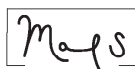


MASKS AND CAPES



In this project we will invent creatures by building masks and designing capes. We will use paper and plaster gauze to sculpt our masks as we think about three-dimensionality and form. Mixing our own colors, we will paint the masks as we play with shapes and lines. We will continue this exploration as we design and color our capes. Once our masks and capes are complete, we will dive into video work as we learn how to walk and move as our creatures.



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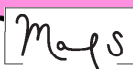
TIPS

Plaster Gauze: If you teach children in second grade or below, you'll need to prepare the plaster gauze strips in advance. We find that, depending on the particular group, children as young as third grade can prepare this material, which will save a teacher lots of prep time. Just be wary of the dust that can be created if the material is jostled or used too roughly. Because of the dust, preparing this material outdoors is a good option if the weather is appropriate. Face masks can also be worn while cutting plaster. Make sure to cover the table you're cutting on with plastic, paper or a tablecloth. Cut the plaster gauze strips into pieces of different sizes - some small, some big. You'll need a nice healthy pile of plaster for each kid.

MATERIALS

- plain paper, or watercolor paper, for the warmup
- pencil
- coloring supplies/watercolors
- chipboard
- scrap paper or newsprint
- Scissors
- standard plier stapler
- masking tape
- muslin fabric
- paint
- paint brushes in various sizes
- tempera paint sticks
- thick elastic
- embellishments
- white glue

Plaster Clean-Up: When you are cleaning up the plaster water dishes, make sure that the plaster gunk that accumulates on the bottom of the container does not get poured into the sink. The water floating on top is fine to pour off down the drain, but the plaster itself should be scraped out and put in the trash can. Because it dries so strong and rigid, plaster is unsafe for plumbing!

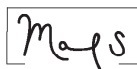


QUESTION

Is a mask alive if no one is wearing it?

RESOURCES

Look into Ralph Lee's masks and puppets. Lee is an artist who works in NYC. His puppets, masks and costumes are involved in plays, installations and community events including parades and holiday celebrations.



WARM UP

Using a pencil, paper and any other art materials you have - like watercolors, pastels or markers - design a creature. Invent an imaginary animal and draw only it's face.

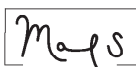


Think about what makes your creature magical. What are it's magical powers? What are it's magical parts? Maybe it has magical antenna or horns. Maybe it has powers in it's eyes. You decide!

1



Pick up your mask form. If it's hard cardboard, bend it and roll it a bit to loosen it up. If you are using a form that needs to be put together, staple the chin and the elastic.

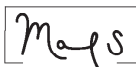


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2a



Using masking tape, chipboard and scrap paper, build up your mask. You could make ears, antenna, noses, spikes - make it as interesting and magical as possible.

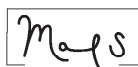


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2b



Crumpled paper is a great material to build up protruding features like noses, eyebrows, cheeks and mouths.

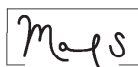


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2c



You can use the chipboard to change the shape of the eyehole, such as by making eyelids.

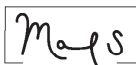


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2d



You can also use things you find around your environment, like recycled objects or sticks, to build up your mask in interesting new ways.

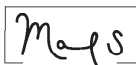


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2e



Cutting tabs or flaps into chipboard and other paper products can be helpful when attaching them to your mask.

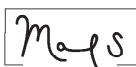


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2f



Change the way the mask form looks completely so it is unrecognizable as the form you started with. It should look totally new, like something you invented!

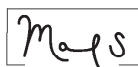


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3



Prepare the plaster and your workspace.

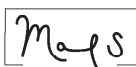


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4



Dip plaster strips into water and cover the entire mask with plaster. Use warm water, it feels nicer on your fingers!

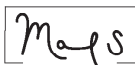


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5



If you have any chipboard pieces that are sticking off the mask (your ears, horns, spikes and the like), you don't need to cover the parts that stick off, but do make sure you cover the joints (the parts where the chipboard meets the mask) to make sure they are stuck on strongly.



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6



Paint your entire mask with a first coat. Use wild colors and make sure to practice mixing your own colors. The more different colors you can mix, the more magical your mask will be.



Meas

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7



Once your mask has dried after the first coat of paint, go back in and add some details. You could paint dots, stripes, wiggly lines, circles, a grid - see how many ways you can think of painting. You could even paint scenes on your mask such as clouds, grass, flowers or even animals! Make sure you give every part of your mask some painting love.

Meis

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Let your second coat of paint dry, then go and find some embellishments. Every classroom will have something different, so see what interesting materials you can find. You could go outside to gather sticks or leaves. You can check the recycling bin for used plastic or bottle caps. You could add felt, fabric bits, buttons, gems, pieces of leather, sequins, or even old toys!



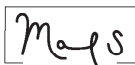


Attach these embellishments with white glue. Use a BIG dab of glue to make sure things stick on properly. If it is available and a grown-up can manage it, hot glue will come in handy.

10a



Now it's time to design a cape to wear with your mask. Decide what kind of cape your mask needs. Does it need scales? Does it need stripes? Maybe your creature has polka-dots or spots. You could draw things your creature loves on your cape such as what it eats or where it lives.

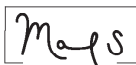


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10b



Get a large piece of fabric, big enough to be able to wrap around you, and spread it out on a big workspace, such as the floor. Use a marker to draw in the details. Draw big!

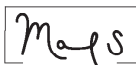


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10c



Use tempera paint sticks, watercolor, or diluted tempera paint to color in your cape.



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10d



Embellish your cape by cutting an interesting line at the bottom or by adding scraps of fabric with a stapler. Once your cape is dry, you can tie it around you using a simple knot.



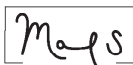
Maes

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11a



The final step of this project is to put on your mask and cape and turn into your character. How does your creature walk? How does it talk? What does it look like when it's playing? Practice moving around as your creature.

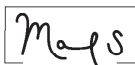


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11b



Have someone take a video of you performing. Make sure to choose an interesting location for filming. Think about what's behind you when you film, as the background of a film is very important. For example, if you film somewhere like inside your classroom with your classmates all working behind you, it will be too much commotion for the viewer, and we won't be able to focus on your acting or invented creature.

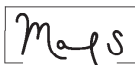


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11c



Choose a filming location with compelling scenery. You could try to find somewhere with trees or mountains, an interesting building, a place that shows off the sky, somewhere with water in the background, or some other amazing location.



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