



# Cardboard creation

*Banish A4 paper in art lessons and embrace something larger – much larger, says Robert Watts*



**Robert Watts**

Co-editor of *Teaching Art and Design 3–11* (Continuum Books) and Programme Convener for the MA Art, Craft and Design Education at Roehampton University

**W**arning! Teachers should be aware that there is something hidden in their classrooms, intent on preventing pupils from expressing their individuality and developing their creativity. What is it? It's a sheet of A4 paper. Visit any gallery

and you'll immediately be aware of the great diversity of artists' work – imagine if every painting and sculpture were the same size! By restricting the scale of children's artwork, we also restrict their ideas.

This is the first in a series of three projects aimed at inspiring children to work on large-scale art and design

projects using familiar, durable (and cheap) materials. Each activity offers opportunities for collaborative work, as children create expanding artworks in two and three dimensions. And once they see the results of their collaborations displayed around the school, you might find that your young artists never look at a sheet of A4 paper again...

## Curriculum links:

Art and design 2a–b.

**You will need:** flattened cardboard boxes; scissors; paint; brushes; masking tape.

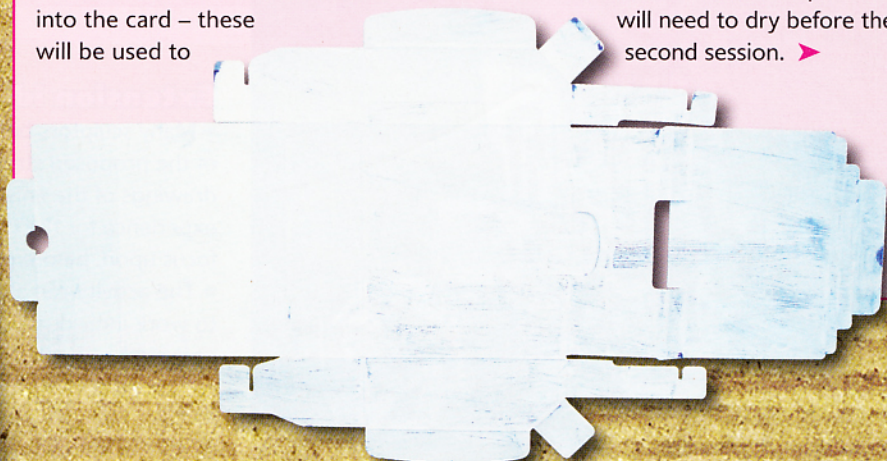
Before beginning the project, ask the children to each bring a cardboard box to school. Demonstrate how the boxes can be flattened so that they're easy to store. Once you have a substantial collection, explain that the children will be working together on a sculpture project and that each of them has an important role to play. The sculpture will be constructed over three sessions.

## Session 1

You'll find that, once flattened out, a cardboard box features an interesting selection of shapes and slots.

Encourage children to remove sections and to cut more slots into the card – these will be used to

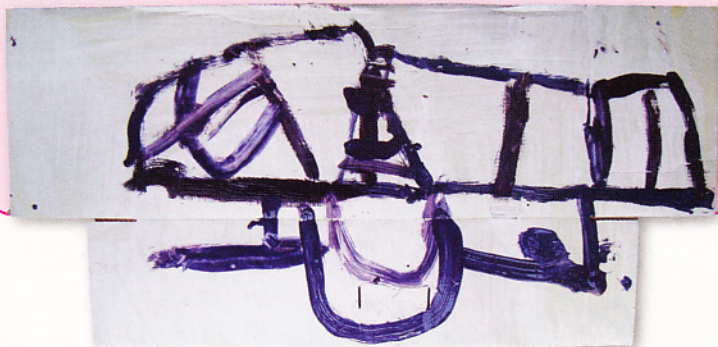
attach different pieces together. Provide white paint and a selection of large brushes, and ask the children to paint both sides of their flattened cardboard box. This first coat of paint will need to dry before the second session. ▶





## Session 2

In the examples shown, children added purple paint to their card shapes – though your pupils may want to experiment with a wider range of colours. The children were asked to concentrate on creating angular marks to emphasise the angular qualities of the sculpture. However, some preferred to make more random marks while others were intent on sneaking in the occasional self-portrait! A combination of different approaches eventually proved successful.



## Session 3

Once the paint is dry, the construction can begin. The sculpture should have a stable base, constructed from a few large, interlocked sections. (It's best to use boxes made from thicker card to begin with.) Once the base is in place, children should have the freedom to experiment with slotting the different pieces together to create further interlocking shapes. You could introduce specific challenges – for example, to make the structure as tall as possible while retaining its stability. Masking tape can be used to fix some of the pieces if things start to get a little unstable.



You will find that the painted lines and shapes are now juxtaposed on the sculpture to create new, unexpected compositions. It should also be too big for the classroom! The sculpture could be displayed outside – try varnishing it with PVA glue for added strength and protection. It should also be easy to dismantle and reassemble it in a high-profile location, where it will hopefully soon serve as inspiration for more large-scale artworks around the school.



### Extension ideas:

- Many sculptors begin a project such as this by making sketches of the proposed structure. In this case, creating observational drawings of the finished piece will be a really enjoyable experience for the children. Begin by selecting a small area to focus upon, before expanding to fill the whole sheet of paper.
- The activity can also be adapted in order to allow children to work individually. Smaller cardboard boxes, such as cereal packets, can be flattened, cut into shapes and bent and folded to create interesting structures.