

AT-HOME ART PROJECT: Cardboard Creations

INSTRUCTIONS

INSPIRATION ARTIST:



Kambel Smith with some of his architectural models in progress at his home in Philadelphia's Germantown section.
Photo by: Tim Tai / Philadelphia Inquirer Staff Photographer

Kambel Smith (1986, Altus, Oklahoma)

Kambel Smith creates sculptures of landmark buildings in Philadelphia, using cardboard salvaged from the trash and other discarded materials, including foamcore and paint. Kambel, who is self-taught, pays close attention to replicating architectural features like cartouches, flourishes on column capitals, cornices, fenestration, and other elements.

The young artist works “constantly” until a piece is completed, taking up to five months to finish a model. His detailed works now require more than half the family's home in Germantown to house.

Kambel Smith was born Cambel Smith, however prefers to use a K in reference to his artist self. Kambel's family relocated to the Philadelphia area when he was six years old. At the age of

eight, Kambel was diagnosed with Autism. Although Kambel was verbal, his words were laced with profanity and anger. At the age of 15, Kambel was given pencils and an easel by a family member. He quickly grew out of his colored pencils and began oil painting shortly thereafter. Kambel began experimenting with model making when his family could not afford canvas for his oils. He found the challenge of creating his three-dimensional models of architecture a natural progression from painting.

Kambel's artistic journey has been centered around family and he has used art as an avenue to channel his autism. Kambel, in collaboration with his father, Lonnie, invents stories in which Lonnie begins a narrative and Kambel creates character-based drawings on the narratives. Kambel's younger brother, Kantai (who is also autistic and an aspiring computer and video game coder) works with them to develop their collective tales into self-published graphic novels and animated videos. Each relates the idea that autism should not be conceived as a disability.

ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

LESSON PLAN



Shake Shack,
2019
cardboard, foam-board, gouache, oil paint, charcoal,
36 1/2 × 62 × 62 in.
Photo by: Pierre Le Hors



Tbilisi Bridge
2019
cardboard, foam-board, gouache, oil paint, charcoal,
24 × 114 × 29 in.
Photo by: Pierre Le Hors



Guild House
2019
cardboard, foam board, gouache, oil paint and charcoal,
33 × 88 × 36 in.
Photo by: Luke Walker



Realm of Neveah
2019
foam core board, acrylic, ink, and paper,
42 × 59 1/2 × 48 in.
Photo by: Pierre Le Hors

ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

LESSON PLAN

MATERIALS NEEDED FROM HOME:

- Found Objects: Cardboard, Paper Towel Rolls, Corks, etc.
- Paper: Construction Paper, Cardstock, Recycled Paper
- Markers, Sharpies, Crayons, etc.
- Scissors
- Glue, Glue Stick, Tape, Stapler, etc.

ART PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Drawing inspiration from Kambel Smith's work, participants will use found and repurposed items to create their own real or imagined structures.

VOCABULARY:

Cartouches: often an oval shape surrounded by scrolls, and found above doors, over entrances, or as ornaments on walls or ceilings

Cornice: a horizontal molded projection crowning a building or structure

Fenestration: the arrangement of windows and doors on the elevations of a building

Found Object: Once you take an object and change it to make it art, it is a found object

Composition: the arrangement of elements within a work of art

Texture: the way something feels

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

Take a moment to look at the examples of Kambel's artwork.

1. Do Kambel's buildings look realistic?
2. Why do you think Kambel selects the buildings that he does?
3. Think about buildings and structures that you have visited. What is meaningful about these places to you? What details from these buildings or structures stand out to you?
4. What building or structure would you like to create?
5. Kambel uses cardboard and foamcore in his artworks. What materials do you have access to that could become part of your own artwork?

ART MAKING PROCESS:

Step 1:

Think about the building or structure you are going to create. Is it real or imagined? What shapes make up the structure? What color is it? Is it made of stone? Wood? Stucco? How could you recreate this texture in your artwork using found objects or drawing materials?

Step 2:

Once you have decided on your inspiration building or structure, look around your home to see what items you can collect to create your artwork: cardboard boxes, cardboard pieces, paper towel rolls, recycled papers, corks, string, etc. Prepare your workspace by covering your work surface with scrap paper. Arrange at-home tools: scissors, glue, tape and found objects.

