
Make Paper Maché© Animal Masks with Katrina Wheeler

Chapter 1 - Make Paper Maché© Animal Masks

Overview

(bright music) - Hi, I'm Katrina Wheeler and I'm the creative director here at Creativebug. I'm also a paper mache artist, and my favorite subject is animals. I have a small obsession with making paper mache sculptures of some of the dogs at the office. I got back into paper mache about four and a half years ago when I was pregnant with my daughter. I was setting up her nursery and I needed a 3D element on the gallery wall, so I made a hot-pink wolf mask. I've since made paper mache rabbits and dogs and cats, alligators, flies, you name it, I will paper mache it. Sometimes when I sell a piece, people like to find out what type of materials I used, and I'm very excited to say "This used to be a Cheerios box," or "This used to be a paper towel roll." If it's gonna go in the garbage, I will take it and turn it into art. I'm gonna show you a great introduction to paper mache with these paper mache animal masks. I'll walk you through picking sustainable materials from around your home. I'll share my favorite paper mache paste recipe with you. I'll show you how to form an expressive face for a rabbit, a fox, and a bear. We'll add paint and use paint pen to add color and texture and personality. This is a great way to make a personalized pet portrait for the furry friends in your life.

Materials

- The materials we will need for paper mache animal masks are paper mache paste. You can make that with one third wood glue, one third Elmer's Glue-All, and one third water. You want the consistency to be similar to a pancake batter. If your hands are too sticky when you're touching the paper mache paste, then you might need to add a little more water. If your paper is swelling with the paper mache paste, then you need to add a little more glue. We also have a popsicle stick for stirring. We have our paper strips. These I use packaging paper that come in Amazon boxes. We have some empty food packaging. Our hot glue gun with hot glue sticks. We have some acrylic paint, in a variety of colors. Some paint pens. I'm using Posca for these, in a couple different sizes and colors. Variety of craft paint brushes. A marker. We have a palette knife. We have some scissors that are suitable for cutting through cardboard. Some masking tape. A bone folder and a ruler. And to display your mask, you're gonna need a sharp needle and some embroidery thread in a variety of colors. We have some balloons, freezer paper to protect our surface so the paper mache does not stick to the table, an apron because we are about to get very messy and some paint rags.

Make the base structure

- The first step in making our paper mache animal masks starts with building the foundation of the mask. I have a blown up balloon here, and I've set it in a bowl so it doesn't fall over. First, I'm gonna draw a circle around the top of the balloon. This is gonna let me know where to paper mache so I'm not covering too much. It'll also let me know where to cut the mask when the paper mache is dry. Your circle does not have to be perfect. It's just a guide to let you know about how big your mask should be and where you wanna cut it. I have my freezer paper down to protect my surface, and I put my apron on to protect my clothes. Now let's start paper mache-ing. I have strips that I've ripped to about one inch wide, and they're about eight inches long. For this project, I want a strip to go all the way across, but I don't want them too wide. If you have your strips too wide, then you'll create more wrinkles in your paper mache mask, but you do want some wrinkles to create the

illusion of animal fur. I'm gonna tear some of these into smaller pieces. This is useful to fill in the gaps of any missing spots on my balloon. I begin by taking one of the longer pieces and I like to start in the middle of my balloon. It keeps it balanced and centered, and it prevents the balloon from falling over as you're working. What we wanna do is we dip the paper into the paper mache paste, and we use our fingers as a squeegee to squeegee it off. You don't want too much paste on your paper, or it'll become too heavy and it could fall in on itself. And now we start layering the paper mache. I like to start in the center and I use just even pressure to squeegee out the excess glue, and I make sure to run my fingers over the edges so it has a good seal. We continue along, slightly overlapping each piece. I prefer using brown packing paper to newspaper because it gives me a neutral surface to paint on afterwards. With the newspaper, the high contrast between the black and the white can cause you to add several layers of paint to get an even tone. With brown packing paper, you have a nice neutral base to work off of. Any paper could work for paper mache as long as it's thin. You could use scrap paper that you have around your house, as long as it's slightly lighter than a text weight paper, it should work for paper mache. And as I'm going, I am mopping up some of the excess glue with my fingers, just so it doesn't get too heavy and start to sink in on the top. Also, the more glue you have, the longer dry time it will take. You want to cover up the marks that you made on your balloon because those lines will transfer to your dry paper mache piece, and then you know where to cut out your mask. It's helpful to turn your balloon as you're working so you can make sure that you're getting the entire surface covered. So you can see, this is a very quick process. It takes about four hours to dry. I like to paper mache at night, and then I let it sit and dry overnight. The easy thing about this is you could have several balloons on your table, set up, paper mache them, and work on several of them together at the same time. That looks like I've covered the entire surface area that I want to cover. I'm just going to squeegee off some of this excess glue so it dries evenly. Once your first layer is dry, you'll want to add two more layers. A trick is to start the second layer perpendicular to the first, so you know exactly what you've already covered and what you still have yet to cover. Between layers, we're gonna want to grab some moisturizing soap and a nail brush and go wash our hands.

