



Activa's LI-QUA-CHÉ

"A Doll Makers' Dream Come True!"

By: Colleen Allen, Professional Dollmaker

For those of you who want to make quality dolls, I've found the most exciting product to come along in ages. It's a medium that lets those who *don't have a kiln* use the *same doll molds* we use for porcelain to pour a good-looking high quality doll. The medium doesn't damage your molds for porcelain pouring and the dolls *won't require firing*, not even cooking in an oven. It is completely *air-drying* and ready to finish the day after pouring. Activa's LI-QUA-CHÉ will open up the wide world of doll making to a whole new group of people.

LI-QUA-CHÉ is a pourable paper maché with an extremely fine body. The finish feels just as smooth and silky as sanded porcelain. You'd never recognize it as a paper compound. It has the high quality look of a cross between porcelain and resin with a far more realistic, velvety, skin-like luster. It pours and dries a nice, light cream color or for darker skin you may color it with additional pigment.

LI-QUA-CHÉ has the added advantage of being very strong. Its strength coupled with its ability to look every bit as fine and fragile as porcelain makes it an excellent medium for creating family heirlooms and museum quality items.

I poured a 10" circumference head and dropped it from a height of four feet onto my kitchen floor. It didn't break! I then threw it higher each time and still, it did not break. After the 15th time, I smashed it down as hard as I could and the head finally broke. It didn't explode into a million fragments (which porcelain will do) but broke into *three* pieces. I could easily have repaired it using the wet LI-QUA-CHÉ, another bonus as rarely does porcelain "forgive" enough to allow quality repair.

The surface may be painted with a variety of finishes, but my favorites are, Fiestas, oil-based translucent paints by AdHoc Ceramics. These are intense, yet soft and realistic looking, like the natural blush of skin and well-done makeup.

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED FOR THIS PROJECT

- 20" Timios mold from Colleen Allen Originals
- Mold bands and duster brush
- 1 gallon Liquache'
- Wooden spoon
- Cleaning tools
- Scalpel (optional)
- Sand-o-flex (optional)
- Sanding blocks or #150 grit scrubber

- Fine grit sandpaper
- Small round brush
- Square shader brush
- Eyes (optional can be painted)
- Eye lashes
- Wig
- Fiesta oil-based translucent doll kit paints

DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING A DOLL WITH LI-QUA-CHÉ

Open Timios mold and brush with a soft brush to clean any debris that may have accumulated, then band tightly.

Open LI-QUA-CHÉ and carefully stir in a single direction until completely smooth. Do not mix in opposite directions so you don't create air bubbles in it. (Air bubbles are *not* our friend!)

Let it rest for five minutes and then rock it lightly on the counter to get rid of any bubbles left.

Add pigment here if you want color to the skin. I keep *extremely careful* record of the amount I use so I will always be able to duplicate a color. Put four cups (1 quart) of LI-QUA-CHÉ in an 8 quart (1 gallon) bowl and add pigment 1 teaspoon (measured and counted) at a time until you're happy with the color.

Warning: Be sure you *write down* the exact amount. (I promise, you'll thank me!) Now add the amount you used for pigment 3 more times to the mixture. Stir until smooth. It will be too dark at this stage, don't worry. Now add the three quarts that are left to this mixture and stir again until smooth and even colored. You now have a gallon that is all evenly colored. I can't stress enough how important it is to keep really good records. There will come a time you'll need to replace a broken foot or hand and if you don't have records you are out of luck. (Trust me, this **is** the voice of nasty, experience speaking from a *whole table-full* of pitiful, unmatched parts!)

You need to have a large bowl to empty your molds into. Long wooden spoons can be laid across the bowl so you can prop your mold upside down on the bowl while it drains. Also have a good supply of paper towels. There's *always* some drippings and **mess!** (Don't learn the hard way, on a dining table over carpet, like I did!)

Pour the LI-QUA-CHÉ into the mold right to the top of the pour hole. Set a timer for six or eight minutes and drain when timer goes off. Leave the mold upside down to empty. You can pour LI-QUA-CHÉ from 1/8th to 1/4th of an inch thick or greater and it seems to work well at most all thicknesses. My preference is 1/4th inch thick because this is thin enough for lightness which is important if you're making angels or something you want to pose easily, yet still heavy enough to be sturdy. The head I repeatedly dropped was 1/4 inch thick and it held up extraordinarily well

In general open the mold approximately 8 minutes after draining. Leave it open, exposed 3 to 6 minutes before taking the piece out. Begin to clean immediately if you are going to do it while it's wet. This is what I strongly recommend, as it's much easier to clean when wet. These times are an average. You will need to experiment a bit to see what works best in your area. Weather and humidity could make it take less or longer. Allowing the piece to rest in the mold while it dries a few minutes makes for less "squishing" out of shape. I wiggle the piece slightly as soon as I open it, just enough to tell if it's loose and not sticking anywhere. It is ready to take out when you can pick up the piece and it will rest on itself

without squishing or sagging. (i.e. back of head, top of head, neck) Be careful, this requires some patience to get the timing right. The head is *not* dry at this point, just dry enough to retain it's shape.

