

Flint Knapping: Displaying & Making Things with Your Points



Compiled/Edited by Michael Lynn



*Photo of Tim Dillard teaching me at the
Center for American Archaeology in Kampsville, IL*

Dedicated to all those who have taught someone else about the art of flint knapping, especially to my primary teachers – Bruce Boda, Tim Dillard, Mike McGrath and Steve Nissly. This is my attempt to pay forward.

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Scanning Your Points

By Michael Miller (aka mjflinty)



I use my flatbed scanner to make the pictures of my points. The trick is to leave the lid up and to do it at night and turn off all the lights in the room. Be sure to clean the glass well first. Sometimes I do end up with a smudge or some dust and I'll use Photoshop to clean it up. One fun thing to do is to use different materials (e.g. paper, fabric, etc) and lay it on top the points to create a backdrop effect.

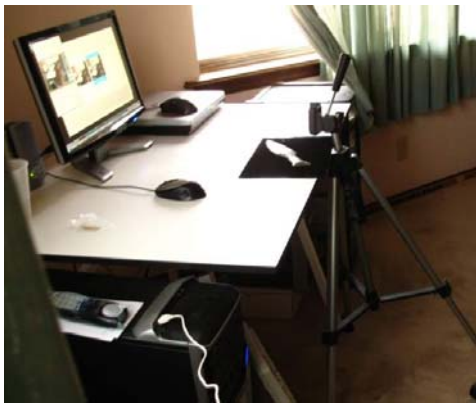
From <http://paleoplanet69529.yuku.com/topic/33645>, April 7, 2010, copied with permission

Photographing Stone Points

Chris Merriam

I have had many people ask how I do the photography, so I thought I would take a few photos of my setup, as you can see it is fairly simple. I use a Canon powershot A 620. It comes with software so I can hook it up to my computer and see the image on my monitor before I take the photo. You can see the program's window on the left side of my monitor in the pictures below. I use the tripod and can take the photo with the click of the mouse, which is a great help when taking close up shots without the camera moving when I press the shutter release on the camera.

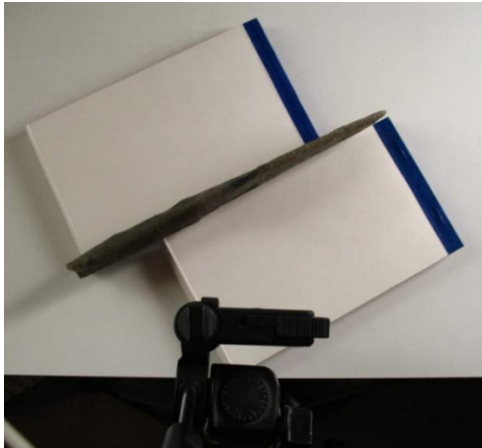
You can see I offset the legs of the tripod so the camera is over the table, I get good indirect sunlight that does great for showing the true color and flaking on the point.



I use a plain black felt background, it works well for most points, though black material and obsidian can be a problem sometimes, mostly I just reset the contrast and it works.



For the profile, I use two notepads and slot the point in between them, it works well and allows for a variety of size artifacts, even arrowpoints work well with this method.



A side shot showing how the point sits between the pads.



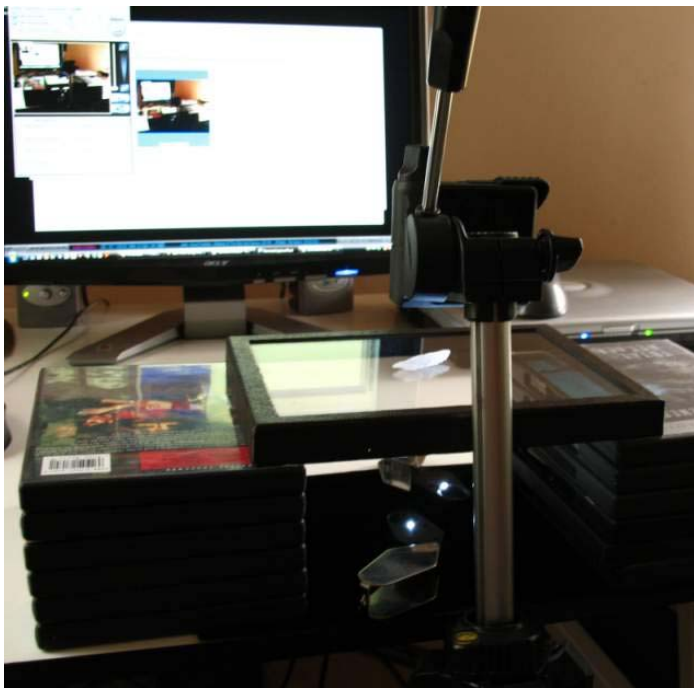
Now I added the black felt background, I lay it down tight, then wiggle the point down between the pads.



