

NSU ART MUSEUM FORT LAUDERDALE

Marvelous Marionette

At-Home Art Activity

Inspired by **Pablo Cano**

Pablo Cano is a performance artist born in Havana, Cuba in 1961, who lives and works in Miami. He is best known for his enchanting marionettes created from found objects and debris, which are used as part of his performances as well as displayed as sculptures. Influenced by artists such as Alexander Calder, Pablo Picasso and Kurt Schwitters, as well as art movements the likes of magic realism, Dada and Surrealism, he creates a dream-like world where inanimate objects spring to life not unlike the way as Pinocchio did when Geppetto finished shaping him.



February 6, 2020 Pablo Cano, *Queen Marie Antoinette*, 2007. Commissioned by MOCA North Miami. Starry Nights Performance at NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale

Art vocabulary:

Inanimate - Not alive, especially not in the manner of animals and humans.

Marionette - A puppet worked from above by strings attached to its limbs.

Magic Realism - A style that creates a realistic view of the modern world while adding magical elements.

Dada - In its simplest form is an artistic movement that rejects logic and reason in favor of nonsense and irrationality.

Surrealism - An art movement that incorporates an irrational mixing of elements, often disjointed and seemingly nonsensical.

Performance Artist - An art form that combines visual art with dramatic human performance.

Materials:

- Recycled materials including assorted product packages, cardboard tubes, scrap paper and corrugated cardboard
- Scissors (to be used with adult supervision)
- Hole puncher
- Ruler
- White glue such as Elmer's
- Markers
- String or ribbon
- Duct or masking tape
- Two sticks such as paint stirrers, rulers, chop sticks or sticks from nature
- Covering for your work surface

Instructions:

Step 1 - Always use a protective cover for your work surface. Several layers of newspaper, brown paper or a plastic tablecloth work well.



Step 2 - Select a large empty product box for the marionette's body and a smaller one for the head. You will also need 4 pieces of cardboard tubing 4" to 6" long for the jointed legs and a 1" piece for the neck. If you have no recycled cardboard tubes handy you can make your own by rolling up cardstock or paper and gluing or taping it. In addition, you need 2 strips of cardboard 15" to 20" long by 1" wide for the zigzag arms a small pieces of cardboard to cut 2 ovals for the feet.



Step 3 - Open the bottom end of the large box so you can reach in and poke a hole through the closed flaps of the top of the box. Open the box that you have chosen for the head a poke a hole in both the top and bottom of the box. You may need an adult's help for this step.



Step 4 - Fold up the 2 long strips of cardboard in a zigzag fashion to make the arms. Cut a small piece of cardboard about 2" x 1" with a notch on each long edge to hold the string in place inside the head.



Step 5 - Tie a 15" length of string or ribbon around the center of the small, notched piece of cardboard you cut in step 4. Leave the bottom end of the body box open and thread the string up through the hole you made in the top of the box. Next thread it through the 1" neck tube and then through the head box. Hold the loose end of the string up so all items slide down and tie it to the center of one of the sticks about 6" to 8" above the top of the head.



Step 6 - Fold in or cut off the front and side flaps of the bottom of the body box leaving the back flap attached and extending out. Mark and cut away the excess of the back flap forming 2 tabs on the bottom. Glue the end of a cardboard tube to each tab and let dry.



Step 7 - Turn the marionette over and tape the other 2 cardboard tubes to the ends of the first set of tubes. Reinforce the folds and tabs holding the cardboard tubes to the body with tape as well as the inside of each tape hinge you have already created at the knees. You can easily accomplish this task by folding the legs back in order to add the tape.



Step 8 - Glue the zigzag cardboard arms you created in step 4 on the top corners of the body box at the point that would be considered the shoulders and reinforce with tape.



Step 9 - Cut out 2 ovals of cardboard for the feet making sure they are larger than the end of the tubes. Glue them in place and let them dry.



Step 10 - Using assorted scraps of recycled paper and found objects cut and add facial features and details to your marionette. Glue them in place and let them dry. Markers may be used for additional details.



Step 11 - Punch a hole for stringing in the middle of each zigzag arm at the point that would be considered the elbow. Thread and tie a 15" piece of string to the holes you just punched at the elbows of the marionette. Hang or have someone hold up the stick you have tied the head of your marionette to in step 5 so you can tie the loose end of the elbow strings in place at each end of the same stick. Do not tie the strings too short. Arms should loosely dangle below the height of the shoulders. After tying, secure all strings with tape.



Step 12 - Fold back the legs of your marionette and punch a hole in the ends of each of the top tubes at the point that would be considered the knee. Thread and tie a string at least 25" to 30" long to each of the holes you just punched. Hang or have someone hold up your marionette and the second stick at the same height as the first. The second stick will control only the legs, so tie the loose end of each knee string to each end of this stick taking care that the legs hang down below the marionette naturally.



Step 13 -Your marionette is now complete and can be controlled using both hands on the 2 separate sticks. It is best if the hand controlling the feet is positioned in front of the hand controlling the head and arms. Have fun!



Variations and adaptations:

Try a simple version of this marionette by using flat cardboard instead of recycled product packaging. Cut out a body and head in the shape of your choice from cardboard or card stock. Create both arms and legs by folding strips of paper or cardstock in a zigzag fashion. Attach the arms and legs using glue, tape or a stapler. Decorate your marionette using markers or crayons. Add one string or ribbon to the top of the head to control your puppet.

*If you have any questions about these art activities
please e-mail Sue at: sgirardisw@moafl.org
Now in her garage making art!

We'd love to see your artwork! Take a photo and tag @nsuartmuseum



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