Construct rabbit features

- My three layers of paper mache are dry so now we're gonna pop the balloon. I'm just gonna cut into the balloon at the tip so that way it doesn't explode. Now we just want to carefully peel the balloon out. It will not rip your paper mache because you have your three layers on and it's sturdy enough. Wipe out this excess glue. As you can see, we still have our line that we mark the balloon with so we know exactly where to cut our mask shape out. Using the cardboard scissors, I'm just gonna cut along the line. I'm gonna clean up some of these edges. An easy way to tell if your mask is evenly shaped, so if you lay it down and if you see any funny edges sticking up, then you might just wanna trim those back a little bit. Now we have the basis for our animal masks. We're gonna start with the rabbit. First, we want to build out the nose. We're gonna take some of our food packaging cardboard, and we're gonna draw a little triangle shape. Rabbits have these cute little triangle noses that are pushed out a little bit from their face so we're gonna start with that. Now to make sure that we can connect our cardboard pieces, we wanna add tabs onto our nose shape. So when we cut this out, we're gonna wanna leave a little space around each side because this is what we'll attach to the rest of the nose pieces. Now using our bone folder, we're gonna make little creases in the cardboard. This is where we're gonna want to fold over the tabs that we will use to connect to the rest of the nose. And there is the tip of your rabbit nose. Now to connect it to the

rest of the mask, cut some one inch long strips. I don't use a ruler for this. I like to use my fingers. I learned in art school that each segment of your finger is about an inch long. And because we're not going for perfection on this mask, this is not a realistic rabbit, we can use our finger to measure. So I'm just gonna take a square piece of paper. And I know that this segment is about an inch, so I want every piece about this long. I also wanna leave room for more tabs to connect these pieces to the mask. Now to determine the width of this, we're just gonna use the tip of the nose itself. You wanna cut these pieces slightly in from the edge of the nose. Now since these tabs are going on a curved surface, you'll want to cut these into little triangles so they curve around the surface of your mask. Now we don't need the bone folder for this because the triangle shape makes them very foldable. Now let's attach these pieces to the tip of the nose. Just use a small bit of hot glue, and I like to stick the glue close to the edge so that way, the pieces really adhere to each other. Now let's attach the nose to the face. I like to start by just making a little dot in the center of my mask shape. This helps me line up all the pieces. I start by gluing one side at a time. I like to start with the top piece because it helps me get my nose centered. And then we move on to the side pieces. Just glue one side at a time, otherwise your glue might dry before you get your nose into place properly. As you can see, I'm adding glue just to the tabs and they fold under so they're not visible once we add our structure. And now we have the skeleton of our nose. We're gonna add some pieces here to fill in the shape of our nose. We're gonna take some more cardboard and just cut off a few pieces to fill in the gaps. So I want a shape that's gonna cover up this triangle. First thing I do is find the height that I'm gonna need. So I just press this piece of cardboard to the mask and I need to cut it about here. That fits pretty well. We only want it to overhang on the tops just to attach it. We don't want too add too much cardboard to our nose structure. So that looks pretty good. So I'm just gonna fold these corners over to fit the shape of the rabbit nose and then attach with hot glue. It might be helpful to use your bone folder to be able to secure the glue to your cardboard pieces. Just gives you a little leverage to attach the pieces. Now I'm gonna repeat the process for the other two sides. And now we have the shape of our rabbit nose. If you have little gaps between your rabbit nose structure and the mask, don't worry about it. We will be covering that with paper mache and it will hold its shape. Let's start our rabbit ears. We're gonna want to use a large piece of paper packaging. This is a cereal box. To make the ear, you're gonna wanna lay your mask on top of the cereal box. We want to draw a rabbit ear and you can tell how you'll need to cut the bottom by the curve of the mask. This will inform you of the curve of the top of the mask that you will attach it to to make sure that it lays flat. Now to create the folds of the rabbit ear, you're gonna wanna extend your rabbit ear shape out, about an inch, inch and a half. So I'm just going to draw some excess ear on the edges that we will later fold over. We'll also need to add about half an inch tabs that we will use to adhere the mask to the ears. Go ahead and cut out your rabbit ear. Now flip your ear over and trace it to make your other ear. I'm gonna cut along these lines here where the ear will fold over. I'm gonna use my bone folder to create a crease. This allows me to easily fold this thick cardboard onto itself. Folding the ear will give your mask those fluffy bunny ears that rabbits are known for. You're gonna get little bumps and ripples in the cardboard and that's okay. It just gives it a more realistic rabbit ear look. We're gonna glue these folds down onto the ear so they stay in place. To attach the ear to the mask, we're going to want to cut into our tabs. Only in the center we'll add some triangles. You wanna be careful not to cut too close to these edges, otherwise you'll lose this part of your tab. Now, to place your ears, you wanna use your nose as a guide. I like to start with the center of the nose and I draw an imaginary line to the corner of the nose and then up, and that's where the center of your ear should be. We're gonna attach it with glue by gluing the tabs onto the mask. It should sit