Side shot.



Now for the translucent photos, as you can see, I use a small riker mount frame, and stack it on some DVD cases, CD cases work too, and by using several of these cases I can vary the height depending on the size of the point. In the top left corner you can see the camera window in the software I use to setup the shot.



Here is the light source, yep, just two little loupes with LED lights. They work surprising well, and are easy to move around to show the best translucence of the points.



An overhead shot showing the light positioning, I set them up so one is under the base and the other near the tip, each point needs it's own fine tuning to get the most out of it.



So, that is it, for the most part... The majority of my photos are not manipulated, once the photos are done I just resize and post them.

For the trifold photos there is alot more work....

First I use Paint Shop Pro 9, but most software will do the job.

The first step is to rotate the point, it also tends to be the most time consuming part, each time the angle is slightly different so trial and error is the way I get it to line up.

Next I crop the photo as close to the point as possible, this helps to eliminate any imperfections in the background, lint, dust, etc. This also helps when it is time to resize the photos so they are all the same size.

For resizing, I use the resize tool and line up the different views of the point by using the height adjustment with the pixel setting not the percentage, this gets it closer to the full size of the photo. Since I cropped the points close in the last step this helps make sure that the different views are the same size so everything lines up well.

There can be some distortion when integrating the profile shot, since the camera is so close to the point when it is photographed sometimes the flakes dont line up perfectly, since the point comes to a tip, one part may be in focus while the rest isn't, no way to get around that, but

with a more expensive camera and a macro lens.

Once that is done, I just put the photos together in one picture and save it.

Now for the photo size and compression for the website...

What I do is set the dpi to 72, in the resize options. Most cameras use something like 180 dpi, which is half way between what is best for the internet, 72 dpi and for printing 300 dpi.

You can use 72 dpi or 96 dpi, both are fairly standard sizes, anything less and the pictures will pixelate, or look blocky, you can use some higher setting but there is no advantage to it; the file will be larger, more KB, and take longer to load. I also compress the images to 65%, different software uses different methods so for some it maybe a setting of 35, either way, make sure it is 1/3 of the way down from the highest quality. Anything below 65% and the image will look blocky and blurry.

So, that's it, all my secrets out in the open, now everyone can make great photos!

If you have any other questions please contact me, I have probably forgot a thing or two and I would be happy to provide more info.

From: <http://www.arrowheadsonline.com/pages/photography.htm>, accessed 6/7/10, copied with permission

Point Displays with Girl Power

By Gary Abbatte (aka rhymeswithwhat)

Mary B. has been a very talented artist since before I met her in 1965 when we were sophomores in high school. She gets all the credit for imagineering this new point display technique. I told her my point displays were boring and looked like every body else's and that they were plain with the points all in straight rows. Then I asked her for some help. My display boxes were at her home for safe keeping while I was moving to my new apartment this spring. When I saw what she has done, I was amazed and very grateful. She has made my work look better than it is!

Here are some photos and tips on what Mary has done:



The display boxes when new have a white fiber pad, like the material that home heating filters are made from. The pads are springy but just plain white.



First Mary sprinkles a thin layer of base color of decorative sand over over the pad in the box. The colored sand is available at hobby and craft stores. It is also used in model railroad landscapes and rail-beds.



After the base color, a contrasting decorative color is sprinkled in a free hand design or pattern. Kitchen seasoning sprinkle bottles work nice for applying the sand, one sprinkle bottle for each color is needed.

Before the points are set in place, a spray adhesive is applied to the sand design. Commercial spray adhesive can be used but a mix of Elmer's clear dry glue one part. to 4 or 5 parts water in a dollar store plant misting pump spray bottle works great to apply the glue/water mix to the sand for fixing the design.to stay in place.



After arranging the points on the sand, replace the glass windowed cover and leave to dry for several days.

The sand and points and have stayed very stable through car travel to both the Bald Eagle and the Letchworth Knap-ins. That is a lot of driving vibration, but all has stayed pretty stable.



The instructions I gave will work with the Glue/Water mix by just spraying the sand to dampen like I have done with model railroad landscape. A different technique is used with commercial spray glue. First spray the pad and apply sand and lightly shake off what does not stay. Build in layers with commercial spray glue like 3M.

A very few flier specks of sand have been easily brushed away with an artist brush.

Thank You Mary.