Complete drying takes about 24 hours if you let the piece sit out in a warm room. But for those of you, (like me!) impatient to get started, there are a few things you can do to speed up the process. Set the piece on an open oven door with the oven turned to 275' or place the piece out in the backyard where the hot sun and a breeze can dry it. I haven't actually tried the microwave yet but I will. Let me know if you do and what kind of results you get. You can tell when the piece is dry enough to work on by wrapping it in a paper towel and cupping it in your hands for about ten seconds. If the piece is dry, when you open your hands the paper towel will still be dry and *crisp*. If it's not quite dry, the paper towel will be slightly *limp and damp*. Here again, it takes a little practice to get the feel for this but you'll get it, just be patient with yourself while you learn.

I prefer to do my cleaning right when I take the piece out of the mold. This takes less work because the clay is still wet and pliable. I use a scalpel because it's faster and much easier. But keep in mind if you choose to use one, though easier, there is less room for error. They are very, very sharp and any regular ceramic cleaning tool will work. Keep a small container of water nearby to frequently rinse the build-up from your tool. Also wipe the blade on a towel each time you rinse so you won't transfer water back to the piece and smear.

If you've never cleaned a doll before, start with the top of **the legs**. (If you make a mistake, by starting at the top of the legs rather than the face you leave yourself a relatively easy area to disguise.) Use your tool to **scrape** down the seam line on each side. I drag my scalpel down the line several times rather than trying to cut the line off. Cutting makes too many nicks and gouges. Then as the seam line begins to get smooth I ease up on the pressure I'm exerting and still dragging the blade downward use it more to blend and smooth. Then carefully cut away seam lines between toes and smooth lightly with a damp (not wet) brush. Use a damp brush to smooth any nicks or bumps. I also use my slightly damp finger to polish away marks. Do arms the same way and carefully cut around fingers to get rid of excess lines and use a damp brush to smooth and refine.

Go from **legs** to **arms** to **head** and by the time you get to the head you'll have enough practice to do a really nice job on the face.

Eyes can be painted or set in. If you intend to set in eyes, you'll need to cut the eye sockets open and cut out the top or back of the head so you can reach in to set the eyes.

Scrape a fine line all around the eye where you want it cut out. Do this several times until you have scored it. Next, carefully make tiny slits with your tool parallel to the upper and lower lids. Make many tiny cuts rather than trying to slice as you go. Slicing will tear and leave raggedy edges that are horrid to clean and get smooth. After you've cut all the way around, more like perforating, go back with the tip of the tool and finish the cuts rather than trying to cut all at once. This will prevent the edge of the eye from becoming fractured. Now take your wet shader brush and smooth the rim of the eyelids until they look right to you.

To set in the eyes, take one of the eyeballs and reaching in through the back of the head, place the eye in the opening. Check to see how snugly it fits in the socket. Pull eye back slightly from the socket and with a wet brush, 'paint' water on the front of the eyeball through the eye hole. Then fit eyeball back into socket and rotate eyeball until you have a snug fit. Do this for both eyes. You may set the eyes with LI-QUA-CHÉ by painting LI-QUA-CHÉ all around the inside rim and holding the eye in place for a minute.

Repeat with the other eye. Clean any external residue from eyes and shape or smooth lids with a damp, not dripping brush and let dry for ten minutes. Then with a loaded brush or an eyedropper, drip or brush extra LI-QUA-CHÉ all around the eyes inside the head. Let dry.

If you want to wait until the piece is completely dry to clean, use your standard cleaning tool and **scrape** off lines. Then smooth with sandpaper ranging from rough to very fine, or with any sanding tool you prefer but it is *much* easier to clean while still wet.

If you are using translucent oil-based paints, you may use a liquid car wax for a great finish. (Just be sure you **get** the kind that is transparent and not tinted blue or green!) or you may use a commercial sealer. One or the other is needed to seal the piece and give you a base to paint on. I paint it on 3 times with a large shader brush, allowing it to dry between each coat and being very careful not to incorporate bubbles.

You may also spray a clear acrylic matte sealer 3 times. Let dry between coats. This gives a somewhat shinier finish, but if the finish is too shiny, it may be toned down after you've painted and blushed by giving the piece a final coat of Porcelain Fog or any real *matte* sealer sprayed lightly. You may use acrylic paints over the acrylic spray to paint your doll, but remember a light hand gives the best look. I don't believe you can get the real skin look from acrylics but there are a number of doll types where that's not as important. (Elves, character dolls, etc.) My personal preference is to use the oil-base paints for realism.