about half an inch from the back edge of your mask. Repeat those steps for the other ear. So I have attached my second ear and I've realized my ear is a little floppy, so I'm gonna show you how to better secure it. I'm just gonna use some of my scrap packaging and I'm gonna cut a small piece. I'm gonna give it a little fold where I'm gonna want it to hold up the ear. and there you go. There'll be a little ear cast. Nice and secure, and my ear is staying put.

Add paper maché to the mask

- We've built out our rabbit face, so let's start paper macheing. We only need to cover the pieces that we just added to the mask. We don't need to go over the whole mask again. So I have my pieces cut down to about three to four inches in length and one inch wide. I'm gonna start with the nose, the center of the nose, crossing over and overlapping onto the mask. I'm gonna add layer after layer overlapping just like we did with the balloons until my entire nose structure is covered. As you're applying the paper mache, you wanna use gentle pressure in your hands to squeeze out the excess glue. You also wanna follow how the paper moves. Gently guide it to fold over the edges and the corners. That way your paper won't rip and it'll lay nice and flat on your structure. I treat my paper mache projects almost like wrapping a gift. Sometimes you need to fold the edges slightly to cover every bit of the surface. Our nose is covered, so let's begin covering the ear. I like to start at the tip of the ear. I find it to be the hardest, and whenever there's a hard area to cover, you want to begin with that so you have more dry surface area to hold onto. I'm gonna fold the paper strips over the corner of my ear to make sure that this will all be covered in paper mache. And I press down, guiding the paper of where I would like it to go. You want to paper mache the visible part of your mask first. So I'm more concerned with making sure the front of this ear is looking nice and smooth than what the back is doing. As you work your way down, your paper is going to bend a little bit over these edges and you might get some weird curls. I will show you how to do the bandaid fix. You take a strip like it was a bandaid and you cover it up. So now your boobos, that gapping paper, is no longer visible. When you reach these folds, you kind of wanna use your fingertip or your nail to guide the paper into those crevices. That way the folds on this ear are still visible after the paper mache dries. I'm gonna continue all the way around the ear until the entire ear is covered. When you get towards the bottom, you're gonna wanna overlap your paper strips on the ear onto the mask shape a little bit and then you kind of fold it around. You're gonna get this ripple effect on the edge, and that's okay. It'll mimic the way an animal's skin looks where its head meets its ears. When I'm adding strips, I like to fold over the edges first and then the center. It just helps the paper lay as flat as possible. To finish out the bottom in the back, I like to overlap it over the existing mask a bit. When it dries, it'll just add a little more strength and security to the ear shape. You can use some of these small pieces to fill in the little gaps. And we have our first ear finished. Finish covering the second ear and let it dry for about five hours or overnight.