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New Look for Display Case

By Steve Colby (aka Mutt.vets)

I was really impressed with Gary's post "Point's Display With Girl Power" and they way it made his points look better. <http://paleoplanet69529.yuku.com/topic/28623> I usually just shove in a piece of white foam and line up my points like a bunch of little soldiers. Well, after seeing Gary's post I felt that I needed to do something with my display box. But, I didn't want to mess with sand and glue. But then I saw this krylon paint called "stone" Krylon Stone Paint



I painted the foam pad and then just cut it out to fit into the case. Beware, if you put it on really thick, it take FOREVER to dry

Well, I think the whole thing turned out pretty decent. And, it has the same style of look as the ones in Gary's post. But, this is the cheater's easy way to do itLOL

Here's how it turned out Hope your's is a success. Enjoy Mutt



From <http://paleoplanet69529.yuku.com/reply/252039#reply-252039>, April 7, 2010, copied with permission

Cord Wrapping for an Arrowhead Necklace

By Kyle (aka Potholes Primitive)

I make necklaces for friends by stringing the cordage right to the arrowhead. I came up with this technique myself. I start by tying a hangman's noose and then wrap the point with the resulting loop and pull the noose tight. The way the point is wrapped is difficult to explain, but the example in the photo is loose so you can kind of see how in the picture. You'll probably need to play with it a while to figure it out. The result is a point that hangs straight down and a knot that won't come loose. It sure beats just tying a clove-hitch around the point like I see in novelty shops.



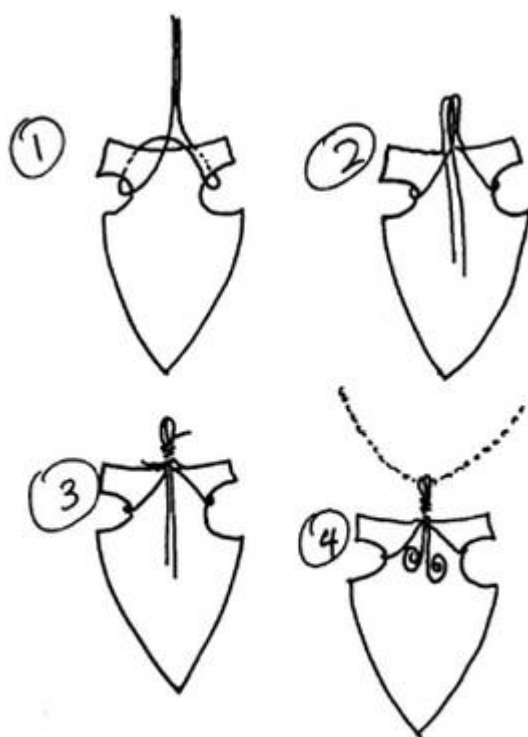
This necklace only has one wrap between the notches. I do two now because I think it looks better. Again, this one hasn't been cinched up all the way. The finished necklace will look almost seamless. If you can't figure it out, tell me and I'll try do draw instructions on paint.

From <http://paleoplanet69529.yuku.com/reply/31455#reply-31455>, April 6, 2010

Wire Wrapping for an Arrowhead Necklace

By Jim (aka Flyfish)

This is what I do with wire. I don't remember where the drawing came from. Wish I could remember so I could give the credit.



From <http://paleoplanet69529.yuku.com/reply/31455#reply-31455>, April 6, 2010

I heard from the artist, who wishes to remain anonymous and who wrote me that “the illustration was posted on KRU showing a technique done by James Howell.”

For a video demonstration of this technique,
see <http://www.youtube.com/user/mjflinty#p/a/u/1/d3AWa5GGkjA>

Hafting Blades into Knives

By Travis Smolinski

Warning: Working with antler and bone dust can be hazardous. Always wear safety glasses and a mask. While I have had no problems as of yet, I have heard horror stories about people who have received awful infections from antler dust. If you have any cuts make sure they are sealed off completely.

Modern Methods

Wood and Antler

As wood and antler can be hafted the same way, I will discuss them both here. The main difference is that wood is easier and can be done without any use of power tools. Antler can too but it just takes a lot longer and is tougher on the tools. Stone is also done in the same way but high powered drills and diamond tools are needed.

<http://www.sparrowcreek.com/KH1.JPG>

Here is a typical style of blade that you see and an antler that I used a saw to cut it to the size I wanted. The first thing we need to do is to place the blade to the knife and determine where the best fit is. Once we see how the knife should be (general look) we place the blade to the area we need to cut.



What we are doing here is finding the area that needs to be worked to fit the blade. We then hold the blade in place and take a marker and draw out the circle where the blade will fit. If we are going to make a slot then we want to determine the thickest width of the tang (the area to be hafted) and draw

two cut lines. The finished markings will look like this.





Now we have two choices. One choice is to use a drill with various sizes of bits and drill out several holes to the depth of the tang. You can clean up the hole marks with knives and files. The hole will look like this. Then the knife will fit in the hole. Epoxy or pine pitch will hold it into place.



