

# Max Gyllenhaal — ZORTZ Creator



Zortz were invented in 1980 while I was on a work study program at Henson and Associates (The Muppets). I was playing around with a clothespin one morning and thought what a great mechanism for a miniature puppet.

The first ones I made were carved out of foam mattresses and then dipped in latex rubber. This was a pretty arduous process, and the results weren't the best. I later learned how to work with foam latex after a brief job working on a horror movie (Plutonium Babies). That's when Zortz really began to evolve.

There are several stages to working in foam latex. The first is sculpting a clay model of the Zortz character. That's the fun part. Next, a permanent mold is created from the clay model into which the foam is cast. The piece is then baked for several hours. Additional features are painted on with rubber ink, and then the piece is cleaned, assembled, and prepared to go to work for you.

Zortz were originally meant to be miniature puppets but over time they evolved into noteholders — I guess out of necessity. I started selling them at street fairs and craft shows around NYC in 1983. Several local stores became interested in carrying Zortz and eventually buyers throughout the country were ordering them.

Because each Zortz is made by hand they tend to have their own unique personalities and that personality will grow and change as you play with it. Believe me it's true. I play with lots of them everyday.

## If MAX was a ZORTZ...