Step 3:

Look through the found objects you collected and select materials for the base of your structure (**FIG. 1**). Consider, is your structure horizontal or vertical? Can you stack different boxes to get a taller or wider structure? Can you use cardboard scraps to build the shape you need? Tip: if you don't have any plain cardboard boxes, take apart a cracker box or cereal box and turn it inside out to get a blank surface to work on.

Step 4:

Add architectural details to your piece. Kambel's work often includes ornate architectural elements. Think about adding windows, doors, and architectural flourishes. Consider using the printed side of food boxes to add color, texture and details to your artwork. Using corks or smaller pieces of cardboard can add dimension to your work (**FIG. 2**). As you are working, you may decide not to use some of the items you collected, and you may be inspired to go find something new, this is all part of the process!

Step 5:

OPTIONAL: Consider creating a background for your structure out of additional cardboard. How does this change your artwork? (**FIG.3**)

POST PROJECT PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. Why did you select the building or structure that you did?
2. Did anything challenge you as you were building your piece. How did you problem solve?
3. Did you enjoy this art making process? If so, what will you build next?

ART PROJECT STEP-BY-STEP EXAMPLE:

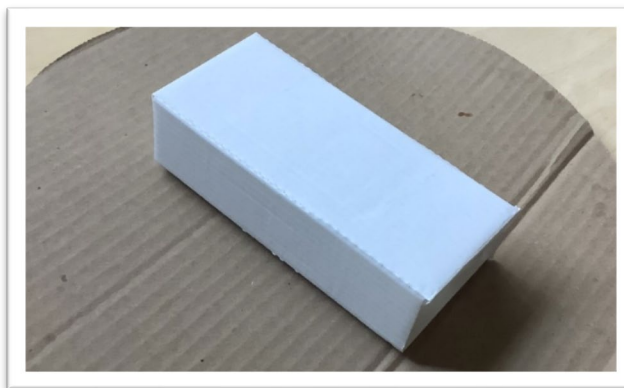


FIG. 1

LESSON PLAN

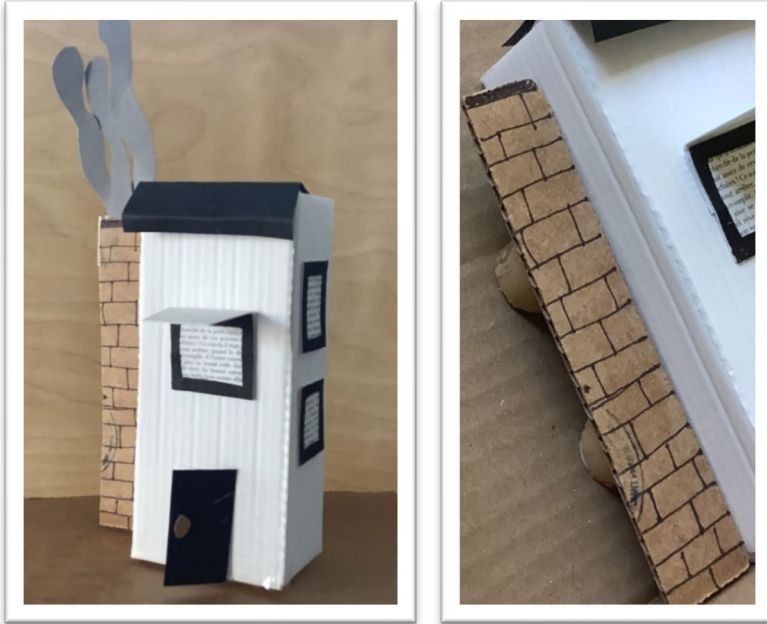


FIG. 2



FIG. 3

ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

LESSON PLAN

EXTRA FUN:

Create a neighborhood full of buildings, real or imagined. Choose to create free standing buildings or create a backdrop for your artworks.



OTHER ARTISTS TO CONSIDER:

- Leonardo Drew
- Mark Bradford
- Betye Saar
- Grace Kisa