

About the Make Art Kit and the Artist



“Hello! My name is Jacqueline Demendeev and it’s my pleasure to be leading you through this activity.

As part of my art practice, I like to take people to the world of the dark forest. It’s a gorgeously mysterious place, where white details shine out from mysterious black depths. It’s also a place of great monsters.

For me making monsters has been an important part of my practice and my life. By making our own monsters. I believe we can make friends with what scares us and celebrate beauty in unusual places.

If you look at the work of Z’otz* Collective, they engage in a process of making creatures. Even their name Z’otz* derives from the Mayan word for bat. In their work, they explore environments of creatures which sometimes live in and out of niches. These niches add great depths for the viewer to dive into and tell their own story about the work.

I’m going to share with you my techniques for building a story, a convincing scene, a little bit about the white on black process that I love, and how to bring it all together to create a niche.

As we’re all in our homes right now, I hope this exercise will be a chance to bring a little wildness and mischief inside to liven up your everyday environment!”

- Jacqueline Demendeev



Top image: Jacqueline Demendeev, Self portrait
Bottom image: Z’otz* Collective, detail of niche from mural *Dissolving Frontiers*, 2019

Part 1 - Building a Story

For this activity you will need

- 6 panel page from your kit
- A pencil and eraser (from your own supplies)

In this exercise, we will be creating thumbnails. Thumbnails are rough drawings that help inform parts or the whole of your final project. It's a way to plan your piece, which will always make your final work better, but it's also a great moment to spend with your own thoughts. We're not trying to make a perfect drawing at this stage, we're just doodling. And when we doodle we unlock our natural storyteller!

We will be building our story around 2 main blocks: a character and an environment. We'll be thumbnailing the first on the top 3 panels, and the second on the bottom three.

Character Exercise: use basic shapes to create 3 characters



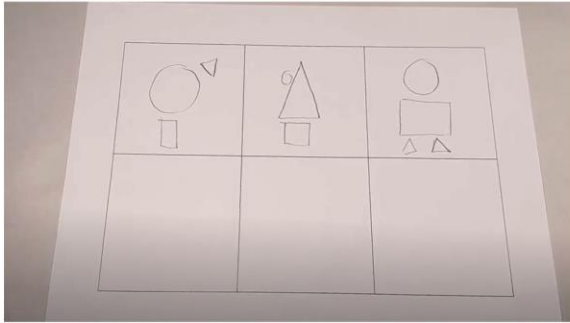
Look at this inspiration photo from Z'otz* Collective. As a viewer, it sparks so many questions.

- Who is the central figure?
- Are they big or is the niche small?
- Is this their home?

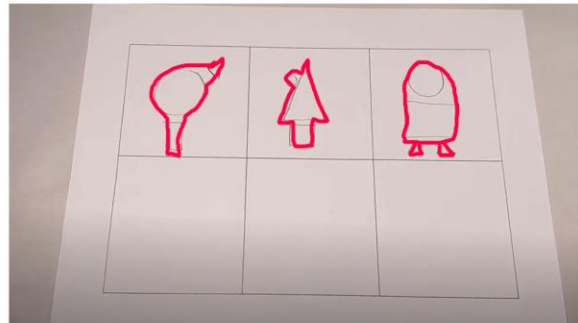
All these great questions come to mind, without the piece itself being too complicated. Sometimes the more exciting characters are simpler in shape. In fact, this is so much the case that one popular character design exercise is to take circles, rectangles and triangles, and to combine them in different sizes to create a character.