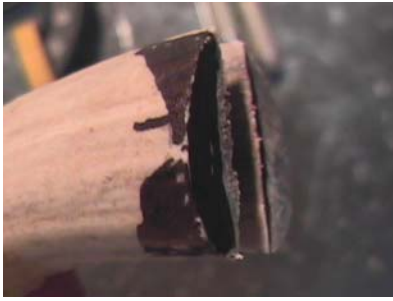
The other method is just as easy. With the straight lines marked you can use a jig or hand saw. First measure the tang and mark it on both the bottom and top of the handle to give you a clear vision of where to cut. The best method is to cut thin and then use a file to scrape away slowly where the tang is still wide. This method will make a tight fit and is superior to the one I will

describe. The only draw back is that it could take 2 hours to do. I use to do this method all of the time till I realized that epoxy is strong and the lashing material will hide the cuts. Therefore, I mostly use the quicker method.



Now take your saw and cut each line from start to mark. Then go down the center and angle it to each side to remove all the middle antler. You can now cut off the remaining pieces with a hand saw. You can finally clean it out with a file making sure not to remove too much from the sides. Test your blade into the slot to make sure it fits and nothing more needs to be removed.





Now as an optional method we can round the sides of the antler. Take your marker and mark the areas to be removed. Now take it to the grinder and remove these areas as well as cleaning up anything on the base of the antler. If you have no grinder then this can be done with steel rasps and 60 grit sand paper. I did the hand method for years and it can be done but takes a lot longer. Finally, once in shape, take 120 grit then 220 grit sand paper and sand it down smooth.



Now the antler handle is almost finished. We need to polish it. There are two methods to use. If you don't have a power buffer then get some polyurethane spray of semi-gloss, or gloss if you want a high finish. Spray it on after reading the instructions. You will then have to wait 72 hours

before proceeding. The other method is take it to your power cloth buffer and add tripoli, a brown soap like substance. Buff it and be careful to hold it good or it will throw it. Also, I always get static shocks that causes me to jump.

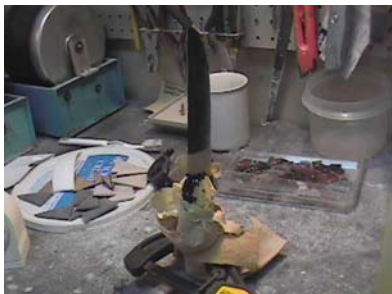
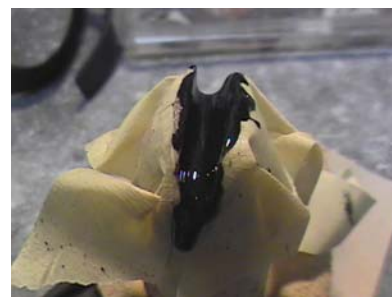


Now that we have a finished handle it is time to haft the blade. I got a little careless on this one as doing two things (taking pics) was too much for my little attention span. But it is a good mistake as it shows you how to overcome problems. What I did was cut too much off so that the blade wobbles in the hafting area. This can easily be fixed by adding some wood braces That will be

taken out and added after the glue has been placed in the slot.



So that we don't have a big mess it is best to tape off the blade and antler. Now we take viscous (non runny) 5- minute epoxy. One option is to add black India ink, available at any craft store. Only add enough to color the epoxy. This will turn it



black and when it dries it will look very similar to pine pitch. Set a timer for 15 minutes and fill in the slot completely with the glue. Now we do a little clean up making sure none of the glue runs and let it sit for 10 minutes. If you made the mistake like I did and the blade does not sit still then you will have to watch it moving it back into place.



Ding Ding! The timer goes off. Immediately set it again for another 15 minutes. The glue should be like play dough now. Remove the tape. Now clean up the glue with a flattened nail or similar. What you are doing here is making sure there are no lumps, no glue



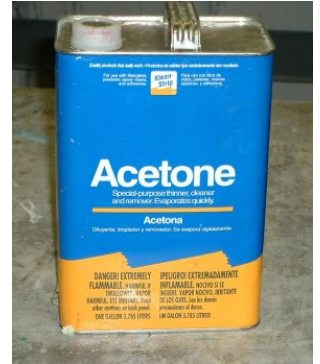
away from the hafting area and finally that the hafting area is completely covered. A good thing to do is to lick your finger and push down on the glue spreading it evenly. This will give it a smooth look. Also we are still constantly making sure that the knife remains even and straight, i.e. the blade isn't leaning crooked to one side or the other. It is important to do this slowly and never forcefully. This is why it is important to do it slowly from the start. If you wait too long the glue will have set too much and you can crack the wood handle or break off the tang.



When the timer goes off again check to see that the glue is dry. Once it is, you can lash on any material that you desire. I have used hemp cord, simulated sinew, leather straps and even wool from my wife's sewing cit. A little bit of Elmer's glue will help it stay in place.



Now we let it dry for an hour or so just to make sure. Also, acetone will help take off any spilled glue. And its done.



From http://www.sparrowcreek.com/Hafting_Knives.htm, April 6, 2010, copied with permission