

ARTventures ... at home!

African-inspired Masks

Create an African-inspired mask using cardboard shaping, cutting, and embellishment techniques.



Materials Needed

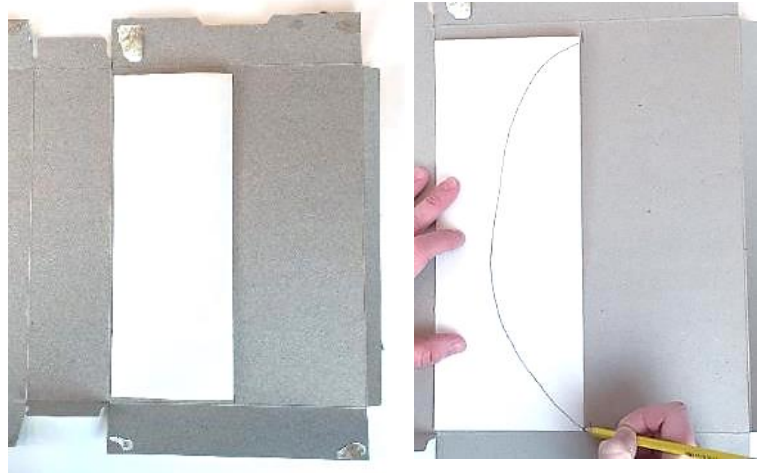
- pencil
- scissors
- Elmer's glue®
- acrylic paint
- empty cereal box
- scrap paper (9"x12")
- spray bottle or paintbrush
- **optional:** X-acto knife
- **optional:** painter's tape
- **optional:** beads or yarn



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Step 1

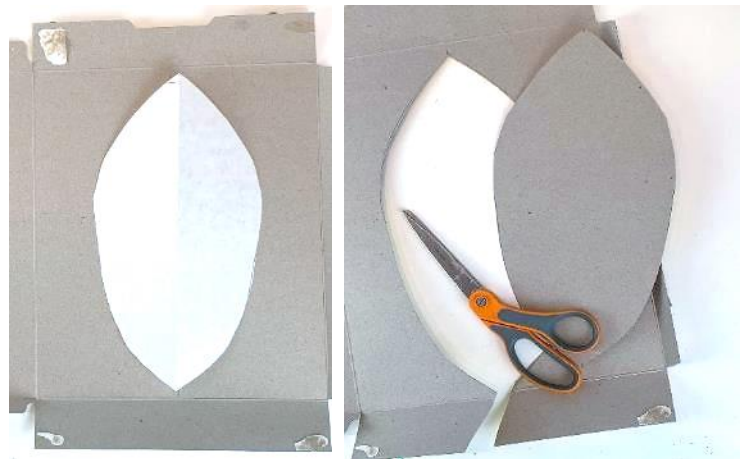
Open the cereal box and lay flat. Fold your scrap paper lengthwise and lay it on the flattened box, making sure it fits on the cardboard. Draw the outer edge of the shape of your mask, starting at the top of the folded edge and ending at the bottom. (You are drawing half the mask, right or left side.)



Step 2

Cut out the paper mask. Then unfold, trace onto the cardboard, and cut.

For younger artists: skip to step #6.



Step 3

Re-fold your paper again. Draw an eye, eyelid, nose and mouth on one side and along the folded edge. Cut what you've drawn from the paper as one piece. Trace just the outline of the paper eyes and mouth onto your cardboard. Mark the bottom center of the nose.



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Step 4

Cut apart paper nose and parts of the eyes to use as stencils. Trace these paper facial features onto the cardboard mask to define eye openings. Trace eyelids and nose onto scrap cardboard and cut out.



Step 5

Use scissors to cut the facial features out from the cardboard, (or use an X-acto® knife for a finer cut).

Note: be sure that the cardboard you are cutting is on top of scrap board or a cutting board to protect your work surfaces. Press and hold the cardboard firmly on a stable surface and your other hand should always be free from the path of the cutting blade. Make a series of shorter cuts to maintain control and safety.



Step 6

Wet a paintbrush with water or use a spray bottle to mist the mask lightly but thoroughly until it becomes flexible and begins to curve. Bend the mask around a cylindrical object and leave to dry.



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Step 7

To add the cardboard nose and eyelids, first glue yarn onto the existing pencil outline you drew earlier. Allow to dry.

For younger artists: use glue and yarn to create shapes for facial features.



Step 8

Add lines of glue inside the yarn outline of the mask and fit cut cardboard eyes, nose, mouth, etc., onto the glue.

Helpful hint: you may need to lightly moisten the cut cardboard facial features in order for them to best fit onto the mask.



Step 9

Embellish with beads, more yarn, scrap cardboard, or other small decorative items to add texture and pattern. Use glue to adhere and allow to dry.



Step 10

Paint your mask. For inspiration, [visit the DAI's online collection](#) to view masks by different tribes and cultures from Africa.

Helpful hint: paint your mask a solid color to seal it and create an even primer layer for the final paint layer. Allow to dry before adding your final paint layer(s).

Optional: use painter's tape to create a geometric pattern on the surface of the mask. Paint over tape with another color and when dry, remove tape to reveal pattern(s).



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Resources

[Visit the DAI's online collection to see masks by different tribes and cultures from Africa](#)

[Watch this video tutorial on how to make a tribal mask from cardboard](#)

[Explore Cleveland Museum of Art's collection of masks from all around the world](#)

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Questions about or ideas for ARTventures? Email edu@daytonart.org

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