Z'otz* Collective, detail of niche from mural *Dissolving Frontiers*, 2019

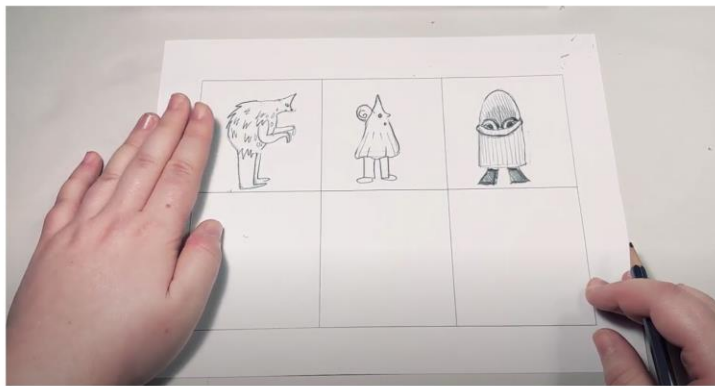
Step 1



Step 2



Step 3

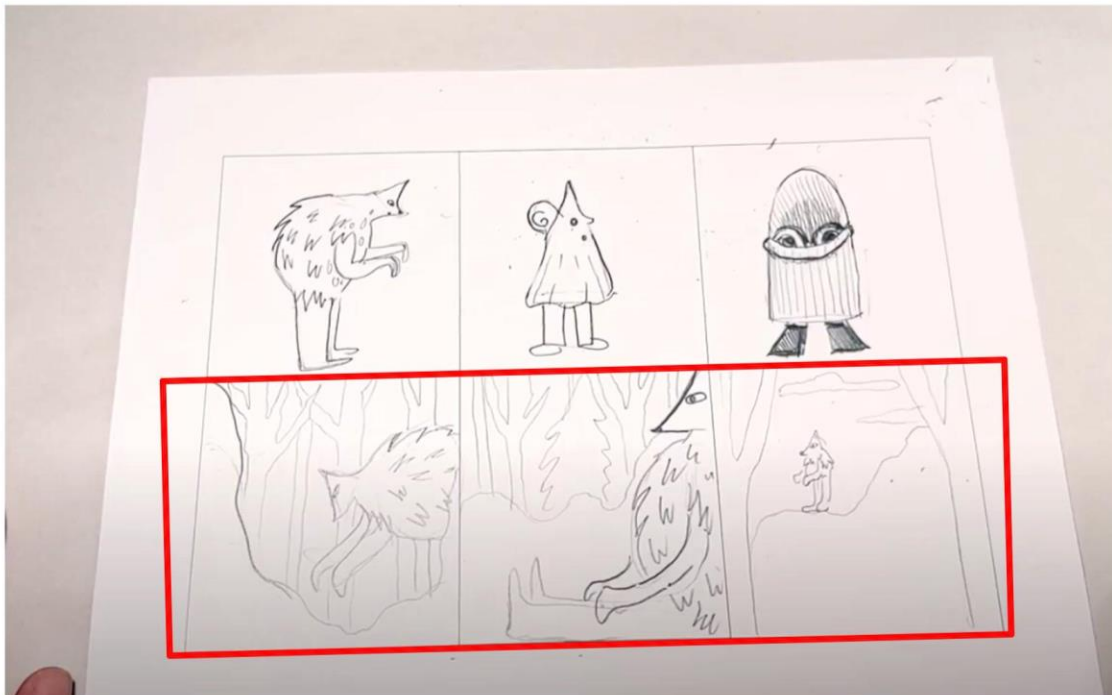


1. Fill your first three panels with your own combinations of these three basic shapes (circles, squares and triangles).
2. Join these shapes together with an outline and erase the center lines to make room for details.
3. Go wild! Find the monster in your new shapes. Here, we are free to try things without worrying too much about how it looks.
4. Choose a monster for your final piece. You may need to do a little more drawing before you find a monster you're in love with, but once you do, make this your character!

Environment Exercise:

Our next three thumbnails are going to be about our environment - where our creature lives and maybe plays. Our niche, but also any artwork, is a beautiful stage on which our character can inhabit. Divide your stage into three parts to make it simple:

- The foreground or front of the scene
- The background or back of the scene
- And the mid ground (the middle in between these two areas)

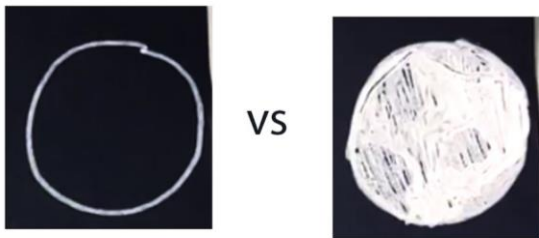


1. Come up with one element for each of these planes (for example, rocks, trees and your creature). Use the three thumbnail squares to experiment with their sizes and positions.
2. Once you've filled in your six squares, choose one or two you like.

These make the beginnings of the story you'll tell with your final artwork!

Part 2 - Tips for Drawing in White on Black Paper

Drawing with your white paint marker on black cardstock will be how you'll decorate the back and sides of your niche. Use the back of a black page to experiment with these techniques if you wish. Here are some tips for drawing in this style:



Instead of outlines, consider painting your main objects as a solid white shape. We also have the benefit of these paint markers being slightly translucent, which means we can go back in with second coats to create beautiful milky layers like the craters on this moon.

For more complicated drawings, you're going to want to sketch them out first. You can use a pencil, which shines under overhead lights, to plan out your drawing before you paint it on.