PAINTING ON LI-QUA-CHÉ

- Materials required:
- Fiesta transluents paint doll kit
- Various size square or angle shaders
- Q-tips
- Soft cotton T-shirt cut into small squares, 3" by 3" with a few larger for wiping back.
- Tile or plate for paint
- Toothpicks for stirring paint

The technique for using oil-based paints is called *rouging*. You are actually laying down a *transparent* wash of color. Each subsequent layer gets more intense color without looking painted or losing the transparency. This is why the doll skin has a natural, realistic look. You have the control to go from a very light touch as in baby skin, to quite dark, as in old, leathery, weathered looking skin. From light pastel to intensely dark, yet still retaining the translucency. Since the paint is transparent it goes on more like blush on real skin than like what we're used to with regular paints.

This painting process is completely different from the standard way to paint. You'll use such a minimal amount of paint, you'll probably think you read this wrong. A dime-sized dab of paint will do an entire doll!

Start with brushing a coat of #8 natural lightly over the whole piece, then take a large square of T-shirt and wipe off the entire piece. *Don't* rub hard as this will produce shine, which we don't want. Mix a small amount (**the size of a dime**) of #22 coral on the tile and an equal amount of #8 natural in another place on the tile. The #8 natural works like a remover, a thinner and extends drying time. The #2 Ultra

toner works much like #8, but dries faster. I suggest starting with #8 until you have some experience with what these paints will do.

Dip your brush in the paint, then wipe it off on a piece of T-shirt until there's only the slightest hint of color. I use the side of my thumb and paint a little blush on it. If I see oil shine I wipe some more. When only color, no oil, shows I begin to blush the whole body with a back and forth motion, similar to dry-brushing for those of you familiar with that technique. Use appropriate sized brushes, either large or small for wherever you're working. This will leave smooth, even, color that looks like the natural blush of skin.

Where the rosier blush of forehead, cheeks and lips is needed, I go back with another layer of paint. You may not need more paint on your brush as it really does last for an incredibly long time! When you do need paint, repeat the process above. It's important to remember, you are not painting *more* paint on but rouging more transparent blush. Painting lays down an actual layer of paint that is not transparent. Rouging lays see-through color. Blush as many times as you need to get the intensity of color you prefer. I've used these paints for 13 years and still have my first set that I use paint from as well as several new sets added over the years. I continue to be amazed at how far they go!

To complete the lips, corners of eyes, fingernails, toenails and ears...pick up a little more blush and go over these areas layer by layer until they are blushed to suit you. I like a very natural look on the **lips** but natural doesn't mean pale. By rouging one layer at a time you build color to whatever intensity you prefer but stay natural.

To shadow the eye or for brow color and to get a natural look use a minimum of #16 dark walnut. For each color change use a clean brush. In fact I have small, medium and large brushes for each color because it makes life so much simpler! Apply the same as blush. Put into crease line of eyelid and blend outward, line the eyelids and put light blush where the eyebrows will be. If you want a color for eyeshadow follow above directions and pick a color you like. I like #23 gray, #24 navy and #18 Provincial Antique. But remember, you apply these *very* light, so navy, as we all know it as very dark, will actually be a wonderful grayed-blue in its transparent form. Practice on the back of a head, it makes a great 'doodle' pad and remember... **don't, don't, don't** put your fingers where you've already blushed as it will lift the color and leave a fingerprint!

When your doll is perfectly blushed and you know she's a masterpiece set her aside and let her dry for 12 to 24 hours, then you may handle her again. (Or if you are in a real big hurry I sometimes set it on an open oven or when I'm really pressed for time I may spray it with a sealer and just go ahead and work on it. This is the most dangerous choice of all because the paint is not really 'set' yet and you could do something to mess it up.) I use acrylic color for brows and lashes. Choose an appropriate color for the brows and using an ultra thin liner brush, make short tapered brow strokes until you like the look Here again, its wise to practice until you find your style. Use very fine strokes for lashes. At some point you will need to take a lash or brow off, when that occurs, use a slightly wet Q-tip and rub lightly to remove.

When I use painted eyes, I do them before I start the blushing process because if I make a mistake I only have to start a new head, not **reblush** one. Set in eyes I do as soon as the head is dry enough.

If you use them, apply human hair eyelashes with a transparent glue and at last you are now ready to assemble your doll.

Enjoy the learning process, experiment see how versatile LI-QUA-CHÉ is. It's great for figurines and small statues too.

For all of you who haven't made a doll because you had no access to a kiln, welcome... welcome to the wonderful world of dollmaking! Enjoy the journey!

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Colleen Allen Originals carries dolls, molds, **LI-QUA-CHÉ** and Fiesta paints. Drop us an E-Mail request at: ***DovesWind@aol.com***