



James Lake

After artist James Lake developed bone cancer aged 17, art became a way to cope with the significant challenges set before him, despite a lack of resources, space and professional guidance. He shares how his life informs his practice, and how he creates the work he does today

Above David Rushbrook – Gold Run Project with Pallant House Gallery OutsideIn

The sculpture is a realistic representation of David Rushbrook, a six-foot high sculpture of the opera singer, based on detailed photos. It was exhibited as part of a collective of artists

Almost 27 years ago, at the age of 17, I developed bone cancer and lost my right leg above the knee. After this I became unintentionally distanced from educational establishments, and found it hard to re-engage with them due to the many years of rehabilitation of my health and mobility.

During this time, a growing interest in the arts developed as a coping mechanism, but also because of a need to change the immediate space around me, as I couldn't move through the environment as I once had done.

I arrived at the need to make things. However, I was somewhat stuck within the confines of my disability/bedroom, lacking in space, and spending increasing amounts of time away from education and the educational support. I came from a hardworking, modest family and had limited access to art materials. These conditions are what fundamentally inspired me to start working with cardboard.

At first the cardboard came from the local supermarket. I used masking tape and scissors

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to cut and hold the initial forms together, then continued with a hot-melt glue gun and craft knife in the sculpting process.

Today, my working practice echoes those times. Being dyslexic has shaped how I generate ideas and how I approach the application of working with card. Ideas start as initial drawings, usually to the size of what I aim to make, and normally on scraps of card from the local store. The drawings are lifted from 2D to 3D, horizontal to vertical, as I find this the easiest way to visualise the form. Structural and free-form techniques give it a linear and lateral quality.

When working with students, I emphasise the possibilities of working with simple/low cost materials to generate complex ideas. It is an attempt on my part to enable students not to feel restricted or confined by financial implications and lack of space. Work can be made in a variety of locations and will hopefully foster students' confidence in working independently with familiar materials. ►



Making David Rushbrook for the Gold Run Project with Pallant House Gallery OutsideIn

- 1** Cardboard cross section, taking the initial drawing and transferring to a large flat sheet
- 2** Positioning the features, and working out volume and depth
- 3** Near completion, working from garage at home. The fine crafting takes place using scalpel/craft knives to carve away and define details



4 Male and female cannon assembled to make 3D cross section – three-quarter view (note repeated front that changes in shape, related to placement inside the head profile)



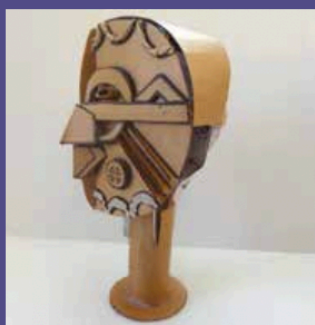
5 Example of placing features on cannon structure, standard anatomical representation. Different sculpture techniques shown on each side of the face, showing essential placement of eyes, ears, nose and mouth



6 Side view, but different sculpture techniques on each side of the face



6b Side view, profile



3a The head section has been covered in part to demonstrate the process of making the mask more 3D, thus moving from mask to portrait



3b Detail as seen from above ■

For more information about workshops contact:
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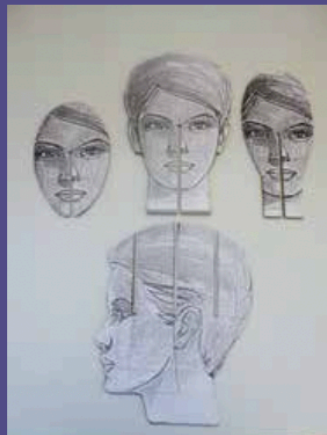
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3

Portraits and masks in sequence

These sequences show how a front and side cannon can be used to produce the mass, depth and volume of a portrait or mask structure from four pieces of card, including an extra rolled piece of card which becomes the neck/stand for the portrait or mask.



1 Female cannon templates – three front views, one profile view



2 Male cannon templates



3 Male and female cannon using slots to assemble into a 3D cross section on a rolled cardboard stand – front/side view



1 African Teke mask has been drawn onto a template, the profile on the cannon has been cut away and the mask template has been glued onto the front face section of the cannon



2 Mask has been bent vertically through the middle to create shape/form and glued in position. Cardboard layers added to create features and detail in semi relief 3D