Lastly, small textures look really great in this style, and there's two ways you can apply them:

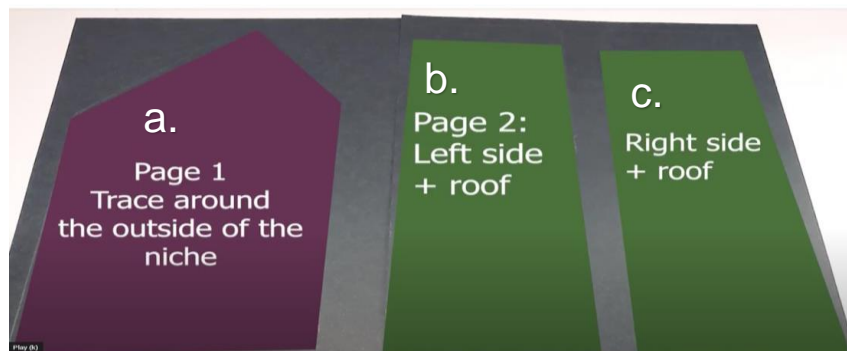
1. If you have a black pen or pencil crayon on hand, you can layer on black dashes to create things like the bark on trees.



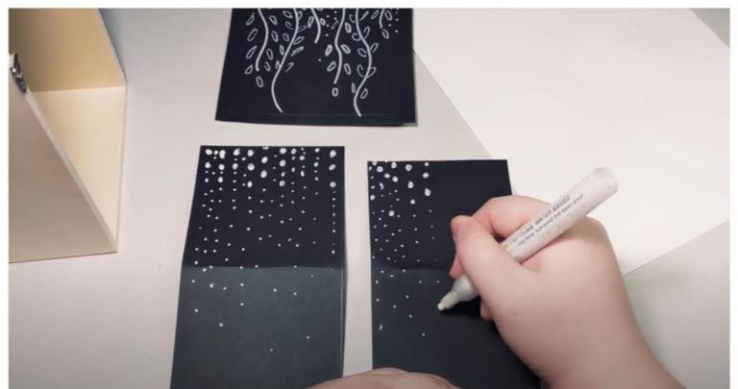
2. The other way is by using the paint pen to create clusters of dots. Widening or narrowing the space between the dots creates different effects. They are great for rain, small flowers, or other visual interest.

Part 3 - Assembling Your Niche

In this part, you'll see how the planning and techniques from the previous two parts come together for the final project. Your final project should tell your own story and be a unique home for your creature.



1. Firstly, use a pencil to trace the contours of the niche in three areas:
 - a. The outside of the niche (Page 1) to create the back wall
 - b. The left side and roof (Page 2)
 - c. The right side and roof (Page 2)

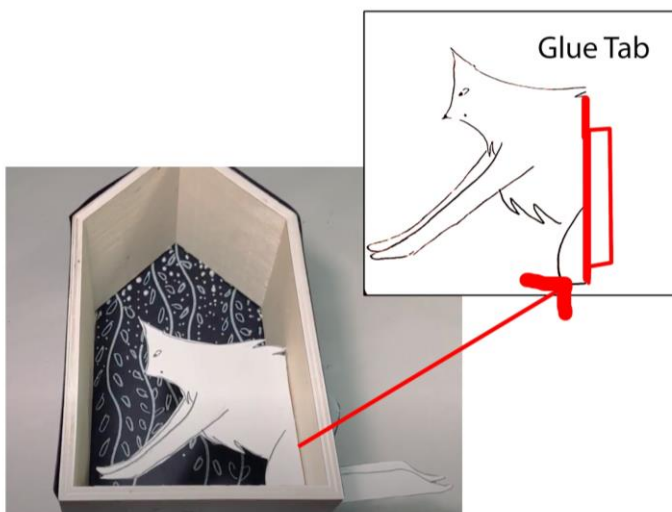


2. Create the backdrop on these three pages by using your paint marker to decorate piece **a** from step 1 (above)
3. Create the outside of your niche using your paint marker to decorate pieces **b** and **c** from step 1. Remember: each panel allows for an opportunity to tell another story about your creature. Do they have a garden? A pet? Is their niche a giant house or a tiny hideaway? Show this in your drawings.

Home is Where Your Niche is



4. Once your panels are complete, you're ready for assembly. Working quickly, glue the pieces onto the wooden niche by using your glue stick to cover the surface of both the paper and the niche. Glue piece **a** to the back of your niche (facing the inside), and glue pieces **b** and **c** to the sides.
5. Using any paper cut outs that you wish to create, add elements to the interior of your niche. Tip: draw a rectangle on the bottom or sides of your elements before cutting them out. When you fold these tabs down, it will make it possible to glue your paper object upright!



6. Add large elements made out of paper to the front of your niche. Make use of whatever you want! There are pre-cut trees you can use or layer together for an interesting effect.

7. Keep adding elements until you've made the perfect home for your creature!