Make bear and fox features

- The bear and the fox are constructed similarly to the rabbit. I'll show you how to make the ears and nose. For the fox, we're gonna build a cone-shaped nose using a toilet paper roll. Let's take our toilet paper roll and we're just going to cut it down the middle. To build our cone shape, we're gonna use our tape and fold our toilet paper roll into a cone just about like this. Boxes have these skinny, short, little noses. So we're gonna emulate that with a skinny, short, little cone. And I'm using tape here instead of glue in case I need to make adjustments as I cut this down to size. (tape crinkling) I want a flat edge on here, so I'm just going to even out this end and cut off some of this

excess cardboard. So it's a flat circle. I want my nose to be about two inches long, so I'm just gonna use my ruler and start marking two inches down around the length of this toilet paper roll. I also want to add on 1/2 inch to add tabs to adhere this to the mask shape. Now, the easiest thing for me to do is just connect these dots, and now I know exactly where I should be cutting. Since I'm not making a realistic animal and it's more of a stylized version of a fox, I'm not worried about perfection on these pieces. As long as I can give the illusion of a nose, I feel like it's a successful piece. I am cutting my tabs into these so they're easy to fold over to adhere to the rounded mask base. I'm gonna fold these tabs inward. And this is where I would be applying the glue to stick this onto the mask base. But first, we need a tip for our nose. Now, I could make a circle, and add tabs, and have to deal with all that folding, but instead, because there's no weight being supported by this piece, I'm gonna show you a quicker way to do this. I'm just gonna add glue on the top and stick it onto the cardboard. You wanna use a good amount of glue. You can cut through anything that's excess and dripping off on the side, but you wanna make sure that this is sticking very well to your cardboard pieces. Let this dry and then we're gonna cut it out. And you want to cut around, not into, but just around your cylinder shape. Cut a little bit of these edges off, but I'm being very careful not to cut into the actual nose structure because I don't wanna weaken that part. And there we have it, our fox nose. Now, what we're gonna wanna do is just similar to how we attach the rabbit pieces. We just glue onto these tabs and attach it to our mask base. For the ears, (tools clattering) we're going to draw right onto the cardboard using our mask as a template, just how we did with the rabbit ears. So you would just line up your mask about where you want the ears and mark it so you know the curve. Remember to add your 1/2-inch tabs to your ears. I'm just going to extend these ears just a little bit down and follow the same curve that I had on the mask. I already have some fox ears cut out, but the tabs already cut into them. When I attach these to the mask, I'm gonna fold them in the same way as I did the rabbit ears and glue them on about 1/2 inch from the back. For the bear nose, we're gonna do the same technique we did with the fox, except make it bigger. We're gonna start with the paper towel tube. We want to cut this again down the middle. (paper towel tube rustling) Now, I'm gonna unfold this because it's easier to mark, but we will roll it again. We want our nose to be about 2 1/2 inches long. So using my ruler, I'm just gonna mark off that length. And again, I'm gonna leave about 1/2 inch to add tabs that we will use to adhere to the base. I'm also gonna mark off this end too because we will need two pieces of the paper towel roll to make it a larger cylinder. (ruler clattering) Just gonna make a line so I know where to cut across. We are gonna want to attach these two pieces together. I like to line up the end piece from each one because you know this is a straight line, so I want this to be the front of my nose. Now that we have our two cylinder pieces glued together, we have one giant bear nose. To get it into a bear shape, we want a flat side, and a little mound for the top of the nose. So we just kind of use our hands to gently bend and mold the paper. Paper can be highly malleable. You just need to use gentle pressure so you're bending and not creasing the paper or breaking the paper. That looks like a good bear shape to me. So now, I'm just going to cut my Vs into the tab so I can adhere it to the mask base. (scissor clattering) Now, we're gonna fold over our tabs just like we did with the fox nose, and this will give us something to glue the nose onto the base with. For the front of the nose, we're going to do exactly what we did with the fox nose. We're just gonna glue a piece of cardboard right on top. Try to get your glue as close to the edge as possible, and you want to move quickly before your glue dries. We are just gonna press it into the surface for cardboard and hold it. It takes about 30 seconds to dry. I'm gonna start cutting off some of this excess here. Just makes it easier to get a close cut around the edge of your nose. We're going to wanna cut the excess

