

Camera Constructions

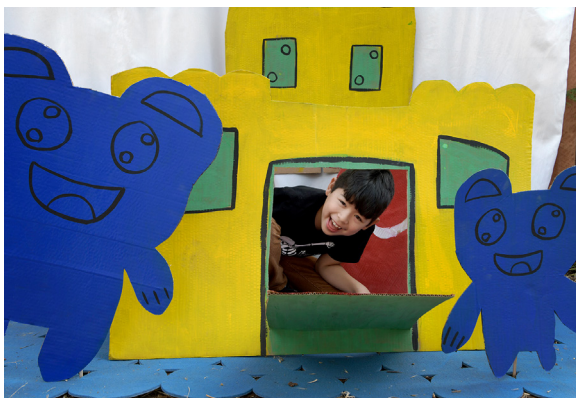
By Anna Garner

Materials Needed:

- digital camera or cellphone camera
- cardboard (used is perfect)
- scissors and/or box cutter
- paints (tempura, acrylic, or latex)
- paint brushes
- something to mix paint on (paper plate, spare cardboard, etc.)
- water cup
- paper towels
- household lamps for lighting (optional)

Overview:

For this DIY project, you get to transport yourself through photography to a fun, imaginary, and exciting place. Similar to the stage decorations used for holiday plays and concerts at your school. You will construct a theatrical style set and photograph you and/or your family within it. All you need is cardboard, paint, and a cell phone camera!



Camera Construction Instructions

Step 1:

Envision yourself in any place you miss or just wish you could visit right now. This place can be imagined or real. Maybe it is the lake you went camping on last year, or maybe it's a gummy bear land with giant skittles and a gummy castle. You pick.

Step 2:

Find old pieces of cardboard in your house, the bigger the better, see if you can find some cardboard that is as tall as you. If you can't find big pieces you can tape smaller pieces together to make larger ones.

Step 3:

Using scissors or a box cutter (with the help of a parent), cut out shapes and forms that represent your place. Your forms can be as realistic or imaginative as you like. Maybe you're cutting out mountains and clouds or maybe you're cutting out organic or geometric shapes that don't have a real life equivalent. I recommend drawing the shapes on the cardboard before cutting so you have a guide, and if you want a rougher look you can also tear the cardboard by hand to create an unfinished edge.



Step 4:

Once your shapes are all cut out, now it's time to paint them. Make sure you put some newspaper or plastic down before you start to prevent making a mess. Almost any kind of paint will work, acrylic, tempura, or old house paint. You can paint solid colors or paint a design or a scene. Gluing on glitter or pieces of colored construction paper is another option.



Step 5:

Now it's time set up your cardboard pieces and photograph! Make sure all the paint or glue is dry first! Then read through the following set up, lighting, and photographing tips to get the best results. (on following pages)

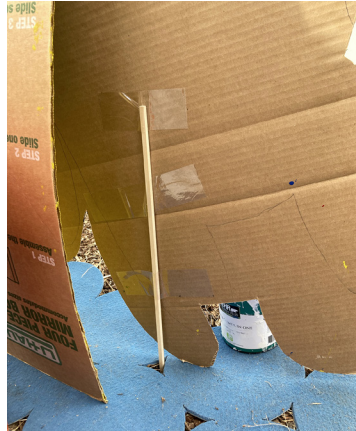
Set Up Tips:

- Find a spot outside or inside your home that is mostly empty, so you won't have unwanted items in the background. You can also use sheets to create a blank backdrop.

- To set up your pieces you can tape them to the wall or hot glue cardboard support beams on the back to stand on their own. You can also use household items such as a small step stool, sawhorse or bucket to lean them against. Duct tape, masking tape, or packing tape are great to secure the pieces so they won't move.

- Create distance between the pieces and try placing them an arms distance apart. This way you can stand inside your set and it won't be only a backdrop.

- Lastly, rearrange several times. There are so many options of how you can piece things together so make sure you try



Photographing and Lighting Tips:

- If you are photographing outside think about doing it in the morning or late afternoon to avoid the harsh noon sun.
- If you are photographing inside see if you have a couple lamps that you can use to create some dramatic lighting. Desk lamps with bendable/moveable necks work great because you can point the light in different directions.
- Get your camera or phone close enough/zoomed in enough to crop out anything that is not part of your constructed set.
- Instead of just smiling and looking right at the camera, play around with your poses. Look off to the side, play with your set pieces, interact with your family member. Have fun!
- Take lots of shots so you have many to choose from (I generally use 1 out of 50 images that I take).

Step 6:

Select a few of your favorite images and do some minimal editing through whatever you have available. Even the basic functions on a phone offer lots of possibilities. Crop in the image, add some contrast, or put a blue cast over everything. Anything you want!



Step 7:

Share the images! Send your photos to the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh on social media using-

#ToughArt@Home #PGHKids @pghkids

Send to friends or family via email, or even print them out and mail as postcards.

