

## ***Make Your Own Wearable Art: Cosplay Armor***

**Best for:** grades 7-12

**Description:** build 3-D arm bracers (armor for the forearm) from upcycled materials while learning the foundations of armor design.

**Vocabulary:** bracer, symmetrical

### **Required materials:**

- plastic wrap
- masking or painter's tape
- scissors
- three-five: pizza-sized cardboard boxes
- thin marker
- pencil
- sketch paper
- Elmer's glue
- knobs, buttons or beads
- acrylic or tempera paint
- paintbrushes
- 1/8" or 1/2" elastic / string

### **Optional materials:**

- papier mâché
- hole punch
- foamie sheets or scraps
- hot glue gun
- spray paint
- grommets
- joint compound
- wax or parchment paper



Images:

Master FG (German, active 1534–1537), *Mutius Scaevola*, 1537, engraving on paper. Museum Purchase, 1969.53.

Unknown Maker (Japanese, Edo period, 1615–1868), *Helmet Bowl* by Myōchin Nobuie (Japanese, 1486–1564), 1511. *Armor*, about 1750, iron, lacquer, silk, leather, copper, silver, gold, horse hair, glass. Museum purchase with funds provided by The Kettering Fund, 2016.51.

# DAYTON ART INSTITUTE

## Instructions

1. Wrap arm in plastic. It will stick to itself. Then wrap arm with masking or painter's tape. Wrap directionally across arm to keep tape as flat as possible, then go back and fill in where plastic wrap is still visible.

**Helpful hint:** Don't wrap too tightly! If working alone, tear off 6—8" strips of tape for use.



2. Use marker to draw a 1.5—2" opening on arm's underside. This is how to take the **bracer** on or off. Carefully slide the scissors under the **bracer** along the drawn line, lifting it away from arm while carefully cutting. Go slowly and cautiously! Once cut off, trim **bracer** down to lines drawn for opening.



3. Flatten plastic/tape pattern and trace it onto cardboard. Cut the shape out from the cardboard. Next, flip the cardboard template over and trace and cut out a matching template for the opposite arm.

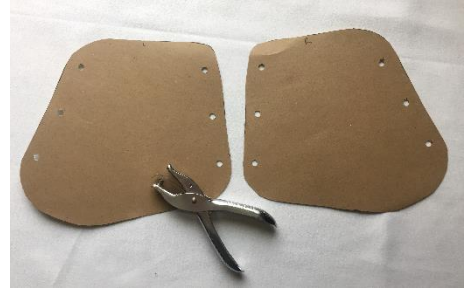
**Helpful hint:** flipping cardboard makes a **symmetrical**, or mirrored, match for opposite arm.





# DAYTON ART INSTITUTE

4. Use a hole punch or carefully use a pen to punch holes to make three evenly spaced holes on each long side of both **bracers**. These will lace the **bracer**.
5. Sketch a design for your **bracers** on paper and cut it out. Be sure to trace the **bracers'** shape for accuracy.



6. Also include an outer border to your design, at least  $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide. Try not to cover hole-punches. Cut paper design out, trace onto thin cardboard and cut. Then flip cardboard design over, trace this matching version and cut out for opposing arm.



**Helpful hint:** this can also be created from a sheet of foamies to add more dimension.

7. Label each design as left or right. Glue cut cardboard design to the **bracer** cardboard. Re-punch holes if needed.



Have time for a [short survey](#)? Let us know how you're enjoying our digital resources!

# DAYTON ART INSTITUTE

## OPTIONAL:

8. Create papier mâché. Mix equal parts Elmer's glue and joint compound. Then, add this mix to water, two-parts water to one-part mix, (2:1). Add mâché pulp to glue/joint mixture until it is a paintable consistency. Paint mâché mixture onto **bracers** and allow to dry.

**Helpful hint:** painting a mâché mixture onto **bracers** makes them more durable. Don't prefer to make mâché? Skip to step #9.



**Helpful hint:** Try to avoid getting cardboard too wet. Paint a thin layer. Drape over a cardboard tube to help it dry into a curved shape.

9. Embellish design and add decoration. Try applying Elmer's glue and covering the design in beads—larger beads can represent rivets.



10. Paint over your embellished design with acrylic paint or spray paint. Let dry.

**Helpful hint:** if using spray paint, be sure to use outdoors and somewhere safely ventilated. Keep spray paint bottle tilted at least a 45° angle and 8–10" away from the artwork. Use an adult for help!





# DAYTON ART INSTITUTE

11. Paint the flatter surface a contrasting color.

12. Reinforce the back of the lacing holes with tape.

Re-punch holes (or use grommets). Thread elastic or cord into holes so the **bracer** stays tightly in place. Start at the wrist and leave 10" tails for tying off.



13. Wear your armor proudly!

## Extensions

**For extra challenge:**

1. Experiment with making different lengths of **bracers** to cover various sections of the arm.

**For further technique:**

1. Make **greaves** (armor worn over shins)! Use same steps except wrap calves instead of forearms.

## Web Resources

[Homemade papier mâché recipe](#)

[The Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's digital collection](#)

[Video: working in theatre—costume designer](#)

DAYTON ART INSTITUTE

Questions about or ideas for our programs? Email [edu@daytonart.org](mailto:edu@daytonart.org)



Have time for a [short survey](#)? Let us know how you're enjoying our digital resources!