cardboard off of the nose tip. And again, we want to cut in close to the cylinder shape, but not onto it. We wanna make sure that we're keeping this cylinder as is and not punching holes in it. (cardboard scratching) And trim some of these rough edges here, and there is our nose shape. The cool thing about these paper mache projects is you can make a bear nose over and over again, and each one will come out differently. I've already cut out my bear ears. I'm gonna attach them the same way that I would with the fox and the rabbit. Once I've attached all my pieces, I will paper mache everything just like I did with the rabbit. I'll let it dry, and then we'll be ready to paint.

Paint the mask

- Our paper mache masks are dry, so we're ready to paint. We're gonna give these animals some personality, using acrylic paint and paint pens. I'm going to start with my white shade first. I like to use unbleached titanium instead of pure white. It gives a little more of a vintage feel to the mask, and it also helps saturate some of the other colors. Now this rabbit, I'm gonna paint black and white. I follow almost the shape of his nose and I imagine that he has some cute little cheeks right here, so I'm gonna fill all of that in with white. I like to start with the lighter shades first because you can go over the lighter shades with a darker color, but you cannot go over a darker color with a lighter shade. This unbleached titanium also comes in handy because it covers better in one coat than a pure titanium white would do. Now to get that soft rabbit fur look, I'm going to use my brush. There's not a lot of paint on it. It's almost a dry brush. I'm gonna gently just pull the edges up. So it gives it this soft fur feel to it. When we add our black paint, we will do the same technique so the two colors will blend into each other like the real fur of a rabbit would. For our black shade, I don't want to use a solid black. It tends to look flat and it does not reflect the light as well as a mixed black would, so I'm going to use two colors. I'm gonna use Mars black and add a little bit of ultramarine blue just to give it a little more depth. You don't need a lot of blue in it. What it'll actually do is start to turn it to a gray if you add too much of the blue into the black, but I want just enough to give it some depth and a little bit more personality than a solid black would have. I'm gonna start with the ears here and I'm careful not to cover the inside of the ears because that's where the inside of the rabbit's ears would be. Using a good amount of paint because of the texture of the paper mache, sometimes the nooks and crannies tend to get missed, so make sure that you're using a good amount of paint to spread on your mask. And I wanna follow the curves of the cardboard ear that we made, all the folded edges that we made. We wanna highlight those with the black paint so I'm following along the lines of the fold with the paint. The cool thing about paper mache is that you can let these folds determine the shape of your face a little bit and add personality. If you see a funny bump, don't be worried about hiding it. You can highlight it and turn that into a clump of fur or maybe where the eye should be, or a little wrinkle in their face. Again, I'm taking my soft brush and as I'm putting the black on towards the white color, I am softly brushing and blending them together for the illusion of fur. Making sure I get the insides. Sometimes it's easy to forget about the underside of a fold of the paper. Make sure that your brush is reaching all those places. I'm gonna get the back of the rabbit ears as well, even though you might not see them when it's hanging up on a wall. If the piece moves at all, you would notice it. I think I have all of my black mapped out. For the inside of the ears, I'm gonna use a pale terracotta color. I like this shade more than a pink because it has a more earthy undertone so it tones down any colors that are too bright and it will make some colors that aren't as vibrant seem to pop a little more. I'm approaching the black edge just as I did with the white with a soft brush just give it the illusion of fur. I'm gonna do the same on the other side. Now, some of these mixed shades are a little more watered down than a

