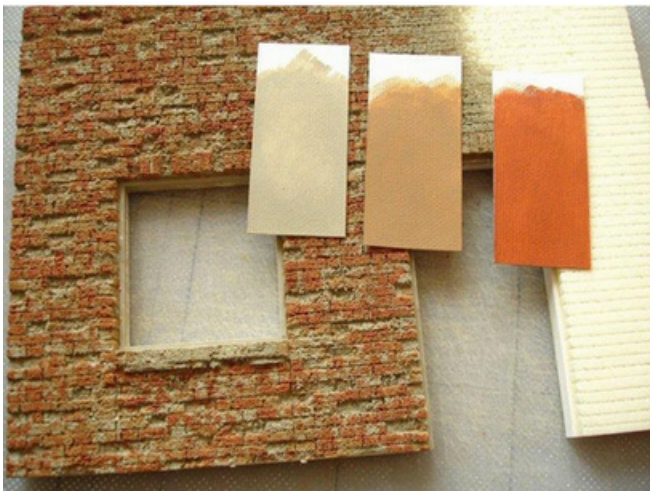
A fairly recent discovery of mine was that, if a small wire brush (available from 4D modelshop) is dragged strongly a few times over the foam surface it gives a texture not unlike heavy, weathered wood.

These samples have been basecoated, awaiting their final colours.

As well as using pencil or wire brush to create effects, I often impress the ends of metal tubes, in this case creating the effect of street cobbles. (photo Astrid Baerndal)

Kapa-line foam is not only very impressionable, it will hold that impression. Anything that's strong enough to press in will create an effect.

Here for example I've used decorative jewellery 'findings' and dental modelling tools to create different patterns.



The thick (10mm) version of Kapa-line foam can also be ideal for building up whole structures, especially if all paper is removed.

For the concrete structures in progress below I made the thicker bits by gluing 2 layers together and then breaking down with wire brush and scalpel. All joins were glued using superglue, though this may need a couple of tries because thin superglue will soak into the surface too quickly.

If Paverpol (mixed with acrylic or dry pigment to achieve the right colour) is used as a basecoat the surface becomes a lot tougher. These have been given an additional dry brushing in a lighter green/grey but still need all the stains and 'blooms' of old concrete added.

When layering colours it's important to keep a record of which, including the order, so that one can repeat the effect if successful.

There may be as many as 7 different colours needed to simulate brickwork convincingly.