

Paper Sculptures

Studio from Home Series

Lesson plan prepared by Lux Habrich for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Suggested Grade Levels

Primary - Junior High, ages 5–12 – with possible modifications available for ages 10–13. Can be performed with younger ages with adult support.

Introduction

Inspired by the work of John Greer:

This is a fun and simple activity that can be done at home with very few supplies and that can offer a range of results and possibilities. Inspired by the artwork, *Origins*, by Canadian sculptor, John Greer, this activity uses simple folding and cutting techniques create paper sculptures.

The larger-than life bronze outdoor sculpture created in 1995 represents an abstract / non-representational, free-form sculpture that can be experienced in the round. Greer is interested in how humans respond to the world of physical objects as living, responsive cultural objects.



John Greer, Origins, 1995. Patinated cast bronze.

Set Up:

- Large flat surface area

Materials:

- Paper - cardstock is ideal due to stiffness, printer paper, construction paper, thin cardboard
- Scissors
- Decorative Scissors (optional)
- Markers / Colouring Pencils
- Ruler
- Pencil, Eraser
- Optional: clear tape, a box or any other platform (cardboard, canvas) for the work to be mounted on

Process:

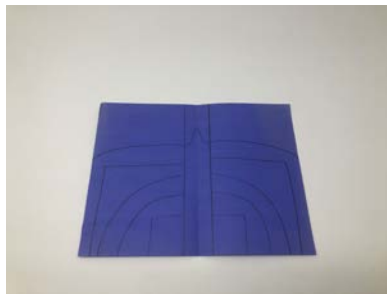
Make your own Standing Paper Sculpture:

Step 1



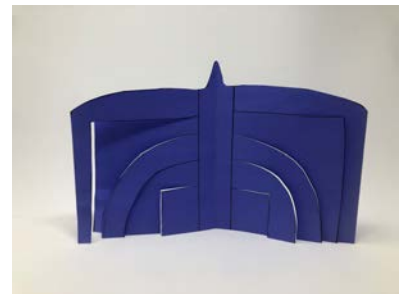
Fold paper in half, unfold.
Place ruler on fold, draw lines on either side

Step 2



Draw lines (these will be the legs) in desired shapes (rectangular, round, squiggly) from the vertical centre lines outward

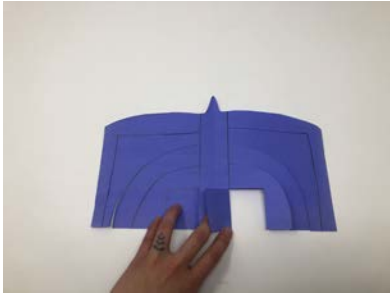
Step 3



Cut along drawn lines, except for the vertical centre - this centre space is the "spine" that will help hold the whole piece up

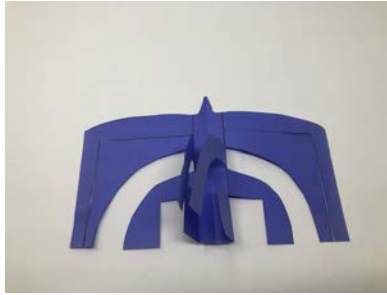


Step 4



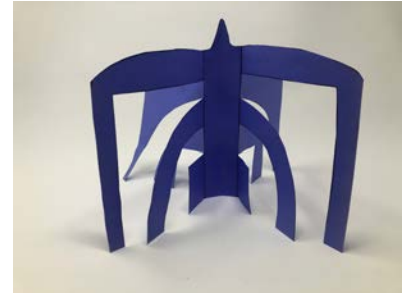
Starting from the bottom, fold the lowest pieces toward you

Step 5



Moving upwards, continue by alternating between folding the layers toward you, then away from you

Step 6



Adjust the folded legs accordingly so the piece can stand (you can play with the folding intensity)

Tips:

- The shorter the sculpture, the more stable it will be. The size of your sculpture is determined by the size of your paper. If you only have flimsy computer paper available, use smaller pieces of paper to create shorter sculptures for increased stability.
- Consider experimenting with colour(s), and decorating both sides of the paper
- Play with light to see the different shadows that emerge
- For increased complexity, you can try an asymmetrical design
- For increased complexity, you can try including multiple centre “spines” (instead of a single, try two or three)
- Mounting platform can be coloured / decorated for a more engaging design

Resources:

- Shuebrook, Ron (September–October 1987). "[John Greer-Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax, 1987](#)". *Vanguard*. **16** (4). Retrieved April 2, 2020.