black or the unbleached titanium, so you might have to go over with a couple coats. Get the inside of this ear and make sure that I am covering everything. Again, I'm going to drag a little bit of the pink over to the black to give it the illusion of the fur. Now, for the nose and the mouth, I'm gonna use a smaller angled brush with the same pink shade, just to draw in the shape of the nose, and I'm going to use the structure of this mask as my guide. I'm just going to trace a line with my brush on both sides and just gonna round out the bottom just a little bit. Just thicken that up a little so it's slightly more visible. For the mouth, I'm just gonna do one line straight down the center. You'll wanna let your mask dry before you add the eyes and the details with paint pens. I have one here that's already dry. I'm gonna start with a simple eye shape for the rabbit. Rabbits have very angled, almond-shaped eyes, and I'm gonna use my ivory pen just to sketch it out. I like to take the nose and follow the angle of the nose up to the ears to determine where my eye placement should be. I like to use paint pens instead of paint to make some of these more detailed features because the surface texture of a paper mache mask is a little irregular. There's bumps and grooves and things that make it a little harder to get into the detail, so paint pens are a lot more simple. I'm drawing back over my lines just to thicken them up a little bit. I found that if you take too heavy a pen on this texture, too big of a size, that it gets a little bit of an uneven line so I'd rather make several line strokes with a smaller pen. And then rabbits just have black eyes with just a little reflection in them so I'm gonna draw a circle just to show a little sun glare in their eyes and give it some personality. I'm gonna do the same on the other side. Again, I'm gonna look at the center of my nose and my ear placement and make sure that the eye is lining up with about that angle. As you can see, my pen has hit a little bit of a snag on this paper mache texture, but that's why I use a pen because I can sharpen these lines easily and I don't need to worry about squiggly lines for my eyes. Gonna thicken up this line here and try to smooth out this line a little bit. I'm gonna add a reflection on this side as well. This helps give the eyes a little bit of sparkle and a little more personality than if you didn't have a reflection in it. And that's it, our rabbit is done. I wanna show you the details on the fox and the bear. For the fox, I started the eye with a similar line that I did with the rabbit, just this almond shape, but instead of bringing the eye all the way around, I added a circle underneath. Foxes have these large eyes that are perfect for spotting rabbits in the wild. I also added an iris and a pupil, and again, to add some personality, a little glare. I used the paint pens to add texture to their fur. Foxes have these beautiful thick fur coats and I wanted to show you the texture of the fur. For the bear, I did a slightly different eye shape. It kind of emulates the shape of the bear nose, like a little mound. I also colored in the bear eye and added a pupil and a glare. I added texture to the bear on the ears and the nose and I added a few freckles. Now that you know a few of my tricks, you can personalize your mask as much as you want.

Display

- I've designed these masks to be used as home decor, but if you did want to wear them, you could cut out eye holes. I found that a 3-1/4 inch space between the center of your eye holes works best. If you did wanna cut out eye holes, I suggest doing it before painting. If you wanna use these masks as home decor, I will show you how to add a hanger. I have my threaded needle here with about 18 inches of embroidery thread and it's knotted at the end. I also have a thimble. I'm going to want to add a hole about 2/3 up from the bottom of the mask. I keep my needle about a quarter of an inch from the edge. If you get it too close to the edge, it could punch through. I'm holding the edge of the mask so it doesn't bend as I punch through, and I'm just gonna push the needle all the way through. Now, I want to line up with the other side. Again, staying about a quarter of an inch from

the edge. I'm going to bring it out on this side. Now I want to add a knot on the left side. I'm going to add a little bit of tension to this. I want it to hang, but I don't want it to be too tight. Add a double knot to this side. You don't want your string falling out of the hole. We're gonna snip it close to the knot. Now your mask is ready to hang. Now that you've learned the fundamentals of creating your animal mask, you can mix and match these techniques to make a variety of animals. Here we have a bear that I've made using a very large balloon. I wanted to play with scale, so we have the large bear, medium-sized fox, and a small rabbit. You can have fun with a different assortment of animals and making each one fit to scale. For a cat, I used fox ears, except I folded them the same way that I did the rabbit to make the cat ears. I also used a rabbit nose. You can see how the triangle shape is similar to what I did on the rabbit. I added cat stripes using paint pens. I just made little tiny dots to form the shape of the stripes and the nose and the freckles and the whiskers. I also added green eyes. As you can see, the shape is very similar to how I did the rabbit eyes. I only added a pupil similar to the fox eyes. Here I made a mask of my dog, Ollie. I used a nose similar to the fox nose, except I made it more cone shape instead of rounded. I also made ears that are the same as the fox shape, except I folded them over to look like a dog. I also added some paper that I paper mached onto the top for my dog's little mohawk. These paper mache animal masks are versatile enough to make an endless assortment of little critters to hang on your wall.