

MAKERS MANUAL #14

Helen Kirkum



SNEAKER SCULPTURES



BIO OF THE DESIGNER

Helen Kirkum is an Artist and Designer based in East London. Her work embodies reworking discarded and recycled sneakers, the craftsmanship of handmade footwear, and the emphasis of human agency and stories. Creating wearable couture collages from discarded sneakers that challenge ideas of materiality and newness.

FURTHER READING

- The Age of Collage/ The age of Collage 2 - Gestalten
- Radical Matter - Kate Franklin & Caroline Till
- Sneakers - Howie Kahn, Alex Frech, Rodrigo Corral

LIST OF MATERIALS

- Dry and clean household recycling, e.g: Cereal boxes, cardboard food packets, Egg boxes, packages, leaflets, labels, envelopes, milk/ juice cartons, scraps of fabric, string.
- A sneaker to draw around the sole (ideally something like Converse/ Vans)
- Scissors/ Scalpel
- Masking tape
- Pen/ Pencil
- Double sided tape/ Glue stick
- Ruler

The measurements in this guide are suited for an adult size UK5 (you can adjust the measurements up or down depending on the size you are making)

INTRODUCTION

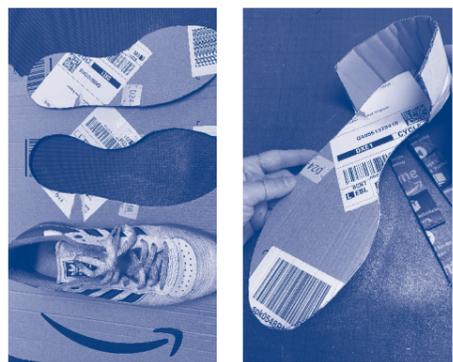
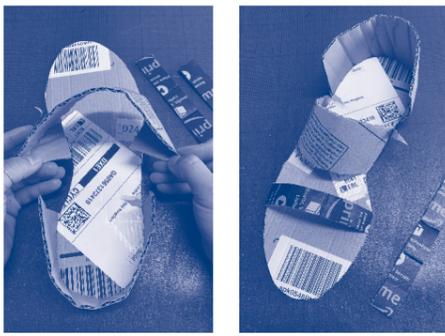
This manual provides a spontaneous and fun exploration into alternative sneaker design. Emphasising the value in waste materials and using household waste as a source of inspiration, you will never look at your cereal boxes the same again! The purpose of this way of working is to consider a physical approach to initial design research, allowing you to create a 3D sneaker sculpture full of ideas to explore. Once you have followed these basic steps you can get as intricate or wild as you like, the possibilities are endless.

STEP 1

Cut a cereal box/cardboard package down one edge to get a flat sheet of card. Place your sneaker on the card, draw around the sole onto the card (adjust shape if necessary) and cut out, this is your insole.

STEP 2

Cut x2 strips of card approx 5cm x 20cm and x2 strips of card 2cm x 15cm. This will be your base skeleton for your sculpture.



STEP 3

Take one of the larger strips and stick a piece of masking tape along the long edge with half the masking tape exposed. Wrap the strip around the back of the heel of your insole, so you create a right angle between the insole and the heel piece (counter), then fold over the masking tape and stick under the insole to secure it.

STEP 4

Take the second larger strip and fold the top corner of both ends so the corner meets the opposite side. Bend your strip into an arch (with card it is good to do lots of little bends to get a smooth arch shape) At the bottom of your arch you should have two triangles from the folded corners, place these under your insole so your arch is leaning forward at roughly a 45 degree angle to the insole. Align the start of your arch to the ends of the heel counter pieces and stick down the triangles under the insole with masking tape.

STEP 5

Take the smaller strip and bend into an arch. Fold 1cm at both ends. Place the arch at the forefoot (widest part) of your insole. Stick the folded ends under the insole with masking tape.

STEP 6

Take the final strip and stick a piece of masking tape along the long edge with half the masking tape exposed. Wrap the strip around the front toe of the insole, so you create a right angle between the insole and the toe piece (mudguard), then fold over the masking tape and stick under the insole to secure it. Now you should have the basic skeleton of your sneaker sculpture. Once you have this basic skeleton you can play around and be as creative as you want. Think of your recycling as interesting shapes you could use, as graphic design elements and as colour elements.

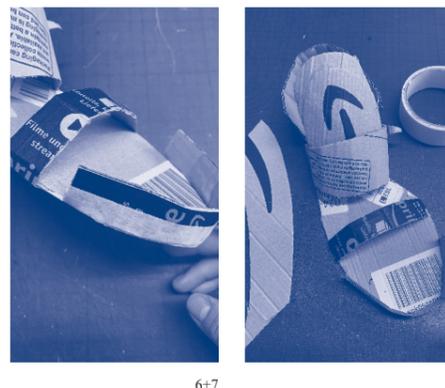
STEP 7

After this initial build it is important you try to use the original shapes and structures of the recycling. Try not to cut shapes you think would be good but instead let the materials dictate the shapes of your design! The next few steps are a good way to start building your sneaker sculpture into a design but not essential!

STEP 8

Take a larger piece of your recycling such as a piece of packaging/ box which

you would like to use for the front (vamp) or tongue part of your sneaker. Bend to shape the card, place under your large centre strip and secure with tape.



STEP 9

Build up the back heel counter by adding another piece of card around the back but slightly higher. You can also create a dart by folding a small triangle in the centre of your card panel to shape it to more of a heel.

STEP 10

Look at the recycling you have and try to build up the sidewalls by adding unusual shapes, you can think about elements that you would find on a sneaker such as the eyestay (for the laces) or support panels. If your recycling has holes you could use this to thread your laces.



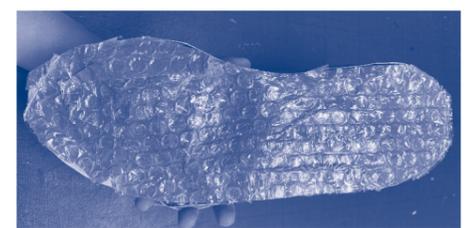
STEP 11

For the toe add some smaller pieces of recycling and begin to patchwork these over your existing skeleton. Think about how you could create areas on the toe such as the mudguard, or small design overlays and details using your recycling shapes. Keep going, adding until you feel like your sculpture is looking like a sneaker.



STEP 12

For the sole you can think about adding egg boxes or more textured recycling to the bottom of your insole to make a sole and tread pattern. Or you can add cardboard strips such as toothpaste boxes all the way around your sneaker at the base to make a cup sole.



STEP 13

For the final touches you can finely roll up a leaflet or some receipts to create a lace and thread through your eyestay. Or think about adding a heel tab at the back by folding a thin strip into a loop. When your sneaker sculpture is complete you can use this to sketch from to create endless designs. Don't forget to tag your sneaker sculptures and sketches on instagram using #sneakersculptures @helenkirkumstudio

Makers Manual is a collaborative project between exciting makers and STORE STORE. Participation is free and no design background is necessary. You can share your creations using #makersmanual. We will pick our favourite submissions and publish the results in a limited printed edition of all of the manuals. Everyone who makes it into the book will receive a free copy.

This project is supported by Coal Drops Yard.

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